

THE

# COVENANTER:

DEVOTED TO THE

*Principles of the Reformed Presbyterian Church.*

JAMES M. WILLSON,

EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

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The law of the Lord is perfect.—PSALM XIX. 7.

Whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.—PHIL. III. 18

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THE  
C O V E N A N T E R .

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THE DUTY OF THE CHURCH TO PROVIDE A MINISTRY  
ADEQUATE TO THE PRESENT TIMES.\*

*“Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.”—2 TIM. II. 1, 2.*

The ministry forms an essential part of the church's organization. The office is committed to earthen vessels, mortal men, who in a very short time by the stroke of death resign their charge, and their places must be filled by others. Besides, the church is a progressive organization, increasing her numbers, enlarging her territory, and this mainly through her ministry. Hence a constant and increasing supply of ministers is demanded to meet these various objects. And a divine arrangement is made within the church herself to secure this end, and is brought to view in the text. It is here enjoined upon Timothy, an officer in the Lord's house, to see that a competent ministry is provided. And to prepare him for the proper discharge of this duty, the apostle urges upon him the vigorous exercise of grace. “Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.” As much as if he had said, You have a great and important work to perform, which cannot be properly and successfully accomplished without the special exercise of Divine grace. Then follows the command, verse 2d, specifying the duty, and directing in its proper performance. We notice here, 1. The trust to be committed. “The things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses.” The whole word of God—the whole “form of sound words”—the whole work of the ministry, which Timothy had often heard from the mouth of Paul, “among many witnesses.”

2. The candidates to be selected for this trust. “Faithful men.” Believers in Christ, subjects of Divine grace, manifesting fidelity to the truth, the honour of Christ, the souls of men, and the interests of the church. Able men, “who shall be able (fit) to teach others also.” The measure, or degree of ability, is here intimated. Their ability, or fitness to teach, must, in general, rise superior to those who are taught. Not that in every instance the ability of the preacher must be supe-

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rior to that of every hearer; for in many cases this would be simply impossible. But, as a general rule, it should be in proportion to the position occupied, and the intelligence of those who are to be taught. It must keep up with the progress of the times. "Able to teach others also."

3. The commitment of this trust. "The *same* commit thou." That is, the truth of God—"form of sound words." The commitment of this implies careful instruction in the knowledge of Divine truth—the constitution, laws, and order of the Lord's house—and the whole work of the ministry. The supervision of this matter was committed to Timothy, an officer in the house of God. And he had the right and authority to avail himself of all the aid the church could afford in the prosecution of the work. And, of course, a corresponding obligation rested on all the members of the church to assist in all suitable ways.

Candidates, selected, trained, and qualified, were to be finally ordained to the office and work. Hence we are taught here, "that it is the duty of the church to furnish a ministry adequate to the times."

This should be done—

I. In the special exercise of grace.

II. In making a judicious choice.

III. In training for the office and work.

I. In the special exercise of grace. And, 1. In our own souls. "My son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." Be strong—exert thyself vigorously. So the term imports. What the apostle here said to Timothy, he says to each one of us, officers and people. There will be no full and successful discharge of this duty, where there is not a vigorous exercise of grace on the part of each and every member of the church. The church is the only department from which a supply of candidates for the ministry is to be obtained. And when the tone of true piety is low among her members, we have little hope of many of her youth devoting themselves to the ministry. And if they even should, it is not likely they will possess that vital energy so necessary to the proper performance of the work, and which the wants of this cold and formal age demand. Occasionally, in cold and lifeless times, God may raise up one here, and another there, baptized with the influences of his Spirit and grace, for some special work or emergency; but, as a general thing, this is not the case. What the church herself is, in point of spirituality, the same she may expect of her rising ministry. Like produces like. The stream never rises higher than the fountain. But what can we say of ourselves?—of the sincerity, the strength, the vigour of our grace? What do our closets, families, social meetings, congregations, church courts testify? In all these are the eternal interests of our own souls and of others—the welfare and prosperity of Zion—the advancement of Christ's kingdom—the honour and glory of God, and preparation for the eternal state, the all-absorbing subjects of our attention, thoughts, desires, and aims? Oh, how many know it to be far otherwise! Feeble in ourselves, a cold, chilling breath blowing upon us from almost every quarter, we are become more like the lifeless corpse than the living and active body. We need to be revived. The dead bring forth no children. The unhealthy parent produces a sickly offspring. The inte-

