

THE UNION SEMINARY MAGAZINE

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I. LITERARY.

EARLY RECOLLECTIONS OF JOHN RANDOLPH.

[Since the publication of my Father's sketches of Major James Morton in *The Union Seminary Magazine*, Vol. IV., No. 2, (Nov.-Dec., '92) I have been so frequently asked if among my Father's papers there were any other memoranda of the men whom he knew in his early life, that I venture to send to you for preservation in a later publication, the accompanying article, giving his "Early Recollections of John Randolph." These recollections were published in the *Central Presbyterian* in 1859, and transferred from that paper to the *Southern Literary Messenger*, then edited by John R. Thompson, Esq. (June, 1859, pp. 461-466). On p. 471 of same number and volume, Mr. Thompson makes the following editorial comment:

"We transfer to the pages of the Messenger this month from the *Central Presbyterian*, some pleasant recollections of John Randolph of Roanoke, which were contributed to that excellent paper by one who knew the gifted and eccentric orator and politician. As contributions to a work as yet unwritten, a full and impartial biography of one of the most remarkable men of his time, these sketches have a permanent value and it is with the view of placing them within ready access, as well as of presenting them to our readers, many of whom do not see the *Central Presbyterian*, that we surrender the space for their insertion to the exclusion of original material. It is a part of the Messenger's mission, which we never overlooked, to garner up all that relates to the past history of Virginia in the lives of her distinguished citizens, and thus give to the whole series of the Magazine a significance not possessed by periodicals devoted entirely to the literature of the day."

I take it, that it is also the mission of the *Seminary Magazine* as of the famed journal from which the extract is taken, "to garner up all that relates to the past history of Virginia in the lives of her distinguished citizens, and thus give to the whole series of the Magazine a significance not possessed by periodicals devoted entirely to the literature of the day." And specially to do this with reference to all that concerns the

THE DUTY OF ASCERTAINING AND ADHERING TO THE TRUE RELIGION.

PROF. T. C. JOHNSON.

“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.—I Thes. 5:1.”

It is not something, my hearers, which you will find easy to do. This thing of going to work to find out what is right and what is wrong in the religious faiths of those around you and in your own religious faith, which very likely you hold more because your father held it than because you know it is true.

Before you can make this examination you must overcome your natural indolence. The discerning what is right and what is wrong in any religious doctrine or body of doctrines, is not the easiest conceivable task. It is a work that requires for its accomplishment, very often, a considerable intensity and continuance of mental effort. The intuitive powers of most men are by no means so keen and thorough-going as to enable them to solve *ordinary* questions without exertion both intense and protracted. And much less can the average man determine the right and the wrong in the *religious faiths* of men—those joint products of the working of God in man and the deepest ponderings, desires, and determinations, on the part of man—without a struggle. Sheer indolence prevents many a man's climbing the Alps to get the view to be had thence. Many a man never sees the right and the wrong in the creeds around him because he is too indolent to work up to the point where he could see.

Again, before a man can discern the good and the bad in the faiths around him he must curb his tastes for discursive, general, and superficial thinking. He must not only use energy he must apply it constantly and for a protracted period *on a given point*. A man will do little toward clearing a new-ground cornfield, by cutting down a pine sappling in Prince Edward, a sourwood bush in Kanawa, and a young red-wood in California; by cutting a notch in an immense sugar maple in Maine, hacking around a great oak in Ohio, or by coultering with a Shetland pony the tough mesquite sod of a Texas prairie. Such desultory work may be attended by certain in-

cidental pleasure and benefits but it will not provide a maize-field. The yeoman farmer who will have a new-ground corn-field must choose a small tract in Prince Edward and clear her pines away, or in Knowa and cut and grub up her sourwoods, or in California and denude her slopes of a multitude of redwoods, great and small, or in Maine and clear off her sugar-maples, in Ohio and fell and take up by the roots many of her great oaks. If he will have his field in a Texas prairie, then, instead of a few scratches with a coulter and a Shetland pony he must provide himself with a great turning plow and yokes of cattle; and, then, for weeks slowly and painfully turn over the heavy glebe. Man is finite. If he is to do anything, he must limit the sphere of his operations and concentrate. The thinker finds it to be true in his sphere as well as in the Farmer's. Specialism, however it be run mad in our day, yet contains this of truth: It declares to men that if they will know anything well they must fasten upon that one thing and live and move and have their mental being in it; it protests against desultory and unconfined effort as accomplishing nothing; it asserts that he who will be an oculist shall *study* the eye, that he who will be the finest of Greek scholars must *live* in Greece, in her literature, art, history, under her skies, beside the waters which lave her shores and among her shrines. And if you are going to discern the good and the bad in the faiths of men around you, you must put your thought on them.

