

THE STANDARD OF ORDINATION.¹

IT is a pungent affliction to me to read two overtures from the respected Presbyteries of Wilmington and East Hanover, asking of the General Assembly the repudiation for our church of its time-honored and most vital attribute, an educated ministry. Those who advocate this revolution are doubtless moved by laudable zeal to multiply ministers faster, and thus to extend the operations of our church more rapidly. This zeal is commendable, but it out-runs all discretion.

Surely it ought to be enough to bring cautious men to a stand to witness the sweeping and summary way in which it is proposed to forsake the whole past policy of our church on this point. One of their amendments requires that when presbyteries proceed to ordain ministers they shall not require them to exhibit any classical scholarship whatever, nor any knowledge of philosophy, nor of either of the languages of inspiration. Here are whole continents of those acquirements our wise fathers deemed essential, swept away by one rash touch of a pen!!! This takes one's breath away.

The overture does indeed indicate a compensation, when it says that such requirements, out of place at ordination, are to find their appropriate position at licensure. I seek in vain for any consolation in this deceptive intimation. For, first, the arrangement proposed, if carried out in good faith, would be utterly illogical. According to our constitution, licensure is an advancement merely provisional and contingent; it merely makes the licensed man a "probationer *for* the ministry," and leaves him a mere layman invested with no franchise of office, whom the presbytery may degrade at its discretion without any judicial trial whatever. But it is ordination which makes the man official presbyter and herald, and that for life. Here, then,

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is the vital step of the governing presbytery. Here, then, should be the crucial tests of fitness. To neglect them here, and remit them to the previous non-essential stage is, both in the classical and popular sense of the word, preposterous.

This inversion would of itself ensure neglect of proper tests throughout the whole course of trial without any more bad legislation; but when we come to the new provision for licensure, the last ghost of a consolation vanishes. For presbyteries are forbidden to require any Latin exegesis, and are authorized at their discretion to dispense with every other test of classical, philosophical, and biblical scholarship. Everybody who knows presbyteries knows that this dispensing power, if granted, would usually be exercised. Thus, our time-honored requirements of real education are first kicked out of the rules for ordination. Conservative men are told that they shall be consoled by finding these requirements in the rules for licensure. But when we come to them, we find them virtually absent there also. Thus, practically, they are kicked adroitly outside of our church.

Moreover, were the requirements faithfully retained at licensure, the change would work the worst possible expediency; for it would offer a tacit premium to the probationer to cease his liberal studies in the interval between licensure and ordination, which is the very time when he ought to be most diligent in them. He is thus deliberately invited to become a poorer scholar just as he approaches the fuller responsibilities of his arduous vocation. I know not what expedient could be adopted better suited to teach our young ministers a practical contempt for scholarship.

I would oppose this perilous innovation with all my might by these further arguments.

I. The manner in which our presbyteries are already employing the existing provision for licensing and ordaining "*extraordinary cases*," renders any change utterly needless, even from the point of view of the innovators. This useful provision is doubtless much abused, so much so that without any further loose legislation, all the half qualified men whom the loosest lover of change desires, may easily find their way into our ministry. The provision is plainly intended by the constitution to meet this case only: Here is a Christian gentleman who ex-

hibits, in addition to holy character, experience, wisdom and prudence, and the aptness to teach and talent of command required by the Apostle of Timothy, thorough mental culture, and intelligence as acquired and attested in some other educated profession, such as the law, medicine, or the professor's chair; which thorough culture acquired in a different direction, may be honestly accepted as a real equivalent for classical and Hebrew-istic learning.

“The law hath that extent, no more.”