rests of the church and world now, and more than ever, require a ministry in the fulness of Christian life and vigour,—not dwarfs in religion, puny and sickly. And in order to this there must be more spiritual life in the church herself; a revived spiritual life in every one of her members; for the degree of the church's life is just the aggregate of that of all her members, and no more. "As soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children." Isa. lxvi. 8. True converts to God. And from these the church is supplied with an adequate ministry. Go back to the time of the Pentecostal effusion of the Spirit from on high—when the work of Divine grace was truly revived—when sinners every where flocked to Christ, and saints were quickened and comforted: from the many thousands, then gathered together in various places, do you hear of any want—any difficulty in finding suitable candidates for the ministry, to meet the wants of the time? Come forward to the times of the first and second Reformations, when the truth concerning God, Christ, the Spirit, sin and hell, salvation and heaven, duty and interest, was not regarded, as it is too often now, an idle tale; but with convincing, renewing, and saving power, took fast hold of the mind, heart, and conscience of the sinner, bringing him to realize his lost condition, and turning him to God—when earnest and unwearied search and inquiry were made for the truth, with an humble disposition to receive, practise, and commend it—when there was joy in the church, as in heaven, over one sinner that repenteth, and one day spent in the courts of the Lord was better than a thousand—when the aspirations of multitudes were upward, having their conversation in heaven, looking for the Saviour: from these came forth a qualified and faithful host to fill up and enlarge the ranks of the ministry, prepared for the necessities and duties of those eventful times.

And may we not, guided by the word of prophecy and promise, look forward to the future, not to the far distant future; but to the times, if we mistake not, that are very near at hand, when the church is warranted to expect a more copious and general outpouring of the Spirit than has ever yet been experienced? Here is the gracious promise, (Isa. xxx. 25,) "There shall be upon every high mountain, and upon every high hill, rivers and streams of waters in the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall." And the blessed result is, "The light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound." The great slaughter is already commenced, the towers are beginning to fall. What hinders the rivers and streams of water to flow? Why do we not begin to realize this blessed privilege now? Are we thoroughly convinced that this, above every thing else, is just what we need? That our many sins, especially our unbelief, provoke the Most High to withhold his promised blessing? We must put ourselves in a proper attitude before we can expect this Divine gift to descend upon us. We must go down in self-abasement before God, and upward to him in the exercise of an unwavering faith upon the promises of his word, and in earnest, unfeigned desires for the enjoyment of this privilege. Then, with the gift of the Spirit at large upon his heritage, God will also raise up a ministry suited to the times.

But we must have grace in special exercise, 2. At a throne of grace. It should never be forgotten that Christ, the King and Head of the church, furnished her with a ministry. They are raised up, called, and sent by him. And he does this in answer to prayer. His command is, "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest." Matt. ix. 38. Then the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile was about to be removed—commission was about to be given "to go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Multitudes were already flocking to the Redeemer, as he went through the cities and villages preaching the gospel of the kingdom. In view of all this he calls upon his followers to pray for labourers. They did so. And wherever the standard of the cross was lifted up, and sinners converted to Christ, there materials were found from which to procure a ministry adequate to the wants of the time.

