

THE PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW.

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I.

THE FUTURE OF HUMANITY ON EARTH.

HE would be a bold thinker who should undertake to foretell the fortunes and the state of an American Republic five or ten centuries hence :—who should attempt not only to describe the type or types of government which may then exist here, but also to delineate the personal characteristics of the men and women of that distant era, the social life of the period, the grade of development and of civilization which our humanity will then have attained on this broad and elect continent. How much bolder would he be who, in full view of the present medley of antagonistic elements, religious, political, social, in European society and life, should propose to tell us what Europe will have become, after the agitations and the mutations of the next thousand years ! Bolder still would he be deemed who should attempt to prognosticate the future at that distant period, not of any single nation or continent, but of all the continents and all the races of mankind : who should assume to say what this world, in its controlling elements and tendencies, its prevailing spirit and principles and life, will be at the end of five or ten more centuries of activity and of growth. But would not he be boldest of all—daring beyond all comparison—who should venture to prophesy concerning the career and development of our humanity, not for any such given period however prolonged, but down to the last century and the last hour of recorded time : unfolding before our vision that ultimate issue in which the whole of human life on earth shall be consummated, in the decisive day

VI.

THE SUPPLY OF MINISTERS.

TWO impressions are wide-spread and deep: that there are too many ministers, and that they are very largely inefficient.

Two facts, which are undisputed, are especially appealed to in justification of both impressions: the numbers of preachers without charge who are congregated in our cities; and the showers of applications which fall upon every vacant pulpit.

But there are two other facts which should be weighed, and which break the force of the conclusions drawn from those: the cities contain only a small proportion of the ministry; and a great many of the applications for vacancies are made on behalf of settled pastors, who, for some reason, have become uneasy in their positions.

The glut of ministers in some of our cities leads in many quarters to an ecclesiastical fallacy directly the contrary to that which is sometimes found in the business world. "The mercantile public commit a fallacy by the ambiguity of the phrase, 'scarcity of money.' In the language of commerce, 'money' has two meanings—currency, or the circulating medium, and capital seeking investment, especially investment on loan. In this last sense the word is used when the 'money market' is spoken of, and when the value of money is said to be high or low, the rate of interest being meant. The consequence of this ambiguity is, that as soon as the scarcity of money in this latter sense begins to be felt, as soon as there is a difficulty of obtaining loans, and the rate of interest is high, it is concluded that this must arise from causes acting upon the quantity of money in the other and more popular sense; that the circulating medium must have diminished in quantity, or ought to have been increased. A

cry then arises for more money, for more circulating medium, no increase of which can possibly relieve this pressure." (Davis's "Theory of Thought," p. 264). On the contrary, because in our ecclesiastical centres unemployed ministers are seeking investment and cannot find it in and around those centres, the eyes of many are shut to the immense fields beyond, in which there is not a plethora, but a scarcity; and the cry arises for fewer ministers.

The numerous applications for vacant pulpits, on behalf of settled pastors, raise the question whether there may not be something in the churches, and in the way in which they deal with their pastors, to cause this ministerial uneasiness and desire to change. No doubt the starving-out process, in some quarters, by irritated ungodly Trustees, has something to do with it.

But our Presbyteries reported a year ago 927 vacant churches.* Why do not the churchless ministers, who are hanging around the cities, find their way to those fields? Or why are they not by some authority sent to them?

Before answering that question with a censure on the unemployed, and before condemning pastors who are desiring to change, there are some other figures that should be considered.

Epictetus said: "It is not facts which perplex us, but the opinion about those facts." The following facts, however, will perplex and sadden many:

We had enrolled last year 5,415 churches. But from 458 no reports were received by their Presbyteries. The great mass of the 458 are the mere shadow of a name, and should be left out of any statement that may be made of efficiency and strength. Many should probably be dissolved, though perhaps, with proper pastoral and presbyterial care, they might have been developed into active organisms. Of the remaining 4,957, 1,005 reported less than \$250, as having been raised during the year for all congregational purposes, salaries, buildings, repairs, Sabbath-school requisites, and other current expenses; 667 others between \$250 and \$500; and

* It will be understood that the figures, when not otherwise specified, are drawn from, and the references are to, one branch of the Church—"The Presbyterian Church in the U. S. of America"—whose Assembly met this year in Madison, Wisconsin.

765 more between \$500 and \$1,000. Thus almost 2,500, or one-half of the whole number, did not reach \$1,000 each for all purposes. Now estimate the proportion that went to the ministers, on the one hand, and on the other make the requisite allowance for the number of congregations (1,315), which are grouped into collegiate charges (573), and for the supplements to salaries which were received from the \$299,536 that the Board of Home Missions divided among the 1,212 that it aided, and how can an embodied mind exist, not to say live, on what the most of the laborers in those fields received?

An attempt was made by the General Assembly in 1873, when we were on the flood of financial prosperity, to secure reports of ministerial salaries from the churches. Two-thirds of the list, or 3,230, reported a total of \$3,151,767,—an average of \$975. But that average would not hold for the whole; for, with few exceptions, the very large salaries were returned; and, as it was, 1,162 were below \$500.

