

ON THE IMPORTANCE
OF
ASSISTING YOUNG MEN OF PIETY AND TALENTS
IN
OBTAINING AN EDUCATION
FOR THE
GOSPEL MINISTRY.

The Rev. Lyman Beecher, chairman of the Committee of the Connecticut Charitable Society for the education of indigent pious young men for the ministry, lately published an address in favour of the object of the Society. The Address is here republished, with a few circumstantial variations which appeared necessary to adapt it to more general use.

It is the object of this *Tract*, to excite the attention of the Christian community to the importance of providing for our country a sufficient number of competent religious instructors. The importance of the evangelical ministry is generally admitted. But the state of the nation in respect to qualified instructors, is far from being sufficiently understood. In soliciting the charitable cooperation of the public in this design, it becomes our duty, therefore, to state, for their information, such facts and estimates as we have been able to obtain; and to explain our views as to the ways of supplying this deficiency.

The population of the United States at the present time may be estimated at 8,000,000. Now the civil welfare of the nation and the interests of Eternity alike demand for this whole number the agency of qualified, religious instructors. If it be important that *any* portion of this population be instructed in religion, it is equally important that *all* should be instructed. If the overthrow of our religious institutions in New England, and the extinction of evangelical light, would render our circumstances calamitous; theirs who have no such blessings are in fact as calamitous as ours would be, should we be deprived of them.

To provide competent religious instruction for the United States, would demand at least one pastor for every thousand souls; which, estimating the family at seven mem-

11
13

bers, at a medium, will be one pastor for *one hundred and fifty* families. If it should seem that the allotted charge is too small, it may be remembered, that in the Jewish Economy about one instructor was provided for every *forty* families, including in their duty the common education of children, as well as the religious instruction of the people; which might afford at least one, exclusively devoted to religious instruction for *eighty* families. It appears also, from the evidence of authentic documents, that in New England, so late as 1753, there was one liberally educated minister to 628 souls; and from a cursory examination of the necessary documents, it is presumed, that previously to this period, back to the first settlement of this country, the supply was even greater than this proportion.*

At the present time, the ratio in New England is about one educated minister to every 1500 souls. But whether we have gained by this diminution of religious instruction, the present religious and moral state of New England, compared with the first 150 years, will easily decide.

In Great Britain and Ireland it is estimated that the number of worshipping assemblies is as many as one to every 8 or 900 inhabitants. In Portugal, Spain, Italy, and Switzerland, the number of congregations is supposed to be still greater according to the population. In Holland, Prussia, Denmark, and the states of Germany, there may be one assembly for every 1100 souls; and in Russia there is one religious teacher, including every grade, for every 460. The medium supply for Europe may then be estimated at one minister for every 1000 souls.

That this is not too great a proportion, may appear from the fact, that in the state of Connecticut, one of the most populous in the union, though the number of ministers, including all who bear the name, is about one to 1000, there are still vacancies, and unorganized population, and partially supplied congregations enough to demand the em-

* In the year 1665, Connecticut contained about 1700 families, 8 or 9000 inhabitants, and they constantly enjoyed the instructions of about twenty ministers. Upon an average there was as much as one minister to every 85 families, or to about 430 souls. In some of the new plantations, thirty families supported a minister, and commonly there was no more than forty when they called and settled a pastor.

Vid. Dr. Trumbull's Hist. of Conn.

ployment of nearly one hundred additional ministers. The population of the Union is so scattered, that one half of it cannot be thrown into congregations of a thousand souls; and if, in some places, one pastor can supply 1500 or 2000; in four times that number of places he can embody in his charge a number not exceeding 500 souls. So that assigning one minister to 1000 souls, as they are scattered over the face of the nation, is in fact a very small supply. But, could the population of the nation be organized in congregations of 1000 souls, or 150 families, the whole routine of ministerial labour, weekly preparations for the desk, visiting schools, catechetical instructions, weekly lectures and family visiting, added to a vast amount of miscellaneous avocations, would completely engross the whole time of any pastor.