And what is our position now? Have we not approached a period when this command, this call to prayer, comes to us with no less weight, with no less urgency than it did to the disciples then? The walls of partition that have so long stood in the way of the spread of the gospel, are fast mouldering away under the judgment strokes of the Most High. Mountain barriers among Pagan, Mohammedan, Antichristian, infidel, and oppressive powers of earth, are rapidly being removed. A wide door is already opened—crooked things are being made straight, and rough places plain—access to the masses of the benighted and perishing is become easy. Multitudes are as sheep without a shepherd. A loud and protracted call is ever sounding in our ears. It comes to us upon every breeze, and from every clime and corner of the earth—from all our destitute congregations and societies—from the destitute districts round about us—from the western wilderness—from the shattered prison-house of slavery—from the twenty-four or twenty-five millions yet unsaved in our own land—from the eight or nine hundred millions of the human family yet without Christ. This is no ordinary call; it comes from the millions perishing, perishing eternally, and none to care for their souls. How shall this urgent call be answered? Above and before all other means, by sending them a living ministry—a ministry such as Christ will give in answer to believing and importunate prayer. Why, then, should not every Christian, in the special exercise of grace, implore the Lord of all till he give us a more abundant, pious, faithful, and laborious ministry? What an amount of beneficent power would such prayers exert upon the destinies of our fallen race! What a divine and enriching blessing would descend upon the church! Here let the faith of the church be unflinching, her desire unceasingly importunate, and she shall have the unspeakable comfort of knowing that the Lord of the harvest hears and answers her prayer. Again, there must be grace in exercise.

3. In the use of the means, in order to the end. "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me, the same commit thou." Here a duty is enjoined, which implies the use of appointed means, in order to the contemplated ends. And grace is required to be exercised in the use of those means. All our faith, affection, hope, earnestness, and activity, should be aroused to

this primary work. For all other efforts of the church for the conversion of sinners, the edification of saints, the advancement of Christ's kingdom in the world, will, to a great extent, be a failure, if she overlooks or neglects this primary matter of furnishing a suitable ministry. "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard, and how shall they hear without a preacher, and how shall they preach except they be sent?" This is God's special way of reaching a lost and perishing world. Something may be done in other ways. But here especially is where the beneficent exercise of grace should commence. We look abroad upon a lost and perishing world, and our Christian sympathies are awakened, we desire to do something for its recovery, and God has pointed out the special channel through which our benevolence is to flow out towards it, and that is providing and sending a competent ministry to make known the unsearchable riches of Christ. Here is the true starting-point for the practical exercise of the Christian's grace towards the perishing. Why has God saved you from sin and wrath? It is that you may be for ever blessed in the enjoyment of himself. But this is not all. He designs that you should be instrumental in imparting to others the same benefits and privileges, and this especially through the ministry of the church. And your faith, your benevolent desires, your hopes of success, should be called into vigorous activity in aiding to bring forward a competent ministry. We have not had too much exercise of grace about other things; but far too little about this. Why should it be so? What higher or holier object can you have before you, than this which brought the Son of God down from heaven—upon which his heart was set from eternity? Then "he rejoiced in the habitable parts of this earth; and his delights were with the sons of men," in prospect of the wondrous work of mercy and grace he was to accomplish. Oh, that we were inspired with the same spirit, that our souls were kindled with a flame from the same altar! How ready would we be in furnishing the means, and so the agents, to carry on and accomplish his glorious designs and work! But the church should provide an adequate ministry,

II. In making a judicious choice. "The same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." This implies the choice or selection of suitable candidates. While particular congregations most certainly have the right to choose their own pastors, still there is implied here a judicial authority and oversight on the part of the rulers of the church, in the choice, training and ordination of candidates. Nor does this conflict with the right or appropriate duty of any member. An individual may offer himself as a candidate,—any person may select and recommend,—the rulers themselves may directly choose. And for the direction of all, especially the rulers of the church, we have here what must determine their choice. And,

