

# THE UNION SEMINARY MAGAZINE

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NO. 3—JAN.-FEB., 1893.

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## I. LITERARY.

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### THE EVOLUTION OF THE "NEW INSPIRATION."

PROF. HENRY ALEXANDER WHITE.

There are some among us who first turned the pages of the Bible to see the color and pictured form of men and things whose story was already familiar from parental lips. From picture to print we passed and found the narrative there recorded in exact agreement with the stories told us in childhood. Again and again we sought the printed pages only to find all these stories linked together in one great history. The "Father in Heaven" of our daily prayer was found to be the speaker, in his own Divine Person, on many pages of the sacred book. Character by character the nature of His Personality was unfolded to us. The Creator of the opening chapter was declared to be the Moral Governor in the chapters immediately following; then, by degrees, he was set forth as the Father, the Redeemer and the Comforter of those people whom He had before selected. Yet in all these varying manifestations of His character, He was declared to be 'the same, yesterday, today and forever.'

Closely interwoven with the web of these statements concerning the character of God, we found also a history of human character. Nations and individuals were described with reference to the relationship existing between them and the Invisible God. The character of men was always measured by our infallible standard—the character of God. Hence,

## BENEFICIARY EDUCATION.

PRES. RICHARD McILWAINÉ.

It is not the purpose of this article to argue this question. It has been elaborately and sufficiently done. The policy of the church with reference to it has been settled since 1820. In 1866 and again in 1877 able reports were presented to our General Assembly in which every phase of the subject was conclusively discussed. No objection has since been urged which was not then triumphantly answered. A careful reading of these documents must satisfy any candid mind. My effort shall be to give some facts from my own experience and observation and from the current history of the church adapted to conciliate opposition and enlist co-operation. Singularly enough this is the first of our benevolent enterprises which elicited my sympathy and assistance in early childhood. Well do I remember that on a warm summer evening about the year 1844 or 1845, Miss Virginia Nash, a godly member of old Tabb St. church, Petersburg, called at my father's residence and remained to tea. Conversation turned to the Ladies' Education Society of which my mother was an interested member, and Miss Nash told of a letter lately received by its President, Mrs. Dr. John Bott, (*the elect Lady* of blessed memory) from the young student who was aided by the society and of her anxiety to make him a remittance at an early day. To all this I was an attentive listener, and when opportunity occurred I crept up to my room and securing all the money I had, put it into the good woman's hand and asked her to give it to Mrs. Bott. The church of that day was much more interested in caring for the poor, and a more tender regard was manifested toward young men looking forward to the ministry than now seems common. The example of Jesus, "who went about doing good," appears to have been more potent, and the apostolic injunction, "as we have, therefore, opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith," was practically enforced and obeyed. Would it not be well if there were more of this old-fashioned religion now-a-days? It is very homely but divinely good, and I am persuaded it would be better for individual christians, for the

church, for our country and for the world, if it were more prevalent. We cannot improve on the religion of the Bible. The kind which is becoming dangerously fashionable, must sooner or later lead to degeneracy and disaster. The signs of moral apostacy are beginning already to appear in a flippant piety administered by proxy very unlike that of which the Master gave us an example. It is a death-bearing heresy. No higher obligation rests on the individual christian or on the church as a whole than to help the poor personally and through organized agencies, and no form of such help is more incumbent or more productive of good than that accorded poor youth in their efforts to fit themselves for the service of God. Evidently this cause lies at the basis of all the church's work. Explain it as we may, it is a fact that "God hath chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith," and it is a further fact that most of the young men who enter the ministry, whether from city or country, are poor. Hence the necessity for the Education Committee and of a provision for their assistance. And the wonder is not that so many need help, but that more do not apply for it. Many of these candidates are sons of ministers who have no accumulated estate; many are the sons of farmers, and artisans and small merchants who are barely able to support their families; many are in their theological course having been brought through college without assistance, but whose fathers in doing this have exhausted their resources or having other children to educate cannot rightfully deprive them of like advantages.

