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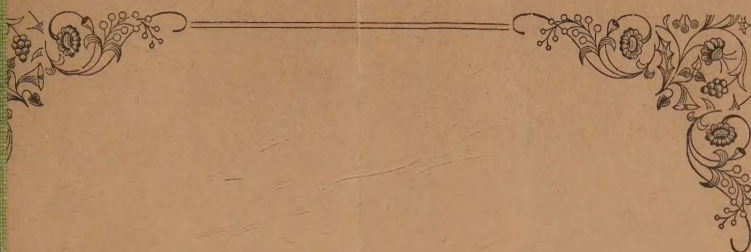
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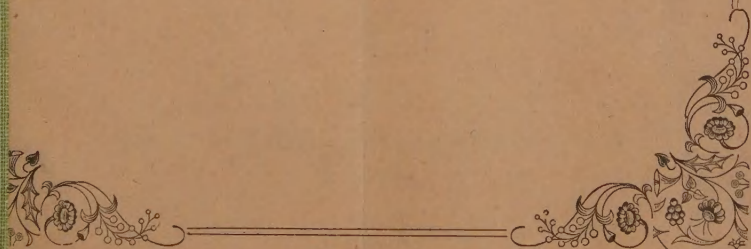


PROF. SHEDD'S DISCOURSE,

BEFORE THE

AMERICAN EDUCATION SOCIETY,

MAY, 1855.



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The Education of a Ministry, the Progress of the Churches.
1855

A

DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

AMERICAN EDUCATION SOCIETY,

MAY 28, 1855.

BY W. G. T. SHEDD.

BOSTON:

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1855.

Theology Library

SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
AT CLAREMONT
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DISCOURSE.

ROMANS x. 15.

AND HOW SHALL THEY PREACH, EXCEPT THEY BE SENT?

THIS is the concluding question, in a series of interrogatories designed to show that Christianity, as a universal religion, should obtain a universal proclamation. The *substance* of this religion, the Apostle affirms to be, simple faith in the work of Christ. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead:" if thou shalt simply and cordially appropriate what is involved in that death: "thou shalt be saved." The *range* of this religion, he teaches, is the whole world of mankind. "There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all, is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." These two facts being established, it follows immediately that this religion, so simple in its nature, and so catholic in its aim, should be preached to every human being. Were Christianity complicated and difficult to be understood and complied with, or were it designed for only a particular people or class of mankind, the contrary inference would be drawn. The proclamation of an abstruse or esoteric truth should be cautious and circumspect. There should be initiation, and secret instruction, in case the religion is complex and sectarian. But when, as in the instance of the Christian religion, the essential truth of a system is simple as childhood, and to be received by a child's act, and when it is designed for all ages, sexes, conditions, classes, and nationalities of mankind, its promulgation ought to be as loud as thunder and free as the winds.

The sound of it should go out through all the earth, and its utterance to the end of the world.

But the text implies that the Christian religion is not self-proclaiming. As a revelation of truth, it had been furnished solely by God. As a plan and work of Redemption, there had been no co-operation of man. The Deity imparted a body of knowledge, made an atonement for sin, and poured out supernatural influences, by himself alone ; and in reference to all this substance and foundation, man was neither taken into counsel nor permitted to assist. As truth and as fact, Christianity originated from another sphere than the human, and is the pure product and gift and work of God alone.

Yet, though having such a transcendent origin, and being so perfect in its nature, its Author made no supernatural provision for its spread among the nations and down the ages. Under the arrangements of Providence, this supernatural religion is as dependent upon the agency of man, for its extension, as if it were a merely human production. The heavenly treasure is committed to earthen vessels ; and Christianity, though a heaven-derived and perfect system, is compelled by its great Author to rely, for its diffusion among mankind, upon the very same contingencies by which literatures, sciences, arts, and all earth-born knowledges, are disseminated and perpetuated. God might have sent twelve legions of angels to proclaim the truth, with their eyes of light and tongues of flame. He might have continued to train up preachers to the end of time, by his own direct inspiration and personal instructions, as he did in the beginning. He might have intrusted the heavenly treasure to a celestial vessel and agent. But he did not. He left this wonderful system of truth, which he had been slowly revealing for four thousand years, by prophecy, by type, by miracle, by institute and dispensation, and which he finally crowned and perfected by the Incarnation of his Son ; he left this wonderful religion, thus originated and constructed, to be diffused among the race for whose benefit it had come into existence, by their feeble and unreliable agency. It *looks* as if the Architect were deserting his work ; as if this stupendous plan, originating in the counsels of eternity, and moving forward through some centuries of time with energy and success, were suddenly dismissed to a lame and impotent conclusion. As the Gospels

and Epistles themselves, in the early ages of the church, were left floating about on a few manuscripts, like the future legislator in the ark of rushes on the Nile, so that as we look back, we wonder that the archives of our faith were preserved at all, in those ages of fire and blood, and vapor of smoke,—so has the Christian religion been committed to an agency, in itself considered, utterly feeble and totally unreliable; and as we look back over the history of Christianity, we wonder that the world has known and felt so much of its influence as it has. The doctrines of a special divine influence, and a special superintending Providence, alone, dispel our wonder in each of these instances. The human agent worked, and worked well, notwithstanding his intrinsic unfitness and unreliableness, because God worked in him to will and to do. The events and contingencies of this earthly state, the adverse events and unexpected contingencies of human history, conspired to the extension of the Christian religion, instead of its overthrow, because a divine Arm was outstretched to uphold and guide the vessel through the billows.

