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I.

THE COMPARATIVE CERTAINTY OF PHYSICS AND  
METAPHYSICS.

THEOPHRASTUS, or perhaps Andronicus, in editing the writings of Aristotle, arranged them in two classes: τὰ φυσικά and τὰ μετὰ τὰ φυσικά: physics and metaphysics. Whether the meaning was, that the latter class is to be *read after* the first, or whether it treats of objects that *exist beyond* those treated of in the first class, has been disputed. We shall adopt the latter explanation as much the most probable, and understand by physics those provinces of inquiry which relate to the irrational and material world, and by metaphysics those relating to the rational and spiritual. Aristotle's own division of knowledge favors this explanation of the running titles under which his writings have been placed. "If there is something," he says, *Metaphysics*, v. i., "that is eternal and immovable, and that involves a separate subsistence, it is evident that it is the province of ontological science to investigate this. It is not certainly the province of physical science, for physical science is conversant about certain movable natures." Under τὰ φυσικά, Aristotle included the doctrine of material motion as seen in the heavens and earth; the history of animals; the nature of sensuous perception; of memory; of sleep and dreams; of life and death. Under τὰ μετὰ τὰ φυσικά, he grouped ethics, politics, rhetoric, logic, and ontology or metaphysics proper. Some of these terms were wider than in modern usage. This is particularly the case with ethics and politics, which included considerable that now falls under the heads of psychology and philosophy. Aristotle regarded the metaphysical division as by far the most important part of human knowledge, denominating it the "first philosophy," implying that the physical division is secondary.

## V.

### PRESBYTERIAL CARE OF THEOLOGICAL STUDENTS.

THE theory of the Presbyterian Church respecting the preparation of candidates for the ministry could hardly be improved. They are to be formally received under the care of the Presbytery, early in their course of study; and rules are prescribed by direction of the General Assembly, which indicate to what this care shall relate. Reference to the requirements of the Board of Education, of those who receive its aid, makes known the purpose of the Church in general, and their sum is thus given. The care of the Presbytery is to consist in

“The constant exercise of a parental oversight over them in spiritual things, and the bestowment of the counsel they need, as to their mode of preparation, their places of study, their trials, and the occupation of their time when not engaged in study, in employments which shall tend to qualify them for effective usefulness as pastors, or evangelists.”

The object of such parental oversight is, primarily, that the “sacred office may not be degraded by being committed to weak and unworthy men; and that the churches may have an opportunity to form a better judgment respecting the talents of those by whom they are to be instructed and governed.” And the Presbytery is made directly responsible for the character and qualifications of those inducted into it, inasmuch as “the encouragement of a young man to undertake the office of the ministry is a matter of most serious concern to himself, the Church, and many immortal souls, which should only be ventured upon by those who have sufficient knowledge of his religious and mental character and capabilities, with much counsel and prayer, and out of a single, anxious desire for the glory of God.”

While none could ask for a more wise and worthy supervision of the education of candidates for the ministry than is provided for in these extracts, a very slight knowledge of the facts must reveal the

contrast between the theory they present and the practice of the Presbyteries; a contrast working evil in more than one direction, and likely to be more and more serious in its results, unless soon recognized and remedied. The object of this article is to call attention to the subject, with the hope that the remedy may be applied to the relief and advantage of all concerned.

Until the organization of Seminaries for that purpose, certain pastors were selected, under whose superintendence the necessary special instruction of theological students, and their equally necessary practice, were to be conducted; and these pastors made report to the Presbytery, from time to time, in order that there might be a basis for judgment concerning the wisdom of continuing them in the process of training. And for their better information, it was the custom of Presbytery to appoint a committee, who should have personal knowledge of each student during the years of his course preparatory to license, whose successive reports also became a prominent item in the evidence of his preparation and fitness for licensure. All this knowledge, received from the instructor and the committee, had reference to the candidate's Christian character and life, his skill and progress in study, and his ability to interest and instruct as a public speaker. Hence, opportunities were furnished, either by the pastor having the students in charge, or by others of the Presbytery, in their pulpits, in their social meetings, and in their own hearing, as well as before the church, for the frequent exercise of their gifts, in both formal and informal ways. These opportunities were called "trials," or tests and means of practice. It would have been deemed ridiculous, had the Presbytery never seen or heard any of these trials before the candidate presented himself for license, and it had been proposed that upon the quality of the trial then offered the judgment of those to pass upon his case should be formed. Quite as much importance was attached to these frequent trials, as to the order and scope of study; and as the result, since the license must be obtained from the Presbytery which had all the facts of their history in these particulars, few men were permitted to enter the ministry of whom the Church had no experience of their qualifications.