To supply then a population of 8,000,000, with competent religious instructors, at the ratio of one for a thousand, demands the agency of 8000 ministers. But according to the best information which can be obtained, and which to a great extent is obtained from the authentic printed documents of ecclesiastical bodies, there are not, according to the largest computation, more than 3000 educated ministers of the gospel in our land; leaving a deficiency of 5000 ministers, and a population of 5,000,000 destitute of proper religious instruction.*

There may be, perhaps, 1500 besides, who are nominally ministers of the gospel. But they are generally illiterate men, often not possessed even of a good English education, and in some instances unable to read or write. By them, as a body, learning is despised. With few exceptions, they are utterly unacquainted with Theology, and like other men are devoted through the week to secular employment, and preach on the Sabbath, with such preparation as such an education and such avocations will allow. Now, admitting the piety of these men, the rectitude of their motives, and that in the absence of a better supply they were even benefactors to the country; still, with the best intentions, they are unable to exert that religious, and moral, and

* In this population there are about 1200 organized congregations able to support a pastor—the remainder is either in the hands of illiterate men, or like primeval Chaos, without form and void, and darkness resting upon it.

literary influence which it belongs to the Ministry to exert. It is not by preaching repentance and faith, exclusively, that the interests of religion are promoted. There is a state of society to be formed, and to be formed by an extensive combination of institutions, religious, civil and literary, which never exist without the cooperation of an educated Ministry.

Illiterate men, however pious, cannot command the attention of that class of the community whose education and mental culture is above their own. But this class of persons, whose souls are not to be disregarded, will ever exert a powerful influence in human affairs. And they will despise religion, and neglect their institutions, and throw the weight of their influence against the gospel, when its chosen advocates are ignorant and unlettered men. Illiterate pastors cannot be the patrons of schools, academies and colleges. They cannot, and if they can, they will not, exalt society above their own level. Education, religious and literary, will be neglected in their hands; civilization will decline, and immoralities multiply. If the influence of such men be better than nothing, if it do not help on the decline caused by human depravity, it is totally incompetent to arrest it.

Illiterate men have never been the chosen instruments of God to build up his cause. The disciples of our Lord, to supply the deficiency of an education, were instructed by himself for three years; and then, were miraculously taught languages, and clothed with the power of miracles, and were guided beside by the immediate suggestions of the Holy Spirit.

What would the Science of Law become, and the administration of Justice, in the hands of men destitute of a common education, ignorant of the science, and who should go from the plough and the workshop to the bar? What would be the fate of medicine, and our fate, were health and life committed to the hands of men who never studied the human system, and knew nothing of diseases or remedies, by reading or by meditation? And what would be the fate of agriculture or commerce, or the mechanic arts, pursued with as much ignorance as attends an unlettered Ministry; and pursued only as a calling subordinate to another which occupied six days in seven? Is religious knowledge

alone to be obtained without study? Or is the soul, and its eternal concern, the only thing on earth unworthy the attention of an order of men educated for the purpose, and devoted exclusively to that object? It is our duty then to engage deliberately in the enterprise of supplying our nation with qualified religious instructors.—Religion is the last thing that should be committed to the hands of ignorant and incompetent men, and the real deficiency of competent religious instructors is at least *five thousand*, and the population unsupplied is 5,000,000.

If we cast our eye over the different sections of the Union, to ascertain in detail, by facts and probable estimates, the state of the nation as to religious instruction, the result will corroborate this general estimate. It will exhibit a scene of destitution and wretchedness little realized by the more favoured parts of New England, and which no benevolent mind can contemplate without sympathy.

In the District of Maine, containing a population of 228,705, about one half the people are destitute of stated religious instruction.

It appears that in the counties of Rockingham and Strafford, the two oldest and principal counties in the state of New Hampshire, containing in 1810, exclusive of Portsmouth and Exeter, 76 towns and 83,040 inhabitants, 46 towns were, in December 1813, destitute of the stated means of grace; and their inhabitants, 40,286, were not only precluded the blessings of a regular ministry, but exposed to the errors of enthusiastic and false teachers, by whose influence the few remaining friends of the religion of their fathers were counteracted, depressed, and discouraged. The population of New Hampshire is 214,460. Now if to this 40,000 unsupplied population be added that which is in like circumstances in other parts of the State, the result will be, probably, that at least one third, or 71,486 of the inhabitants of that State, are unsupplied with stated religious instruction.

In Vermont the state of things may be a little better, though not varying greatly from the State of New Hampshire.