These reflections, suggested by the text, may serve to introduce the subject to which this occasion, and anniversary, invites our attention. We are met to deliberate respecting the education and training of the Christian ministry. Can our minds, at this hour, be fixed upon any topics, better adapted to interest us in the aims and claims of the American Education Society, than,

The reasons why the Church should address itself to the particular work of Clerical Training and Education.

I. The first reason is found in the fact, that unless the churches devote their energies and means to this special object, their clergy will not be a sufficiently numerous profession.

It is never safe, nor prudent, to rely upon the operation of extraordinary causes, in laying a plan for permanent operations. Inducements and impulses need to be employed, to elicit the latent disposition and power, otherwise this latency will continue to slumber. Hence the church within its own sphere, like the world within its, must make use of average materials, and

ordinary appliances, in carrying forward the enterprise that has been committed to it. The common piety of a regenerated man, and not the uncommon holiness of a seraph, is the material which the church should take and mould into the earthen vessels that are to hold the treasure. The churches cannot, wisely or successfully, insist upon a degree of piety, in the Christian young men of this age or of any age, so intense and angelic as to carry them over all obstacles, and without any stimulus or encouragement, into the Christian ministry. Means and facilities for clerical education will never be rendered unnecessary, by a zeal like that of some few missionaries, in some few periods of church history, who penetrated heathenism alone and unassisted, and who laid down and died in the beginning of their career; the zeal of God's house having literally eaten them up. Extremes are dangerous, and those are not the best periods in the history of the church, when remarkable apathy in the mass of Christians, was both supplemented and shamed, by the intense self-martyrdom of a few individuals. For the church to coldly look on, while the youthful warrior fights his way through a conflict, which a little self-denial on the part of his fellow-Christians might have spared him, is unwise and unchristian. All that we should expect or demand, in candidates for the ministry, is a grade and type of Christian character that originates in the bosom of the church itself, possesses the average excellencies and deficiencies, and needs the stimulus and purification of ordinary means and appliances.

Some thirty or forty years ago, that remarkable and interesting man, Edward Irving, was called to preach a sermon before the London Missionary Society. Seizing rankly upon the example of our Lord, who sent out the seventy without purse or scrip, and forgetting the altered circumstances of both the church and the world, and particularly the absence of those miraculous gifts with which those first missionaries were endowed, he deduced the doctrine, that the whole modern missionary movement ought to be left to the spontaneous, unorganized, unaided energy and vehemence of the individual Christian mind. On his scheme, the church had a right to demand that the missionary, in devotedness and zeal for God, tower high above the level of clerical character; that the piety of the herald of the cross

should be of such an extra-ordinary type, that it would bear the missionary, as on the wings of the wind, over land and sea, through all species of populations, and inspire him with a pentecostal energy by which he should electrify and overcome the masses of heathenism. He announced this theory with a wonderful boldness and energy, and threw over it, and all about it, the sheen, and the splendor, of a most affluent imagination, and a most gorgeous rhetoric, and set the whole all aglow with the fire of an undoubted zeal for God and human salvation.

But no wise man, from that day to this, has supposed that Christian missions can be successfully carried forward on such a scheme. The church cannot rely upon the unusual in feeling, and the extraordinary in character, because, if for no other reason, it is not to be found in sufficient abundance for working purposes. It must rely upon an average piety, and fill out what is lacking, by wise and judicious means and appliances.

It is, consequently, not to be expected, that the attention of Christian young men, *in sufficient numbers*, will be turned to the work of the ministry, *unless facilities are afforded by the Church for access to this work*. A few men, of remarkable holiness and zeal, might perhaps have crowded and forced their way into ministerial life, by individual and unaided effort; but the greater portion of the present generation of clergymen, who are now actually preaching the word, would not be so doing, if the church had not, by its organizations and charitable foundations, and literary and theological institutions, thrown up a highway into the Christian ministry, and wooed them on into it. And this fact is not specially derogatory to the clerical profession. It implies, indeed, that the clerical mind is not yet filled with a cherub's knowledge of eternal things, and a seraph's love for them. But neither is the church at large. Both clergy and laity have a common type of piety, which, in each case alike, requires aids, and encouragements, and stimulants, and in neither case, alike, can be rightfully called upon to exercise a superhuman virtue, that the other may exercise none at all.

The Christian young man, therefore, at certain turning points in his educational career, needs an impulse to carry him over into the ministry. His mind is balancing; and if, in this mental state, he sees the church indifferent and apathetic, in

reference to that self-denying profession whose claims he is weighing, he will, in too many instances, conclude that a layman's position is not incompatible with his soul's salvation.

