

VII

A DISCOURSE

AT THE

ANNUAL EXAMINATION,

OF THE

Students in the Theological Seminary,

COLUMBIA, S. C.

July 1839.

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To the Ministers, Elders and Members of the Presbyterian Churches in South Carolina.

BELOVED BRETHREN IN CHRIST—

With Christian affection and an ardent desire for the welfare and prosperity of our Zion, I address to you the views and statements, contained in the following discourse, upon a subject most deeply interesting to us all. I pretend not to strict accuracy as to numbers and calculations, but only at substantial correctness in the general results.— I beg you will not regard me as a self-constituted censor, but rather as a brother, expressing my honest convictions as to the causes of evils we all deplore, and as to the remedial measures necessary for their removal. Believing, as I most solemnly do, that the present mode of supporting and employing the Ministry, so widely prevalent among us, is criminal and ruinous; I could not forbear to lay the subject fully before you. Should your sentiments be in unison with mine, I trust you will make united, vigorous and immediate efforts to produce the necessary change. And should your opinions be opposed to mine, I may hope you will still give me the credit of good intentions. With fervent desires and prayers for the spiritual increase and edification of all our churches, I subscribe myself,

Christian Brethren,

Your fellow labourer in the Vineyard,

And your servant for Christ's sake,

A. W. LELAND.

DISCOURSE.

I have chosen a subject so vitally important to success in the Ministry, and to the prosperity of our Churches, as to claim our special attention on this occasion. As this Institution is chiefly designed to furnish an able, efficient Ministry, it must be deeply interesting, not only to candidates for the sacred office, but to all the churches in our connexion, to inquire what are the true causes of the languishing, discouraging state of our Zion, and to discover, if possible, the real obstacles which so greatly hinder ministerial success and efficiency. In attempting to give a brief general view of the circumstances which have exerted an influence so disastrous, my remarks will have direct reference to our denomination in this State. My personal knowledge of the condition of our churches in the adjoining States, is not sufficient to enable me to decide in what degree they are affected by similar evils.

While thus our attention is directed to the state of the Presbyterian Churches in South Carolina, minute accuracy of information must not be expected. But as I have spent thirty years in the Ministry, in this State, some general knowledge upon this subject must have been obtained; and as my attention has been directed to the official records of the past, and the present, I trust that a plain and candid statement of my views and impressions, in relation to this matter, will not be regarded as obtrusive or inappropriate. If it be true, that our churches, throughout the State, are generally in a feeble, declining condition, and that the labours of our Ministers are not crowned with much visible success; it is surely incumbent upon us all to discover, if possible, whether there may not be opinions, habits or practices, prevalent among us, which have a most pernicious tendency to blight and destroy our spiritual prosperity.

Our first inquiry therefore is, what are the present condition and prospects of our Churches? The answer is painful and discouraging. It cannot be denied that very many of our congregations are in a declining state. A comparison of the statistics of our denomination, with those recorded thirty years ago, exhibits a rate of increase deplorably small. While other denominations have doubled, trebled or quadrupled their Churches and Ministers, during that period; ours has hardly advanced at all. The number of Pastors in the upper country, was nearly as

great in 1805, as it is now; at least twenty-five churches, which then existed, are now extinct, and within the last ten years, about thirty of our ministers have removed from the State. The uniform testimony, heard from many of our most numerous and efficient congregations, is, that they are either stationary or declining. It is readily admitted, that emigration has enfeebled our churches; but that evil has been felt equally by other denominations, which have increased rapidly notwithstanding. It is also true that our denomination has increased, both in strength and numbers, in the middle and lower country, by the establishment of flourishing churches, in Charleston, Columbia, Camden, Cheraw, and other places. But this exception affords the strongest support to the position I shall maintain; because these churches have risen and become strong, under the influence of a system entirely opposite to that which, I contend, has fatally prevented the increase and prosperity of the great body of our Churches.

The question then returns, how can we account for this exceeding contrast, between our progress and that of sister churches? In order to meet this inquiry, we must ascertain whether there has been any remarkable deficiency, on our part, as to the appointed means of grace—the public Ordinances of the Gospel. My full conviction is, that such a deficiency does exist—that the provisions, divinely made for the sustenance and increase of the Church of God, have by us been criminally neglected, and that this capital error has produced all these discouragements. Hence it has happened that, with an able, pious, learned ministry, with a system of doctrines purely scriptural, and with a form of government eminently calculated for the extension of the Gospel—we have accomplished so little, in building up the kingdom of the Redeemer. This dereliction of duty, so disastrous in its consequences, is justly chargeable upon our churches and our ministers. The churches have neglected to secure and support the ministry of the Gospel; and the ministers have been criminal, in yielding to the unjust and unscriptural requisitions of the people. I find no difficulty in thus distinctly stating what I verily believe to be the real causes, why the Presbyterian Church in this State, has remained nearly stationary for thirty years—why so many of her congregations have ceased to exist—why most of those which do exist remain so feeble—and why our detachment of the Lord's army has achieved so little in the field of conquest. How could it be otherwise, when so many of our congregations are, by their own neglect and indifference, wholly destitute of the ministry of the Gospel—when so many wealthy churches are less than half supplied with the ordinances of the house of God, because they will not support the ministry—and when in our churches generally, there is a famine of spiritual food, because the ministers are driven by necessity to waste their energies in secular employments. Instead of being at a

loss to know why our state is so bad, I am only surprised that it is not vastly worse. If it had been the design to exterminate Presbyterianism utterly, more efficient measures could hardly have been devised, than those which have been adopted in many instances, by its professed friends. Nothing but a miracle can save a church from falling into decay, when her ministry and ordinances are taken away. For those who trust to special interpositions, while they criminally neglect their bounden duty, are justly left to eat the bitter fruits of their own criminal negligence.

While I thus feel myself compelled, by a sense of duty, to prefer these grievous charges against the churches of our own beloved Zion, I acknowledge that it is incumbent on me clearly to substantiate my accusations; and to show, by the authority of scripture and by indubitable facts, that it is owing to a deliberate neglect of duty positively enjoined, that the condition and prospects of our churches generally are so discouraging.

We proceed then to inquire what are the spiritual provisions, which have been appointed by our beloved Redeemer, for the sustenance and edification of his churches, and for their extension and increase. It is evident from these Divine arrangements, that it is the good pleasure of God, that churches should be planted, and nurtured, and multiplied, by the instrumentality of human efforts and appointed means. Therefore, while it is a precious truth—that there can be no true church, no spiritual life, no success of the Gospel—without the special presence and gracious influences of the Holy Spirit; yet it were just as absurd to expect such results without the diligent use of the provided means, as to expect health and vigour without necessary food. It is thus perfectly scriptural to decide, that those who sow sparingly, by neglecting to avail themselves of all the spiritual provisions which Divine wisdom has made, must expect to reap sparingly in the harvest time of Gospel blessings. It would be dishonouring Christ to suppose, that he made arrangements for the gathering, sustaining and increasing his church, in the days of the Apostles, which were not required to secure the end in view: and if such an assemblage of means were indispensable in the days of miraculous gifts and inspiration, how much greater is the necessity of all such aids, in the present state of the Christian world. We appeal therefore, to the sacred records for testimony, as to the provisions made by our Saviour, for the support and extension of the blessed Gospel. The apostle testifies (Eph. 4, xi.) that the ascending Saviour gave *some, Apostles, and some, Prophets, and some, Evangelists, and some, Pastors, and Teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.* And a similar declaration is made by the same inspired servant of Christ, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians. *And God hath set some in the Church, first Apostles, secondarily Prophets, thirdly Teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing,*