In the State of Rhode Island; in the whole western part of the State, including a territory about 30 miles broad and 50 long, containing about one half the population of the

State, there is but one regularly educated minister; and but about ten beside, of the lowest order of uneducated ministers. Many churches have become utterly extinct, and many *once* organized congregations have been long since broken down. The Sabbath, without the least restraint, is devoted to secular business, to visiting, amusements, and profligate habits; and is more distinguished by open wickedness than any other day of the week.

In the state of Connecticut there are 218 congregational churches, of which 36 are vacant. Of other denominations there are about 68 vacant churches. Allowing these congregations to be small, we may reasonably allot one pastor for every two; which will be *thirty four*. Of 114 churches not vacant, and doubtless in most cases small, the supply does not exceed one Sabbath in two, and very often but one in three. If we give then to one half of these churches a stated pastor, there will be 57 of these churches destitute of religious instruction; leaving in this State at the rate of 127 vacancies to be supplied; and this notwithstanding, the ratio of ministers, including all who bear the name, is about one to a thousand. To meet this demand, there are not more than 30 ministers and candidates: leaving still a demand for 97 competent religious instructors for the State.

Allowing Massachusetts Proper a proportion equal to that of Connecticut, and her deficiency of competent religious instructors will be 178.

New York, a state of extended territory, in the heart of our land, with a population of more than 1,000,000, and doubling, by the help of emigration from New England, at the rate of once in 15 years, is greatly destitute of qualified religious instructors. From the best accounts, obtained partly from printed documents and partly from individuals personally acquainted in the State, there is reason to believe that 500 teachers will exceed the actual supply, leaving 500,000 of the population destitute of the stated means of grace, and demanding 500 additional labourers to fill the vacant vineyard. There are, it is estimated, in this State, nearly 200 organized congregations, in which ministers of education and talents might probably be settled, could such be obtained.

The district of country which lies between the west line of

Connecticut and the Hudson river, is about 100 miles in length, 20 in breadth, and contains three counties, Westchester, Putnam, and Dutchess, and a population of about 81,000 souls. In this whole district there are but 20 regularly educated ministers—9 in Westchester; 11 in Dutchess; and in Putnam county, containing a population of 10,000 inhabitants, there is not one settled minister of any denomination. There is in this whole district of course a population of 60,000 souls destitute of the ordinary means of grace, and a demand for 60 additional ministers of the gospel.

The county of Columbia, the next north of Dutchess county, is in no better circumstances than the three preceding counties.

It appears from the report of Messrs. Mills and Schermerhorn, founded on information obtained in their missionary tour through the western States, that in the whole district west of the Alleghany mountains, including Ohio, the western counties of Pennsylvania and Virginia; the States of Kentucky, Tennessee, Louisiana, and all the territories, containing at this time a population of about 2,000,000 of souls, there are not more than 130 regularly educated and settled ministers; leaving a population of 1,870,000 unsupplied, and demanding 1870 additional ministers of the gospel.

In Louisiana, containing 76,000, there is not one protestant minister of any denomination, and only about a dozen Catholic ministers. The people sit in darkness and the shadow of death.

The State of New Jersey is better furnished with ministers than any State south of Connecticut; there is, however, in some parts of this State, a considerable deficiency, to what extent we are not able to say with much exactness. It may be estimated at 100 ministers; but if we estimate it 50, we shall be sure not to exaggerate.

Of Pennsylvania and Delaware, we can only say generally, that the want of ministers is great, without being able to furnish a probable estimate of the deficiency.

The State of Virginia, the centre of the union, a State which, from its location and its members, must always exert a powerful influence on our national concerns, contains a population of 974,622: and from the account of Messrs.

Mills and Schermerhorn, has but about 60, regularly educated ministers, leaving 914,000 of her population in the hands of unlettered men, or totally destitute of the means of grace. Of the State of Maryland we cannot speak particularly. But from general information on the subject, we have no reason to believe the supply any better than that of Virginia.*

The State of North Carolina, possessing a population of 555,500, receives the instruction of about 20 educated ministers; leaving 535,500 of the population destitute of proper religious instruction, and demanding the help of 535 additional educated ministers.

Of South Carolina, the population is 415,115 and the number of regularly educated settled pastors is about 36; demanding 379 additional ministers to supply a destitute population of 379,115 souls.