If, as he is hesitating in respect to the course he should pursue, he casts his eye forward, and sees that even the years of proposed professional study will be overhung, not merely with poverty but increasing embarrassments, and then usher him into the most anxious and laborious and ill-paid of occupations ; if he sees that this obstacle, in the outset, is owing to the neglect, or indifference, of that very Christian church to whose service he proposes to devote himself, what is more natural than that, in a majority of cases, the professedly, and really, pious young man slides down to a lower level of character and feeling, and enters upon some other course of life and labor ? But if, on the other hand, as he looks off in this hour of hesitation, he sees that the wise and good, of the past and the present, have smoothed the pathway to the laborious but noble field of clerical effort, and, by their institutions and scholarships, and benevolent societies, and faculties of instruction, and libraries of books, have made all things ready to his hand, and have placed a professional training within his reach ; if, we say, all this preparation and emphatic invitation, on the part of the churches, strike the mind of the hesitating young man at this crisis in his history, how very few truly religious young men would or could find excuses for declining the clerical profession.

In so far, therefore, as the church addresses itself to the work of raising up a ministry, by gratuitously furnishing *ample* means and apparatus for a professional education, does it take the surest method of securing a *numerous* clergy ; a profession sufficiently well stocked to meet the ever-increasing demand, in this country and age, for religious teachers. And, just in proportion as it leaves the pathway to ministerial life full of obstructions, by neglecting to provide the necessary facilities for clerical education, will it lose the service of a great number, who, under these slight outward influences and impulses from benevolent assistance, would have entered the ministry, and have proved good and faithful laborers in the vineyard of the Lord.

It may be, and it has been, urged as an objection to this mul-

tiplication of facilities for entrance into the ministry, that the clerical profession will become secularized by the admission of large numbers who are unwilling to exercise that fair and acknowledged degree of self-denial which is required in a true minister of Jesus Christ. There is, however, little danger under the voluntary system of clerical support, that this will be the case. Were there, in this country, a rich and powerful ecclesiastical establishment, to provide amply for the wants of the incumbents of the sacred office when they enter it, there might, perhaps, be some need of rendering the access to the profession as difficult as possible. But when, as is the case in this country, the clergyman, immediately on leaving his professional course, enters upon a career for life of the most trying and self-sacrificing character, surely the objection above-mentioned loses all its force. The few brief years of preparatory study ought, therefore, to be rendered as pleasant and free from anxiety as possible, in order that the mind may enter, with boldness, and buoyancy, and courage, upon that ministerial life which becomes more and more solemn, and more and more weighty, to the end of it. The church need be under no concern lest, by a full educational treasury, and the multiplication of endowments and scholarships, by the accumulation of books and all the means of clerical training, it shall be instrumental of introducing too many men into the Christian ministry. There is *a work for life* to follow the professional course that will be a sufficient check upon any apprehended glut of clergymen. The few years of education are soon passed, and the long, long years of service begin. Perhaps there is no transition more marked than that from the college and professional school into the parish. The youthful mind has been spending a decennium in the still air of delightful studies, under the guidance of accomplished teachers, and in association with kindred youthful minds. It has been free from care. It has felt only those private responsibilities, which relate to the keeping of one's own heart, and the education of one's own mind. But now it passes into public life. The youthful disciple becomes a religious teacher, is laden with the cares and responsibilities of a great profession, and finds that the days of spirited and hopeful self-education are passed, and the days of persevering, arduous toil for others have come. Looking at this

transition from a merely human point of view, there is none more fitted to deter. Were there no higher considerations of usefulness to man and of glory to God, how many a youthful mind would start back at the change, and even on the very threshold of the profession, return to the more inviting fields of literature and authorship, or the more dazzling and exciting arenas of the bar and the senate-house. All that Wordsworth tells us of the passage from the early and romantic age of human life, to the sober, gray, realism of its later periods, applies, with very deep truth and force, to the transition from the days of professional training, to the days of professional toil. So far as this world is concerned, the journey is ever "farther from the East," and the light fades more and more into that of "common day."

In the great and toilsome *work*, then, which is to follow the professional course, and which must be performed with no assistance from institutions and establishments, but solely in self-denial, and faith and prayer; in the weight and solemnity of the ministerial profession itself, we find the check needed to prevent the indolent, the ambitious, and the irreligious, from availing themselves of the introductory facilities of the professional course.

Let, then, the church, by making the avenue to ministerial labor as broad and pleasant as possible, while it leaves the labor itself as toilsome and as self-denying as God in his providence has seen fit to constitute it, elicit the greatest possible amount of clerical talent, get it committed to the clerical profession, and thus train up the greatest possible number of clergymen.

II. The second reason why the church should address itself to the special work of ministerial education, is found in the fact, that without such patronage and assistance the ministry will not be a sufficiently learned profession. We shall here employ the term "learning" in its widest signification, and under this head shall discuss several topics, some of which pertain to the literary, and some of them to the theological education of the clergyman.

1. Taking up, in the first place, the *conditions of learning*, we shall see the need of a special attention and assistance on the part of the churches. Learning depends upon these three

conditions: first, upon freedom from mental distraction and task-work, during the period of study: secondly, upon thorough teachers and the discipline of a curriculum: and, thirdly, upon access to large libraries.