Your power of thought may prefer to go out and fix itself on your reveries, or to follow in a lazy way the tales of Arabian Knights, or to wander under the guidance of the cheap novelist, or to commit itself to the intoxicating leading of the mere *literateur*. It may wish to go careering off on any one of the infinite number of tangents on the sphere of your life; but if you are going to judge as to what is right and what is wrong in the faiths about you, you must pull in your thought and place it determinedly on the subject of inquiry for a sufficient length of time. You must exert yourself intensely, protractedly, and on the narrow question in hand.

Furthermore, in finding out the true and the false in the faiths around you, you must nerve yourself *to efforts many of which, you know, will result in no positive and immediate good*. For you have already seen, when a religious quack has come along, claiming to be some great power—an advocate of the

importance of some particular doctrine, it may be, or an apostle of Christian Science falsely so-called, or a man who claims to have a message for his age, obtained through his toiling scholarship, claims that God has enabled him to see the truth, about God, the Bible, and all religion, in a clearer light than the world has hitherto seen it—when such an one has come, we say, you have seen men patiently according to him attention and after all their trouble finding, often, only chaff and riff-raff. The fear that you, very likely, may get no returns for your painstaking examination save the knowledge that the claims made are false, tends to prevent your hearty engagement in such examinations, when new claims are presented you. But if you would reach the truth, down with the fear; and nerve yourself for investigation, albeit uncertain of positive results.

Once more, in finding the true and the false in the faiths around you, you must nerve yourself to *the risk of finding your own faith more or less wrong*. The nerve required here is not small. Many men stay away from a new teaching or refuse to consider an old one, simply out of fear—craven fear—as if the danger were less when unseen.

No, it is not altogether pleasant to examine the creeds about us. Nor is it a pleasant thing, under all circumstances, to stand for the truth when found. It is often very inconvenient, on the contrary.

It sometimes costs the giving up of many self-indulgences. If your investigation leads you to see that the true worshiper of God must treat every fellow-man under heaven as his neighbor, you may have to forego many indulgences in which you are now accustomed to disport yourself. If you come to see that it is according to the true faith that a man shall struggle, not to entertain the first impulse toward hate, or the first appetency toward impurity, or the first movement toward theft, or the initial tendency toward a lie, in his soul; but in all things, to be pure, without spot; you will find yourself inconveniently checked on all sides from the exercise of inclinations as natural as life. And if you find the true faith has been forsaken, consciously or unconsciously by the generality of Christians, or forsaken by the church of your fathers of which you have hitherto been a contented member, and that the true worshiper of God must separate from the multitude and from his own people, you have something beyond ordinary self-

indulgence to give up. You have to give up such harmony of religion as you have had with the church of your birth, and with your nearest and dearest. And about the hardest thing which a even a brave man ever has to do is to give up an inherited and cherished belief and hold to another, through the misunderstanding of him, and distrust, and dislike, and growing hatred, it may be, of all whom he has been accustomed to regard with respect, veneration, and love.

Besides standing for the truth is often followed by persecution. Persecution may touch both body and soul or the soul alone. You may not be liable to stoning with Paul, or to burning with John Hus, Jerome of Prague, and a host of other saints of God; you may not be in danger of being beheaded with James, or of crucifixion with our Lord. But you may suffer as those heroic men, if you stand for the truth—suffer, in having your fair name blackened by hellish detractions, in having heaped upon you all the petty insults, which your families and *quondam* friends as well as mere acquaintances and strangers may heap upon you.