helps, governments, diversities of tongues. These passages are sufficient to evince how ample a provision was made for public preaching, and pastoral instruction, in the Apostolic churches. No modern churches on earth are so richly supplied with the living ministry, with laborious devoted pastors, and with the public services of religion, as those early communities of the friends of the Redeemer. But let us try to discover what directions were given, as to the labours of the ministry, and the corresponding duties of the people. Ministers were commanded, *to be instant in season and out of season—to reprove, rebuke, and exhort with all long suffering and doctrine. They taught publicly, and from house to house—warning and reproving every man.* And the people were commanded, *to receive the word with meekness, watching thereunto with all diligence, not forsaking the assembling of themselves together, but receiving divine truth, not as the word of man, but (as it is in truth) the word of God, which effectually worketh in them that believe.* Thus by these express declarations of scripture, selected from many of similar import, it is manifest, that ample provision was made by the Head of the Church, to preserve the ordinances of public worship; and that it is thus decided by Divine authority, that enlarged privileges of religious instruction, where they can be enjoyed, are essential to the spiritual prosperity of every Christian congregation.

Admitting then, that at least equal privileges are indispensable to the sustenance and extension of churches now, I proceed to state what amount of religious advantages and means of instruction must be enjoyed by a church, in our day, in order to her possessing the treasures of privilege provided and bequeathed by the King of Zion, and without which there is no rational or scriptural expectation of welfare and enlargement. And this inventory of gospel blessings, which every Christian congregation is bound to obtain, solemnly admonishes every minister of Christ, and every candidate for the sacred office, of the arduous pastoral labours, the unremitting diligence, the devotion of all the energies of mind and body, and the constant unremitting discharge of clerical duties and obligations—all of which are essential to ministerial fidelity, and without which, there is neither promise nor prospect of success in the ministry of reconciliation.

1. It is essential to the spiritual prosperity of a church to enjoy the regular ordinances of worship every Sabbath.—To be satisfied with less than this, or to suppose that preaching every second Sabbath is sufficient, is practically to impeach the Divine wisdom. God has set apart EVERY Sabbath for religious worship, and *what God hath joined together let no man put asunder.* Who will dare to pronounce the weekly provision of spiritual food, which the Lord has appointed, superfluous and unnecessary. It is as utterly impossible for a church to be in a vigorous flourishing condition, with her sanctuary closed and her pulpit silent half the Sabbaths, as for a man to be strong and healthful who

keeps fast every other day. It is true in both cases, life may be sustained, but it will be feeble, sickly and miserable. It is true there are churches, in new settlements, and amongst the poor and helpless, where regular preaching cannot be enjoyed. But I solemnly warn every congregation which shuts up the house of God on the Lord's day—and I warn every minister who consents to such an arrangement, to be ready, with the plea of *absolute necessity*, to present before the judgment seat of Christ.

2. But besides the regular instructions of the sanctuary, all the families of a christian congregation are entitled to faithful pastoral visitation; and every individual has a claim upon pastoral care. That minister who does not frequently visit every household of his flock, and thus know their spiritual state, has no pretension to parochial fidelity. How can he *watch for souls as one who must give account*—how can he *warn every man, and teach every man in all wisdom*—how can he *give to every one a portion in due season*—if he do not know the spiritual state of every individual in his congregation? Woe to that minister, who must come to a personal, solemn interview with any of his hearers, for the first time, before the bar of God. And woe to that congregation, who neglect or refuse to make provision for a full discharge of pastoral duty.

3. It is moreover indispensable to the flourishing state of a congregation, and especially to its increase, that frequent meetings should be held in the various districts or neighborhoods within its limits; that the Gospel may be preached from house to house, and that the messages of grace may be carried to those who cannot or will not come to the house of God.

4. Equally precious and necessary are frequent and stated prayer-meetings under pastoral direction. How essential is it that a minister should often meet his church members, and hold with them seasons of special prayer; that he should attend, with the Elders, district prayer meetings, in various places within his charge, and that the youth should often be assembled for the purpose of earnest supplication on their behalf. If a church is to grow in grace, and shine as a light in the world; and if sinners within its borders are to be converted, it will be in answer to the frequent, importunate and fervent prayers of the Pastor and his flock.

5. To watch over the souls of the young, to be faithful to the children of his charge, is an arduous, laborious and most important part of clerical duty. Such labours every church *must* enjoy, or she is poor indeed. The infant members of a church have a solemn claim upon the watch and care of the Pastor, which he cannot disregard, without criminal unfaithfulness. Regular catechetical instruction he is bound to impart to all the children under his care. The superintendence and direction of Sunday-Schools, those valuable auxiliaries to pastoral labours, and collecting the youth into Bible classes, for the purpose of enriching their minds

with scriptural knowledge, and reaching their hearts with gospel doctrine, afford opportunities for doing good which no faithful minister will neglect. Diligent pastoral labours, in this most interesting department, are justly claimed by every church; and deplorable is the state of any church, which is satisfied without them. It is hardly necessary to add, that a Christian minister must be faithful and constant in visiting the sick, the dying, and the bereaved—must be known and endeared to his people as an angel of mercy in every house of mourning, as the counsellor of the perplexed, the guide of the inquiring and anxious, and the consoler of the penitent and broken-hearted.

I have thus given an imperfect account of the duties and employments of the ministry, showing what priceless treasures, what invaluable blessings, Christ has bestowed upon the Church, in the appointment of Pastors and Teachers. And every church is privileged to enjoy such a ministry; and wherever it is not enjoyed there is a famine of that bread of life, a destitution of those spiritual provisions, which Divine goodness has appointed for the comfort and sustenance of Christians. I take for granted, what could be easily proved, that the original arrangements, as to ministerial duties, and as to the varied means of instruction bestowed upon the Apostolic Churches, are at least equivalent to the course of labours I have now described. And it is my solemn conviction, that all these services are absolutely necessary, where it is possible to procure them, to a prosperous state of any church. And I confess it seems to be as presumptuous for any congregation to dispense with any of these pastoral labours; as it would have been for the churches planted by the Apostles, to send away part of the sacred teachers whom the Holy Ghost had appointed among them. Which of the departments of pastoral labour, as now specified, can be dispensed with, without a grievous robbery of the privileges, which constitute the fair inheritance, bequeathed by the Redeemer to the church, purchased with his blood? Wherever such labours have been enjoyed, the deprivation of any part, would excite mourning and lamentation. And wherever Christians are contented and satisfied in destitution of these services, it is manifest that they do not know the extent, either of their necessities or of their privileges.