During the period of study, the mind requires to be calm and unembarrassed, in order that it may give its powers a single direction and concentrate them upon a single point. The whirl of business, and the excitement of gay life, are unfavorable to scholarship, even in case there be no exacting demands made upon the student's mind and time. Hence, the cloister life of the middle ages was far less injurious to the scholarship of that period, than it was to its piety. In all ages, tranquillity and serenity have been found favorable to culture, even though other interests may have suffered from a life of undue seclusion.

But when, in addition to the lack of scholastic retirement during the years of professional training, there is added the laborious occupation of the mind in other pursuits than those of study and self-discipline, great injury must result to the ultimate professional power and stamina of the individual. He, who is compelled to earn his daily bread while laying the foundations upon which the future structure of ministerial labor is to be reared, will find, to his regret, when he comes to perform that life-long service, and feel that unintermittent draught upon his ideas, that he was obliged to be hasty and superficial at a point, where, of all others, there is need of slowness and thoroughness. The human mind cannot well do two things at once, and, therefore, from the beginning to the end of the course of clerical education, there ought to be secured to the rising ministry, the greatest possible freedom from the excitement of gay and secular life, and the exactions of poverty. Only in academical quiet, and unembarrassed finances, can the foundations of a broad, deep, and powerful clerical scholarship, be laid.

Again, the influence of a faculty and a curriculum is needed, in order to the existence of a learned ministry. Doubtless much thorough discipline in a single direction, and with respect to a single topic, may be obtained from a single strong and original mind. The minds that were trained in the last century, in the study-chambers of the distinguished divines of New

England, were very able in regard to their specialty, or that of their teacher. They had their forte, and they had their foible. For it is impossible that a single mind should be able to impart the entire encyclopædic knowledge and discipline of a faculty of learned men, each of whom devotes himself to a particular department, while he co-works with his associates. It is impossible that the professional culture which flows out from a single fountain, however ebullient, should exhibit the powerful and broad current that results from the union of head-waters. It was for this reason, that the churches were compelled, so soon as the colleges of the land ceased to impart that clerical training, for the sake of which they were first founded, to establish the ecclesiastical professional school, and subject the rising ministry to the influence of a faculty and a curriculum.

And, lastly, a learned profession can live only in the atmosphere of libraries. The influence of large collections of books, upon both faculties and students, is a subject deserving the increasing attention of all who are interested in the formation of a yet more thorough culture in our lively age and country. The consciousness of ignorance, which is generated by an exhibition upon the shelves of a library of what the human mind has accomplished in the past, is one of the sharpest spurs to personal investigation; is one of the keenest corrosives of intellectual conceit and vain-glorying. And the professional mind, equally with the popular, needs to come under this influence; for it is as true in the intellectual sphere, as it is in the moral, that he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

These conditions of thorough scholarship can be secured to the candidate for the ministry only by the church at large. The individual cannot originate and maintain them for himself, any more than he can originate and maintain courts of law and juries, and benches of judges. The institutions, societies, and endowments, requisite in order to the very existence of a clerical discipline, are the proper care of the churches; and just in proportion as any particular branch of the church fosters or neglects them, will be the strength, or the weakness, of its clerical body.

2. But the strength of this argument, from the fact that the ministry will not be a learned body unless it is supplied with the conditions of scholarship, is greatly enhanced, as soon as we

consider one or two *peculiarities in the present state of the world*, which create an unusual necessity for thorough learning and discipline in the clerical profession. It is to this part of the plea that we would invite particular attention.

(1.) In the first place, then, a very high mental discipline is required, at the present time, in order that preaching may be simple, plain, and powerful. It was a remark of Archbishop Usher to the clergy of his diocese, "It takes all our learning to be simple." To preach plain and simple, says Luther, is a great art. These statements are true ones, though paradoxical, and contrary to a common notion respecting the influence of learning. It will however be found, that in proportion as the human mind becomes a profound master of the truth, it becomes able to unfold and express it in such a manner, that the wayfaring man need not err, and also in such a way that the cultivated mind feels the very same influence from the actual verity. We see this illustrated in secular literature. The greatest minds, in any department, address the two extremes of human culture, as well as all the intermediates. Shakspeare is the poet of the masses, and also of the "laureate fraternity" of poets. That homely sense, which speaks like a swain to the swain, and that ethereal discourse, which is the admiration and the despair of the cultivated reason and imagination, both alike, flow from a thorough apprehension and a perfect knowledge of man and of nature. Lord Bacon's understanding addresses both the peasant and the philosopher, because it grasped what it seized, and saw entirely through what it looked at. And, to come down to our own time and country, and into a department that more than any other is both practical and popular, how powerfully does the eloquence of Webster affect all grades of intelligence, because it sprang, so uniformly, out of an entire mastery of the subject. In each of these instances there was learning, in the sense of clear and thorough knowledge. From whatever source it be derived—whether from intercourse with man and self, or whether it is drawn more immediately from books—if there be a clear understanding, a perfect mastery, there will be plainness; and if there be plainness, there will be power.