But how do we see it applied? To such cases as these: To some zealous middle aged man who has no culture, and never will have any in either direction, neither in classical English literature, nor in the ancient classics, nor in the languages of inspiration, nor in sciences, medicine, nor law. Here is a younger man who is said to be a good fellow, but without income, who thinks he cannot get his own consent to go through the long course of studies required by our book, so he claims to be made an “extraordinary case;” when the only thing “extraordinary” about him is, that he lacks the pluck and conscientious industry which alone could give assurance of permanent usefulness in the ministry, for a person deprived of early education. Here is another young man who, without any thorough culture, has some natural gift of fluent, plausible speech, in whose favor some congregation sends up to presbytery the assurance that he preaches abundantly well enough for them. The soft-hearted presbytery makes him an “extraordinary case,” when they ought to have foreseen that the most certain and ordinary result would be that this fluency, unchastened by thorough mental discipline, is going to be his snare and his ruin. And here is another uneducated man, a very good fellow, who has a sweetheart, and who thinks he must marry at once, and that he never could stand the postponement required by a thorough course of study. So some kind presbytery makes him an “extraordinary case,” with the most regular and ordinary result of forever spoiling the career of him and a very amiable young woman.

These are no travesties. I make here two points—the door into our ministry is already made too wide, instead of needing to be further widened; and, secondly, “if these things be done

in the green tree, what will be done in the dry?" With our present explicit and strict laws, we already have a mischievous looseness. The adoption of the loose laws demanded by the revolutionists in the hands of such presbyteries as ours, will gradually result in total looseness. Practically, we should have no barrier at all against an ignorant ministry.

II. The overture asserts that their design is "to remove those barriers for which no sufficient reason can be found either in the word of God, or in the dictates of human expediency, that now debar from our ministry many men who are qualified both by nature and by grace for the exercise of its functions."

I expressly take issue with this declaration as to every proposition and every intimation it includes. I shall show expressly that each one is a mistake, and is contrary to the facts. What are the supposed needless barriers? The overture defines them for us: a knowledge of the Latin language, of philosophy, of science, and of the languages of inspiration. I assert that none of them are "barriers" to the fit minister, but suitable requirements. I assert that in fact no qualified man is kept out of the Presbyterian ministry by these supposed barriers. Some *suppose* they are kept out by them? Yes. But the fact that they allow these proper requisitions to estop their progress is the perfect demonstration that they are not qualified men. These righteous requirements never kept the carpenter, John D. Matthews, nor the penniless plow boy, John H. Rice, nor the middle aged sailor, Dr. Harding, out of the ranks of our learned ministry. And let us notice the cardinal omission of the overture in its enumeration of qualifications. It mentions qualities of nature and qualities of grace, but the Bible and the Constitution of our church insist on a third which the overture adroitly omits. This is *acquired knowledge*. "The priest's lips should keep knowledge." Every line of Scripture which touches upon the topic teaches us that native vigor of faculty can be no substitute for the acquired knowledge to be employed in the sacred profession, any more than the muscular symmetry of a carpenter's two arms enables him to build a wooden house without tools and lumber.

Our church has provided a mode of entrance into the ministry for all proper extraordinary cases. To all other candidates she

offers pecuniary assistance which she will continue for seven years, if necessary, until the scholastic requirements are obtained. Whence it follows as matter of fact that no man whom God has called is "debarred" from the ministry by these requirements. The things which really debar such supposed cases are self-sufficiency, the arduous nature of the calling, impatience, indolence. And these, when indulged, prove them not to be "qualified by grace."

But I can tell brethren, from an intimate acquaintance of forty-seven years with candidates and theological education, how numerous young men of real value are deterred from our ministry. *It is by a natural disgust at the facility and unfaithfulness with which its honors are bestowed.* Let the reader represent to himself the kind of young Christian whom we ought to wish to get into our ministry. He will be one distinguished for strictness of conscience, thoroughness of effort, high and noble aspirations, intelligence, and an exalted reverential conception of the sacred office. Is not this the kind of young man we want? Well, as an eager spectator, he sees the presbyteries shirking a part of their duty in trying their candidates, and many of these candidates consequently shirking much of their duty in study; known in colleges as the self-indulgent, slack-twisted student, and unfaithful reciter in class, and consequently an unenergetic herald of salvation. The honorable young man is disgusted, grieved, chilled, and repelled. He no longer feels any aspiration to belong to ranks whose honors are thus disparaged, and bestowed as easily upon the unworthy as the worthy.