According to the Minutes of the last General Assembly there are 409 candidates for the ministry under the care of the Presbyteries. From the report of the Secretary of Education, it appears that of these 246 were aided by the Executive Committee; *i. e.* three out of five were aided and two out of five received no assistance. Now does any reasonable man, acquainted with the financial condition of our Southern country and of the people of our church think this shows a disproportionate number who are obtaining assistance? On the contrary is it not gratifying that so many are willing to submit to self denial and make sacrifices in order to fit themselves for the great work of preaching the gospel? In the Synod of Virginia there are scores and possibly hundreds of congregations in which there is hardly a single family, that with any ordinary self-denial is able to send one son through college.

Doubtless the same proportion of poor congregations holds throughout the synods of our church. These, perhaps, amount to one-third, possibly to a half, of all our churches. So too in most of our stronger congregations, probably not one family in five has means to educate even one son. These are facts beyond contradiction. And yet perhaps in these families and congregations there are many pious young men of good natural gifts who would rejoice in the advantages of education and who, if the matter were properly presented to them and the opportunity afforded, would be glad to fit themselves to become useful ministers. It is true too that a large proportion of our candidates come from these very sources. Of necessity they must be aided in their preparation. Cut off the aid, and the supply of candidates is at once confined to much less than a moiety of the church and that part embracing a large proportion of the worldly minded, the covetous and the ambitious, who are far from willing that their sons shall enter the pulpit.

When I was a young preacher in the county of Amelia, I found in Namozine congregation a youth of much modesty and worth, the son of a small farmer of large family and narrow estate. He was a young man of real piety and good natural talents and had made fair progress at a neighborhood school. On calling his attention to the subject of the ministry, he readily saw his way clear to begin preparation and entered Hampden-Sidney College in the fall of 1859. Here he earned an enviable reputation for piety and diligence and would doubtless have made an excellent preacher, but on the breaking out of our late war, he was among the first to enlist and was killed in battle with his face to the front. I buried him at midnight in darkness and storm on the field of Port Republic in a grave with thirteen other noble fellows who fell that day from the same regiment.

Later on in another pastorate a youth of excellent talents and family connections, but wholly without means was led to devote himself to the ministry; and later still in another charge the same thing occurred. Both these latter are now useful ministers of Christ, but none of the three could ever have passed even through college without assistance. There were men in each of these congregations who, if their sons had been disposed toward the ministry, could well afford to bring them up to it, but none were so inclined. It was only poor boys who were chosen of God and graciously fitted for this

work. Now it is hardly probable that my experience differs much from that of other brethren, who have been interested to seek out young men for the gospel ministry. It is true at present as it was in ancient times, that the sons of the prophets are usually poor.

It may be thought by indiscriminating people that because so many poor young men are entering the ministry there is danger of deterioration in its standard and the introduction of a vulgar element which will lower its tone and bring it into disrepute. The ready and satisfactory reply to this is, that with noteworthy exceptions, the best people in the South are poor. A man's being rich is no ground of assurance that he is respectable and good, and because he is poor we may not reasonably judge that he is descended from the ignoble or that he is not in himself a gentleman and full of virtue and benignity. It is only necessary for one acquainted with affairs and whose memory runs back sufficiently far, to scan the society items and letters in the daily papers to see that some of those honorably mentioned as leaders in the German and in progressive euche and theatre parties, &c., are far from being the best people, their chief title to consideration being an abundance of shekels, sometimes honestly and sometimes disreputably acquired. Now it is a cause of thanksgiving that our ministry is not recruited from such as these. They have not the stuff in them out of which preachers are made, and they would perhaps show disgust rather than pleasure, if one nearly related to them should seek the ministry. On the other hand most of our candidates are sons of pious parents and can trace their lineage for generations from a pious ancestry. A large proportion of them bear honored names and are descendants of honorable people. There is no better blood in the South than runs in the veins of her ministers, many of whom have been aided in reaching the sacred desk. Not a few are children of Revolutionary Sires, who in the cabinet and on the field did deeds of valour and illustrated the virtues for which their sons in humbler spheres are today distinguished. There are now candidates for the ministry struggling on in their education and kept from going under by the aid they receive, who can boast as honorable heritage as any man in our commonwealth, and yet they count this as nothing for Christ's sake.