1. The possession of true piety. "Faithful men." Believers in Christ, not unbelievers. And, of course, possessed of true piety. God has settled this point. Whom he calls to the work of the ministry, he first calls by his grace making them new creatures in Christ Jesus. This blessed change removes the man to the greatest distance from the brute creation, places him in the most direct opposition to fallen spirits, makes him approach nearest to the angels of God, and gives him the most correct resemblance of the Holy and Eternal One, and

forms the primary qualification of him who is to be an ambassador of Christ. A qualification essentially necessary at all times, and under all circumstances. God will never approve those who know nothing of the principles of the new life within, nothing about living a life of faith upon Christ,—who are not delivered from the reigning power of their lusts and corruptions, who have not tasted “that the Lord is gracious.” Such will not serve the Lord Christ; but themselves only. Besides, regard should be had not only to the possession of true piety, but also to its *vigorous exercise*. The times require this. Ours is an extremely cold and lifeless age. True, there is much activity; but it is to be feared that much of this is very superficial, more from the flow and pressure of external influences, than from the vigorous exercise of grace within. A wintry storm is blowing upon us; few but feel its chilling influence. The fires must be kept burning; fuel provided, and piled on. And this, in a great measure, by the vigorous energy of a living, not a dead ministry.

Again, ours is a very carnal and worldly age. In this respect the rush is onward in all departments of society. Scarcely any stand so remote as not to feel the pressure, and catch the spirit. The head, the heart, and the hands, are so full of secular affairs, that scarcely an hour is left for thoughtfulness, prayer, and reading the Scriptures. With all this, and its evil connexions, the Christian minister has to contend; and if he be not overborne and carried away, it is owing very much, if not altogether, to the strength and vigour of the Divine life within.

Various forms of error, some old, some new, are every where sweeping abroad. How are these to be met and overcome? Perhaps you say, By the power of intellect and force of reason. These have their place; but they will not always do. The vigorous exercise of grace is needed. It is the energy of the heart in the human frame, which nerves the arm to defend the head. And so in the spiritual system. The historian, D'Aubigné, in giving his own experience, states, “that after his conversion to God, and after he had begun to preach Christ with fulness of faith, upon his coming into Germany, he was so assailed and perplexed by the sophisms of Rationalism, that he was plunged into unutterable distress, and passed whole nights without sleeping, crying to God from the bottom of his heart, or endeavouring by arguments and syllogisms to repel the attacks of the adversary. In his perplexity he visited a venerable divine at Kiel, who for forty years had been defending Christianity against the attacks of infidel theologians, and spread out his doubts and difficulties for solution. Instead of doing this, Klenker replied—Were I to succeed in ridding you of them, others would soon rise up; there is a shorter, deeper, and more complete way of annihilating them. Let Christ be really to you the Son of God, the Saviour, the Author of eternal life; only be settled in his grace, and then these difficulties of detail will never stop you; the light which proceeds from Christ will disperse all darkness.” This advice, followed by the text, suggested by another friend, “Now unto him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think,” relieved him of all his difficulties. Let this suffice to show that the possession of true piety, and its vigorous exercise, should govern in the choice of candidates for the ministerial work.

(To be continued.)

THE  
C O V E N A N T E R .

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OCTOBER, 1862.

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THE DUTY OF THE CHURCH TO PROVIDE A MINISTRY  
ADEQUATE TO THE PRESENT TIMES.

(Concluded from page 8.)

2. The possession of undoubted fidelity. "Faithful men." And here I remark, that the belief and reception of the truth, from an exalted view of its divine excellence, intrinsic worth, and ever-beneficent influence, together with an ardent love and desire for it, and the maintenance of it, enter largely into the formation of this trait of character. The mind and heart must be thoroughly imbued with the truth, otherwise there will be little or no fidelity in the life. The truthless are not to be trusted. Intimately connected with this, and in some measure flowing from it, is honesty of intention and purpose. I use the term honesty, not merely in the sense of what is decorous or honourable, but as it relates to the principle of justice, which should enter into and regulate all our conduct. If we would have faithful men, we must have those whose endeavour at least is, to think and act at all times justly. None other can be rightly or safely trusted. The infinitely momentous concerns connected with the gospel ministry should never be committed to the care of dishonest, unjust men. The ministry of the church should be purged of all such, wherever they may or can be found; and no more such permitted to enter. Those who manifest dishonesty in minor matters, should never be allowed to intrude here. "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much. If, therefore, ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?" Luke xvi. 10, 11.