But if that young man witnessed what our Constitution designs, the strict and honest requirement of good scholarship and exalted Christian diligence; if he saw that the honors of the calling were hard to win, and worth winning, his sanctified ambition would be fired. He would remain eager to press into these worthy ranks.

This is human nature. Society and universities are full of illustrations of this powerful principle. When I began to teach in Union Seminary, in 1853, there were eleven students. In 1860, there were thirty-eight, and these were not drawn from inferior sources, but from the best Christian material of the

States. I do know, that the main influence under God which wrought this improvement was the increase in that institution of the thoroughness of the course of studies and strictness of the examinations.

The overture asserts "that no sufficient reason can be found in the word of God," for the constitutional requirements of our book. This I expressly contradict. Hear the words of the Saviour: "If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." He tells the heralds of the cross they must be "like unto householders who bring forth out of their treasure things new and old." The Apostle says: "They are stewards of the mysteries of God." They must be "apt to teach." They must be "workmen who need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." They must "continue in reading and in doctrine, giving themselves wholly to them." "Thou, therefore, which teachest another, teachest not thou thyself?" As elders, they must be "*able men*, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness." (Ex. xviii. 21.) The first heralds of the new dispensation, notwithstanding their gifts of nature and of grace, were kept by their divine Master under three years' tuition.

What, now, is the plain amount of these precedents and express commands? It can be nothing less than this, that every minister must have, in addition to endowments of natural faculty and grace, an acquired knowledge, competent to teach the system of divine truth correctly and fully, and to defend that system by refuting all gainsayers. But that system is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. The Holy Spirit gave these in the Hebrew and Greek languages. It is these alone which are our infallible rule of faith, not any version, however honest and respectable. Every judicious student of exposition knows that when the question is raised upon him, whether a given explanation of a given text presented in English by a pious Scott, or Henry, or Ryle, or Alexander is really the mind of the Spirit, that question is not fully settled until the original is examined. No teacher has full right to adopt and indorse such uninspired explanations unless he is able to test them by the originals, at least with the help of text-books and lexicons.

Does one say the piety and the concilience of these English

expositors give a good probability that they explain the mind of the Spirit correctly? Let us grant it. But can that teacher who can give his pupils but a probability of what is the real mind of the Spirit, be called a "workman who needeth not to be ashamed, correctly dividing the word of truth"? Plainly not. Will one say the great mass of the laity cannot learn Greek and Hebrew and have only their English Bibles? I reply: So much the more reason is there that their authorized teachers shall be able to go to the real spring heads of truth.

But a much more important point remains. In construing the mind of the Spirit contained in any precept of Scripture, it is absolutely necessary to take into account the state of facts environing the men who first reviewed the precept. For instance, our Lord commanded his disciples to procure an upper room for his last passover, and "there to make ready" for it. Must they understand this express commandment as requiring them to provide chairs on which to sit around the supper table? Such would unquestionably be the meaning of the command to "make ready," upon the servitors of a modern supper. But we know very well, as the disciples knew, that our Lord did not mean chairs, but did mean the customary dinner couches. Now how are we so sure of this? Because we know with perfect certainty, though chiefly from uninspired witnesses, that chairs at meals were not then customary in Jerusalem, while these couches were generally used instead. The state of facts known to the disciples and their Lord must interpret to them the meaning of his precept. Now, then, when we hear the Lord and his apostles requiring ministers to be able expounders of Scripture, we know that he meant the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures, because we know that these were the languages in which believers then had the Scriptures, and in which the Holy Ghost had given them.