When our fathers stood for what they regarded as true, in 1861, their characters were maligned. They were excommunicated from the church of Christ as impious traitors and malevolent heretics. When certain princes in our Israel stand, to-day, for a truth, they are maligned—by some stupidly and ignorantly meligned, by others wilfully and maliciously maligned—, and by men who but for stupidity and meanness would stand with them.

The Northern General Assembly is charicatured in a most galling manner for its stand for the truth as it sees it in relation to Briggsism—by the secular press, by a large part of the American people, and by not a few of God's own people. When a man stands for the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, he is, today, in many quarters tabooed as hundreds of years behind the time, as having taken a manifold Rip Van Winkle sleep. So when he makes anything of a distinctive denominational tenet.

If you really hold the truth, you run risk of more or less persecution.

Yes sirs; it is indubitably hard to find out whether a man has the right faith and then in the face of the world to stand for it, to hold it fast.

Yet, Paul exhorts us in our text to do this very thing. He

says: "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good." Paul had for *one* of his immediate purposes in uttering these words to modify, by their import, the force of an exhortation given in the immediately preceding verse. That exhortation had been: "Despise not prophesyings." *i. e.* (chiefly) despise not those interpretations of scripture which professed prophets of the Lord give you. For by "prophesyings" as used here we are to understand not predictions of future events or new revelations, chiefly, but rather interpretations of scripture—a kind of work, which, when viewed as completed, was very similar to the expositions of sanctified and illuminated teachers or preachers of today. These New Testament prophets may have, in every instance perhaps, made their interpretations under the miraculous guidance of the spirit. But substantially the same results, we say, are now accomplished by the thorough and scholarly study of men under the illumination which all Christians in common may enjoy. The prophesyings which Paul exhorts the Thessalonians, and with them all Christians, not to despise, are, then, those explanations which they offered of Bible teaching, together with their new revelation. The Apostle says: "Despise them not." But he adds: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." *i. e.*, do not lay aside common sense. Bring to a sober test the doctrines of all your religious teachers.

It is the habit of the Great Apostle to make much of this power of rational discernment. It is the habit of God to make much of it. He never encourages credulity. The power of discerning spirits seems to have been one of the miraculous gifts of the Apostolic church. And in Paul's enumeration of those gifts, this one always appears in connection with that of prophecy. *e. g.*, see I. Cor. 12:10. And he directs its use whenever the gift of prophecy is used. *e. g.*, I. Cor. 14:29. More expressly, without, indeed, any reference to the exercise of such a miraculous gift as Apostolic discernment, but with evident reference to the continued use of their common sense when listening to a teacher the Apostle (I. Tim. 4:1) warns Christians that, "The spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." That is, he tells them that there are going to be false teachers and that we should look out for them: John the Evangelist supports Paul in this notion of bringing every new doctrine of a religious teacher to the test.

He says (I John 4:1) "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world."

To return, this is what Paul says in the text: Bring all the teachings of your would-be religious lights to the test of a sanctified common-sense.

But remark the fact that he says somewhat more than this. Paul gives the proposition of the text such a form as to make it refer to all objects of Christian belief. All prophesyings were to be tested; but Paul does not say: "Despise not prophesying; (but) prove all prophesyings, &c." He said: Despise not prophesyings; prove *all things, i. e.*, all things within the sphere of things under consideration, all facts of religion: hold fast that which is good. He virtually says to the Thessalonians and to all to whom these words come, if we may be allowed to paraphrase his words in terms of our own time: Prove all things: Bring all things to the test. Test the Bible and see whether it is indeed the word of God. The reason must be applied to revelation only in a legitimate way of course. It is not competent to measure God or to decide what he should reveal. In that case there would be no need for revelation. But the reason is competent to weigh the evidences of revelation and upon conviction that God has made a revelation receive the contents of said revelation. Bring the writings which claim to record God's revelation to man, then, to the test. See whether the evidence of a real revelation is sufficient to carry conviction; and if so what are the contents of revelation. Test the standards of the church to which you adhere and see whether they are in conformity with the scriptures. Test the great contemporaneous systems which are brought to your knowledge. Test Arminianism and Socinianism. Test the teachers and preachers of the day; and see for yourself what is true and beautiful and good; and hold to that.