Having passed through this probation to the satisfaction of the Presbytery, and for the required time, the student was allowed to apply for license, when a rigid examination was had upon all the points included in his study and practice. If this was sustained, he was authorized to engage more formally and independently in ministerial work, though still, as much as before, under the care of the

Presbytery. The object of his license was that it might be ascertained whether, on this wider arena, and in more responsible stations, he could be relied on to instruct and edify the Church, and preach the Gospel so that men would be saved. The definite understanding was, that he was not released from care and subject to no guidance, but that he was constantly watched by those who were interested in his success, yet felt the solemnity of the responsibility laid on them, and that the verdict of the Church with the ministry must determine whether he should be ordained. This further and wider probation being concluded to the satisfaction of the Presbytery, the candidate was ordained, either by that body which had conducted the entire process of education, or through its recommendation and approval, if on account of convenience another was called to render this service. In either case, it was always after even more careful examination and trial than at any previous time. Thus, after the candidate was ordained, and never before, the special, tutelary, or parental oversight of the Presbytery ceased; and all the process was included in the one word "care," as prescribed by our Form of Government. It hardly need be said, that very rarely is Presbyterian supervision now to be regarded as *care*, when compared with what is thus detailed; and much interest attaches to the inquiry why so marked a change has occurred.

After Theological Seminaries were established, all students were expected to pursue their studies in them; and the facilities they furnish render thorough and varied training far more general and more easily obtained than before in modern times. Yet there is no evidence that the care of Presbyteries over them was expected to be less in any of the details mentioned above, because of these increased facilities. Possibly the habit of thinking that this is true has grown out of the name given to these Seminaries, indicating that their chief office is to teach theology in its departments, and therefore the duty of the Presbyteries is limited to the matter of learning whether this is accomplished. Hence it has been thought that Presbyterian examinations should relate to the acquisitions that have been made, and the orthodoxy of these acquisitions as compared with our standards. The parts of trial assigned are to be criticised, with this object prominently in view; even the sermon and lecture being acceptable or not, according to the substance they contain, its amount and quality. Of course, there is no necessity, with this understanding, that the questions be raised whether the candidate has shown himself to be an acceptable preacher of the Word; whether he has been before the church and received their approval; whether it is likely that he will be welcomed by the church as a skillful and able leader in all departments of ad-

vance. The fact that he has been properly taught requires no opportunity for such trials or tests, and though never seen or heard until he appears before them to be licensed, the Presbytery may duly judge whether he should be commissioned as he shall answer their questions and meet their requirements with the papers he has brought for their review, often never hearing the sermon or lecture he puts into their hands. This view of Theological Seminaries, and this judgment of their work in Presbyteries, has become so general that the real power and efficiency of our ministry may be seriously diminished as the result. These are not, and by any fair estimate of their design, determined by that process of training which they superseded, they were not intended to be merely *Theological* Seminaries, but schools in which men may be prepared to preach the Gospel. The whole curriculum of study, and all the methods adopted, should relate to the highest success in this chief service of the Master and the Church, as to both material and manner. And all facilities should be available in them for the attainment of reliable proof that the students can do with acceptance the work assigned to pastors when they finish their course. None are to decide this question but the Presbytery, in the exercise of that constant care which is not transferable.

There are reasons why this should be even more parental and manifest than when the students were under the instruction of private teachers; certainly none of the advantages then enjoyed should be sacrificed because they are now educated in the institutions of the Church.

With these remarks as a preface, let us look at some of the facts. In a large majority of cases the Presbytery puts all the responsibility upon the Seminary, so far as any details are concerned; reasoning, if reasoning at all, that as Professors in the several departments are appointed by the Church for this service, they are better qualified to conduct the entire process, and to decide points of debate as they arise, and pass upon the results, than others can be; and that they will do this better, if not hampered by Presbyterian suggestions or authority. The effect is much the same as that occasioned by Sunday-schools upon family Christian culture and education, when these would have attention in the home, were the schools not permitted to have them in charge. In both cases, the effect is not necessary, yet it is so general as to warrant question respecting the real advantage in these particulars of institutions which afford opportunity for such sad neglect. As the family can never safely transfer the Christian nurture of children to those who are outside of its own hallowed in-