The population of Georgia is 452,083, while in the whole State there are not more than 10 ministers who are qualified to preach the gospel; leaving 442,433 of the population of that State, destitute of such instruction as God has decided to be proper for the Salvation of men. A small portion of this destitute population of the land is enlightened by a feeble glimmering from uneducated men; but the greater part is unorganized, and in almost total darkness.

Such, then, is the state of our nation; more deplorably destitute of religious instruction than any other Christian nation under heaven.

We now come to the question, what shall be done? and a ready answer, which our readers we trust will anticipate, is, that something must be done; something more than ever has been done, or our land will be ruined. That the ordinary providential supply, afforded by the colleges of our land, is utterly incompetent, is put beyond all question by the following statement.

From the year 1700 to 1753, there were 1998 students graduated at Harvard and Yale colleges. (at that time the only colleges in New England.) Of this number, 804 were ministers of the gospel. Of these 804, there were living in

* It is stated by a candidate for the ministry, from Massachusetts, who has been preaching for some time in this State, that there are only two regularly educated ministers, in any direction for fifty miles from the place where he is employed.

1753, according to the best estimate, 621. The population of New England in 1753 was 390,000. Of course there was, at that time, on an average, *one liberally educated minister* for every 628 souls in New England.

From a cursory examination of the necessary documents, it is presumed, that previous to this period, back to the first settlement of the country, the supply was even greater than this proportion.

Compare this result with the *present* supply of ministers from these colleges. Let it be first remembered, however, that since 1753 the population of New England has increased nearly *tenfold*, and has spread itself over the whole western country; and though colleges have multiplied, yet Harvard and Yale still educate *one third* of all who receive a collegiate education in the United States: that of course one third of the population, or nearly three millions of people, look to them for religious teachers. To supply this population as New England was supplied for more than 130 years after its settlement, (that is, till within the memory of many now upon the stage,) would require 4250 ministers. Yet it is a fact, that there are now living only 760 ministers, graduates of Harvard and Yale; leaving an arrearage of 3490.

To speak more particularly of Yale college. Probably *one sixth* of all who receive a collegiate education in the United States are graduates of this seminary.—Allotting then to Yale college *one sixth* of the population of the United States, as her portion to supply, if this portion were now fully supplied, with one minister for every 1000 souls; yet, barely to fill the vacancies by *death*, and to meet the *annual increase* of population, the college would still be called upon to furnish 80 ministers *annually*; and this number to be increased in future, in proportion as the population should increase. Yet it is a fact, that for the last forty years, there has not been an average of *nine* ministers annually from this institution.

From colleges, then, in the ordinary course of things our hopes are vain. Nothing better can be expected from any one of them than from Yale college; and were all the graduates to become ministers, they would not supply her proportion of the national demand.

As to what shall be done, there can be no doubt that an

immediate, universal, vigorous effort must be made to provide religious instruction for the nation. The enterprise is one which a few hands cannot accomplish. The nation, all the pious and well-disposed part of the nation, must unite and engage systematically and vigorously in this work of self-preservation. The evangelizing of the nation must not be a secondary object to any one. It must stand forth in all its magnitude, as the prominent object upon which all eyes are fixed: for which all hearts beat, and in which all hands are employed. *A Bible for every family, a school for every district, and a pastor for every thousand souls*, must be the motto upon the standard, round which the millions, who enjoy these blessings must rally for the purpose of extending them to those who do not. While foreign missions are in no degree to be abandoned, a strong hand must be applied to the work of domestic missions. A thousand times as much as has yet been done, must be done every year till our country is rescued, and rendered great, and good, and happy.

To produce such a combination and such efforts, the wretched state of our country must be made known. The information, contained in this Tract, may, with propriety be communicated to all our worshipping assemblies, and the investigation commenced in it with propriety, be continued, until a regular and minute account can be given of the religious state of our land. Newspapers, Tracts, and Magazines must disclose to our slumbering countrymen their danger. The press must groan in the communication of our wretchedness; and from every pulpit in the land the trumpet must sound long and loud. The nation must be awaked to save itself by its own exertions or we are undone.

So mighty an effort should undoubtedly be begun and carried on with importunate prayer. In the public worship of the sanctuary; in every meeting of the church; in every religious conference; in the closet; in every select concert, and in that great concert which promises to unite at length the whole world in supplication to God; the spiritual wretchedness of our country should press upon our hearts, and be recognized in our supplications to the Almighty. God only can sanctify and qualify them to be ministers. God only can unite the hearts of all, and bless the exertions of all in this great work; and for these things will he be inquired of to do it for us.