Dr. Crosby, in his recently published volume of Lectures, "The Preacher," has written some very sharp sentences on this subject. "The average pay of Christian ministers in this country is the same with the pay of the better class of manual day laborers, and, of course, much less than the pay of journeymen artisans. . . . It should make the churches of this land ashamed in sack-cloth that they give less to the support of their ministers than they do to their house servants" (p. 181). That indictment will not, in its extreme severity, lie against our Church. Some of the other denominations are in this respect worse than we are. Even in the strong Philadelphia Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, complaint was made this spring, that insufficiency of support was driving ministers into secular work. But this is the case: Our General Assembly, and, under it, the Presbyteries, have worked nobly in the cultivation of the work of the Boards. They have, however, done little to enlighten the people as to liberality in the support of their pastors. The consequence is, that our Church stands at the top of the scale in its contributions to benevolent enterprises; but in the support of the hard-working ministry it is too far down among the Presbyterian organizations. Hence the people are not en-

tirely to blame. They have not been educated to the proper support of their pastors, because the pastors improperly feel it to be a delicate thing to educate them in. It is distressing to find that among our brethren in the South, the average of the salaries is only \$426; and only 294 of their congregations give over \$500 each to their pastors. As Americans, we ought to be ashamed of the contrast with the Presbyterian Church of England, in which, amid many adverse surroundings, the lowest salary is now \$1,000. This should not be, especially if, as Mr. Gladstone has predicted, the census of this year should show that the United States and not England is the wealthiest of the nations. Joseph Cook (in his "Labor," p. 198), has made this remarkable statement: "The cost of maintaining a hundred thousand paupers in the city of London, in 1875, was officially ascertained to be five times as great as that of maintaining a similar number in 1815. The difference arises almost entirely from the fact that the average popular estimate of what is humanly necessary to maintain even the poorest of the poor has risen." Has our Church, has any one of the denominations, recognized and acted upon that fact in its dealings with the ministry? Of course it is admitted that no man should enter the sacred office for the sake of a good living. Its incumbents should be willing to practice a high degree of self-denial. Unctuous Pecksniffs should not be desired among them. But, with their families, they have a right to be housed, fed, clothed, and developed as intellectual and æsthetic immortals, unless they are expected to be, like a puling character in a recent novel, "with many principles, absolutely no passions, and very little digestion." Hurst, in his description of the Lutheran ministers in the middle of the seventeenth century, says ("History of Rationalism," p. 73): "Scanty salaries are the outgrowth of scanty ministerial piety. The people, in no age of the world, have refused a proper and sufficient support to a zealous, God-fearing ministry." Would that this could be substantiated! But many of the most spiritually-minded, earnest, Christ-like pastors, though, perhaps, they are not intellectually prominent nor masters of ecclesiastical diplomacy, are among those who have to struggle very hard for survival under a wretched support.

Let no inference from this be drawn against the voluntary system. Dr. John Hall wrote ten years ago (in the "Memorial Volume," p. 477): "One of the very strongest arguments on behalf of the national Establishment of the British Isles, is founded upon the inadequacy of ministers' incomes in America. They can tell there of ministers among us keeping stores, and being driven to still more unprofessional pursuits—almost as much so as Paul's tent-making. They make rather merry over such accounts as they have received of 'donation parties;' and they allege that churches so sustained cannot raise and educate in the natural way their own ministers. Even so lately as the last meeting of the Scottish Assembly (Established) Dr. Norman McLeod urged this argument with all his characteristic force and earnestness.* American failure in this particular is a strong buttress of Old World State Churches." But the same writer two years later said ("Evangelical Alliance," p. 567): "Having lived in such countries, and under this particular system [church establishments], I am able to say, that the proportion of under-supported ministers in those countries is in my judgment quite as great as it is in this country." In the same volume, p. 571, the Rev. T. Y. Killen said of the Established Irish Episcopal Church: "Her people, having had everything in the way of church building, and the support of their ministers, provided for them by the State, except in the case of a few proprietary churches, had not been well trained in the exercise of Christian liberality;" and the average income of ministers in the Presbyterian Church, even with the addition of the *Regium Donum*, was about \$600. As to England, no one who has gazed upon Macaulay's distressing picture of her clergy two hundred years ago will ever forget it. Bentley, in the first half of the eighteenth century, alluded in the "Remarks of Phileleutherus Lipsiensis," to a parliamentary report which showed that six thousand of the clergy, the greater part of the whole, "had, at a middle rate one with another, not fifty pounds a year." Twenty years ago, when the celebrated "Essays and Reviews" appeared, Dr. H. B. Wilson

* *Per contra*: A few years ago I was surprised to see it stated that the Established Church of Scotland, with over 400,000 communicants, raised only about \$350,000 (£71,000), for all its missionary and other charitable objects.

wrote in them, p. 216: "The Church of England is said to be the richest Church in Europe; which is probably not true; but its people contribute less to its support than the members of any other Church in Christendom, whether established or voluntary." Within this decade it has been published that of the English curates, 1,585 receive less than \$500 each; 1,854 between \$500 and \$750; 1,782 between \$750 and \$1,000: or 5,221 less than \$1,000; and the Marquis of Lorne and his wife proposed to the Archbishop of Canterbury, that the laity should be asked to raise a sum large enough to provide for each curate at least \$1,000 per annum. On the other hand, Dr. Wilson declared: "There is reason to think, that the means and willingness to give, on the part of non-conforming congregations, are already mainly exhausted in making provision for their ministers." But the course of the Irish Presbyterian Church since the surrender of the *Regium Donum*, of the Scotch Free Church, which has (I believe) reached the minimum of almost a thousand dollars' salary, and of the English Presbyterian Church, in which a thousand dollars is the lowest salary paid, answers the declaration, sustains voluntaryism, and should excite while wounding us.