You are not to despise prophesyings—not to despise the Westminster standards or the Catechisms of Trent—the institutes of Calvin or those of Watson.

Don't despise every man who claims to have discovered a profounder truth in the scripture than all the worthies who have gone before. He is probably mistaken. He may, however, have gotten the truth. The church grew in its comprehension of the truth of God's word up to 312, and up to 590, and up to 1517, and up to 1648. Who has any right to say

that she had then reached her entire growth in this respect? Thank God, our church does not say so. She hopes to receive a new increment of vision into the totality of God's truth. And she may yet rejoice in that vision with a mightier joy than ever filled Kepler upon the enlargement of his vision on the material universe. Don't despise prophesyings.

On the other hand do not swallow prophesyings or religious teachings indiscriminately. The doctrine that the Bible is the Word of God may be true. The only worthy reception of the teaching must be for reasons apprehended. The doctrines of the Westminster standards may be true. Don't accept them without examination. Such a course is contemptible. Don't swallow anti-predestination without a real examination of what you are swallowing. Don't swallow Christian Science teaching. Don't receive hastily the theories of Baur and Straus and Renan. Don't open to take in all the views concerning the rise and nature of the Pentateuch and the word of God generally. Examine before receiving a thousand other *isms*.

This is the teaching of our text, I think we will all agree: It is OUR DUTY TO BRING THE FAITHS, whether they be ours by inheritance or by offer of those around us, TO A FAIR TEST, and then to stand by all that is good in them.

In support of the teaching of the text as thus interpreted, let us note briefly the following reasons:

1st. YOU OWE IT TO YOURSELF TO MAKE such an examination, and to stand by the truth when discovered.

The case of the heathen and the Mohamedan proves that it is your duty to examine the faiths thus. You, yourself, say that the Hindoo, the Chinese or the Bakuban, who does not examine the faith which he receives from his ancestors and from the heathen multitudes around him, fails to consult his highest self-interest; that, as an immortal being with an eternity of woe or of bliss before him, determined by the kind of life he leads on earth—that as an immortal existence which is receiving here the stamp of character, and, in particular, the attitude toward God, which it is to bear throughout the age of ages, and which insures the possession of endless progress in bliss on the one hand or endless descent into misery and ruin on the other, he owes it to himself to make the *most careful* investigation in respect to the grounds on which he hopes to enjoy a blessed future. You say that he should take all pains

that he may find the *true way* from time to a blessed eternity ; nay, better, that he may find blessed and eternal life here and now. And, *of course*, you are right. If *the one* destiny which awaits man be characterized by a wretchedness so awful that the wisest of teachers could do no more towards depicting it than to say of those whose fate it is : "Their worm dieth not and their fire is not quenched," and if *the other* destiny which awaits him, be life—fullness of life in the presence of God, the gloryfying of God and enjoying him forever—the attaining the supreme end of man's existence, it surely goes without saying that it should be the one business of the heathen man to seek for the true way that leadeth to life. He should seek for a perfectly satisfactory way.

You don't excuse the heathen's blind confidence in any way which he thinks he wots of. You hold him morally guilty for resting in any ramshackle way. The matter is of such infinite moment.

But the very same train of reasoning will show that it is your duty to yourself to make this examination and act on the truth. Nothing can excuse you for neglecting to search until you have found a sufficient way. It is the very business of life. It will not do to say that your fathers have made the examination for you. The heathen could say, his fathers have made the examination for him. Besides, God saves men as individuals and each must know for himself the way. Each must know that there is a way—a sufficient way ; and must get on that way. If you have not examined you do not know that Christianity is true, and if true that you have availed yourself of it as a means of safety. You may be holding a ramshackle Christianity for Christianity—a counterfeit Christ for the true, a false reception of him for a genuine.

Oh, you owe it to yourself to see whether the faith you have received or are receiving is true and sufficient. If you are tempted by indolence, dislike to restricted thinking, the great toil involved, or fear of being discovered as holding erroneous opinions, think of the doom to which you are moving in that place where a Dives cries for a drop of water to cool his parched tongue—in that place "where their worm dieth not and their fire is not quenched." If you don't like to toil for and stand for the truth think of being carried on ever to a deeper hell by the untruths which you may hold.