It ought also to be remembered that the youth who come into the ministry from what are called plain families and have

had little opportunity of social culture are generally picked men, whose hearts have been touched and infused by heavenly grace and have been taught to aspire after nobler things, whose quick perception and ready adaptation enable them easily to overcome early restraints. Often in the experience of college and seminary life, they show themselves the peers of their more fortunate comrades, not only in refinement of feeling and elegance of manner, but also in all the important elements which go to constitute the scholarly minister and the useful man. In the race of life they are generally found at the front as the leaders and under God, the saviours of men.

Another thought worthy of consideration in regard to the entrance of poor young men on the ministry is that they are peculiarly fitted by the restraints and self-denial of childhood for a sphere of action which promises and demands such sacrifices. By their circumstances they have been forced to work and have learned the value of time and money, and how to economize and use both. Their physical and moral muscles have been strengthened by exercise. They are not easily discouraged or turned aside by difficulties. They generally exhibit moral heroism of the most pronounced character. They are undaunted by obstacles because they exercise a sublime faith in God and have faith in their work as an ordained Divine instrumentality. Having put their hand to the plough, they are not apt to look back. Nearly all our Foreign Missionaries, personally known to me, have been men of this training and stamp, in the fore-front of whom are found Edward Lane and John Boyle of sainted memory. A large proportion of the very best men in the home church have also passed through the same experience.

The history of education in the American Presbyterian church ought to disarm prejudice and to put an estoppel on much that periodically discourages and distresses God's people. This is not the place for any extended treatment of this subject. A bare reference to it will suffice for those who are already informed and may induce others to seek fuller knowledge of the facts.

It is well known that the first Presbyterian college established in America—the *Log college*, on the Neshaminy—was originated and maintained by the elder Tennent for the purpose of educating poor young men for the ministry. It did splendid service. From it sprang the school of Rev. Samuel

Blair, at New Londonderry, and then Princeton College, and later on Washington and Jefferson Colleges, Penn., Hampden-Sidney College and Liberty Hall Academy, Va., La Fayette College, N. J., &c. Among the young men who came under the influence of Neshaminy, there was one by the name of Robinson, who soon after his ordination was sent by New Castle Presbytery, Md., to visit the scattered flocks of Presbyterians who had emigrated from Pennsylvania to Piedmont Virginia and North Carolina. As he passed through upper Virginia, tidings of his preaching were borne down to Hanover county, below Richmond, where there was an evangelical band who had ceased to attend the unsatisfying services of the church of England and were struggling after light and scriptural knowledge. When they heard of Robinson, they determined to intercept him on his return and secure a visit from him. This they did, their deputation meeting him in the county of Albemarle and although he was in feeble health, he consented to go with them. He preached for them only a few times, but it was with divine power and effect. They besought him to remain with them as their minister, but he was forbidden to do this both by imperative engagements and the state of his health. They then tendered him a bag of gold, which he declined to receive ; but when it was pressed on him under such circumstances and with such urgency that he could no longer refuse, he said, " I see you are resolved I shall have your money ; I will take it, but as I have told you before, I do not need it. I have enough, nor will I appropriate it to my own use ; but there is a young man of my acquaintance of promising talents and piety, who is now studying with a view to the ministry, but his circumstances are embarrassing, he has not funds to support and carry him on without much difficulty ; this money will relieve him from his pecuniary difficulties ; I will take charge of it and appropriate it to his use ; and as soon as he is licensed we will send him to visit you ; it may be that you may now by your liberality be educating a minister for yourselves." " This money," says Foote in his Sketches of Virginia, " was appropriated by Mr. Robinson to the education of Samuel Davies. His promise was kept ; he did not live to see the reality of his anticipation ; he died in 1746, and Davies came to Virginia in 1747." " This is the reason," said a pious old lady to Dr. Rice, " that Mr. Davies came to Hanover ; for he used to say that he was inclined to settle in another place, but