But, a commercial mind may retort, do not the figures given concerning our churches show, after all, that the demand is far below the supply? Another turn of the kaleidoscope will answer that.

Of our 5,415 churches, 121 are mission organizations in foreign lands; 458, as has been said, made no report to their Presbyteries; and 1,315 were grouped into 573 pastoral or stated supply charges, thus decreasing the number of established pastoral fields by 748. (It ought to be referred to as an amazing wrong that more than two hundred of our congregations seem to be served by ministers who are not Presbyterians, not on the roll of the Presbyteries, not subject to their jurisdiction). Now deduct the total of the foreign missionary churches, of the non-reporting churches which are evidently lifeless, and the allowance for the collegiate charges, and there remain fully 4,100 ecclesiastically organized fields in our own country, which need pastors.

What ministerial force have we that can be called upon for the cultivation of those fields?

Our rolls embrace 4,938 ministers and 306 licentiates—5,244 combined. The ministers I classify as follows: 3,289 pastors and stated supplies; 184 foreign missionaries; 274 presidents, professors, teachers, librarians, and editors; 14 ecclesiastical secretaries; 28 chaplains; 68 district, city, tract, S. S., Presbyterian and Synodical missionaries; 383 honorably retired; 371 without charges; 228 evangelists; 36 *confessedly* secularized; 4 suspended; 49 *in transitu*; 10 unmarked.

Of this number, at least 1,300 (foreign missionaries, those engaged in educational work, secretaries, chaplains, the local missionaries of the various classes, the honorably retired, the secularized, the suspended, the pastors of Congregational churches who are on our rolls, and the W. C.'s and evangelists who are unable to labor) must be counted out of the list of those who can be looked to for pastoral work in our country. That will leave not more than 3,900 ministers and licentiates settled or open to settlement, if they could be supported and had the gifts which could command a call. In other words, for more than 4,000 organized charges we have less than 4,000 men who could in any event, and without cramping other departments of ministerial work, be placed in them.

Let the case be stated in another form. Of our churches 638 have less than 50 communicants, leaving 4,777 with more than 50. "Wherever ten Jews were settled, it was incumbent on them to form themselves into a congregation, and have a synagogue service." Is it conceivable that through our sparsely-settled regions, 50 communicants can be organized into a church and not be entitled to pastoral care?

Now, add to this, the new stations* which in our constantly advancing and growing population should be occupied; the flood of immigration that has commenced afresh to roll in upon us with such enormous volume; the masses in the cities who are flowing away from the churches; the immense demand of the foreign field; the increasing educational positions

* Look at one of the recent monthly reports of the Home Mission Board! Dakota, two years ago had but two Presbyterian churches; now 21; 20 churches organized last year in Nebraska; 26 in Kansas, which now has 275 (last year 256, with 10,317 communicants); and one a week could be organized there if the ministerial force could be had.

which we should keep filled ; and what means the cry of surplus ? We have not enough ministers to supply the churches in our own country as they have been organized into charges : not enough properly to cultivate them, even if we were to cease to be aggressive in the Lord's work upon the world and in meeting the onflowing population of the country.

At first sight it has a very unfavorable look that nearly one-fourth of our ministers are unavailable for the pastoral office. In the Presbyterian army, what means it that there are about thirteen hundred who cannot be called upon to serve particular congregations ? In the array of our ministerial roll are we acting like " those Chinese generals who, to terrify their enemies, place among their troops formidable monsters of painted card-board ? " Have we a great number of mere figure-heads ? Analyze the totals and it will be seen that that number have not abandoned ministerial work, and that the proportion of delinquency is not large. The popular idea, based upon loose statements and wild generalizations, is to the contrary ; but the popular idea is wrong nevertheless.

The foreign missionaries will, of course, be admitted as properly engaged in a pre-eminent degree.

The presidents, professors, collegiate and theological, and teachers : will any Christian man, who has at heart the interests of the rising generation and the training of young men for professional life and for the sacred office especially, intimate that they are not in work which is strictly germane to the ministry ? * Is it not highly desirable to keep the educational institutions of all grades as largely as possible under the influence of men who have been trained beneath a sound theological influence ? Whatever be the educational position occupied by a minister, in a preparatory school, or the chair of dry mathematics or pure physics or classics in a college, if he carries into it the spirit of his Master and breathes the

* Dr. J. W. Alexander in " Thoughts on Preaching," p. 68 : " Some there are indeed who have had a clear vocation to the work of teaching, which is really a branch of the ministry, and one of its most indispensable branches, and who have served Christ as faithfully in the school-room or the university as in the pulpit." And the Scotch Second B'k of Dis., ch. v., § 4 : " Under the name and office of a doctor, we comprehend also the order in schooles, colledges, and universities, quhilk hes bene forra tyme to tyme carefullie maintainit, als weill among the Jewes and Christians, as amangs the prophane nations."