If, then, it be admitted that such duties are incumbent on every Pastor, and that every church is entitled to expect, and bound to require, such services; it follows undeniably that the labours of every congregation imperiously demand the entire time and talents, bodily and mental energies of its minister. Whether a congregation be large or small, the man who furnishes those spiritual provisions appointed for a Christian people, must have his hands, his head and his heart fully occupied; and he can have no time for other employments. From the same premises it is equally plain, that no human being can perform the duties of the Ministry in more than one congregation. While it is freely admitted that

when necessity requires it, missionary services may be performed by a minister in several destitute neighborhoods, or among scattered, vacant congregations; yet such labours cannot be regarded as pastoral, and all people who have only such occasional, partial ministrations, are really destitute of the Christian Ministry—are suffering a spiritual famine, and have no part nor lot in the rich inheritance of gospel ordinances, bequeathed by the Saviour to his churches. When any community of professing Christians suffer this sad deprivation from invincible necessity, their case is deplorable. But much more to be pitied are those, who willingly remain in such destitution, because they love to have it so; or because they refuse to make those efforts and sacrifices, which are necessary to secure such inestimable blessings. How then are we to regard those numerous and wealthy congregations, who either divide the labours of a minister between two or three churches, and thus render it impossible that he should be faithful to either; or compel him to resort for subsistence to some secular employment; thus utterly incapacitating him for the discharge of his clerical duties. Such are instances of popular delusion and of selfish folly, which can hardly find a parallel. What would be thought of employing a school-master to teach two schools, ten miles apart, dividing his labours between them; and requiring him besides, to make shoes while his pupils were reciting, so as to obtain his services at half price? And yet this would be quite a rational arrangement, in comparison with that of a divided partial ministry. It is sometimes regarded as a noble act of charity, for a church to give up half the labours of their minister to assist the destitute. But this is going a little too far in generosity. So charity requires us to feed the hungry. And yet what would you think of a man, who left his own family without a morsel of food every other day, in order to supply the wants of those too indolent to provide for themselves. It is an act of charity also to clothe the naked; but we are not therefore required to strip off our own garments and give them away. The real truth is, that those who are so liberal in depriving themselves and their families of the blessings and provisions of the Gospel, and bestowing them upon others, give a convincing evidence how little they prize them.—If they really estimated divine ordinances, more precious than gold, more valuable than houses or lands, they would not be quite so ready to bestow them upon their neighbours.

I have thus stated explicitly the amount of labours, included in the appropriate and indispensable duties of the pastoral office; and the absolute necessity of such a ministry to every church, in order to the enjoyment of the gifts and blessings bestowed by Christ upon all his people; and in order to any scriptural expectation of the edification of believers.

The question now arises, whether the churches of our connexion, in this State, are furnished with such privileges, such

provisions, such services. If they were, it would be totally inexplicable that the present state of things should exist, that there should have been almost no increase for so many years; and that so many churches should be stationary—so many declining—so many extinct. But if, on the contrary, it be a fact, as undeniable as it is deplorable, that only a few of our churches have full pastoral labours; that the great majority rest satisfied with a meagre substitute for the fulness of the blessings of the Gospel of Christ, and that this destitution in most cases is entirely voluntary—then there can be no difficulty in explaining all that is unfavourable and discouraging in the condition of such churches. It would indeed be matter of astonishment, if any denomination should flourish, under such circumstances. True, the grace of God is sovereign and free. He has mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Still, the kingdom of grace is regulated by laws as invariable as those of nature. And there is no more reason to expect a church, destitute of a scriptural ministry, to be fruitful, efficient and increased by large accessions, than there is to gather a rich harvest of grain from a field unploughed, unfenced, uncultivated. But the appeal is to facts. There are some churches, within our borders, where the undivided labours of a minister *have been* enjoyed from their origin, and in which the various departments of pastoral duty before mentioned, have been filled with more or less fidelity. What is the result? In every such instance within my knowledge, the church has been gathered from the world within thirty years, contains hundreds of communicants, exerts a blessed influence upon the community, and contributes largely to supply the destitute, and sustain all our pious institutions. It may be objected, that the state of such churches is not so flourishing as might be expected, if so much depended upon a regular ministry. I reply, that the real progress of a church is to be estimated frequently, by the magnitude of the obstacles it overcomes, and the power of hostile influences with which it successfully contends. Tried by this test, the churches in our large towns are proved to have been favoured with very signal prosperity. Had any one of them been closed half the time, or enjoyed half the labours of a pastor, it could not have existed a single year. It would long since have passed into oblivion.

But what is the real condition of our churches generally? I am fully convinced that the time has come, when the true state of things must be distinctly known and fully examined. The question therefore, above stated, illicit the following facts. In the four Presbyteries of this State, there are about ninety congregations, and thirty-four pastors. Seven or eight of the churches are supplied with a pastor to each. There are of course more than eighty congregations, with less than thirty pastors among them. So that the average supply to each church is about one third of a minister's time. So many, however, are totally vacant,

that most of the larger churches have preaching half the time, and two or three have worship two Sabbaths out of three.— Thus many of the Presbyterian meeting-houses, and some of them with large congregations, are silent and deserted every Sabbath. More than half our members in communion are, on every Lord's day, destitute of the spiritual food appointed to nourish the flock of Christ. Upon half our families each Sabbath does not smile, nor gladden them with the summons to go up to the house of the Lord; and alas, our youth spend half their Sabbaths, unblessed by the restraints and salutary influences of public worship. But this view of the case, appalling as it is, does not disclose its worst features. If all our ministers, few in number as they are, and with their time and labours so divided, were enabled to devote themselves wholly and laboriously to their pastoral duties, and zealously attend to the visiting, catechising, and counselling their people; if they employed their time in itinerating through their extensive charges, preaching frequently, and holding prayer meetings in the different neighbourhoods; regularly instructing the youth in Bible-classes, and sustaining and regulating the sunday-schools; a vast amount of good would be effected, and much of the direful influence of pastoral destitution counteracted. But, while such a course of untiring labour and fervent zeal is pursued by some of our brethren, with the most blessed results; it is feared that a greater number do not thus wholly give themselves to the work. With many, the week is spent in temporal business to provide a support for their families. Their hearts may burn with desire to spend and be spent in the labours of the Lord's vineyard, but they feel constrained to leave the Word of God, and serve tables—constrained to employ themselves in providing things honest in the sight of all men, so that they may owe no man any thing. In consequence of all these lamented deficiencies, the condition of most of our congregations, is one over which all the friends of our church must mourn. With most distinguished advantages, we make little progress. With an excellent form of government, pure and scriptural standards of doctrine, and an able and faithful ministry, we may justly be charged with supineness and inefficiency.

In view, therefore, of these discouragements, and the disastrous effects of the present arrangements in our denomination, we proceed next to inquire into the causes of these deplorable evils. There must be sad delinquency some where. There must be criminal negligence, as well as mistaken opinions, to produce so much dereliction of duty, so much destitution of privilege. As to the immediate cause of this deplorable state of things, there can be no question. **IT IS THE HABITUAL, SYSTEMATIC NEGLECT, ON THE PART OF OUR CHURCHES GENERALLY, OF SUPPORTING THE MINISTRY.** It seems to be a sentiment widely prevalent, that it is not the incumbent duty of christians, to give a Competent main-

tenance, to those who serve them and their families in the sacred office. The habit has been extensively formed, of being satisfied with having a sermon once in two or three weeks, and dispensing with pastoral services almost entirely. And, as it has been found that such labours can be obtained very cheaply, the arrangement has generally been very satisfactory. Of this the inevitable result has been, that as ministers cannot live without means of subsistence, and as clerical celibacy is not in accordance with Protestantism, most of our clergy have felt themselves compelled to follow some secular avocation, in order to provide for their families. Hence it has followed necessarily, that most of the duties, whose discharge demands the whole time, energy, heart and soul of the Christian pastor, have been either very slightly performed, or else wholly neglected. For it is absolutely impossible, for any mortal man to be employed in planting or school-keeping, and yet obey the apostolic charge, to *give himself wholly to the work of the ministry, to be instant in season and out of season, and to give attendance to reading, exhortation and doctrine, that his profiting may appear to all.*