We are now at a point of view from which we easily see the sophistry of a favorite argument of the innovators. They exclaim, Paul authorized the church at Ephesus, under Timothy's moderatorship, to choose any male member their minister who possessed the aptness to teach and other qualifications. He might be a merchant or an intelligent mechanic. Paul did not require him to learn any dead language or foreign literature.

What right have we to require it now? Why not do as Paul did; elect any pious mechanic, merchant or farmer who knows the English language, and has good natural gifts?

I reply, that this would be virtually doing exactly the opposite thing to what Paul did. Here was the all-important fact conditioning Paul's requirements; that the Greek language (the more important of the two languages of inspiration) was the native vernacular of that sensible Ephesian mechanic; to us it is a learned dead language. Hebrew was also a living vernacular to most Jews. Now, then, this Ephesian minister was already possessed, even from childhood, of a competent and correct knowledge of the main language of inspiration. Its syntax was perfectly familiar to him by daily usage in his business and reading. The idiomatic force of its phrases was as clear to him as our English is to us. Moreover, all the social usages, civic institutions, religious opinions and customs of the day and country, which were the subjects of perpetual allusion and illustration in the sacred writings, were equally familiar to him.

But now that copious language is to us a dead language, all those familiar facts and usages in the light of which it was so perfectly easy for that Ephesian mechanic to understand the meaning of the apostles, all has passed away, and is to us matter of learned antiquarian research. How much laborious classical study is needed to put one of us English-speaking citizens abreast with that Ephesian mechanic in the knowledge of that language and all those facts and usages which were his familiar knowledge, but to us must be the learned science of antiquity. I confess as to myself that I do not believe that my classical and biblical studies, continued through a long and laborious life have brought me up to the practical level of that fortunate Greek mechanic, as to the correct apprehension of the Greek Scriptures.

But, when the apostle required of the ministers of that day a certain competency to teach the gospel, we must understand him as requiring a similar competency of all ministers of all subsequent ages. It would be mere dishonest paltering with the precept to understand it otherwise. If the passage of the languages of inspiration and the usages of the day and country out of

vernacular use into antiquity calls for more study from us, in order to attain that grade of competency, then it must be ours to give that additional study. How can the honest mind dispute this conclusion? Dare we say to our divine Lord that because the right performance of a duty has, in his providence, become more laborious, we shall shirk a part of it, and put him off with half-way service? Surely not. We see, then, that this plausible argument is deceitful; it "keeps the word of promise to the ear, but breaks it to the sense." Under the pretence of nominally following the apostles' method it introduces a principle exactly opposite to theirs in practical effect.

The duty of apologetic defence against errorists, so solemnly laid upon the pastors by the apostle, presents a powerful argument. Hear him, 2 Tim. iv. 2, "Reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine." Titus i. 9, "That he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers." The pastor is required to be competent, not only to instruct his flock in the revealed science of redemption, but to defend their faith by refuting and convincing all assailants. He must be able to do this "with *all* doctrine." How much *διδασκαλία* then must this pastor have? Just so much as the assailants of the gospel employ against it. If he is a good knight he must be so armed and equipped as to be able "to meet all comers." Now when we remember how rapidly the provinces of human knowledge are extended, and how audaciously infidels use the resources of every province to attack the gospel, is this a time for the faithful warriors of Christ to be divesting themselves of any part of their armor or weapons? Take not the mere letter, but the true spirit of the scriptural injunction, and we see that this Bible principle must require of pastors continually widening qualifications instead of contracted ones, as the expansion of secular knowledge furnishes the enemies of the cross with new and varied weapons. "To whom much is given, of them shall much be required." This is the law of Christ's kingdom and the measure of our responsibility. We Americans of this age are continually glorying in the *privilege* of our fuller light and culture. Is this only braggart lying, or do we really believe that we do enjoy this privilege of an advanced age? If we say the latter, then we are bound to admit that the fair prin-

ciple of that requirement which demanded competency of earlier ministers demands of us continually higher competency and wider knowledge. Scripture expressly requires us to be a better educated ministry than any that ever went before. Is this a time, then, for diminishing the learning of our ministers? It is going backward exactly when the Master says go forward.