Christian influence through his instructions, his position is far more important than many pastorates; and we should be glad as a Church to provide the supply from our ministerial rolls wherewith to meet the demand for the work, however largely that may increase. Daniel Webster, in his Girard College Argument, said: "Since the introduction of Christianity it has been the duty, as it has been the effort, of the great and the good, to sanctify human knowledge, to bring it to the fount, and to baptize learning into Christianity; to gather up all its productions, its earliest and its latest, its blossoms and its fruits, and lay them all upon the altar of religion and virtue." Never was that duty more imperative than now as against the persistent leaven of scientific scepticism. It is said (*Nineteenth Century* for Jan., 1880) to be a Russian university rule that if a professor be sick his colleagues shall take his place and lecture in his stead whatever their specialty: hence a priest who taught Logic was called on once to lecture on Obstetrics, while at another a celebrated accoucheur was obliged to hold forth on Theology. Of course we do not want any such correlation of professional force as that. But as Theology is the queen of the sciences, we should pervade all educational institutions with the theological atmosphere.

It will scarcely be denied that the chaplains, the various classes of missionaries that have been specified, the ecclesiastical secretaries, and the editors of religious journals, are engaged in strictly ministerial employments which the interests of society and of the Church demand should be performed.

Those marked *in transitu* were passing from one field of labor to another.

The Honorably Retired: Who are they? Their names are found (and the same thing may be said of a large number of those who are marked W. C.,) at the head of the Presbyterian rolls, which are arranged according to seniority of ordination. They are aged men. A decade or two ago they were active, hard-working pastors: some of them in the glory of early manhood, when we who are now active were in the cradle or still unborn. But enfeebled beneath the weight of years, worn out by their labors, the keepers of the house trembling, the grasshopper a burden, they are out of the

harness. There must be at least five hundred of these veterans. Will any one cast a stone at them, or at the ministry as weighted by numerical inefficients, because they are still with us? Palsied be the tongue that would slur them.

Who, then, remain amenable to the charge of abandoning their work while physically strong, or of being such intellectual chaff that they cannot settle?

There are fifty that are plainly marked as in secularized employments, suspended, and unknown; and there are 228 evangelists. The position of the most of the latter class cannot be positively stated. Some of them are aged W. C.'s; others are preaching from place to place as they are invited; others show such a lack of gifts that nobody is willing to hear them; others, perhaps, do not really want to preach, either having means lazily to live upon or making a living in business. The larger number of them could and would be useful in the pastorate. But grant for the sake of the argument, (I believe it is granting too much,) that among the W. C.'s and the evangelists, there are two hundred and fifty who are not, and are not desirous to be, engaged in strict and proper ministerial work; and combine them with the confessedly secularized: and would there be anything in those figures at which the ministry should blush, the Church be indignant, the world scornful? Suppose it could be shown that three or four hundred of our able-bodied ministers have willingly ceased to labor in the ministry, or are such miserable make-shifts that they cannot secure fields to labor in? What then? A dead loss of six per cent. of our ministerial investment. In the business world would the failure of one venture in sixteen be considered at all disgraceful or disheartening? Do less than six per cent. of the men who start in life fall out by the way, and show themselves to be utter incompetents? Among the trained mechanics, how many turn out to be the veriest botches? What percentage of lawyers never get briefs, or having received some in early life make such a poor show that no more are placed in their hands? How many physicians have to exercise the grace of patience through lack of patients? After all that is spent on the nation's wards at West Point, and the severe intellectual discipline through which those Cadets are supposed to be led, how many of them have made any return to the Government?

Suppose all of our derelict or utterly incompetent ministers were among those who were educated with the help of our Board of Education: would the money lost on them, judged according to the strictest business principles, anything like balance the gain which has been brought to the Church by those who, educated in the same way, have been grand successes in the pulpit?

I very strongly doubt whether there can be found upon our ministerial rolls the names of a hundred men who have deliberately abandoned their proper work. It may be that among the evangelists and W. C.'s may be found a couple of hundred who are still physically able and who are willing to preach and do other pastoral labor, but who cannot secure the call of a congregation able to support a pastor. But they are too often scornfully spoken of as utterly inefficient, as are also many who are found in the pastorate. This has become one of the stock charges of the day.

The question, which this raises, as to what constitutes efficiency and success, in a true Gospel sense, cannot here be discussed at length. This, however, may be said: The most important results of ministerial work and influence cannot be weighed, measured, or counted. There are prominent and popular city preachers, who, at the bar of heaven, appear as splendid failures. There are obscure pastors, unknown to the great world, whom the angels know to be mighty vital forces in the quiet development and extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, and in a saving influence upon the society around them. Who can estimate the value, to the country and to Christ's kingdom, in time and for eternity, of the holy-life influence and the quiet routine labors, through pulpit and by pastoral visitation, at sick-beds and funerals, of the thousands of godly though perhaps not intellectually polished ministers of the various denominations? Oliver Wendell Holmes, among his flippant references to them, confesses ("The Professor at the Breakfast Table," p. 9), that they "have played the part of the fly-wheel in our modern civilization." What would this Republic have been, what would it be, without them? This question of supply is not to be settled only on Webster's remark about the Law: "Always room at the top." Important as is the influence of