Truth, honesty, and then *corresponding action* in the prosecution of the trust committed. "Make full proof of thy ministry." 2 Tim. iv. 5. Fill it up, complete it. And this both as to matter and manner. There should ever be respect to the rights and interests of ministers themselves. "Take heed unto yourselves." To your own spiritual and eternal interests. It ill becomes such to say, "Mine own vineyard have I not kept." There must be due attention to the office they bear. They are ambassadors of Christ. No higher honour, no more sacred trust than this. They should sustain the honour and dignity of their office, and of the Lord and Master who sends them. The man should never be permitted to belittle the office. And then there

is the whole range of divine truths, "That which we have heard among many witnesses," which has been sealed by the blood of martyrs, handed down through many generations, to be held, preserved, and transmitted unimpaired to others—sinners to be sought for and brought home to God—the flock of God to be fed—the kingdom of Christ advanced—and all this in opposition to the errors, corruptions, temptations, and discouragements that every where prevail. In this whole matter unwavering fidelity is requisite. And so there is with regard to the manner of action. "A man is not crowned unless he strive lawfully." 2 Tim. ii. 5. Not every thing which passes for fidelity, as it regards manner, is so in God's account. It is not the windy vociferations of the fiery zealot,—nor the manifestation of malignant passion, instead of holy vehemence. Nor that rash inconsiderateness, which has no respect to time, place, or circumstances. But here is the divine direction: "Lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins;" and this, "whether they will hear or forbear." Isa. lviii. 1; Ezek. ii. 7. At the same time, "The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men—in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth." 2 Tim. ii. 24. And here is an approved example: "Not handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." 2 Cor. iv. 2. There should, then, be good evidence of the knowledge and love of the truth—of unimpeachable honesty—and of a disposition for becoming action in all those selected for this high and responsible trust.

3. The possession of competent ability. "Able to teach others also." And here we should not overlook the physical strength of body. The want of this, it is true, is not always sufficient reason for the discouragement or rejection of a person from going forward. For Timothy was of a delicate constitution, "troubled with often infirmities." Still, however, none should be encouraged to go forward where there is no good evidence of sufficient strength of constitution for the arduous duties of the calling. Fidelity to the persons themselves, and the interests of the church, require this. The exhausting influence of long and intense preparatory study—the constant preparation that is necessary for the pulpit—the Sabbath exercises—the various pastoral visitations—personal, domestic, and public duties—together with the almost ever-recurring disappointments, want of success, the torture of mind occasioned by their own sins and infirmities, the falls, scandals, imprudence, and perverseness of professors, all lay a heavy tax upon the physical constitution, that none adequately know but those who are called to bear them. And the interests of the church must necessarily suffer through the indisposition of the labourer.

Again, mental ability is requisite. "Able to teach others." This contemplates power of mind. Not men of inferior capacity; but such as possess naturally a high and commanding order of intellect, capable of that degree of culture and exercise of power that are necessary to give weight and influence to the office and work. While "the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong," still it would be great folly to select the lame for the race, or the feeble for war. In all the

departments of science and art, the world by its influence has monopolized many of the greatest intellects that are now at work upon earth. Many of these are highly trained and refined, as far as human culture can go, unaided by grace. False systems of religion and philosophy are sustained and propagated by mighty minds. Add to this, the abundant educational facilities so extensively in operation, by which the masses of the human family are being rapidly raised above their former level to an advanced state of intelligence. Mind is every where becoming more strengthened, quickened, and enlarged. With all this the church is imperatively bound to keep pace. Nay, more, to be in advance. "Ye are the light of the world." And how absurd for the lamp-bearers to be less intelligent than those whom they profess to guide! The degree of training and culture, twenty, fifteen, or even ten years ago, will not do now. The church now, more than ever, needs the very best minds, and these thoroughly trained in the whole range of literature and science of the day. And especially there is needed theological training and ability. Men, mighty in the Scriptures. First, in order simply to preach the gospel. God made ministers. "Who," says the apostle, "hath made us able ministers of the New Testament; not of the letter, (only,) but of the Spirit." 2 Cor. iii. 6. Second, to fight the battles of the Lord against all the church's enemies. "Take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God," and study its exercise. "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds." 2 Cor. x. 4.