In one word, if anything is made clear in the Bible concerning ministerial duty, this is clear: that Christ has appointed the pastors and evangelists of his church to be the teachers of religion to men, the appointed school-masters of the world in the one science of theology. But as Lord Bacon shows, this is the splendid apex of the whole pyramid of human knowledge. It is the mistress of all sciences to whom all the rest are tributary, history, ethnology, zoölogy, geology, literature, and especially philosophy, her nearest handmaid. The mistress must dominate all and rule all lest, becoming insurrectionary, they should use their hands to pull down the foundations of her throne. The teachers of the supreme science must not be ignorant of any other science. They ought to be strong enough to lead the leaders of all secular thought; for if they do not, the tendencies of the carnal mind will most assuredly prompt those secular leaders to array their followers against our King and his gospel.

Let us pause to see how practical this is, and how true. Somebody is asking, why may not a sensible good man, well acquainted with his English Bible, suffice to instruct his plain neighbors in this science of redemption? Possibly he might suffice if he and they were the only sorts of people in the world. But they are not. Our world is also full of authors, legislators, lawyers, physicians, scientists, historians, antiquaries, philosophers, all equipped with the resources of learning. Just so surely as Satan is hostile to Christ and the carnal mind is enmity against him, these learned classes will refuse to let this plain pastor and this plain people alone. Just so surely as hawks will eat pigeons, the very spirit of this "progressive learning" will insure perpetual interference by every channel which this intellectual activity opens up. As surely as this pastor lives, he will have to defend his plain people from all these pretentious assaults. And he will find that the less education his people

have the more educated skill will he have to employ to save them from seduction. Moreover, the learned assailants also have souls which need salvation, very sinful, miserable souls. This pastor owes missionary duty to them; in order to teach the supreme science to the learned does not he himself need to be learned?

Surely, then, this is no time to reduce the education of our ministers when every other profession is making gigantic efforts to increase this learning, and when the sister denominations, once satisfied with an unlettered ministry, are just learning the wiser lesson taught by our example in the past, and are making gigantic efforts to secure for themselves a learned ministry.

The untimeliness of this retrograde movement is powerfully illustrated in the matter of the Hebrew language. A new law is now proposed, the effect of which may be to exclude all knowledge of this language from every Presbyterian minister of the coming generation, and must be to make the knowledge of it rare among them. And this is proposed at the very time of day, not only when this remains one of the languages of inspiration, but when it is rapidly becoming again a living language in Christendom, having weekly newspapers published in it and translations made into it from English literary and infidel books; when the language is more studied than ever in great institutions of learning, and especially when Hebrew philology and criticism are just becoming the prime arsenal which furnishes the weapons to attack God's church. Is not this overture a fearful anachronism?

III. It is asserted that no reason for our standard of education can be found in "the dictates of human expediency." This again I expressly deny.

The whole experience of the patristic ages, and of the reformed churches for three hundred years, is on my side. In the Latin church the languages of inspiration were dead languages. The people had the word of God only in versions (*Vetus Italica* and *Vulgate*), but take notice! The method of recruiting the ministry was precisely that now recommended to us and now followed by the churches which we are bidden to imitate. Some ministers, as Jerome, were learned; the majority were not. *That was the ministry which created the whole popish apostasy!*

That was the ministry which invented the fatal errors of human priesthood, baptismal regeneration, real presence, and sacrifice in the supper, apostolic succession, monkery, prelacy, celibacy of clergy, persecution, penance and indulgence, false miracles, pelagianism, saint worship, idolatry, purgatory, and popery. The close reading of church history convinces any sober student that it was the ignorance of these men concerning the languages of inspiration and Hebrew archæology which was the main occasion of their fatal errors. Ought not this lesson of history to be vast and black enough to open the eyes of Protestants?