Here, then, we discover the evil which has brought such a withering blight upon our spiritual prospects; which has turned the garden of the Lord almost to a desert; which has paralyzed our powers, and hindered our labours, while the fields have been white all around us for the harvest. Oh! if we could estimate the contrast between our present state, and that which would have been produced if all our churches had enjoyed the full labours of the ministry for the last thirty years; we should find no language to express our emotions of deep regret and humiliation. But all these enormous calamities, these wide-spread desolations, must be traced to their proper source—the refusal of our people to support their ministers, and thus to enable them to perform the duties of their holy vocation. And this refusal has not the smallest plea of necessity. It is wholly inexcusable and criminal. There is no lack of resources. Our denomination is abundantly able to support double the number of our present ministers, without the smallest inconvenience. If our members were to devote to this purpose half the per centage on their income, which the ancient church were required by the divine law to pay to the support of religious worship, the amount would be more than sufficient to give a competent salary to thrice as many ministers as we now have.

Even the small congregations, containing only ten or twelve families each, could sustain a minister, and be none the poorer. Such a little community, as has often been proved by actual experiment, would actually derive temporal advantage from such an expenditure. For it is an established maxim, that the destitution of the Christian ministry occasions expenditures vastly greater than those incurred by its maintenance. It is a fact worthy

of notice, that those congregations which support their ministers liberally, are liberal towards all the institutions of Christian benevolence. And the reverse of this is also true. Little aid can be expected by our charitable institutions from those who do not give a competent salary to the minister. I know a congregation by no means numerous, which pays \$2,000 annually to its minister; and yet the same congregation has contributed more than \$3,000 annually for several years to other religious objects. And there are other congregations equally wealthy and much more numerous, which pay from \$250 to \$400 annually for preaching, and a much less sum to benevolent institutions. It may therefore be regarded as a settled point, that a Christian community, not prizing the Gospel sufficiently to give a bare subsistence to a Pastor, cannot feel any deep interest in diffusing the light of Christianity throughout the world. But I am not arguing the question, whether the ministry is entitled to a support, or whether the members of the church are under obligation to provide for the temporal wants of their pastor. These points are settled by the express and repeated declarations of the Word of God. My simple object is to show how grievously the injunctions of divine authority, in this matter, are set at nought by Presbyterians in South Carolina. Look at the facts of the case. With the exception of seven or eight churches, the charge of neglecting to support the ministry can be sustained, against our whole denomination. I know not that there is one church, with the above stated exception, which pays half a competent salary. And the average amount among all our churches, is less than one fourth of the sum necessary for the comfortable maintenance of a clergyman's family. Do not suppose that I am pleading for large salaries. All I contend for is a plain, simple competence, which will exempt the minister from want and distress, and enable him to give himself wholly to his sacred duties. In the country, I suppose a salary from \$600 to \$800, would be sufficient; while in the towns and villages a larger sum is requisite. If these moderate claims were acknowledged, and such a support given to our ministers, so that every congregation could enjoy the entire labours of a faithful servant of Christ, what a transformation would be witnessed. Our waste places would soon be like the Garden of the Lord. But how humiliating is the fact, that three fourths of our churches raise less than \$200 each upon an average to support the ministry; and even this miserable pittance is badly paid. And I am pained to add, that some of the oldest, richest and largest congregations in the State, abundantly able each to support two ministers, raise with difficulty from \$300 to \$400, and employ a minister only part of his time. Do they wonder why it is that they are stationary or declining, and that they have only about the same number of members as they had twenty years ago? I do not. To those unacquainted with the peculiar circumstances of the case, this state of things may ap-

pear inexplicable. And it is indeed very mysterious, how CHRISTIANS can pursue a course so utterly at war with their dearest interests, and with the success of the cause which they have most at heart. Let us direct our attention, for a moment, to the causes of the apathy and parsimony which Presbyterians evince in relation to this subject.

1st. It is an ancient custom, established from time immemorial, to keep ministers on short allowance, and thus compel them to work for their living. And it seems as if the the present generation regarded it as a reproach upon the memory of their fathers, to adopt any new arrangements.

2nd. Our people generally, are not convinced that the prosperity of the church requires that its ministers should give their whole time and attention to their pastoral duties. It is a common remark, that congregations have gone on pretty well with two sermons a month, without either prayer-meetings, lectures, Bible-classes or family visitations; and therefore it is concluded that these things are unnecessary. It is true, churches have been kept alive on the old system; and so a crew of sailors, on a wreck, are kept alive with half a biscuit and a gill of water per day. But in neither case, I presume, is there much to boast of as to strength or comfort. If our congregations were really aware, how essential it is to have the entire labours of a pastor, they would by no means consent to his following any other occupation, nor would they share his services with another people. In temporal affairs they would act more wisely. They would hardly encourage a physician, who should have two residences, twenty miles apart, and residing a week at each alternately. They would hardly share one cook between two families, and keep fast every other day. They would hardly employ a watchman to guard two villages, spending a night alternately in each. And yet neither of these arrangements would be more absurd, than the division of a minister's labours between two or more distinct congregations. So that it is only necessary that the subject should be understood, to insure a correction of the evil.

3rd. Another circumstance which has contributed to this deplorable state of things, is the sparsely scattered residences of our members, rendering it difficult to feel or act as an united congregation. But it should be remembered that the only way to remedy the evil, is to have a ministry so diligent and efficient, as to fill and multiply churches, and thus reduce the territory, occupied by a single congregation, within convenient limits.

4th. The prevalence of the evil we complain of has been attributed to the worldly spirit, and the want of zeal and spirituality, in some ministers of the Gospel. If there be any such who prefer to preach now and then for a small salary, rather than to be wholly devoted to the work with a full support—if there be any who prize the privilege of making money by worldly business all

the week, more than the honour of winning souls to Christ—if there be any who choose to preach in two churches, in order to save the labour of preparing more than two sermons per month,—I say, if there be such ministers, they will of course exert a decided influence in opposition to the arrangements which I am endeavouring to recommend.