that he felt under obligations to the people of Hanover." On this Dr. Rice in the *Literary and Evangelical Expositor* remarks, "As far as we can learn this is the first money that was ever contributed in Virginia to the education of poor and pious youth for the ministry of the gospel. And really it turned out so well, we wonder people have not done much more in the same way." And so it is probable that but for this gift of money and the direction it took, Samuel Davies, who evangelized throughout the whole eastern part of the state and who was not only the apostle of Presbyterianism but of civil and religious liberty might never have entered Virginia at all; his influence never have been felt by Patrick Henry (whose mother was a member of his church) and others of the leading spirits of those times, his voice never been heard at Williamsburg before the governor and council in the defence of the rights of conscience and the liberty of every man to worship God according to his own choice. From that day to this many of the most eminent, useful and holy of our ministers have been beneficiaries.

John Holt Rice was a poor boy, who having attended Liberty Hall Academy came about the first of this century to Hampden-Sidney to obtain the instruction of Dr. Archibald Alexander, the president of the college. While here he taught some of the younger classes and studied and was generously aided in finishing his education. It is almost needless to say that he afterwards became the first pastor of the 1st Presbyterian church, Richmond, and as the editor of the *Literary and Evangelical Expositor* besides other important services to the church and country, did more, according to the verdict of Prof. Herbert Adams, of John Hopkins University, than any other man to rescue the University of Virginia, then in a formative state, from the dominance of infidel sentiment. He afterwards became the founder of U. T. Seminary, and was elected to the presidency of Princeton College, but declined it.

William S. Plumer was a poor boy, the son of a Revolutionary soldier and pensioner of the United States government; was inured to labor in his youth, was met with providentially by Rev. John McIlhenny, D. D., of Greenbrier Co., Va., taken to his house and prepared for Washington College, through which he was assisted by friends. He afterwards became one of the grandest preachers of the century; a writer whose books have edified tens of thousands, and a teacher of theo-



logical students whose instructions and counsels have aided in moulding hundreds of effective preachers.

James B. Ramsay was a poor boy, the son of a widow who early dedicated him to God and who removed to Princeton in order that she might support herself by manual labor while he was preparing for the ministry. At first a missionary to the Choctaws, afterwards when failing health compelled him to relinquish this post, a pastor in Rockbridge Co., and then in the first church, Lynchburg, and regarded second as preacher, pastor, scholar and writer to no minister in the synod.

Stuart Robinson was a poor boy, the son of an Irishman of excellent character but humble circumstances. By his brightness and good humor, he early attracted the attention of friends, through whose instrumentality he was educated and brought into the ministry. Some years ago, Dr. Robinson was invited to deliver an address at U. T. Seminary, which he did with wonderful eloquence and impressiveness. At its close, he spoke (in substance) with deep emotion, as follows: "And now I have fulfilled an obligation which has been resting on me for many years. When I was ~~and~~ a student in this seminary I was, at one time, in such straits that my trunk was packed and I was about to leave that I might earn means for my support. On going to the post-office, a letter was received addressed in a strange hand. When it was opened I found a fifty dollar note and not a word of writing. I never knew the kind donor and so I have never been able to acknowledge or repay it. But when your invitation came, although at first disposed to decline because of manifold pressing engagements, I thought of this incident and determined to make some small return by this address for the aid then given me, which enabled me to reach the ministry without further interruption." And what a great blessing this mighty man proved to the church! As a tender and earnest preacher of the gospel; as a clear, incisive writer and defender of the truth; as a professor of theology and an advocate of the rights of conscience and of man, he had few peers and no superiors.

James H. Thornwell was the son of poor but honorable parents. Through the beneficence of generous patrons he was educated and fitted to become a master in Israel and one of the leaders of thought on this continent. He filled the most important positions to which a minister of the gospel can attain and there was no post of honor or responsibility within

the gift of the church not open to him.