In no sphere is there greater need of this learned plainness than in religion, and especially in no age more than

our own. The public mind is now distracted by a variety of information. It has read and heard too much. It is discursive, and disinclined to ponder upon fundamental truths. Consequently, simplicity, depth, and clearness, are qualities specially required in the public religious address of the day, in order that men may be called back from this wandering over a large surface, and induced to take a descending, instead of an expatiating, method. Never did man more need to be brought back to his individuality, which is a very simple thing, and to his few relations to God, which are yet more simple, than now. Even good men find, upon their death-beds, that they have been too discursive, even in their religious study and experience. Said a dying theologian, "My theology is now reduced to these two points, that I am a guilty sinner, and that the blood of Christ expiates human guilt." But if the religious and theological mind finds that it is unduly inclined to career over large spaces, and examine curiously into collateral topics, to the neglect of the vitalities and simplicities of faith, and of life, what shall be said of that secular mind, which, in this age of new discoveries, and vast accumulations of facts, roams over all this oceanic expanse, but finds no time for soundings?

In this connection, is it not natural to query, whether even the mind of the church has not been too much distracted by that large and important class of subjects which fall within the sphere of Ethics, as distinguished from that of Christianity? Whether the whole great subject of Reform has not been made to yield up such a mass of topics, and such an influx of ideas and sentiments, as to deluge the mind, and leave no room for the distinctively religious topics of sin and guilt, of atonement and regeneration, of faith and repentance, of hope and of love? Has not this variety of topics, and of information, drawn from the ethical rather than the evangelical domain, brought the public mind into such a confused condition, that it needs, more than ever, to be brought back to the few and simple truths of the Gospel and Godliness?

But how is this to be done? Not by mere fault-finding, and moaning over this unfavorable state of the case, but by a cheerful, manlike, and powerful method. The Christian Religion does not *whine* over human nature. Its meekness and sorrow are not pusillanimity, and, in the phrase of Thomas Paine, "the

spirit of a spaniel." The Lamb of God is also the Lion of the tribe of Judah; and while Christianity, with a yearning love for human welfare, utters its tender "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden," it also utters its high and authoritative "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." A calm, uncomplaining, and commanding tone, should therefore ever be preserved by the Christian ministry, in the midst of all the waywardness and self-ignorance of the generations of men.

Not, then, by lamentations over the present, and forebodings in reference to the future, but by such a clear, bold, and penetrating statement of the truth that slays, and the truth that makes alive, is the altered mood and tendency to be brought about in the public mind. When the "commandment" shall "come," with clearness, and plainness, and power, all these secondary truths, now unduly occupying the attention, will, of themselves, fall back into their proper places, in the thought and feeling of both the church and congregation.

But this implies no slender discipline of head and heart in the clergyman. It requires a most learned, and a most spiritual, mind; a clergy full of evangelical ideas, and full of vital energies; the eye of the hawk, and the fire therein; the eye of the dove, and the love therein. For the auditor will not leave that animated arena, which is now engaging and exacting his powers, unless there be a substitute; unless another realm, of vaster solemnity and grandeur, is opened upon him. The streets of Vanity Fair will never be deserted, until eternity, in all its terrors and splendors, be actually made to dawn upon them. The hearer will not leave his spirited careerings over universal space, and sink a narrow, dark shaft into the depths of his own heart, unless his religious teacher actually goes before him, bringing him to consciousness, and interpreting to him his own perishing religious necessities.

The preacher, consequently, must have a *masterly* knowledge of gospel doctrines. He must know them with thoroughness, so that he can make them come into actual contact with the human mind. Then there will be an effect. Bring the human mind, and especially the sinful human mind, into vivid connection with the bare, real, single, simple, verity, and the

result is like that of the mingling and war of the elements in the old cosmogonies. But the power of thus handling the few and simple truths of Christianity rests, so far as it rests upon a human foundation, upon discipline, deep, clear, and persevering. The truths of Christianity are few in number, but vast in their capacities and implications. Hence a profound, rather than a discursive talent, is required in him who is to proclaim them. He who cannot say the same thing in a variety of modes, is not qualified for the work of the ministry. He who cannot find the new in the old, is not fit to preach the gospel. If we examine the preaching of the great and evangelical divines of the church, in all ages, we find but one general strain and tone. Everything is tinged with sin and redemption. The fall and the recovery of the human soul, paradise lost and paradise regained, are the substance of their sermonizing. Like some of the great painters, they are monochromatic; they employ only one principal color. And yet there is variety in this unity. For the Christian mind never tires of these repeated lessons from *them*, any more than it does of the often-reiterated teachings of Scripture itself. The one subject is ever new and fresh. Be it sin, or be it redemption, it is treated thoroughly, and brought into direct contact with the heart and experience, and wherever this is done there is freshness. The peculiar interest of the public mind in the subject of religion, during an effusion of the Holy Spirit, does not spring from the novelty, or the number, of the truths presented to it. They are the same old and simple doctrines, and exhibited with even less of collateral matter than common. For it is wonderful to observe how both hearer and preacher, at such times, are dissatisfied with everything that is not distinctively and intensely evangelical. Heretofore, perhaps, both parties had preferred to expatiate over that border land which skirts the legitimate field of sermonizing, in order to find topics of intellectual entertainment. But now a meaning and power are discovered, in the few and old truths of Scripture, which the whole varied, vivid, universe of science literature, and art, cannot furnish.