5th. I add but one more probable cause of the great reluctance of many, in our denomination, to give a competent support to those who preach the Gospel. We are compelled by their heartless indifference, and their extreme reluctance to increase their contributions, to come to the conclusion, that they do not highly prize the preaching of the Gospel, nor esteem the labours of a Christian minister as really valuable to themselves or their families. This we must infer from the liberality of many wealthy Presbyterians, towards objects which they *do* hold in high esteem, contrasted with the close-fisted parsimony they exhibit, in the aid they afford in sustaining the Christian ministry. When objects, whose claims they acknowledge, are presented to them, their means are abundant. But when the wants of the ministry are urged, they are always very short of funds. They feel the value of education, and cheerfully pay several hundred dollars per annum, to procure for their children the best instruction they can obtain. But for him who educates them for eternity, for him who laboriously instructs them in that knowledge which makes wise unto salvation, a miserable pittance of ten or twelve dollars is deemed quite a munificent remuneration. Such Christians prize bodily health, and to preserve or restore it, they willingly pay large sums to their Physicians. But when called upon for one tenth of the amount of their medical bills, to aid in giving a bare subsistence to the men who toil day and night to promote their spiritual health, they appear to feel as if they were doing an act of charity. They feel the reasonableness of giving full compensation to all the artizans, whose employments they consider necessary to the welfare of society. They would not think of asking a Mechanic, an Overseer, or an Engineer, to devote his time and skill to their service merely for his food and clothing; and yet they are unwilling, even on such terms, to sustain those who act as their *servants for Christ's sake*.* In a word, whatever employment promotes temporal interests, or gratifies pride and ambition, meets a ready and willing reward. But those labours, which are designed to promote spiritual good, and secure the blessings of immortality, are held in low

* It would be amusing to witness the astonishment and indignation with which a Master Mechanic would receive an offer from a company of Gentlemen to superintend the erection of a Bridge or a Mill; proposing to him, as the company could not afford to pay him a sufficient sum to bear his expenses, that he should make wheel-barrow to pay for his board, while engaged in their service. And yet this would not be more degrading than the offers of settlement gravely made by rich congregations to Ministers of the Gospel. Such treatment of Clergymen seems to evince a determination on the part of the people to give their preachers abundant opportunity for the exercise of self-denial and patience under insults and injuries.

estimation, and are very poorly remunerated. In worldly, irreligious men, such a manifest preference of temporal good to the blessings of the Gospel is to be expected, as a matter of course. But when such feelings are manifested by the members of our churches—we can only say "*Tell it not in Gath.*"—"*It is a lamentation and shall be for a lamentation.*"

But even upon worldly principles, men commit a most egregious error, when they despise the institutions of religion, and take no interest in their support. The value of property, and the safety and comfort of human society, are most signally promoted by the influence of public worship and religious institutions. Every planter in this State, whether he know it or not, enjoys double the income, and possesses twice as much wealth, as he would have if there were no churches—no preaching—no Christian ministry. There is not an intelligent land-holder in Texas, who would not gladly give half his territory, to place the remainder in the midst of a regular Christian community. So it is manifest, that those who support the Gospel grudgingly, are actually undermining the stronghold of their temporal prosperity. Every good citizen readily and promptly pays his taxes, because he duly estimates the necessity of civil government. And I believe the position to be capable of entire demonstration, that true policy, as well as the Divine authority, should lead men, on the very same principles, in the absence of higher ones, to give a liberal support to the institutions of the Gospel.* On the whole, upon this point, is it not clearly evinced that those Presbyterians, who refuse to contribute their reasonable share, according to their means, to support a regular, efficient ministry, must be regarded as holding in very low estimation, all the privileges of the Christian dispensation.

When I have visited some of the ancient, numerous congregations of the northern section of the State, and have seen their churches embowered in groves of venerable oaks, and thronged with hearers, I have urged the anxious inquiry, why it was that such sanctuaries were left in silence and solitude for so many

* A few years ago, in an adjoining State, a Gentleman of high respectability, but by no means wealthy, subscribed one hundred dollars per annum towards the support of the Minister of the church he had recently joined. Many of his friends and fellow church members remonstrated with him on the extravagance of his subscription. His noble reply I remember well, as I had it from his own lips: "You are mistaken," said he, "my friends, in supposing that I cannot well afford this amount to support the Gospel, or that I am injuring my family by this liberality. I have tried it now two years, and find it a very profitable investment, even in a pecuniary point of view. I never laid up so much money as I do now. Formerly I attended the Races with my family; and never at a less expense than \$100 annually. Formerly I found it necessary to run up a bill of \$150 annually for 'Old Jamaica Rum,' 'Real Cognac Brandy,' and Genuine Holland Gin. Formerly my sons and myself belonged to a Sunday Dinner Club, which involved an expense of \$60 or \$70 more. These several items of expenditure I have lately concluded to lay aside; and to employ the funds which they used to consume, in promoting interests which I esteem nobler, and securing advantages and gratifications which I greatly prefer. You thus clearly perceive that, in this matter of paying \$100 annually for the support of public worship, I am realizing a clear gain of \$200 or \$300 per annum, without any self-denial or sacrifice whatever."

sabbaths of the year, and why such promising fields of pastoral labour were not fully cultivated. I have been told in answer, that money was so scarce; that it was found impossible to raise a few hundred dollars to support an entire ministry. And this, perhaps, among an hundred families, some of whom enjoy an income of several thousand dollars per annum. By this statement, I have been led to such reflections as these. Here is a community who have money enough to support schools, to build spacious houses, to pay for fine horses and carriages, to wear costly clothing, and fare sumptuously every day—and yet they cannot pay a few dollars for each family to secure the invaluable blessings of a devoted ministry.

There is one class of our church members, who are most deeply interested in this subject, for on them rests a fearful responsibility. I allude to those to whom God has given wealth, or rather has *entrusted* large possessions to their stewardship. In all communities rich men exert a controlling influence either for good or evil. But a wealthy member of a church occupies a station in which he must necessarily be instrumental in bringing blessings or curses upon all around him. He cannot possibly avoid proving a nursing father to the church; or its most destructive enemy. His influence cannot fail to be instrumental in the salvation or ruin of many immortal souls. When such a man feels and acts rightly, and aids the cause of religion, and the institutions of the church, liberally, according to his ability, his example will be followed, and the treasury of benevolence and piety will be full. The Pastor will have a competence, and be able to devote himself wholly to his flock, and the church, in consequence, will *flourish as a vine which the Lord hath planted, or as a tree by the water courses bringing forth fruit in its season.*

This is not imagination, such instances have occurred. I know a church, of another denomination, to whose aid, in its feebleness, one of its wealthy members gave \$500 per annum for several years. This enabled them to secure the entire labours of an able, faithful minister, who has been successful in gathering a large, flourishing congregation. In the case, also, of a still smaller church, in a different denomination, the entire services of a devoted Pastor are now enjoyed, through the liberality of three individuals, who contribute \$600 per annum, and thus render the prospects of the congregation very animating. Had either of these churches adopted the Presbyterian plan, and engaged preaching twice per month, with the understanding that the preacher should keep school for a living—what would have been the result, think ye, as to its success and prosperity? It is with heart-felt pleasure I can refer to one similar instance among ourselves. There is a small, feeble church, in one of our presbyteries, which has languished for many years, under the exhausting, paralyzing influence of a partial ministry; but has now, by a large subscription of a wealthy member, been enabled to secure the entire services of a Pastor, and is therefore

rapidly increasing in numbers and prosperity. Now permit me to ask, in what possible way such a sum could have been appropriated, to produce an equal amount of real substantial good. If I had access to each of fifty rich men in our communion, I would say—“*for Christ's sake go thou and do likewise.*” We thus see what an amount of enlargement and prosperity might arise to the church, from the liberality of its wealthy members. But it is equally evident, what a chilling discouragement, what a fatal counteraction is produced, in many of the churches, by the backwardness and parsimony of their rich members, in supporting the ministry. For instance, a church member with a known income of \$12,000 or \$15,000 per annum, subscribes \$20 towards the Pastor's salary. Of course those who have one tenth of his income feel satisfied with giving \$2. Another less wealthy church member has a large family of children and servants, amounting in all to fifty or one hundred, who all enjoy or may enjoy the instructions of the sanctuary—the privileges of public worship. He, however, pays only \$12 or \$15 towards the support of the minister. Hence, the man who has no family, and occupies but a single seat, satisfies his conscience by paying fifty cents. In this way it is, that the rich members of our communion are indirectly instrumental of a great portion of the deplorable evils, which are crushing our churches into the dust. A tremendous responsibility rests upon such men. They have it perfectly in their power to repair these desolations, to resuscitate expiring churches, to give the bread of life to famishing thousands in our own denomination, and to enrich the several churches to which they belong, with all the provided blessings of the Gospel: and if they refuse to do their duty, I can only say that before the bar of God they must answer for the consequences.