What a galaxy of splendid names this is! Davies, Rice, Plumer, Ramsay, Robinson, Thornwell, immortal men whose work has shed imperishable glory on the church and whose names shall never die! And yet they were all born poor; were all thoroughly educated at the best institutions of their day; were all dependent for help in fitting themselves for their life's work, and without such help would never have been able to compass it; and all justified the expectations of their friends and filled up the measure of human usefulness and influence. Nor would it be difficult to add to this list scores of names from among the dead who, if somewhat less illustrious, were not less noble or useful in their day and generation. And were it deemed appropriate to take examples from among the living, scores of names of the knightliest and godliest men amongst us with a similar history who are now standing upon the high places and doing a large proportion of the work of the church, might be cited, some of whom are honored throughout the length and breadth of the land and all of whom are beloved and trusted by those who know them.

Surely such facts as these are sufficiently impressive to warrant an urgent appeal for a surcease of the aspersions so persistently thrown on this branch of the church's benevolent work. And this is done with the greater confidence because it has been shown all along to the satisfaction of the church that very few of its beneficiaries have proved themselves unworthy or have failed to go forward to a life of useful service. In an experience of ten years at Hampden-Sidney College, out of several score of young men who have been aided by the church, I can recall but three who were not every way worthy; and out of several hundred who have been at Union Theological Seminary during the same time I can remember but two who have not approved themselves good and true men. Nor is there reason to believe that the experience of these institutions differs from that of other colleges and theological schools within our bounds. Our candidates for the ministry are generally faithful, conscientious and pious, and give promise of making acceptable and useful ministers of the gospel. They deserve the sympathy, the regard and the assistance of the church.

There is but one point in the Assembly's Scheme of Education, as at present administered, which seems to me to call for

criticism and that is in regard to the meagre amount appropriated as the maximum—one hundred dollars. This sum is entirely inadequate to the support of a young man engaged in study, and its inadequacy deters some from ever beginning preparation because they cannot earn enough to supplement their support. It delays others for years and enforces a hasty and insufficient preparation. It consigns others who go forward inconsiderately to mortification and chagrin, and sometimes to hurtful breaks in their education. This point is so well discussed in a letter now before me addressed to Rev. E. M. Richardson, D. D., from Rev. Dr. B. M. Palmer, of New Orleans, that I take the liberty to make an extract from it as follows: “But if you will pardon the liberty I will point out what appears to me the vulnerable feature of our system. It is not the giving of aid, but the giving of insufficient aid:—the cutting down the appropriation below the living point and subjecting the candidate to constant humiliation in not being able to meet his board bill, or for necessary clothing. Of course, the reply is, we do not propose to support, but only to assist in supporting; expecting the narrow income to supplement what is drawn from private sources. This is only to double the indebtedness to two benefactors instead of one, thus doubling the humiliation, if there be humiliation at all. This consideration prevents some Presbyteries from co-operating with your committee—for example, my own Presbytery—which prefer to give their own candidates a sufficient and wholesome supply and not subject them to the mortifying sense of mendicancy and want, in the inability to meet the obligations which they are forced to incur. There is no loss of manhood in the cadets at West Point and Annapolis, who are nevertheless beneficiaries of the state, and why? Because it is a competitive appointment and the conferring of a distinction. It is a mark of dignity and honor to be thought worthy of such an appointment, and the allowance is large enough to support the dignity. Why cannot it be so in the church; that it shall be recognized as an honor to be called to the ministry of the gospel; an honor which the church herself recognizes in the willingness to sustain and support all who enter into it? It may savour of extravagance to advance a theory which, at the outset, calls for twice the amount which the church has ever given to this cause. But, my brother, is there not need for an uplifting of the ideas and convictions of our whole peo-

ple on this vital topic? *I am clear in my own mind for the generous and complete support of every young man needing aid who shall be judged worthy by the authorities which have the proper jurisdiction in the case.*" (Italics ours.)

To which I say, *Amen!* So mote it be!