Now we freely concede, that the work of the Spirit is needed, in both preacher and hearer, in order that this interest in distinctively evangelical subjects may reach its highest form; and were the work of the Spirit our theme, we would insist

upon this great truth. But at this time we are treating of human discipline, and speaking of those intellectual methods that are best adapted to favor the operation of the truth and Spirit of God. And, speaking in this connection, we are bold in affirming, that a learned and thorough theological discipline contributes to this simplicity in the subjects, and to this directness in the exhibition of them. Learning does make us plain, and powerful preachers. A shallow education, and a lively but illogical mind, cannot find the elements of power in the doctrines of Jesus and the resurrection. Such are compelled, by their undue discursiveness, and their lack of thoughtfulness, to seek pulpit effect in a multitude of topics, and in novelty of themes.

(2.) Again, in the second place, the existing, and the coming, conflict with educated skepticism, calls for a ministry that has been made learned, by the discipline of institutions and curriculums.

Modern infidelity assumes a greater variety of forms than the ancient, although its essential character remains the same. We should expect this would be the case in an age which, as we have already observed, is inclined to variety rather than to unity, in all its manifestations. The infidelity which the ministry has to combat is, as usual, protean; and when refuted in one shape, instantaneously re-appears in another. One of its most specious forms, and the only one we have time to notice, springs out of the connection of natural religion with revealed. It involves the relation of Ethics to Christianity. In our country, in particular, this form of infidelity associates itself, parasitically, with the reformation of society, and thereby becomes doubly dangerous to the Christian church, which ever takes a deep interest in the removal of social evils. That the re-construction of society is made to supersede the regeneration of the individual, is not the whole, or the worst. Reform is not merely divorced from evangelical Christianity, but is at enmity with it. A class of minds are loudly proclaiming the truths of ethics and natural religion, from beneath the sounding-board of Reform, for whom the doctrine of the cross is a most hateful offence, and whose temper, towards those peculiar truths which are the life and life-blood of the Christian Religion, is marked by a malignity, and a virulence, which

finds its parallel only in the first, and original, "generation of vipers."

Nothing but learning in the clergy, can overmaster this error. Nothing but broad scholarship, profound insight, and power of distinct statement, can exhibit the true functions of both Ethics and the Gospel, and carry the public mind against this half-understanding of the enemy of Christianity, and his covert attack. For the opponent of the Ministry, and the Gospel, now plants himself upon Ethics, and not upon mere, sheer, sensual infidelity. He professes a moral end and aim, and his own character, in most instances, is moral and proud. He professes to call men back, from a mysterious and complicated religion, to the few first principles of justice, and virtue, and benevolence. He derives no small authority and *prestige*, before the judgment and conscience of men, because he advocates the claims of the great and noble department of moral philosophy. Hence the clergyman, in this age more than in any other, must be able to draw the line between morality and religion, and especially to make men see what all history teaches, that there is no *self-realizing power* in moralism; that all this Ethics must follow in the rear of evangelical Christianity, in order to be operative among mankind.

Men need LIFE, renovating and sanctifying LIFE from God; and not merely light from nature and reason, or even from Revelation; for the Bible itself is powerless without the Holy Ghost. The truths of ethics and natural religion can become the ruling principles of individual and social life, only in case the individual and society come under the power of revealed religion. Ethical justice, and ethical truth, and ethical benevolence, cannot prevail on the earth, except as evangelical faith, and hope, and love, renovate human nature in its fountains. Can any candid and well-informed mind say, that that moral philosophy which, as Bacon says, was "the heathen divinity," sustained the same inward and vital relation to heathendom, that Christianity does to the church; that the system of Socrates was the principle of moral life for any portion of antiquity, as the gospel of Christ has been for the regenerated in all ages? On the contrary, was not the truth—the ethical truth—as Saint Paul affirms, held down in unrighteousness; and was not the actual development of the Old World as contrary to the doc-

trines of *natural* religion, as of revealed? Read Plato, and find as full a confession, prompted by a personal consciousness, of the corruption of human nature, and of the inability of the mere truths of ethics and morality to realize themselves in human life and conduct, as ever came from uninspired lips. Ask the wisest of the heathen, if the principles of reason and justice, which lay in such clear, firm lines before his intellect, wrought warm and vital in his heart, and constituted the life of his soul, and hear the answer, that however it may have been with him in a pre-existence of which he dreamed, or however it might be with him in a future world of which he knew nothing with certainty, the existing inward feeling and character was certainly contrary to the Beautiful, the True and the Good. Only through the *vitality* and *renovation* of Christianity, can the cold, clear reason of ethics be transmuted into feeling, and realized among mankind. Only the regenerated soul can actually obey the hard and high law.