But dropping for the time all reference to future rewards

and punishments: Is there one before me now who does not desire to be a man—strong, by the grace of God, in yourself, for all your duties toward God, and for the keeping of your brother? But how can you be strong in your duties toward God unless you know His will? And how can you be strong, as your brother's keeper, unless you know the true faith? If you will be a man, "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good."

2nd. YOU OWE IT TO THE CHURCH OF GOD OF THE PAST, to make such an examination, and to stand by the truth reached.

The church of the past has committed to you, the deposit of the truth as it saw things; and it has turned over to you its reputation and honor as devoted to that believed to be the truth. And you owe it to the church of the past to preserve that spirit of love to the truth—as glorious an inheritance as any father ever left a son; and to give yourself devotedly to putting others in possession of the truth.

If every man on the *Victoria* could go to a death fit only for a rat, like a hero, that the traditional honor of England's navy might not be tarnished, surely you should brave the obstacles, and endure the labors, necessary in order to reach the truth and hold it fast for the purposes for which the church of the past has committed it to you, surely you should thus acquit yourselves as men, that you may ward off from the church of God charges of pusillanimity and baseness.

A few years ago, at the University of Virginia, when the Latin class was about to go on final examination, the professor thrilled every manly student's heart before him, by quietly remarking: "Young gentlemen, the honor of the University of Virginia is in your hands today. For all the years of its past, the University has been noted as an institution whose students have been too noble to tolerate dishonest work. They have scorned cheating and the cheater. Take up her honor today, and so care for it that you may hand it down without a spot to your successors. The University expects it of you."

The Prophets and Apostles, those stern and self-forgetful devotees of the truth, Augustine and Calvin and Knox, with all the noble host of God which has not counted even life dear that the truth might be known and loved, expects the church of God of today, and in particular you, to do your duty. Yes; children of noble sires, it is your duty to those sires to

examine the Bible and also the standards which they have left you ; and to learn the truth that you may communicate it to a perishing world. A long line of spiritual, and in many cases, natural ancestors, expect it at your hands. The church of Adam and Enoch, the church that rode the waters of a universal deluge which had buried all the world besides, the church of Abraham and the Patriarchs, of Moses and Joshua, of Samuel and David, of Isaiah and Malichi, of Christ and the Apostles, of Martyrs and Reformers, asks you to acquaint yourself with the Bible and the standards, persuaded that you will therein find that which will move you to go on and take the world for Christ.

You can't know the truth unless you examine it. You can't love the truth unless you know it. You can't give it to your posterity unless you make it yours.

My brethren, there are not a few men in the Southern Presbyterian church today who do not care anything for her distinctive peculiarities ; because they do not know what they are —just so in the greater church of God on earth. Many of the church people have not examined, and do not know, and hence, can not love the truth of God. They can't carry it to others. The church of the past calls on the church of the present to examine and know and love the truth.

3rd. YOU OWE IT TO YOUR FELLOWMAN OF THE PRESENT AND OF THE FUTURE to make this examination and to hold fast to the good.

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4th. YOU OWE IT TO GOD TO TEST ALL THINGS AND HOLD FAST that which is true. It is God who made you ; and he made you your brother's keeper. It is God who preserves you ; and he preserves you that you may do good unto all men. It is God who redeems you if you are Christians ; and he has made you such to be the salt of the earth, the lights of the world, as cities set on hills ; He has made you that you might let your light so shine that men might see your good works and glorify your father which is in heaven.

If you owe any respect, reverence, obedience to the mother who bore you and to the father who protected and nurtured you in your years of helpless infancy and childhood, you owe reverence and obedience to God who gave you these beneficent parents and has himself rocked you in the cradle of a good providence till this moment. If you owe any respect, rever-

ence and obedience to those friends who have by vicarious suffering and toils brought you up from beds of sickness, you owe the same respect, reverence and obedience to the wishes of the God ; who gave you the aforementioned vicars ; and himself in the person of the Son was incarnated, humiliated, and crucified for you that you might be healed from the awful malady and curse of sin. God wants you to bring all things to the test.