There is one other view of the prevalent arrangements in our denomination, which I cannot omit to present on this occasion. I mean the criminality which is inseparable from the engagement of a minister in worldly business, and the division of his labours between two or more congregations. The necessary and uniform effect of either of these plans, is not only that his public services are inconstant and inefficient, but that pastoral labours will be almost wholly neglected. It cannot be that a man, who toils in the drudgery of a school, or a farm, all the week, can preach the Gospel with power and effect. And it is manifestly out of his power, to go from house to house as a messenger of salvation.—Consequently the means of grace are not effectual; the church becomes cold and formal; its children wander in forbidden paths; sinners are not converted; and the ways of Zion mourn. I tremble to think, that if our churches had enjoyed an entire-devoted ministry for the last thirty years, many thousands would have embraced the Saviour, who are now in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity, or beyond the reach of mercy. And this I say in the most perfect consistency with the sovereignty of grace, and the necessity of the creative energy of the Holy Spirit, in the conversion

of the soul. Now, in reference to these multitudes, whose salvation has been prevented, humanly speaking, by this failure in duty—on whose skirts will their blood be found?—of whom will their souls be required? Great guilt exists somewhere. For myself I believe it rests partly on those churches, which might have enjoyed all the privileges of the Gospel, and have voluntarily remained destitute of them; and partly on ministers who have consented to such destitution. For if it be criminal in a people to be satisfied with half a minister's time, either through coldness or covetousness; it is certainly equally criminal in a minister, to yield himself an instrument of unrighteousness by entering into such an engagement, and thus assisting the people to rob themselves and their children of the bread of life. There is also a frightful aspect of this practice presented by its connection with the most solemn vows and covenant engagements. When people present a call to a minister, they solemnly invite him to undertake the labours of the pastoral office among them, according to the Divine institution.—But what sheer mockery is this, when it is perfectly understood, that only a small portion of pastoral duties are to be performed. Let us read a sentence in some of these calls. "*And that you may be free from worldly cares and avocations, we promise to pay you Two Hundred and Fifty Dollars every year.*" Would it not be better to change the phraseology thus—"*and that you may be plunged into cares and perplexities, and be compelled to resort to some worldly avocation to get your bread,*" &c. On the other hand, look at the position of the minister. He solemnly accepts the call, and engages to assume the awful charge of a thousand souls. In his ordination he swears to be zealous and faithful, in the labours of his office, and to discharge *all the duties of a pastor*. This he swears to do, when, in many cases, he knows that he shall only preach to them a part of the time, and when he can have neither expectation nor intention of devoting his whole time to pastoral labours; as his time is to be employed in making up the deficiency of his salary. Moreover, he receives a solemn charge, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, *to make full proof of his ministry, to preach publicly and from house to house; to be constant in season and out of season; to feed the flock over which the Holy Ghost has made him overseer, and to watch for souls as one who must give account.* All this he binds his soul to do, and so becomes the watchman and guardian over so many families and so many souls; when he is perfectly aware that his situation will put it out of his power, to act as a pastor to those families, or a spiritual guide to those souls. It is painful to lay open these appalling inconsistencies and profanations which exist among us, sanctioned by custom; but it is necessary to expose them, in order to insure their extirpation. It is by no means designed to imply any general censure of our clergy, for neglect of duty; for many of them are distinguished by the most untiring zeal and laborious fidelity, under very discouraging circumstances; and in the case of others, not so characterized, the

delinquency is rather to be attributed to a vicious system, than to personal unfaithfulness. The simple object I have in view is to prove incontestibly, that the practice adopted by most of our churches, in failing to support the ministry, and in being satisfied with very imperfect and inadequate pastoral labours, has been productive already of the most injurious effects; is totally at war with the principles and institutions of the New Testament; is inseparable from the most criminal dereliction of duty; and threatens utterly to destroy the welfare and prosperity of our denomination.

In proof of such a ruinous tendency in the state of things, I have called your attention—1st. To the numerous churches of our order which are wholly destitute of a regular ministry, or only partially supplied with public preaching, but have no adequate pastoral labours; all of whose destitution results from unwillingness to afford a competent support for the Christian ministry.

2nd. To the large number of our clergy who are not wholly devoted to their sacred duties, but gain their subsistence principally, from secular occupations.

And 3rdly. To the disastrous effects of these delinquencies upon the condition of the churches, the success of the ministry, and the progress and prospects of our denomination. It has also been my purpose to show, that these arrangements are not only unwise and suicidal, but absolutely criminal in a high degree; inasmuch as they amount to a practical refusal, to comply with precepts given by Divine authority, and to sustain institutions established by Christ himself. It is my solemn conviction that this sin among us, is similar to that of offering the blind and the lame in sacrifice, or withholding the tithes and offerings from the house of the Lord; and that it brings upon those guilty of it the same awful malediction. And in vindication of these painful statements, I have solemnly appealed to undeniable facts. Compare the history and state of those congregations which have enjoyed full pastoral labours; with the history and state of those congregations which have had only a partial supply of preaching, and but little efficient pastoral labour; and let the result of such comparison decide as to the correctness of the views I have presented. I rejoice in knowing and testifying that some of our ministers, who do not receive half a support, do nevertheless devote themselves entirely and laboriously to their sacred duties, and that their portion of the vineyard exhibits the blessed effects of such faithful culture. And I know also, that a minister may officiate in two houses of worship, so contiguous, that he preaches to the same congregation; and that such division of labour may not be specially injurious. But these are only exceptions to the general rule, and do not at all affect the positions I maintain. As far as I am able to decide such a question of fact, I fully believe that there is no church within our borders which can be called vigorous and flourishing, where such destitution as has been described, is allowed to exist. And on the contrary, I am

equally confident, that every church, which has fully enjoyed the spiritual provisions and institutions, designed and bestowed by Christ for her edification, does exhibit, in her past history and present condition, unequivocal evidence of the presence and favour of her covenant Head.

As I have thus unreservedly stated my impressions as to these prevalent, threatening evils; I proceed briefly to express my views as to the proper remedy.

If it be true that such ecclesiastical habits and usages do prevail among us, destructive to the vital interests of our connexion, the only course of safety and wisdom, is that of immediate reformation. In order for this, it is necessary that every church now partially supplied, should take prompt and decisive measures to have the entire labours of a faithful minister, and to secure such minister a competent salary; and that every Pastor should resolve to confine his labours to a single congregation, to abandon all secular employments, and to give himself wholly to his great office. Wherever a congregation, fully able to support the ministry, refuses or neglects so to do, and consequently the Pastor is compelled either to sustain his family by secular business, thereby obstructing his parochial labours; or to seek another field; it is my solemn conviction that the latter alternative should be unhesitatingly adopted. For I cannot believe that a ministry can be useful, where it is not sufficiently prized to secure its support.