I assert that the strength, usefulness and respectability of the Presbyterian Church are chiefly due under God to her standard of education in her ministry. Had she adhered more faithfully to her legal standard she would be just so much stronger than she is.

It is well known that the innovators take the data of their supposed argument from expediency, from the apparent progress of sister churches which do not require a learned ministry. They suppose that these churches are thus enabled to multiply ministers more rapidly than we do, and that this is the valuable cause of their more rapid growth.

This argument is wholly deceptive. The growth of a church is, in fact, the consequence of a large complex of various causes. That must, therefore, be a fallacious argument which pitches upon one of these causes and assigns to it the whole result. If the superior growth is sound, the most effective cause of all is undoubtedly the secret agency of that Spirit who is sovereign, and "bloweth where he listeth." A Presbyterian must be the last man to dispute this. Then, it is bad reasoning for him to put the main stress upon any external trait, since all of them must be of very subordinate force. It would, perhaps, be more correct for him to infer that it is the superior prayerfulness, zeal, and holy living of these churches which make them more prosperous, if they are more prosperous. Or it may be the great fact that mankind are born carnal must make the Presbyterian Church less popular, whatever line of expediency it might adopt, because it presents to the world only the simple church order of the Bible, and the strict and humbling doctrines of orthodoxy stripped of all the accessories which might conciliate

bigotry, ritualism, or self-righteousness. This would have to be settled before a safe inference could be drawn.

Is it argued that the other churches present us with really useful ministers, devoid of classical training? I am happy to grant this. But I have two answers. These honored ministers would have been yet more useful with a Presbyterian training; and second, our Presbyterian rule would have saved those churches from the incumbrance of that larger number of untrained ministers at the other end of the scale who have done more harm than good.

I urge again, that before we throw away our time-honored system to imitate these churches, it is all important that we ascertain how much of their supposed rapid progress is real and solid. An honest sifting of statistics would result in a surprising shrinkage.

I will recall an authentic incident of this. In the early stages of this ill-starred discussion against our educational standard, it was asserted that in a given commonwealth where the Presbyterians could count only eleven thousand communicants, a sister denomination, with an uneducated ministry, claimed seventy-five thousand. But when close inquiry was made of a competent and learned leader of that denomination in that State, he answered that those statistics had been gotten together irresponsibly upon a spread-eagle plan, and that, coming down to hard-pan, his denomination had about fifteen thousand actual communicants!

There is a vital reason for this shrinkage in the very nature of an uneducated ministry which furnishes me another powerful argument. American Protestantism is characterized by a peculiar evil which I may describe by the term "spurious revivalism." It has been often called the "New Measure System." The common mischief resulting from all its forms is the over-hasty reception into the communion of the churches, of multitudes of persons whom time proves to have experienced no spiritual change. This disastrous result is in some churches wrought without the machinery of sensational excitements, as where Pelagian or ritualistic teachings encourage men to come in heedlessly and coldly upon a mere profession of historical faith. In most cases, however, these mischievous accessions are brought about

by sensational human expedients. The ill-starred artists stimulate natural remorse and the merely sympathetic excitements of the natural feelings, and deceive themselves and encourage their victims to be deceived into mistaking these agitations for the real and saving work of the Holy Spirit with a criminal recklessness. They overlook the vital distinctions which the religious guide ought to make, which I have pointed out in the twenty-first article of my *Collected Discussions*, Vol. I., in exposition of 1 Cor. iii. 10-15.

This lamentable art has grown in America to great dimensions; the victims of its deception are to be counted by myriads. Its effects for good are so evanescent, that a religious profession has become contemptible in the eyes of critical worldly men. Many churches are loaded down with dead members. Church discipline becomes impracticable. This nominal membership includes tens of thousands of silent infidels who have inferred from the manifest deceitfulness of their own hot religious experience the deceptiveness of the gospel itself. The average standard of Christian morals is degraded throughout the country. The experience of a long life compels me sorrowfully to testify against this method of accessions as the grand peril and curse of American Protestantism. It has shorn the gospel among us of the larger part of its purifying power, and Christ of his honor, until our average Protestantism can scarcely boast of higher moral results than American popery. The mortifying result is, that after ninety years of boasted activity and asserted success in this species of evangelism in these United States, breeding and good manners, domestic purity, temperance, business morals and political morals, are at a lower ebb than in any nation in Protestant Christendom. The evil has become gigantic, and demands solemn protest and resistance.