Third, to show the manner of Christ's coming kingdom, which is nigh at hand. The prophecy of Christ's witnesses in sackcloth is well-nigh completed. The angel has lifted his hand to heaven, and swears by him that liveth for ever and ever that there shall be time no longer. The Mediator from his throne has pronounced the sentence. The condemned are being fearfully and rapidly executed. These mighty movements portend the speedy removal of all those corrupt systems, ecclesiastic and civil, that have so long prevailed in the world, and are preparing the way for the speedy and universal establishment of Christ's righteous and peaceful kingdom throughout the earth; the principles, forms, and order of which, both in a civil and ecclesiastic point of view, will have to be brought forward, discussed, and disseminated, in order that new, righteous, and benevolent systems may succeed the old and rejected. Little has been done, as yet, in this direction; but the onward pressure of the times will soon show clearly that more must be done; and the necessity of having capable minds, and these theologically trained for the work.

We only add here, Ability to communicate. Candidates should be such as are likely to be "apt to teach." Conforming to this divine direction, in the choice of candidates, the church should proceed,

III. In training them for the office and work. And here all should lend their aid. And,

1. Parents. In this matter they have an important service to perform. Timothy's mother early instructed him in the knowledge of divine things. This laid the foundation for his own personal salvation, and his future usefulness as a preacher of the gospel. 2 Tim. iii. 15.

Hannah, having received Samuel in answer to her prayers, in due time devoted him to the Lord, according to her vow. His character and ministry are a standing testimony that God gives the church a competent ministry in answer to the prayers and vows of godly parents. Here is where the duty of parents begins, by prayer devoting their sons to the service of the Lord. They should be guided in their choice by the directions of the divine word, some of which have passed in review; and then by prayer and solemn vows dedicate them to God. And few, if any, who do so, fail to realize their hopes. Dr. M'Crie records, that when quite a small boy, he was sent by his parents to school, some miles distant. The morning he left home, his mother accompanied him some distance on the way; when about to separate, she took him aside to the hedge, and kneeling down, there with a mother's faith and affection, commended him and his studies to the God of all grace. From that day the future object of his life was determined. And may I not be addressing some, if not many, who know what it is to be devoted and followed by a father's or mother's prayers? Stimulated and encouraged by the remembrance of this through the arduous routine of studies, labours, trials, and discouragements, they have passed. And while parents are thus encouraged, let them ever remember that the formation of their children's character depends, in a great measure, on their care. The first seven or eight years of life generally determine the leading features in the character of the man. If, from her children, the church is cursed with an unworthy ministry, let the fault, in some measure, rest where it should, with unfaithful parents, who neglect their proper training. Let parents study and ponder well their responsibility in this matter. If you fail in your duty, what right, what grounds have you to expect that God will furnish the church with an adequate ministry?

2. Members of the church. Ministers, elders, and others, may do much to promote this work. They should look around them in order to discover those youth who give evidence of fitness to go forward, and suggest to them the propriety of doing so. "Look ye out among you," is the divine command. It is not enough for us to have only those, secretly prompted in their own minds, to offer themselves. We should have more. The external means should be employed to enlarge the number. It is true that none should be encouraged to go forward, but those inwardly called by the Holy Spirit. But there is also the external call of the Spirit in the use of means. And this in some, if not many cases, may precede, as well as follow, the inward call of the Spirit. Those who have their attention first directed to this matter, by the suggestion or advice of a friend, may at the same time be brought under the influence of divine grace prompting them to the work, as really as those influenced only by the reflections of their own minds. God calls by his providence, as well as by his grace; and you have a part here to perform. This is the first and preparatory step. Then follows that advice, direction, and assistance to the youthful mind to go forward; and to which all, more or less, may contribute. And here we remark, that if we have a trained ministry at all, material aid is indispensable. The burden of this must fall somewhere. And hitherto, as far as the preparatory course is concerned,