the few top-men, their combined work does not approach that which, heaven-like, goes on from the thousands who are below them in all degrees to the lowest round of the intellectual and social ladder. With Jesus, says Geikie (i. 442), "Success and results were only subordinate." As far as history records, the greater number of the Apostles were failures, and the Master erred in calling all but Peter and John and Paul. God's true workmen, however, "have been content to leave all questions of success or failure in the hands of God" (Farrar's Paul, ii. 588). But even as to the fruits which the coarser criticism may test, I should be willing to have appointed a mixed judicial commission of ministers, lawyers, physicians, merchants, and master-mechanics, men with the gathered experience of three-score years and ten, and, letting them combine the results of their life observation, I would take their verdict on these questions: Whether, during the last twenty-five or fifty years, our theological training has not placed in the ministry a larger proportion of men who have attained real eminence in learning and intellectual power than the other professions have exhibited? Whether the American ministry has not been (not merely more moral: blessed be God, that is a question that cannot even be raised; but) more influential for good and more successful in its work, than any other class? And this may be added: The test of efficiency which is presented by many vacant churches, each considering itself to be "peculiar," and especially by those who have ornamented themselves with a first-class mortgage, which makes it necessary that the minister should be a mint to coin the pews, as by electric discharges, into dollars: that test would exclude Paul and even Jesus himself from their pulpits.* And it is submitted that if ministers fail in an efficiency which Paul and the Master did not possess, the fault must lie—in the pews.

But notwithstanding the numerical insufficiency of our present supply of ministers, and the widening fields which ought to be

* The saucy Gail Hamilton made an apologetic remark (in her "Stumbling Blocks," p. 120), for such churches which is worth reproducing: "The people are not always so unreasonable as is supposed. They sometimes make great demands, because they do not understand what it is that they want. Girls talk in heroic verse of the virtues which their suitors must possess; but by and by they marry men who are not taller by the breadth of my nail than any of their contemporaries, and live happy ever after."

possessed, we are met by the startling fact that the candidates for the ministry are decreasing. The decrease has not, as yet, absolutely manifested itself in the Theological Seminaries. Those institutions of our Church had last year 505 students as against 456 in 1871; and the Board of Education had under its care, in that stage of their studies, 224 as against 230 in 1871. But in the collegiate and theological stages combined there were, in 1871, under the care of the Presbyteries, 711, and in 1879 only 614, of which the Board had 502 in 1871 and 426 in 1879. Since our reunion there has been "an increase of sixteen per cent. in the number of ministers, of twenty-two per cent. in the number of churches, of thirty-three per cent. in the number of communicants, and of forty-two per cent. in the number of persons connected with the Sabbath-school," but the number who are preparing for the ministry is less than it was a decade ago. The latest reports from the colleges show an alarmingly small proportion of the students who have that work in view; and, it is in more than one quarter intimated, the attention of the brightest and most promising of the young men, intellectually, is being less and less turned to the sacred office. Of course if this be not checked, the Church and the country will be in danger.

No diagnosis of the disease, however, will be reliable which does not take into account the fact that it is not in America only, or among Presbyterians only, that it prevails. It is epidemic, not endemic. The Churches which require an educated ministry seem alike to be afflicted. For instance, in the Southern Presbyterian Church the number of theological students fell from 99, in 1876, to a little over 70, in 1880; and "it is doubtful whether enough students will be licensed this spring to supply the vacancies left by death during the year." *The Catholic Presbyterian* for April, p. 313, says: "It seems that the deficiency in the number of candidates for the ministry has reached its turning point in Germany. The Upper Consistory of Bavaria have issued an appeal to the congregations with reference to the present scarcity, concluding with an earnest admonition to parents to train their children in the faith of the Gospel, and to dedicate their sons to the service of the Lord in the ministry, as well as to pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers. There are under that Consistory no fewer than

78 vacant ministerial charges, for which they can find no candidates. As in Bavaria, so is it, though not to the same extent perhaps, in the other national Churches of Germany." The late Dr. Osgood, referring to the decrease in the theological students in Harvard, said: "The cause of the decline in the attraction of the ministry for educated young men is more general than theological opinion, while it is evident that the decline is more marked where the ministry is less guarded by positive faith and left more to personal opinion and faith than to loyal conscience and habitual discipline." Dean Stanley, on his recent visit to this country, speaking from a "liberal" standpoint to the Episcopalian clergymen of New York ("Addresses and Sermons in America," p. 66), referred to "the deficiency of young men of promise and power entering the ranks of the Christian ministry," and added: "I know not how far you are menaced by this danger, but if you are, or if there be any apprehension on that score, I entreat you to be constantly on your watch to meet it, to lose no opportunity of removing any stumbling-block or obstacle which may deter such men from entering your ranks." At the other extreme, a Vicar-General of the Romish Church has published the fact that there are three thousand vacant parishes in France, and that the vacancies are increasing.

It looks as if the scepticism that is through the air was working out one of its legitimate fruits in this way.

Confining our attention to our own Church, how shall the decrease be checked and the impending danger be averted?

1. It is, of course, a first truth, underlying everything that may be thought of, that the Church should earnestly pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers into the harvest. Only those whom He calls and sends are to be desired.