I know it is an unpopular thing for a minister of the gospel to bear this witness. But it is true. And my regard for that account which I must soon render at a more awful bar than that of arrogant public opinion demands its utterance. Now, rational investigation and the induction of facts concur to prove that a lowering of the education of the ministry is ever the main promoter of this spurious revivalism.

There are certain motives which make it popular with its

practitioners in spite of the hard lessons of experience and the cautions of God's word. Those motives are of a coarse nature. They are the love of power, the ambition to count numbers, the hasty lust for visible success, the craving for theatrical excitements, with mistaken zeal for the good cause. In a free country the only antidotes for this mental disease are an enlightened conscience and the refining influence of mental culture. Many uncultivated spirits revel in these mental intoxications, but to the man of refined culture they are odious and repellant. It is of more importance to say that it is the accurate knowledge of theology, psychology and exegesis which enables the true scholar to discriminate between these spurious excitements and spiritual excitements. It is the half-taught Christian heated with misdirected zeal and untrained in the analysis of motives who is ever prone to make the fatal confusion. Indeed we find the craving for this power over the crowd is so seductive, that many are swept away by it who ought to know better. And none seem to be safe from the unwholesome infection unless they combine most thorough conscientiousness with high mental cultivation and a right knowledge of church history. So long as we fill the pulpit with half-educated men, we need expect nothing else than the obstinate prevalence of this coarse counterfeit method, notwithstanding all the demonstrations of past experience.

This explanation is exactly confirmed by the facts. Which are the denominations most notoriously characterized (and cursed) by these "new measure" revivals, so-called? Precisely those which permit an uneducated ministry, and among them the most obstinate practitioners of the false method will never be found in the persons of their best educated pastors. If we are unwilling to have our church corrupted and blighted by this false fire, we must raise, instead of lowering, our standard of ministerial education.

Since 1861, our church and church courts have been blessed with a delightful unity and harmony of orthodox doctrine. Is there any one who is willing to part with this happy harmony? But there is a consideration infinitely more exalted and sacred than our own religious enjoyment. God has committed to us as a church the one true doctrinal testimony. He has made it our

solemn duty to maintain it, and it alone. This is our stewardship; we have to give an awful account for it. But I assert that the only guarantee of doctrinal unity and orthodoxy, next to the inworking of God's Spirit, is a thoroughly educated ministry. The ministry are the main teachers of the churches' doctrinal system. When they divide, they infallibly divide the people. Again, I prove by both reason and fact that the only human safe-guard, under God, for orthodox unity is the requirement of thorough education in pastors.

Consider: Our Scriptural, Calvinistic theology has ever been to the opinionative a stumbling block, and to the carnal mind foolishness. Its doctrines are profound. They involve the most fundamental points of rival philosophies. The root principles of the opposing systems of theology are intricately related to each other and to these philosophies. In order that a man may be intelligently and logically grounded in the Calvinistic system, and able to distinguish all erroneous plausibilities from it, he needs to have his faculties disciplined by the highest philological and logical training. Again, our candidates for the pastoral office need to be kept together, and kept together long, during this formative period, while they are constructing for themselves their permanent systems of thought. Students educate each other more than their professors educate them.

Every active-minded young man comes to the Seminary with some doctrinal crotchet of his own. If he is left to nurse it by himself it becomes the root of dissent and of dissension. But in his three years' intercourse the friction of other minds rubs off the angle, and the man is saved from what would have proved a mischievous tangential movement. He learns to walk freely and of his own choice in the King's established highway. The whole body of students is kept under the guidance of the church's most enlightened and approved teachers long enough to establish them in the straight paths.