it has fallen, chiefly, and perhaps properly, on the students themselves, or their parents. Some have been able to meet it without much, if any inconvenience; while others have had to toil through under great privations, and others may be expected to do so still. But while this is so, why should not the church in some suitable way lend her aid here, as she has already done, in some measure, in the support of her Theological Seminary? In the full discharge of her duty, is she not bound to do this? I will not say that she is either unable or unwilling. For, generally, where a reasonable demand has been made for funds, and an equitable and reliable arrangement secured for their application and distribution, her members have responded with a commendable liberality.

In a community of seven thousand persons, which is about our number, with a settled ministry of about sixty, at an average salary of four hundred dollars each, each member, on an average, has not to contribute more than \$3.50 per annum. Domestic and foreign missions is about \$5,500 annually, giving about seventy-five cents more to each member. To most, if to any of our people, this cannot be called an onerous sum. Is it a full return to the Lord for the bounty, temporal and spiritual, received? We need a preparatory school among ourselves, or elsewhere, where the youth of the church may be trained in part, with less expense, less exposure and temptation. Let each member of the church agree to contribute two dollars annually, and we have fourteen thousand dollars to commence with. This, judiciously applied, would go far in aiding a school for our young men in their preparatory course, in filling up and enlarging our theological classes and library, and in sustaining and forwarding that institution which is now in so successful operation. This is the church's primary work. From these fountains of education, all our missionary efforts, at home and abroad, are to be supplied—all our destitute congregations and societies watered. And where can your funds be better applied? What expenditure produces a quicker or more abundant return? Every dollar spent in this way tells at once before your eyes upon the object for which it is intended. Begin this work at once, and you may live to see the beneficent influence of your contributions in the conversion of sinners, the enlargement of the church, and upon some going to the enjoyment of the eternal inheritance before yourself, there to give you a joyful welcome at last; or, should you be called away, you will have the unspeakable satisfaction of knowing that the aid you have given in this direction will continue to operate in preparing others in due time to follow you. And you may welcome to the realms of eternal glory, through a long succession of ages, the souls saved by the ministry you helped to educate; and that by the influence you have left below, the kingdom of Christ is still prospered. Let all our members, then, and the wealthy ones in particular, well consider the obligations that rest upon them to provide all that is necessary to secure the education of a ministry adapted to the wants and circumstances of these extraordinary times.

3. Teachers. The age demands a fully trained ministry. To those who have charge of the literary, scientific, and theological departments of education, we are naturally to look for the attainment of this high

and important object. Next to the family, the college is the place where the character of the preacher and pastor is formed. The teacher moulds the pupil. Principles, modes of thought, action, and expression, are indelibly stamped upon the youthful mind. How much, then, depends upon those who hold this sacred and honoured trust! How solemn and awfully responsible! If it be a momentous thing for a pastor to have charge of a single congregation, how much more so for a teacher to have charge of ten, twenty, or thirty youthful minds, all looking forward to the ministry; and these after a few years' preparation, succeeded by others in the same pursuit—and all going forth into the church and the world, there to make the impression of their character and training, either for good or evil, upon hundreds, perhaps thousands of the human family! How concerned, then, ought the church be, so see and know that the collegiate training of her sons is of the right kind! It is here that the young Christian soldier puts on his armour, here he is drilled for action and conflict. A great battle is being fought—a glorious victory is shortly to be won. “The saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom.” The Lord’s forces need to be led on and inspired with courage—their numbers to be increased. All this requires well-trained and competent leaders.