Such, I verily believe, are the measures of reform imperiously required, in our denomination, in order to arrest the progress of declension, and to open a scriptural prospect of prosperity and enlargement. Let these measures be adopted, and I have the fullest confidence that our churches would be doubled in numbers and spiritual strength, in two years. Let all the required offerings be brought in, and the Lord will *pour us out a blessing, that there shall not be room to receive it*. Then the efficiency of an able, educated ministry, and the power of the doctrines of our standards, will be fully manifested. Then our flourishing churches shall train up a noble army of devoted young men, to occupy the walls of Zion. And thus our church would *arise and shine, her light being come and the glory of the Lord having risen upon her*. In order to enjoy this prosperity, it is only necessary that every church, in faithful reliance upon the Divine blessing, should simply do its duty.

But if things go on as in years past, the most gloomy anticipations must be indulged. The Divine blessing is not to be expected, by those who neglect and undervalue the Divine institutions. We must apprehend, therefore, severe judgments. Do I speak of future evils? Alas, the sad tokens of Divine displeasure are already seen. I would solemnly say to the churches—your condition is alarming. Your prospects are shrouded in darkness. The process of desolation has commenced, and it is

likely to go on with fearful rapidity. You are compelling faithful pastors to abandon your borders for lack of support. You are driving your choice young preachers to other fields, where they can labor to some purpose.* Most of the thirty pastors who have removed from the State within ten years, would have remained with us, if suitable provision had been made for their support. Still more of your temples will be desolate. Your youth will wander from the right way—your Seminary will die, and your enemies will triumph. And all this will be in consequence of your refusal to comply with those regulations which Christ has established in his kingdom. I testify to you, therefore, in the name of the Lord, that unless you make provision for the enjoyment of all the ordinances of God's house, and the entire work of the ministry, you will sin against God. *And be sure your sin will find you out. Will a man rob God? yet ye have robbed me, saith the Lord, in tithes and offerings. Therefore I will curse your blessings; yea, I have cursed them already because ye do not lay it to heart.*

In conclusion, I have a few words to say to those before me, who are candidates for the holy ministry. This subject is of high importance to you, my dear young brethren, as it involves all your future prospects of success and usefulness. Although this discourse is designed especially to direct the attention of our denomination generally, to the necessity of a devoted and well supported ministry, yet my remarks have had a constant reference to your benefit. I think it entirely needless, to address any farther arguments to you upon this subject. I doubt not that your minds are fully made up, that when you enter the pastoral office, it must be under circumstances to enable you to devote yourselves wholly to the particular churches over which the Holy Ghost may make you overseers. I trust you will *set your faces like a flint* against all proposals, arguments and persuasions, designed to induce you to become instrumental in upholding and perpetuating the ruinous system of a divided or partial ministry. While you will be ready to preach to the destitute, and to labour in missionary fields at home or abroad, I beseech you never to listen to any overtures, to take a pastoral charge, without such a provision as will enable you to devote your whole time and attention to your sacred duties. Reject with abhorrence the temptation to obtain a large income by teaching or farming, in connexion with the work of the ministry, or to live an easy indolent life, by preaching in different congregations; and cherish a deep conviction that your occupation in this world is to be *the ministry, the whole ministry, and nothing but the ministry.*

* The evidence, that this deplorable evil has already occurred in an alarming degree, is furnished by the statistical records of this Seminary. Of all the natives of this State, who have been connected with this Institution, and have entered the ministry, more than half are settled out of the State. And of the eight who have recently received license, all but two have already chosen their location out of South Carolina.

APPENDIX.

The following remarks, omitted in the Discourse for lack of time, but having a direct bearing upon the general subject, are hereto appended.

It is very painful and humiliating, to any friend of our denomination, to witness the neglected, dilapidated condition of many of our houses of worship. I am no advocate for costly, splendid churches; but on the contrary, I am fully sensible, that in case of necessity, a log cabin, or a tent by the river side, may be a sanctuary signally honoured by the Divine presence. Still it is unquestionable, that the state of religious feeling in a community, and the degree in which they prize Christian ordinances; may usually be correctly estimated, by the care and liberality they bestow upon the house of God. As we are forbidden by Divine authority to serve God with that which costs us nothing, it seems fairly inferable that parsimony and negligence, in providing suitable buildings for religious solemnities, are dishonourable to God, and indicate criminal indifference to his sacred institutions. A reproach is thus brought upon the cause of the Redeemer; for it is utterly impossible to convince the world, that Christians do really prize the Gospel as their most precious treasure, while its external habiliments are suffered to be mean and degrading.

Let a building, erected in honour of a statesman, remain unfinished, and fall into ruin and neglect; who would fail to perceive, that the fervour of popular favour and gratitude had subsided? The same conclusion is unavoidable, as to the state of religious feeling in those congregations, where similar indications appear as to the Temples they have dedicated to the living God. There are in fact no better *criteria* of the real sentiments of any community, in relation to any institution, than zeal and liberality in favour of every thing connected with that institution. If, for instance, a traveller in any part of the United States, should remark that the school-houses are rough, mean buildings, of logs or slabs; he cannot hesitate in his conclusion, that the cause of education drags heavily in that region. On the contrary, if he should see, what may be seen now, in one of the western States, a thousand handsome school-houses in progress of erection, he knows that the tide of public opinion, there, runs strongly in favour of a system of thorough instruction, for the young. The same process of moral reasoning applies to the case in hand. While it is conceded that the positive evidence, of a flourishing state of religion, arising from splendid, costly churches, is not conclusive, because such munificence may result from pride and ostentation; yet the negative evidence, afforded by the careless neglect of houses of worship, and their consequent meanness and dilapidation, incontestably proves, that religion is *not* flourishing. It would be wholly inconsistent with the principles, which govern human conduct universally, if men, whose hearts were supremely engaged in the love and service of Christ, should evince total apathy and indifference, as to the external accommodations of sacred ordinances. When, therefore, we see men of property and energy, attending public worship, with their families, from year to year, in an old, rickety building, hardly affording shelter from the weather; we are very slow to believe, that those men are heartily engaged in Christianity, and that they highly prize its privileges. It may be so. But one thing is certain—they exhibit their attachment in a very unusual way. Their tokens of respect and kindness, have a wonderful resemblance to the ordinary marks of contempt. If favour and regard are thus manifested, how could dislike and indifference be made known?

The effect produced, upon the minds of infidels and worldly men, by the prevailing practice, may be clearly perceived by the following anecdote. Two gentlemen of high standing as politicians,—one regarding Christianity with respect, the other an avowed deist—were travelling together and passed by a Presbyterian meeting-house of the description above referred to. "I am surprized," said the former, "that so respectable a congregation, as I know that to be, which worships here, should show so little respect to the faith they embrace, as to perform their devotions in such a barn as this." "It is quite good enough," replied his companion,

“for the worship of a God who was born in a stable.” Such an impious sarcasm, from the lips of a malignant enemy, should rouse Christians to contemplate the frightful aspect and fatal tendency of the conduct of those, who dwell in their *ceiled houses*, surrounded with neatness and elegance, *while the House of God lies waste*. I beseech my brethren, to whom these remarks are applicable, to give them a very serious consideration. They receive their friends with a noble hospitality, in their richly furnished apartments; while the presence chamber, in which they meet the King of Zion, is rough, shattered and filthy.