2. Closely connected with this is the truth that a wide-spread revival and awakening would have a mighty influence. The Romish dignitary above referred to has well said that "it is the religious life of the general community which ultimately determines the supplies furnished by it for the sacred ministry; and if that life ebb and slacken, so will the number of vocations fall off." The precious revivals with which our land has been blessed, especially those which have visited our colleges, have brought into our ministry some of its brightest ornaments, and

have always increased the number of candidates. A powerful quickening would, as a destructive and purifying conflagration, remove the evils which are causing the dearth and produce a faith that would carry our young men in spite of the obstacles that now arrest them. But, even while looking for that, it is our duty to use all the proper aids to faith. Therefore,

3. We must increasingly take care of the religious influence in our colleges; keep the sceptical taint out of our scientific chairs; and see to it that our young men attend, not institutions which claim to be free from a religious bias or which are positively sceptical in their atmosphere, but those in which the Christian and Presbyterian tone is clear. Fifty years ago Mr. Gurney wrote, after an interview with the ponderous Scotchman: "It is evident that Dr. Chalmers is deeply impressed with the opinion that an overwhelming tide is but too likely, ere long, to sweep down many of our civil, literary, and religious institutions. The spirit which prevails abroad he apprehends to be in somewhat active preparation at home, and he ascribes its existence and increase to the wide dissemination of *superficial* knowledge." The catastrophe has not, will not, come. There has been a dissemination of superficial knowledge, however, which has carried many young men into secular, if not sceptical, life. As President Porter has said, with polished irony, "The very select family of those who call themselves the Scientists of the present generation are, of necessity, very active and bright-minded. The members of this large household are constantly stimulating one another by their brilliant hypotheses and their daring adventures in the field of experiment and conjecture." And the effects have been telling on the half-educated and the truncatedly educated. But if we mistake not, those sceptics have crossed their zenith. We must help them in their descent, and save our colleges from the remains of their influence which may still linger.

4. It is also important to blow away the flippant assertions which have so abounded, that there are already too many ministers, and that, as a profession, they are especially inefficient. These belong to the things that are not new under the sun. Addison had in the *Spectator* a number entitled "Overcrowding of the learned professions; many enter them, and fail, who would have succeeded at business." South asserted that many

a man "runs his head against the pulpit" who should have followed the plough. It appeared to Milton that "if any carpenter, smith, or weaver were such a bungler in his trade as are many clergymen in their profession, he would starve for any custom." Twenty years ago the *Princeton Review* had a labored article in reply to the question: "Are there too many ministers?" Following in the line of South and Milton, our genial Dr. Crosby recently asserted: "There are to-day hundreds of ministers in our country who ought to be at tent-making, earning their bread, but who, under a mistaken sense of the ministry as a paid profession, are wandering up and down the Church beseeching support, thus degrading themselves in their own eyes and degrading the ministry in the eyes of all!" ("The Preacher," p. 16). We doubt not that in the early Church, too, the assertion was heard that there were too many apostles; that the traitor was often thrown into the face of believers by scornful Jews; that Jerusalem Christians questioned the efficiency of Bartholomew, and Lebbeus, and Simon the Cananite, and wondered why the Lord had called them from manual labor. It is the sin of Dickens against the clergy, not that he charges them all with being bad, but that all who cross his pages are of a vile type; and many of his worldly readers (acting on Mill's truncated statement of induction "that what is true of certain individuals of a class is true of the whole class") accept them as representatives of the order. Are not our incompetent ministers sometimes put in the pillory, and referred to in conversation in Christian families and in newspapers in such a way as to produce a similar harmful effect? Are not our young men unfavorably affected by the tone of reference to ministers?

5. Perhaps there should be added the duty of our Presbyteries to watch against the organization of nominal congregations; to reach after the removal of the stated supply feature; to exercise more control; to refuse to permit faithful pastors to be driven from their post by ill treatment. Whatever encourages the people to look at their ministers as hired men, instead of divinely-appointed officers entitled to support, should be frowned upon.

6. But, in connection with all the other means, our Church should with boldness and pertinacity endeavor to accomplish

three things : each of the three, in reverse order, being necessary to the others :

(1). Elevate the ministry in the public estimation. Dr. Aiken's article in *The Catholic Presbyterian* on "The Waning Prestige of the Ministry," has in it much that is too sadly true. Ministers are not in general looked up to with the reverential respect which prevailed even twenty-five years ago. Every one who is lazy, unstudious, meanly sensational, unfaithful in his official work or inconsistent in his private life, helps to intensify the existing evil. It becomes each of us, by our own course of life, to assist in removing it. But, in addition, three things are necessary to keep the office on its true pedestal in the Church and before the world : *a*, the maintenance of the true view of it, and of the meaning of ordination to it ; *b*, the voluntary removal of those who show that they were never called to it by the Lord ; *c*, measures which will lovingly compel all who are in it to be continually engaged in work appropriate to it.*

I speak with peculiar hesitation concerning the first two of these three points, knowing that many of our ministers will differ decidedly with me : and therefore what I advance is with modesty, deference, and some misgiving. I hold a higher view of the office and of ordination than is prevalent among us. The idea that ordination is a mere form by which the Church recognizes the call of its subject and puts its approval upon his ministrations, does not, it seems to me, fill the scriptural expressions ; and it largely eviscerates the ordination service of its peculiar value, and depreciates the office itself. I believe in special ordination-grace as well as in special sacramental-grace. As special grace is conveyed by the Holy Spirit to the really believing communicant, so special grace is conveyed through ordination, by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery, to those who are truly called of God to the office.† Hence I might be supposed to be against

* An early Scotch Assembly enacted, "That ministers given to unlawful and incompetent trades and occupations for filthy gain, as holding of hostelries, taking of usury besides conscience and good laws, bearing worldly offices in noblemen's and gentlemen's houses, and such like worldly occupations as may distract them from their charge, and may be slanderous to the pastoral calling, be admonished, and brought to an acknowledgment of their sins, and, if continued, be deposed." The good old times !