To you, Professors in the Colleges and Theological Seminaries, the eyes of the church are directed; from you she expects a ministry trained and adequate to these eventful times. And we trust her hopes will not be disappointed.

And now, from this subject we may learn—1. Our great sins as a church in this matter. Christ has made the preservation and enlargement of the ministry an essential and primary part of the church’s duty. Without due attention to this, whatever else she may do, she cannot possibly succeed in accomplishing the great end of her mission—the conversion of sinners, and the subjection of the world to Christ. Yet how very little have we done! How little thought and reflection have been given to this matter! How weak the faith, how feeble the desires in prayer for this eminently precious and much-needed gift! How poorly concerted and lifeless our efforts! And while God has ever been bestowing upon us with a most munificent hand, what have been our contributions annually to this purpose? Not one dollar a piece! Redeemed by the precious blood of Christ—called by his grace—fed to the full from the riches of his liberality—heirs of eternal felicity—and is this the value we have set upon the ministry of reconciliation? Ah! my friends, profess what we may, say what we may, there is something wrong here. “Our sins testify against us.”

2. The way in which this object is to be sought and obtained. By unfeigned repentance for all sins—by the revival and vigorous exercise of grace in the church, in all her members—by believing and importunate prayer—by vigorous and hopeful use of divinely-appointed means, and reliance upon the promise and blessing of Christ. Here is our duty. Shall we fail to fulfil it? If we do, Christ may cast us off as a withered and useless branch; but he will not fail to find elsewhere men and means, and will raise up and send forth a ministry adequate to these momentous times, while we may have to hide our

face in shame and confusion. But we hope better things. May the Spirit of the Lord awaken and revive us to this our duty and interest!

3. And finally. The call there now is for candidates for this office and work. "I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for me? Then said I, Here am I; send me." Who will thus hear and respond? Was there ever a time when there was greater need for a faithful and devoted ministry than just now?

Are you gifted with a competent measure of natural talents to serve the Lord in this work? Has the Spirit of all grace moved you to seek a personal interest in the great salvation? Kindled in your soul an ardent desire to do something for the rescue of the perishing, for the honour and glory of Christ? Is the way open before you for making the necessary and proper preparation? Then why delay to go forward? Where, or how can you honour and glorify the Divine Master more or better? True, it is a work of labour and toil,—often of trial and conflict; but still it is most holy and honourable, and not without its blessed reward. The secret consciousness that God is honoured,—that you have honestly endeavoured to extend the means, and so the blessings of salvation to others,—that the cause and kingdom of Christ are in some measure promoted, is a present reward, truly satisfying to the renewed and sanctified desires. So that of the faithful gospel minister it may be pre-eminently said, "This man is blessed in his deed." While a full and ever-glorious reward is still in prospect. For, "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever." Amen.

(From the Reformed Presbyterian Magazine.)

#### BRITISH CONSTITUTION.

##### THE OATH OF ALLEGIANCE—WHAT IT IMPLIES.

Steuart Lodge, Strathmiglo, 15th January, 1862.

MY DEAR SIR:—You will permit me to lay before your readers some additional arguments urged against those who decline to swear the oath of allegiance, because they account it wrong to do so, and to show how little reason there is in them.

*It is alleged that the example of Scripture saints is against them—* that Joseph in Egypt, and Daniel in Babylon accepted office under heathen and idolatrous monarchs. In answer to this, I have to say, *first*, that the example of Scripture saints is not to be accepted or followed as an infallible guide. Were we to use it as such, we would be speedily led astray. Abraham, the father of the faithful, under the influence of fear, prevaricated in order to save his life; Rebecca and Jacob imposed on Isaac the belief of a falsehood, in order to secure the blessing; Moses uttered words unadvisedly with his lips; Aaron, the saint of God, at the bidding of Israel, made a golden image; and Paul, in compliance with the advice of James, who was accounted a pillar, acted such a part as was fitted and designed to make the Jews in Jerusalem believe that what they had heard as to his maintaining the freedom of Christians from obligation to keep the law of Moses