All the definitions of his purpose with reference to you proclaim the fact. The whole second table of the decalogue is one long command of this duty upon you.

Besides our text and the other passages cited in explaining the meaning of the text are from His word. He was pleased with the Berean Jews when they went into a careful testing of the preaching of Paul to see whether his teaching was in accord with the Old Testament which they already held as from God. You owe it to God to bring all things to the test and to hold fast the good.

It may not be amiss now to remind you that this text : " Prove all things ; hold fast the good," was addressed by the inspired Apostle not to preachers and religious teachers particularly but to the whole body of poor Thessalonian Christians. Paul was writing to a body of students of divinity, it is true, for as such Paul always regarded the church of Christ, but he was writing to no select class in the church—to no body of students in special preparation for preaching and pastoral work. He was writing to the whole church of Christ in Thessalonica ; and, through them, to the whole church of Christ everywhere. And I beg you, my hearer, who have been thinking that this truth was for your neighbor in the seminary and not for yourself, to beware of doing like many in all ages past—deputing your religious duties to some one else. This command is for the Christian in the pew. Nor can any such one claim that he has not the time and the means for the investigation and the stand. It is not necessary that you have much leisure or that you have any great equipment.

Most occupations, which are in themselves legitimate, are compatible with so much of study as is necessary in order to the investigation. *E. g.*, the farmer can do a large part of the study between the plow handles. The time which he has been wont to give to unprofitable and often injurious reverie, or to neighborhood gossip, he may devote to an examination of the

scriptures and his own inherited faith first of all, and then of other faiths. It is related of one of the fathers of the Presbyterian church in this country, that he worked in his youth for 12 hours a day at hard manual labor and yet during the same hours, in the course of a few months, mastered Latin grammar perfectly—a task to the ordinary mind much greater than the one to which you are invited in the text. Why can you not examine the propositions of your inherited creeds and the new doctrines offered you from day to day in the light of scripture readings, morning and evening, as you plow your corn and hoe your tobacco? You have time enough.

You also have the equipment. The Bible itself is sufficient for its own justification, being self-evidencing to the candid mind. Examine it, therefore, and see whether it is from God. Look at the whole book—its portrayal of man, and conceptions of man's duty, its revelation of God's nature; and conclude for yourself that this work is neither from man nor by man.

Again, ask yourself whether your profession of faith is in accord with the teaching of the Bible, and whether it is a sufficiently full profession. Take up your neighbor's doctrines and examine them in the light of the Bible. Take up all the teaching you hear. Examine it. Repudiate the evil. Hold to the good.

The busy Christian can make such an examination. He is under obligation to do it.

But my brethren of the seminary, the duty is more incumbent on you by ten fold. The call to the ministry which you profess, the special opportunities which you here enjoy for making the examination, the responsibility corresponding to your great opportunities, all unite in strengthening the obligation to "prove all things and hold fast the good." And besides the theological questions of the hour demand an examination of the most radical kind.

You are setting out to be guides—formally guides; should you not, above all other classes, make the fullest examination of the way along which you are to be guides, and hold to it?

You have here an unusual equipment to aid you in making the examination—a noble library, able and honest instructors, a fair modicum of time set apart for this very purpose. God has picked you up and brought you to this place of privilege that you may make the examination and take your stand.

If *any one's* manhood, then, should exhort him to "prove

all things and hold fast the good" how much more should yours? If the church of the past expects *every* Christian to do this thing, how much more must it expect you? If the needs of his fellow-men of the present and future should move the Christian farmer to an earnest examination of faiths and an adherence to the truth, what is your corresponding obligation? And what excuse can *you* of all men render to God for failing to comply with the commands of the text.

Bethink you, too, that every one of these reasons why the theological student should, of all men, make such an examination, is emphasized by the radical questions asked by the world, in every department of theological belief this minute.