† It does not meet this to say, as Baron Stow said to a candidate : "We give you no mysterious or supernatural power, for we have none to impart ; we give you no grace,

demission. But I strongly gravitate towards the idea that, consistently with this, we may allow that "when it is evident to the minister himself, to the court, and to the Church, that God has not called him to the ministry, and that his ordination was a mistake and therefore void, he may cease to be a minister," as the Southern Church provides in its new Book. The ministerial order is hurt by the retention on its roll of those who have declined from it into secular business, though their number is magnified as the number of the wicked children of the New England deacons used to be.

(2). Elevate the standard of intellectual proficiency in the incumbents of the office. As against the loose charges of inefficiency from those who are without, and in reference to the great spiritual work of the ministry, we vindicate the mass of our ministers: among ourselves, and keeping abreast of the culture of the age, we may admit that not enough of our number reach and retain a commanding theological position against the errors of the day, and that our pastors generally do not keep up with the course of thought, so as to deal with the educated of their particular congregations. This weakens their standing and influence in the community. The reading and reflective among our workingmen are especially infected by the current materialism. The ministers who labor among the masses therefore need to be the most thoroughly prepared. In extension though not in intention, in breadth though not in depth, the information of the people is growing; to maintain their place, and to exert their influence, ministers need, in breadth and depth, to be in advance of the former generations. Now, this intellectual elevation should be striven after: *a*, by the Presbyteries taking candidates under their care in ordinary cases, only after they have commenced their collegiate course and after an examination which would reach more than experimental religion and a call to the office, by testing the possession of some of the gifts which are peculiarly needed

for we have none to spare." The grace of God has its bounds. John Brown, of Haddington, once, under some irritation said: "The grace of God can do much; but it canna gi'e a man common sense." Nor does the indelibility of orders follow from this any more than the infallible salvation of all communicants follows from the Calvinistic doctrine of the sacraments. But I do not desire to press this view here. If, however, it will allow of demission, much more will the lower view.

in the ministry ; then, *b*, by watchful care of them all through their course and by rigid examinations which would stimulate them to hard study and sift sharply the weak from the strong and let only the fittest survive as ministers ; and afterwards, *c*, by the ministers themselves keeping up their studies with a progressive conscientiousness and zeal, remembering old Thomas Adams's remark that, "a minister without learning is a mere cipher which fills up a place and increaseth the number, but signifies nothing." The honor and standing of his order should spur every man in it to hard work. Bacon uttered a pestilential heresy, which has affected some of us, when he wrote (or was it he that wrote?) that every man owed it to his profession to write a book on some of its theses ! The dignity of the ministerial order does, however, require life-long study from its members. But—they cannot make brick without straw. Therefore the Church must

(3). Elevate the standard of support.

a. We need to continue to draw from the bright and promising of both classes of pious young men, the rich and poor. The ministry should bid high for the talent of the Church. True, as Prof. Blackie says ("Four Phases of Morals," p. 277): "Wherever official position in a prosperous and popular church presents an open career to persons desirous of making a respectable livelihood, there must always be a class of people, more or less numerous, who are ready to say in their hearts, though they may not dare everywhere to say it openly, 'Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a bit of bread.'" But the possibility and actuality of an abuse must not be allowed to drive us from the truth ; and the principle should be recognized that as soon as a young man, called of the Lord, is approved by a Presbytery, and gives himself up entirely to studious preparation for the work of the Church, he is entitled to a support from the Church. As a pastor who has other means, had better take a salary from his congregation ;* so, if a young candidate does not need it, he had better receive an appropriation and use it himself for the Lord. It is most desirable to get rid of the

* "By the 42d Article of Cap. 1, French Church Discipline, it is found, that ministers who are rich, and have of their own, should, nevertheless, take wages of their flocks, lest their example do prejudice to other pastors and churches." (*Pardovan*, Bk. Second, Tit. 14, 2).

discrimination of candidates—between those who are on the Board of Education and those who are not. The falling off in the number seems thus far to be almost wholly in the former class. It is to be feared that this is largely due to a prevalent tone of reference to them and to the financially amputating way in which the churches, by lack of contributions, compel the Board to deal with its beneficiaries. The danger is great, of the high-toned among our struggling young men, being chilled and driven off. And emphatically they are the men that the pulpit cannot afford to lose. Wealthy and fashionable churches, some of whose members look askance at the Board and depreciate its candidates, would be surprised if they knew that their own darling pastors had been among its beneficiaries!

b. Ideally establish, and at once strike hard and persistently, for a comfortable minimum salary; one, less than which no pastor shall receive, even if his immediate congregation cannot raise it. The principle of the sustentation scheme is right, whatever difference of opinion may exist as to its various specific provisions, and as to the way in which it has been worked. It ought to be considered a truism that every educated Presbyterian minister, be he settled where he may, and be his necessary existing expenses what they may, deserves a salary of at least \$1,000 a year; and that should be insured to him. "It seems natural and just," (says the Massachusetts Labor Bureau Report for 1875), "that a man's labor should be worth, and that his wages should be, as much as, with economy and prudence, will comfortably maintain himself and family, enable him to educate his children, and also lay by enough for his decent support when his laboring powers have failed." Will not the principle of that apply "much more" here? Stewart of Pardovan (Bk. 2, Title 14, 2), remarks: "Seeing ministers do deny themselves to the gain of civil employments, whereby they might have a more unlimited prospect, not only of maintaining their families, but of purchasing stocks for their posterity, therefore the Dutch custom is not unreasonable, which allowed to ministers so much for every son, in order to his better education and breeding." The English Episcopalian Jacobs ("Ecclesiastical Polity," p. 127), declares: "When in any church a maintenance for its officers is provided, it is clearly to the advantage of the community at large that they

should be unencumbered with secular cares." How do we now stand these tests?