The infidelity of moralism, then, so covert and so specious, calls loudly for an evangelical ministry that knows exactly the difference between the law and the gospel; that can meet the opposer upon his own ground, and instead of vilifying ethics, and natural reason and religion, can apply their truths and principles so hotly and terribly to the human soul *at variance with them*, that they shall be a schoolmaster to lead it to Christianity. "Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? The law is not of faith," it stands in no relation to mercy, "but the man that *doeth* them shall live by them," and the contrary follows inevitably, "The man that doeth them *not*, shall die by them." It is because mankind have not obeyed the principles of natural religion, and are under a curse and a bondage therefor, that the peculiar doctrines of revealed religion are needed; and he who in this age, or any other, preaches the truths of natural reason and conscience, and there stops, preaches the eternal and inevitable damnation of the human soul. He may not know what he is doing. He may announce the ideas of ethics and natural religion, as evidences that human nature is upright, and needs no redemption, forgetting that a Plato, a Plutarch, and a Cicero, found in the fact, that they are in man's *reason*, but not obeyed and realized in man's *will*, the most convincing evidences that humanity is at schism with itself, and therefore depraved and fallen, while they knew no

mode of deliverance. He may expand these old and obvious doctrines of ethical morality, as something new and original with himself, forgetting that a single dialogue, like the *Phædo*, or a single tract, like the *De Natura Deorum*, contains more of the pure and dense reason of the finite mind, than he has been able to flatten out into many volumes of essays and so-called sermons. He may suppose in all this, that he is dispensing with the necessity of revelation, and taking the most effectual method to destroy its influence among mankind. But the well-disciplined Christian preacher can take all this asseveration respecting the immutability of ethical distinctions, and all this emphatic assertion of the sacredness, and worth, of justice and truth benevolence and all the forms of virtue, and from it deduce and man's perishing need of God's mercy and redemption. For where is the conformity to all these statutes and commandments? Who realizes these truths of natural conscience in his daily life? Who will not be found guilty before the bar of natural religion, that is, the bar of his own conscience? Who will not need that atonement for his failure to live up even to the light of nature, which is the key to that sacrificial system, which makes a part of all the more thoughtful and respectable religions of paganism?

The connection between natural and revealed religion, is the point where the most dangerous infidelity of the time takes its stand; and the ministry needs, more than ever, a profound and clear understanding of the distinctive character and relations of each, in order to meet the adroit attacks of enemies, to relieve the sincere doubts of inquiring minds, and more than all, to make the law, in all its forms, tributary to the gospel of Christ. But this power rests upon learning; upon a profound acquaintance with what that learned Puritan, Theophilus Gale, denominates 'the wisdom of the Gentiles,' and a yet more profound acquaintance with the wisdom of the Scriptures. Here is the whole broad field of human reason and divine revelation to be traversed, and nothing but that thorough understanding of their true meaning and mutual relations, which characterized both the conforming and the non-conforming divines of England in the seventeenth century, will prepare the ministry of the present, and the coming age, to meet the skepticism present and to come. The English deism of that century and that age was learned, was able, was subtle. It contained all shades, from

the lofty and virtuous deism of Lord Herbert of Cherbury, to the low and sensual deism of Mandeville. But it was thoroughly met by the Christian ministry of that century, because the truths of natural religion were more philosophically and correctly apprehended by the defenders of revelation, than they were by its opponents. The Deist found that the Christian preacher was at home in the Pagan as well as in the Christian theology; and, before the controversy was over, learned, that by far the justest estimate of what the uninspired human mind is capable of doing, and of what it is incapable, is formed by the mind that occupies the higher point of view afforded by a supernatural revelation. The Deist discovered that John Howe had read Plato, and that Bishop Stillingfleet was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and that both alike, while the farthest possible from disparaging the just dues of reason and conscience, were able, convincingly, to show the powerlessness of both, in reference to the two great needs of human nature, the forgiveness of sins and the sanctification of the soul; in reference, not to a mere illumination that, like moonlight in nature, warms nothing and stirs nothing, but to a deep central renovation and restoration to holiness and paradise, of a race, that, for six thousand years, has had full opportunity to try the recuperative virtues supposed to inhere in the uninspired human mind and the unrenewed human will.

We have, then, these two general reasons why the churches should address themselves to the work of training up a ministry: first, that the ministry may be sufficiently numerous to supply the increasing demands for public religious teachers; and, secondly, that the ministry may be sufficiently disciplined, to exhibit the few and simple doctrines of Christianity in a plain, fresh, and powerful manner to the general understanding, and sufficiently learned, to thwart the present attempt of infidelity to substitute natural for revealed religion.

There are other fundamental reasons for this procedure, that might be urged, did the occasion permit. We have preferred to seize upon two strong points, and rest the plea upon them alone. The two considerations of number, and of power, in the ministry, are enough to recommend the aims and claims of the American Education Society. We are the more ready to rest the case upon these two points, because they are both unusually practical, at this juncture. The opening of new nations

to Christianity, is destined to make a great demand for preachers of the Word during the next fifty years. The indications now are, that the unchristianized world is simultaneously waking up to a sense of its spiritual wants, and being thrown open to Christian enterprise. The heathen are ready and waiting to hear the living word from the living tongue and eye. While, therefore, missionary schools and seminaries cannot safely be neglected, and will not be, it is becoming more evident every day, that the *number* of preachers must be very greatly increased, so that, as in the apostolic age, Christianity may run like sacred fire over large spaces in short time. It is by *preaching tours and missionary journeys*, like that of the apostolic age, taking their start from the missionary station, that the world is to be evangelized. *Companies* and *bands* of heralds, penetrating in every direction, and carrying the truth to every hamlet and heart, will speedily be needed, if the church would see the millions who are now coming under the influences of civilization, also coming under the influences of Christianity.