And let facts speak. The Southern Presbyterian Church, by virtue of her requirement of thorough training, enjoys orthodox harmony. The churches who admit uneducated ministers lack it. The confession of Alexander Campbell was notorious, "that in his communion all sorts of doctrine were preached by all sorts of men." The Cumberland Presbyterian Church is now agitated by doctrinal dissensions.

I greatly respect the immersionist churches, known as "Missionary Baptist." Many of their ministers preach the soundest doctrine. Some of their congregations present the best standard of Christian morals and discipline which I see anywhere in our backslidden land. But I have myself heard in Baptist pulpits all grades of doctrine, from Pelagianism, through evangelical Arminianism, up to strict Calvinism. Hear Mr. Spurgeon's testimony on this point against his own denomination in England. So even in the Southern Methodist Church the greatest theological antagonisms are found. Some are moderate Calvinists, the most are evangelical Arminians. I have heard some avow the deadliest dogmas of Pelagius, by reason of their lack of theological learning, ignorant of the fact that John Wesley, in his treatise on original sin (against Dr. Taylor, of Norwich), had condemned them as sternly as Turretin, Edwards or Hodge.

I must now remind my readers that when the innovators argue from the seeming success of a partially educated ministry in other churches, they forget a cardinal difference between our constitution and theirs. It is this: They all have a wide safety escape through which to rid themselves of their clerical failures. Our Constitution gives us none. Our principle is, Once a minister, always a minister. A man whom we ordain may show himself upon trial to be half furnished, or unfurnished; he may lose all relation to any congregation as either pastor or stated supply; no company of God's people chooses him to be either teacher or ruler to them; still we make him until death a full presbyter and minister, with power of rule in Presbytery, Synod and Assembly, over Christians who refuse to elect him as their representative. He cannot be stripped of this power except by judicial process, or upon his own request by a semi-judicial process.

But in the Methodist Church, when an inadequately furnished minister evinces his lack of acceptance, and ceases to serve a pastoral charge or a district, he ceases to be a member of the Conference. He is no longer a ruler in their church, but becomes virtually a lay-preacher. Or else a similar result is reached by putting him on the superannuated list. The Missionary Baptist and Campbellite communions are independent

in church government, and this gives them the same safety-valve. The ill-furnished minister, when he ceases to be a pastor, practically ceases to be a ruler, for there is no authoritative church court above the pastoral charge.

We find, then, that while these powerful churches have a wide front door for the entrance of the ministers, they save themselves from the disastrous consequences of a partially educated ministry by keeping open a very wide back door. We have no back door at all; yet some would have us imitate the imprudence of these churches without their safe-guard. They seem to find, practically, that they need a very wide back door indeed.

I was conversing with a distinguished Baptist divine concerning the numbers and power of his denomination in one of the great Southern commonwealths. He said that they counted six hundred ministers. I asked him how many were engaged in actual ministerial work? He replied, About two hundred. In my astonishment I exclaimed, Then what are the four hundred doing? He answered that many were teaching, many farming; some were practicing medicine; a few were lawyers; and many, from age or infirmity, were doing nothing. A similar inquiry as to the Methodist ministry in a large commonwealth gave like results.

Much more might be said. I trust enough has been said to convince the sober reader that what our church needs is a more faithful and strict execution of our rules by the presbyteries, instead of a degradation of them; well would it be for our church to listen at this juncture to the voice of her dead fathers. Dr. John Holt Rice, Sr., was undoubtedly one of the greatest and wisest of his illustrious generation of great men, perhaps the one Virginian entitled to a place abreast with Thomas Jefferson in transcendent abilities, learning, and vigor of style. I wish every Presbyterian could now read his masterly essay upon the evils of an uneducated ministry, in the *Virginia Literary and Evangelical Magazine*, Volume VIII.