Men are asking whether all sorts of plausible theories as to the origin and real nature of the scriptures are not correct. The war against the Calvinistic system has never been more bitter. The very heart and soul of the redemptive scheme is in dispute. In polity, a great throng of men are crying through the voice of Dr. Josiah Strong: "Erase the dim line between the sacred and the secular," which means: obliterate the distinction between the church and state, among other things. You are to meet these questions. You are to take your stand with reference to them. How can you take a manly stand without investigation thorough and sufficient? Can you contemplate with equanimity your taking your stand among the "progressives" and sneering thence at the "awful orthodoxy" of your neighbor as some empty headed "progressives" now do? Can you contemplate a stand with equanimity, among the "orthodox" and sneer at "progressiveism" about which, and the questions which divide the two parties, you are as incompetent to talk as the animal that chews the thistle and wakes the hills with his ugly bray?

Oh, my brethren, the work which you look forward to, is the grandest, but in case of the noble minister, the most difficult that falls to the hand of man.

Let me beseech you to use well the present opportunity? I trust that it is not necessary to beg you not to idle. But I beg you not to indulge in purposeless general reading. And I even dare to warn you against *any considerable purposeful* general reading while here. Some seem to think that the seminary is the place for the student to acquaint himself with the classic and even the lighter literature of the world. But that is a great mistake. The preacher, should, indeed, have at the

earliest possible moment a thorough acquaintance with the richer portions of all the world's great literatures. But the student should not take his time at the seminary to make himself so acquainted. He is to be a specialist in a difficult department. He should give himself to the mastery of that department, while here.

In no other calling is there need for higher and more special education than in the ministry. There never was such need for an educated ministry as in our own day. The general level of education is higher in this age than ever before. The world has respect for a man who speaks with the facts at his back—probably as much as it ever had. But it has much less respect for every man who has not the facts at his command. The age respects a man up in his own department. It does not respect him when he is not up. This is the place for work on your special line. You are henceforth to be a herald of the gospel. This is the place to get a knowledge precise, specific, sufficient of your message. To do this the time allotted you here is none too long. The man who thinks he does not have to study hard and long to be able to preach as God would have him, is a fool or a knave or both in one. There is only one way to come to know things in this world; and that is study. Then give yourself to the work of investigation while here. Important as the art of preaching is, worthy of attention as it, it is not so much your business here to learn to preach as to learn what the truth is which you must preach.

If any one of you feels inclined to say of me; He is talking as a professor and not as a man of the people, as a great pastor would talk, I ask you to listen to the following extract—from a man who, however, errant in theology, was a pastor and pulpit orator with few equals.

Philips Brooks in his lectures on preaching asks "what is the true preparation" (for the ministry)? He answers the question by saying: "First, and most evident, there are his special studies which have been filling him with their spirit. Most men begin really to study when they enter on the preparation for their profession. But shall I say to you how often I have thought that the very transcendent motives of the young minister's study have a certain tendency to bewilder him and make his study less faithful than that of men seeking other professions from lower motives?"

I never shall forget my first experience of a divinity school. The first place I was taken to at the seminary was the prayer meeting; and never shall I lose my impression of the devoutness with which those men prayed and exhorted one another. Their whole souls seemed exalted and their natures were on fire. On the next day I met some of those same men at a Greek recitation. It would be little to say of some of the devoutest of them that they had not learnt their lesson. Their whole way showed that they never learnt their lessons; that they had not got hold of the first principles of hard conscientious study. The boiler had no connection with the engine. The devotion did not touch the work which then and there was the work and the only work for them to do. By and by I found something of where the steam did escape to. A sort of amateur, premature preaching was much in vogue among us. We were in haste to be at what we called "our work." A feeble twilight of the coming ministry we lived in. The people in the neighborhood dubbed us "parsonettes." Oh, my fellow students, the special study of theology and all that appertains to it, that is what the preacher must be doing always; but he never can do it afterward as he can in the blessed days of quiet in Arabia, after Christ has called him, and before the Apostles have laid their hands upon him.

If like a man you are to take your stand with the so-called "orthodox" or like a man you are to stand with the so-called "progressives" you must to the task enjoined in the text. The grounds on which your present "doxy" rests are not of a kind whence to shake the world for Christ. If you are to preach with a force recalling the prophets of God you must examine and know and love the truth to death itself.

For this talk you need the Spirit's help in addition to all power of self determination. Wait on the Lord for Him.

O may he make your coming here a blessing to the place and a blessing to yourselves, to the world and to His own holy name.