c. Place the fund for the relief of disabled ministers and of the widows and orphans of the deceased on a higher plane than it is now. The terms in which it is referred to too often appear to savor of the notion that it is a charity in the lower idea of the term. Advocate it as a right, and make its grants more than dribbling.

d. With the money support provided in these ways, it would be possible for Presbyteries and Synods to restore the balance of churches and ministers, through a scheme which would remove the unemployed from the cities to the fields where they are needed. So long as proper support is not assured to a man and his family, he cannot be so dealt with.

Many will consider the ideas here expressed, as to the elevation of the support of the ministry, visionary. But the grandest practical results have been secured by schemes which were at the outset branded as very fanciful. There is nothing really impracticable in this, though as "all large subjects require time for the mind to adjust itself to them," ("Hodge's Conference Papers," p. 244), judicious measures would be necessary for the indoctrination of our people with it; and the full realization of the ideal would come slowly. But the beginning would be half the accomplishment. And one would think that a sharp view of all that the full accomplishment would involve ought to produce an enthusiastic beginning. What would it involve? Why, our Church could place on its lists of candidates for the ministry a thousand young men at \$200 a year; could give 4,000 pastors at least a thousand dollars each; and could secure a thousand disabled ministers and families of deceased ones \$500 a year each; through the raising of—what amount of money? Less than five million dollars a year: (\$4,700,000). Now remember that during the ten years which have passed since the reunion, financially depressed as the most of them have been, we have raised for our denominational purposes \$89,641,322, or an average of nine millions a year; consider that less than five millions will accomplish the three objects which we have declared so desirable, leaving four millions of the amount now raised annually to go toward the other congregational ex-

penses, larger salaries in the churches that can raise them, and the missionary work of the denomination: and wherein lies the impracticability of the aim? If the conscience of the Church were educated under it, it could be realized, and the nine millions a year quickly be doubled into eighteen millions. Fifty years ago, in 1831, the *Princeton Review* wrote (iii. 552): "The real resources of the Church are by no means fully known; and we doubt not that there is in her a spirit of more enlarged benevolence than even she herself is yet aware of; a spirit which has only begun to be awakened, and which is destined to glow with a more genial warmth, and a more extended influence, as her exigencies increase." Her 182,017 communicants then reported \$102,017 for the various objects outside the congregational; or an average of only fifty-six cents a member. Last year our 574,486 communicants reported for the same purposes \$1,948,245, or an average of \$3.39 a member. In 1851, when the reports of moneys raised for the internal expenses of the congregations were first made (in the O. S. branch), the 210,306 communicants contributed \$1,056,023, or an average of \$5.02 a member; last year the 574,486 communicants reported \$6,311,768, or an average of \$10.16. In 1851, for all the columns the amount was \$1,462,615, an average of \$6.95 a communicant; last year \$8,260,013, an average of \$14.39.* Encouraging comments on the *Princeton Review* remark! But what is it even now? If, according to the last published educational reports, Pennsylvania has a public-school income of \$9,022,669 for its average attendance of 575,597 scholars; if Massachusetts raises and expends \$5,582,519 for its 307,832 scholars; ought not our 600,000 communicants to do better still for themselves, for their 600,000 S. S. members, and for the various localities in which their light shines? And, if in the United States, the public-school annual income reaches the munificent amount of \$86,866,162 (Report of 1877), should not the religious denominations blush when they are told that they raise for salvation's great eternal work only forty-seven

* It ought to be noted that last year we felt in their extreme the effects of our financial depression. In 1875, before they commenced to cripple, our reports amounted to \$1,366,581 more; and made an average of over \$19 a communicant. Next year, if not the one that has just closed, we shall excel that; for we have emerged from the simoon.

millions? And ought not that blush to deepen when it is known that the teachers in the public schools receive as salaries \$48,392,820—more than the churches raised for all purposes, ministers' salaries included?

But are not things better than they were in this matter of support? And has not our Church accomplished a great work? Yes, yes; the wonder is that the ministers, stinted as they have been, have under God carried the denomination forward as they have done. But let no one apply here the *post hoc ergo propter hoc* fallacy, as Dr. Atwater says he once heard it applied by a juvenile orator who captivated "some of the magnates of the land by arguing that the imposition of a certain grade of impost taxes by Congress had been followed by seasons of industrial activity and prosperity."

The privations through which many of the young men have to pass in order to reach the ministry; their pecuniarily straitened homes thereafter; their frequent compulsory removals through inefficient support or unreasonable expectations; and the condition in which the widows and children of many of the deceased are left, have more to do with lowering the office in the sight of the public, with enfeebling the intellectual energies of its incumbents, and with crippling their influence, than any other cause. Any and every scheme for the proper supply of efficient ministers that does not reach these evils will have only a spasmodic effect.

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