There is a special demand at this time upon pious parents to consecrate their sons to God as Hannah did Samuel, and educate them with reference to the sanctuary. While the cry of perishing millions assails your ears, and awakes the holy sympathies of your souls, make to God, ye pious parents, the offer of your sons, and educate them in the hope that God will sanctify them, and make them his ministers, praying for their conversion without ceasing; and few, who go forth weeping, bearing precious seed, will fail to come again rejoicing, bringing their sheaves with them. And if it be the duty of pious parents to educate their unconverted children in faith and hope, how much more is it the duty of those to whom God has already given pious sons, and ability to educate them? Do you need their help? But do you need it as much as those wretched millions, who have no teacher, no guide to heaven? Will it press you in a pecuniary view to educate them? but will the pressure be like the everlasting pressure of sin upon your brethren, your kinsman according to the flesh? Do you need the consolation of their presence in the decline of life? But will you not deny yourselves that pleasure to send by their hand the consolations of the spirit to the hearts of thousands, whom sin has rendered disconsolate?

It behoves every pious young man of his own self to ask the solemn question, "Lord what wilt thou have me to do?" And if the door be open and the demand be made, "by whom shall we send," to say, "Here am I, Lord, send me."

But all these resources will not meet the demand. The great mass of talent, and piety, and zeal, and hardy enterprise, lies in the middle class of society, and downward to the cottage of the poor. In this class revivals of religion have gloriously prevailed, and the triumphs of redeeming love have been multiplied. Here at all times may be found a resource of talents and piety for the church of God. But the pecuniary resources to obtain an education are wanting, and the great body of this description of pious young men are, by their poverty, shut out from the vacant vineyard of the Lord, till means can be provided to put their services in requisition by giving them an education. It is to accomplish this object, that Charitable Societies for the education of pious youth have been instituted:—it is for this, we are now so loudly called upon by Divine Providence to afford

the means of a liberal education to promising young men, who are ready to consecrate themselves to the Lord, and thus to open the inexhaustible fountain, and draw from it streams which shall refresh the barren land, and make glad the city of our God.

In so glorious a work, there is an urgent call upon Pastors and Churches, for their cooperation. Nor do we anticipate that the call will be unwelcome and unheeded. If ministers do not feel in such a cause, and the churches redeemed by their instrumentality, we should despair of exciting sympathy or obtaining help. It is hoped that every church will in some way, according to its own discretion, enlist in this cause. After hearing this communication, Christians are invited to deliberate, and pray, and act. If each church would engage to pay at the rate of one dollar a member, the rich members making up the deficiencies of the poor, and churches that are strong the deficiencies of the weak, the result would be an annual income, which would support thousands of pious students.

Now, is there a church, bought by the blood of Jesus Christ, which will not pass an unanimous vote to contribute annually so small a sum for so great an object, when the result will be the annual support of so many young men of piety for the ministry? How light will be the burden, and how efficacious the charity!

But the churches are not our only hope. There are a multitude of Female Charitable Associations spread over the States, who save their weekly pittance to be consecrated to benevolent purposes. To these worthy Associations we look for aid. Many of them have already, and from the beginning, devoted their charities to the education of pious, indigent young men for the ministry. Those already formed, we trust will be enlarged, and a similar association be formed in every society. And we hope they will all unite the streams of their charity into one river, which, without ceasing, shall refresh our thirsty land.

There have also in various places been formed recently, & without superseding the Cent Societies, Charitable Associations of Females, who meet one afternoon in a month, and as often as exigencies may demand, bringing each an oblation in raw materials, or domestic manufactures, or money to purchase them, upon which they bestow the necessary

labour, and devote the clothing ready made to the objects for which we are now soliciting patronage. How blessed would be the efficacy of such an example in every congregation in these States. What female is there who does not now devote to social visits, at least one afternoon a month? But how much more cheering and ennobling the friendships which would be formed, and strengthened, by such an intercourse for such purposes.