And, certainly, the other consideration which we have urged, viz., the fresh, vigorous power of the clergy, appeals with equal force to our minds, when we consider the prevailing type of intellectual culture. In speaking of clerical learning, we have directed attention more to the material, than to the formal, side of the subject, because the intellectual tendency of the age is unduly to the Form. Art is outrunning Science. Rhetoric is destroying Logic, as in some previous ages Logic destroyed Rhetoric. Style, instead of being the pure and austere beautiful embodiment of an idea, and a truth, and a logic, that is greater and grander than itself, exists too much by itself, and for itself. There is not enough of argument in the sermon. Men are not sufficiently *reasoned with* out of the Scriptures. Preaching is too often a play, and a display. It is not often enough a conflict of mind with mind, and a battle of the understanding of the preacher with that of the hearer. For the pulpit, like God, has a controversy with human nature.

Hence the need and worth of scientific discipline. For this species of power springs from the rigor of a professional course; is drawn from the nether fountains of philosophical and theological science. He who expects that mighty reasoners, and men of commanding power, will be raised up without the discipline of institutions, and the learning of libraries, expects that

the perturbations of the planets will be calculated without mathematics, and that the constellations of the skies will be mapped without observatories. Showy men, striking men, may be formed without the school or curriculum; but strong men cannot be.

The connection of the objects of the American Education Society with the subject that has thus been presented, is plain and close. The majority of existing clergymen have received from this Society, an amount and kind of aid which decided their profession for them, and their own position within it. Subtract the agency and influence of this organization, and you subtract, in an untold manner, from the sum total of the clerical agencies, and influences, now at work in society. If this is true of the past, it will hold true with emphasis of the future. The time is coming, and now is, when the interests of the church and of Christianity, will require a far broader foundation, and a far ampler apparatus, for clerical education, than now exists. As our own country fills up with population, wealth, and human knowledge, and as the globe wheels up more and more of its dark sides to the eye of the philanthropist and the Christian, there will be needed a permanence, and an opulence, of educational facilities, for the indigent but ardent and devoted young men of the land, such as exists in the church establishments of the Old World. Suppose that all those foundations, and fellowships, and scholarships—all those edifices, and libraries, and museums, and faculties, and courses of instruction, which are radiating an influence from generation after generation of students,—could instantaneously be transferred to the care and use of a church disconnected from the state, and supported upon the voluntary system, what a stream of fresh and energetic life would be poured through these veins and arteries, now clogged and in danger of ossification! How much more evenly and impartially would the revenues be distributed, and how much more advantageously would the power of this great educational system and apparatus be applied!

The church, in this country, has now solved a problem, which, since the days of Constantine, had been deemed insoluble. It has convincingly proved, that Christian institutions not only do not need the support of the State, but thrive best, when left to the spontaneous and free support of that individual

Christian heart and mind, which wants them, and loves them. The doctrine of a self-supporting church, now, has less of doubt and difficulty overhanging it, than the doctrine of a self-governing State. We think, and say, that the United States of America have convincingly proved, that a republic is not merely an ideal, but also a realizable form of government. We may be yet more confident, that the church of Christ, in this country, has irrefragably evinced the inherent and persistent power of vital Christianity to organize its own simple forms, and supply its own few outward wants. Visible churches die out of localities, far less often under the Voluntary System, than under the Establishment. Go among the hills, where a sparse population wrings a bare livelihood from the thin and sterile soil, and you find a "feeble church," as it is called, but a church that never ceases to be among the hills, because it draws what life it has from free-will, and not from ancestral revenues. But how many a church, whose material, moneyed, foundation dates back to the Plantagenets and the Tudors, has disappeared from the sum of national life and vital influences, and exists, now, only as an investment in the funds, or the national debt, because the invisible church, in the outset, was not laden with its proper responsibility, and as a penalty, in the end, ceased to exist altogether as a moral force in the nation.

It therefore, now remains for our churches to complete what has been so well begun; to arm this voluntary system with the powers and resources of an establishment; to fill up its treasuries, that it may dispense with a liberal hand; to endow its institutions, that it may promote its own growth and prosperity. For in this instance, it is not one party who gives, and another who receives and disburses. It is the church, self-governing, self-supporting, self-extending. It is a true evolution from centre to circumference, and back, by a reflex influence, from the periphery to the radiating point. There is no danger, therefore, that revenues will become too large, and the organization too complicated and massive; for the giver is also the treasurer and the almoner, and will know when to stop. There is no danger of mal-administration; for they who administer, and they who endow, are both of one, and at one; of one body, and at one object.

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