I am aware that the common excuse is, “I am only one—I cannot control the congregation. While I very much lament this state of things, it is beyond my power to effect a reformation.” Such an apology is utterly inadmissible, unless those who offer it have made repeated, vigorous efforts. And should such efforts be made, even by a few, they would be crowned with the most complete success. It is my firm conviction, that in every congregation, now destitute of a decent, commodious meeting house, there are three or four individuals, who could, with the utmost ease and convenience, supply the defect, whether their brethren would assist or not. And yet, how many congregations there are, where the known aggregate income of the members of each, amounts to scores of thousands; and yet their houses of worship would not sell, on an average, for three hundred dollars. Do they “honour the Lord with their substance and with the first fruits of all their increase?”

But it is not the only subject of painful regret, that in so many instances our sacred edifices are discreditable; the same neglect and parsimony are exhibited, quite as extensively, in the church furniture, and the vessels employed in holy ordinances. Many of the pulpits are like sentry-boxes, perched up almost to the bare rafters. And while the price of a large pulpit Bible is not more than \$3—yet how poorly supplied are some of the congregations in this respect.

And I feel constrained to call the attention of many of our brethren to the sacramental vessels which they use in celebrating the Lord’s supper. I do not know that my feelings are right, but I cannot avoid regarding it as a desecration, to administer the sacrament in such vessels. I know that externals are unessential, and that when necessity demanded, the use of wooden-spoons or gourd-shells would be sanctioned. But the question relates to the use of cheap, mean utensils, when there is *no* necessity. For one, I must say solemnly and conscientiously, that when Christians, who in their own houses spread their mahogany tables with porcelain and silver, celebrate the Lord’s Supper upon rough boards, with jugs, earthen pitchers, decanters, tumblers or tin-cups. I cannot be persuaded, that such things are “lovely” or “of good report.” They seem to me to be in direct violation of the Apostolic precept—“*Let every thing be done decently and in order.*” And even allowing that the minds of the communicants are so spiritual, as to be wholly unaffected by such degrading associations; yet regard should be had to *those who are without*, in whom such things will not fail to excite contempt and derision. To say that a brown pitcher, a black jug, and a tin cup, are just as proper vehicles for the sacramental wine as any other, is to set at nought the common feelings of mankind. Not more revolting to judicious minds would be the proposal to ordain a Minister in a Barber’s shop, or a Cobbler’s stall.

I doubt not the practice of using such rude furniture, in holy ordinances, originated when real poverty, and the difficulty of obtaining desirable articles, formed a valid excuse for using such substitutes as were at hand. But now, when there are so many wealthy members in every Church, and when a good service of communion plate can be obtained for forty dollars; an adherence to a habit, which has at least the appearance of niggardliness and contempt, and which gives pain to the pious and triumph to the profane, must be regarded as utterly inexcusable.

It cannot have escaped the notice of every candid reader, that all these practices which have been so freely animadverted upon, both in the discourse, and in the appendix, are intimately associated together. They all proceed from the same moral causes, and constitute an harmonious system of Ecclesiastical abuses. It is utterly needless to point out the intimate connexion, between the refusal to give Ministers a competent support, the partnership in the pastoral office, the neglect of the building and preservation of suitable Church Edifices, and the use of improper and degrading articles in celebrating religious ordinances. These evils belong together. They proceed from the covetousness, or the deplorable prejudices, and the spiritual apathy of professing Christians. The disastrous effects of these things I have attempted to unfold. But *the half is not told*. I cannot close this appendix, without again beseeching all our brethren to ponder the sad consequences which have already been produced. In this way Religion in general, and Presbyterianism in particular, have fallen into popular contempt. Neither the Churches nor the Ministers, where these evils prevail, have either dignity or respectability, in the eyes of the world. Of course the profession of the Christian Ministry is regarded in a contemptible and degrading light. Hence it comes to pass, that it requires the self-denial of a martyr, to induce learned, talented men to

enter the sacred office. And this accounts for the alarming fact, that only a small portion, of the pious graduates, from our Southern Colleges, devote themselves to the study of Theology. This fact should be proclaimed so loudly, that all our churches should take the alarm. Let it be repeated and generally known, that scores of excellent, pious men, in this and the adjoining States, have been driven away from the ministry, by the circumstances of neglect and degradation, in which most of our clergy are placed. And the evil is increasing. We cannot expect that all those, who are qualified to become pastors, are prepared to encounter all the trying difficulties and privations, the systematic ingratitude and indifference, which they must expect to cluster around their path, if they enter the ministry. When will the churches awake to the alarming fact, that, by the measures they are pursuing, they are absolutely shrouding their prospects of a future ministry in utter darkness. At this moment, there are many valuable pious young men, who have finished their College course, and who possess most promising talents for the ministry—but they shrink back and utterly refuse to give themselves to the work, for reasons amply detailed in these pages.

But the effects produced upon the popular mind, by the habits of many of our churches, with regard to worship and ordinances, are so manifestly pernicious, as painfully to strike every observer. Enter a worshipping assembly, in a neat and becoming Edifice, where a regular stated ministry is enjoyed—and you will find a silent, solemn and devout attention, to the word and ordinances of the Gospel. You may there see the blessed efficacy of Christian institutions, upon all those who regularly enjoy them. In such congregations you will witness no scenes of disorder and irreverence. Your devotions will not be disturbed, nor your feelings tortured, by the cries of infants, the bustling of servants, the handing about pitchers of water, or the constant going out and returning of groups of young men, in the midst of the service. Such improprieties cannot occur in well regulated congregations; for such is the moral influence of religious ordinances, when properly administered and respected, that all who attend stately upon them are constrained to render the homage of a reverential deportment. Whether the same good order is preserved, in congregations where only a partial ministry is enjoyed, where the house of worship is a mere shell, and where the people are seated on rough benches “in most admired disorder,”—I do not pretend to declare. But if it be true, that in such places of worship, there is a lamentable want of solemnity and decorum, and that many who attend them evince no reverence for sacred things; no surprize should be excited. Such disorders are the results to be expected from such negligence as to the externals of religion. And while Christians treat the ministry and the sanctuary, as if they felt no interest in them—as if they did not prize them as worthy of either care or expense; the inevitable effect will be, to render the Gospel and all its privileges contemptible and worthless, in the estimation of worldly men.

Brethren of the Presbyterian Churches of South Carolina, permit me earnestly and affectionately to entreat your candid attention to these statements and your united co-operation in rolling away these reproaches from our beloved Zion. Then shall she *look forth as the morning, clear as the sun, fair as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners.*

P. S.—The prevalent style of church-building in the State is remarkable for inelegance and inconvenience. Every church should be so constructed as to afford the greatest facility for hearing, and place the audience in front of the preacher. In most of our congregations these requisites are wholly neglected. No conceivable form of a church is worse calculated to promote these objects, than the one most frequently met with. It costs no more to erect a building on a good plan than on a bad one. In several instances the expenditure has been sufficient, to complete a handsome, commodious edifice, and yet by high galleries and a high pulpit, placed on one side of the building, the failure, as to convenience and symmetry, is complete. Out of Charleston I know of only one Presbyterian Church in the State, which, in its proportions, size and architecture, affords a good model for imitation—and that one is at Camden. It is neat, simple and elegant; placing every hearer in full front view of the preacher, and rendering the feeblest voice distinctly audible. What hinders the erection of twenty such, during the present year! Surely they are needed, and surely the means to build them are abundant.