But does piety and benevolent enterprise reside exclusively in female bosoms? Are there not young men, whose emulation will be excited by such fair examples? Might not auxiliary societies of young men be formed in many places, who, by retrenching superfluous expenses or adding a trifling effort to ordinary exertion, would be able to contribute liberally to bless their country with religious instruction? How many young men might be educated for the Lord, if the money which is sometimes worse than wasted were saved, and consecrated to this benevolent object. We invite, then, the cooperation, and intreat the assistance of the young men of New England in this great work of providing religious instruction for our land. It is not improbable, that the very men you help to educate, may become your own pastors, and the instruments of bringing your souls into the kingdom of God.

But while these little streams are flowing to refresh the land, we intreat those whom God has blessed with wealth, to cause a deeper and broader tide to roll.—it is no ordinary subject that invites your attention; It stands first in importance, God himself being Judge; “For what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul. For after that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe. So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But how shall they hear without a preacher, and how shall they preach except they be sent.” Both worlds are interested in the preaching of the gospel “for godliness is profitable to all things, having the promise both of the life that now is and that which is to come.” When the wretchedness of our country then is so great, and the word and the providence of God justify no hope of amelioration, but by extending the religious and moral influence of his own institutions,

are we not brought to your doors upon a noble errand? and will you not receive our solicitations with a smile, and reward us with a liberality surpassing what has ever yet been witnessed? May we not anticipate your patronage of this work by a charity which shall bear a just proportion to your wealth, and the immense importance of the object. Men of wealth! help! we intreat you. help to save your country from ruin, and the souls of your countrymen from death. Freely ye have received; freely give.

To all who are occupied in the concerns of civil government, we look with confidence, as to men who feel the insufficiency of an arm of flesh, and justly appreciate the alliance of Jehovah; who know, experimentally, the multiplied blessings of religious institutions; and who will help by their prayers, and their charities, and their official influence, to extend these blessings through the nation.*

It is with peculiar pleasure, and a cheering confidence of being heard, that we ask the cooperation of the ALUMNI of all our Colleges. Though the immediate object is the education of ministers, yet, in no method can the blessings of a common education for our countrymen be better secured, or the best interests of science better promoted, than by extending an educated ministry through the nation. The gospel has always been friendly to science; enlightening the understanding while it purified the heart; and educated ministers of the gospel have always been efficient patrons of schools, academies, and colleges. Wherever in this land the gospel has exerted the most steady and powerful influence, there the common people have been the best instructed, and science has been most successfully cultivated.

The prosperity of our colleges also, though not the primary object, will be the certain and happy consequence of the measures now proposed. For the talents, and piety,

* In the year 1644, a representation of the necessities of indigent students at Cambridge was made to the Commissioners of Massachusetts, with a request that they would encourage a general contribution in their behalf. They approved the motion, and by their recommendation, seconded by the recommendation of the General Court, contributions of grain and provisions were annually made through the United Colonies, for the charitable end proposed.

Vid. Dr. Trumbull's Hist. of Conn.

and exemplary conduct of the students whom charity shall send to a college, will doubtless contribute to purify her literary character; while through life their religious enterprise and literary eminence will make her heart glad, and bring new honours to her growing age.

By all the tender recollections, then, of your collegiate life, and by your attachment to the institutions in whose walls you passed the most interesting period of life, and laid the foundation of that reputation and prosperity which God has since given you, we invite your cooperation.

The motives to such an effort as we propose, are numerous and powerful. 1. It is indispensable to prevent the great body of the nation from sinking down to a state of absolute heathenism. Let the tide of population roll on for 70 years, as it has done for the 70 that are past, and let no extraordinary exertion be made to meet the vastly increasing demand for Ministers; but let them increase only in the slow proportion that they have done, and what will be the result? There will be within the United States SEVENTY MILLION SOULS—and there will be only *six thousand* competent religious teachers; that is, SIXTY FOUR MILLIONS out of the SEVENTY, will be wholly destitute of proper religious instruction. They may not become the worshippers of Idols; but there is a brutality, and ignorance, and profligacy, always prevalent where the gospel does not enlighten and restrain, as decisively ruinous to the soul, as idolatry itself. It is of little consequence to a ruined immortal in hell, whether he perished by the waters of the Ganges, or on the road to Juggernaut; or whether he perished at home, consumed by slow fires within, or chilled by frost in a fit of intoxication. The little light that may glimmer upon the dark places of our land, if it be not enough to rescue souls from death, may even render their circumstances more dreadful than the total darkness of heathen lands, by aggravating their guilt and condemnation. The civil welfare of the nation demands imperiously, the universal cooperation of religious institutions. If knowledge and virtue be the basis of republican institutions, our foundations will soon rest upon the sand, unless a more effectual and all-pervading system of religious and moral instruction can be provided. The right of suffrage in the hands of an ignorant and vicious popula-

tion, such as will always exist in a land where the gospel does not restrain and civilize, will be a sword in the hand of a maniac, to make desolate around him, and finally to destroy himself. It is no party in politics that can save this nation from political death, by political wisdom merely. The disease is upon the vitals, and the remedy must be appropriate. There is no remedy but the tree whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. Beneath the shade of this tree the millions of our land may sit down with great delight, and its fruit shall be sweet to their taste.

The integrity of the Union demands special exertions to produce in the nation a more homogeneous character, and bind us together by firmer bonds. Commencing as each State did, a kind of insulated existence, and preserving still as it ought to do, an independent internal organization; and spread as the States are, over a vast extent of country; and united as they are, chiefly for defence and commercial purposes, there is not sufficient intercourse to beget affection; nor a sufficient solidity of the whole nation to counteract the danger of local repulsion in times of public commotion. A remedy must be applied to this vital defect of our national organization. But what shall that remedy be? There can be but one. The consolidation of the State Governments would make a despotism. But the prevalence of pious, intelligent, enterprising ministers through the nation, at the ratio of one for 1000, would establish schools, and academies, and colleges, and habits, and institutions of homogeneous influence. These would produce a sameness of views, and feelings, and interests, which would lay the foundation of our empire upon a rock. Religion is the central attraction which must supply the deficiency of political affinity and interest. Religion is the bond of charity, which in storms must undergird the ship. The intercourse of good men, in the blessed enterprise of evangelizing our land, will do more than every thing beside to make the different parts of the land acquainted, to do away local jealousies, to consolidate the nation, and perpetuate its liberties. The very enterprise will cause every one who embarks in it to love his country better, while he constantly renders his country more worthy to be loved.

How blessed will be the remuneration of such an enterprise, in the health, the temperance, the industry, peace, and friendship diffused through the nation. The expense of crimes and of their punishment, beside all the woes of wickedness, is four times as great, as the expense of their prevention, by a comprehensive system of religious instruction.

With respect to those, who are to be educated by our charities, the wisest precautions ought to be and must be used to select young men of sound piety, and good talents. They will be taken from a state of society, where bodily vigour, resolution, and a capacity of enduring hardships, will generally be found in their best estate.

Upon the Colleges and upon the States at large, the influence of such an accession of intelligent and pious young men, will be most auspicious. The religious and moral habits of our young men at college are to affect deeply the civil and religious interests of the States. The age at which they reside in college is the forming age; and the habits of thinking and feeling acquired there, will often be carried through life. We feel constantly in our churches and in our civil concerns, the good or ill effects of principles imbibed, and habits formed in college. Now the great difficulty, where such numbers of inexperienced youth are associated, is to guard against irreligion and dissipation. What parent, on sending his son to a public seminary, does not tremble at the temptations to which he may be exposed? But the students whom Charity shall send to a college, will possess, ordinarily, a weight of talents, and always, it may be hoped, that piety and circumspection, which will create an influence, surpassing the power of laws or discipline. What a security to our sons to have in the college, whither we send them, a select band of pious companions to watch over and pray for them, and lead them in the right way.

Nor is it a vain expectation, that the prayers, the example, and the conversation of these sons of the prophets in our Colleges, will be connected with frequent revivals of religion, and that our charities to them may be the very means, which God will make the occasion of salvation to our own children. What a pledge to the States for the piety and integrity of her pastors and of rising legislators,

It is no unreasonable hope, that in educating *one* minister by charity, we shall provide two for our country, by the blessing of God upon the prayers and example of this one.

The Providence of God also seems, at the present time, to indicate, with uncommon clearness, our duty. There is an unusual predisposition, manifesting itself in our country, to receive the Gospel. Infidelity has long been on the decline, and the importance of religious institutions is more highly appreciated. Something begins to appear in some of the new settlements, which reminds us of the early days of New England, when our fathers carried their pastor with them, to commence a settlement in the wilderness. The utility of Missionary labours is more and more admitted, and the demand, as to extent and importunity is increasing every year.

Several charitable foundations have already been laid, with a view to prepare indigent young men of piety for College; and God has raised up suddenly, and by an unparalleled liberality, Theological Seminaries to receive them, and fit them for the Ministry when regularly educated. By the revivals of religion, also, which have prevailed and now prevail in our land, a great multitude of young men have been made willing to devote themselves to all the hardships attending so great an enterprise as the evangelizing of the nation. Our Colleges constitute the broken link. To their threshold, every year, young men of piety come, and for the love of Jesus, and the worth of souls, plead for admission, and are sent away because no funds are provided to help them through. From all parts of the land, the cry ascends, Give us Ministers, or we die; and pious young men, smitten with compassion, spring up, and rush to our Colleges, and offer themselves to the Lord; but no provision is made to receive them.

For a number of years past, many applications of this kind have been made and refused. There are at this time a large number of promising young men who have entered on a public education for the ministry, who, unless patronized by the public, must relinquish their object; for they stand in need of every thing, while as yet it is comparatively nothing that can be done.

Considering the great demand for Ministers and the evident purpose of God to provide a supply, indicated by re-

vivals in the Colleges and unheard of liberality of many to educate ministers, you have reason to believe that those who offer themselves will generally be those whom God has called, and whom he will preserve and bless. And you have the analogy of past experience, from which it appears that, with few exceptions, the young men, who have been educated by charity for the ministry, have answered the expectations of their benefactors. But suppose occasionally we should be disappointed and our labours be in vain, would that be a reason for abandoning the whole system of charitable education, and leaving our country to relapse into heathenism, and our posterity to be crushed by the hand of despotism. Must we be certain of success in every case, before we lift a finger in any charitable enterprise? Is no trust to be reposed in God, and no risk to be run for the love of Jesus and the good of souls? Do we in common life vest no capital in any business without an absolute certainty of a profitable return? If a crop fail, will the farmer never sow again? If a voyage prove unsuccessful, will the merchant never try another? We have at least as high security for the accomplishment of our charitable designs as attend any ordinary worldly avocations, in which the risk of failure never deters any one. Where then you would run the risk of failure from a prospect of earthly gain, will you not do it to glorify God, to bless your country, to save immortal souls from perdition? You have as high and even higher security than parents ordinarily have who educate their own children for the ministry, and upon the principle upon which you would refuse to give, all efforts must stop to provide ministers, and the whole land sit in darkness. Besides, your obligation to give does not arise from the absolute certainty of success. The necessities of your country and the world, and the high authority of heaven, bind you to give, committing the event to God. If he hear your prayers and bless your alms, you are bound to give thanks. But if for the trial of your faith he disappoint your hopes, then you are to submit without murmuring, but never to withhold your charities and your prayers.

And now, people of New England, and all who fear God: with these facts we appeal to your consciences whether it is not your duty to give. We appeal to your hearts whether you are not willing to give, to save your country from ruin.

and to save millions of your countrymen from hell. Are you a friend to your country? Behold her nakedness and spread over it the cover of charity. Are you friends to civil liberty? Give, that it may be rescued from a violent death, and a speedy one, by the hands of ignorance and irreligion. Are you patriots? Bless your country by uniting in the holy enterprise of converting a moral wilderness into a fruitful field. Are you fathers? Give, that you may provide for your children at home and abroad, an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and unfading in heaven. Are you Christians? Pray without ceasing to the Lord of the harvest, that he would thrust labourers into his vineyard, and let your prayers and your charities go up together. Do any of you anticipate a speedy removal from this to a better world, and do you wish to consecrate to some useful purpose a portion or the whole of your property? Give it, we beseech you, for the education of indigent pious young men for the gospel Ministry, that you, being dead, may yet, through distant generations, speak to your countrymen the words of eternal life. And, finally, whatever it shall be your purpose to do, do it quickly, and with all your might; for of the five millions of your destitute countrymen every year is sweeping one hundred and fifty thousand to the grave. While you read, they die and go to the judgment; and with all the expedition that you can make, about seven hundred and fifty thousand must die in this christian land destitute of the means of grace, before you can send to them one competent religious instructor, as the result of exertions which are yet to be made. O, that our head were waters, and our eyes fountains of tears, that we might weep day and night over the millions that are perishing for lack of vision!

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