fluences, and should never fail to be the centre of all means, direct and co-operative, by which they may be reared for God; so the Presbytery should never transfer obligation respecting the training of the ministry of the Church, nor neglect to supervise whatever others may do to aid in this preparation. Sunday-schools should only help Christian households in the spiritual education of their children. Seminaries should only help Presbyteries in the preparation of ministers of the Gospel for their great work. Independence in either case is perilous. Here arises the question whether the University method of education for the ministry is superior to that which gives the students opportunity to be less isolated from the work to which they are afterward to be devoted. If the object were to obtain the best knowledge of philosophy, science, history—or even the philosophy, science, history of theology—no doubt the University, which may supply all the means for acquiring such knowledge, would be preferable. But if the object be to gain the best ability to instruct, and move men, study in exile from men is not to be preferred. A preacher of the Gospel needs to be taught a doctrine not only, but also how to present that doctrine with most power to those who shall hear him. He needs to learn not only how to elaborate a theme, but also how to exhibit it to others with the most interest and effect. The two items of instruction should be given together. That old matter of *trials*, which many would relegate to the past, should have a place with lectures and books. The former sanction of the Church should still accompany the sanction of Professors, and thus some knowledge should be had by the Presbytery, not merely as to whether the students are able to write review articles and essays, and answer the questions of Professors, but whether they are able preachers of Gospel sermons, and can answer the wants of the Church respecting leaders and guides.

The province of Presbyteries, in the exercise of the care expected of them, is to see that this kind of training is obtained. There should be the most perfect agreement between them and the teachers from whom so much is expected. There should be no jealousies between them, no cross purposes, no want of the heartiest co-operation. Yet, all can see that this is by no means true, and hindrances, not help, come from one or the other, are sometimes exchanged between those who should have a common interest in the end they seek. The attempt to do for students what our theory renders essential is looked upon with disfavor. They are regarded with suspicion, sometimes with dislike, by ministers and churches when they should be treated as children, and they are obliged to make their way into the ministry

under the cold clouds of indifference, when they should move on in the sunshine of cheer and affection.

When they have finished their course of study, and present themselves for license, often the same chill greets them, and the Presbytery assumes the air of the stern judge rather than that of an interested parent, smiling upon the children who have long been cared for with affectionate oversight, and who are now at the goal, all have hoped they would not fail to reach. In short, Presbyterial care, in many cases, is reduced to an indefinite knowledge of the standing and behavior of the students, through the short, annual report of the Seminary, occasional and rare inquiries concerning their advance, and a rigid examination of them at last which excites the feeling that they must then prove themselves worthy of regard, and compel the interest which ought to have attended them throughout their course. One sad consequence is, that every year we take into the Church a large number of ministers who have no warm feelings of attachment for the Zion whose name they bear, and the chill they have experienced must be conquered by their personal associations formed after they begin to preach. Another more sad consequence is, that our young ministers are not qualified as they might be for the responsible work they are expected at once to undertake; and the most sad consequence of all is, that the Church we venerate and love more than all others suffers a loss which its constitution would prevent; and the cause of our Great Lord and Head is weighted with an unnecessary burden, when it might have the enthusiasm of earnest, grateful, skilful leaders from the beginning, to inspire the sacramental host.

These being some of the evils which are too apparent to need any more extended exhibition, perhaps it may not be amiss to make some suggestions that may point toward a remedy, though they be presented with diffidence.

I. The Presbyteries should take more pains to be of some advantage to the young men who are under their care. No doubt, in many cases, they feel the importance of this duty, but they do not take special pains to perform it. In some cases, the duty itself seems to be entirely ignored. When studying within the bounds of the Presbytery, students should be known to the members by both official and personal acquaintance. This can be gained without much cost. They should be invited and expected often to attend meetings. Inquiry should be made respecting their progress; advice should be given concerning affairs of moment to them; in short, they should know that, not as spies in search of something to condemn, but as fathers and brothers, anxious to help, the ministers of the Presbytery are watch-

ing their career and are interested in their welfare. When studying at a distance from those in whose care they are, frequent correspondence should bear witness to their fraternal regard as sustaining such a relation to them. Pulpits should be offered them for occasional exhibition of their advance and skill in usefulness. Generous criticism and wholesome encouragement should be expressed on these occasions, all bearing on the object sought, and serving as tests of fidelity and ability. This is without reference to the question when candidates should be licensed to preach, which will have some consideration afterward. The suggestion here made relates to the care which should be exercised before they are licensed, and to the means by which they may be prepared for licensure. The objection to such occasional preaching is that it is permitted to be altogether miscellaneous, and as the student can gain opportunity, so that it cannot be of much profit, and possibly often is attended with damage. The same objection lies against the preaching he may have during vacation. It affords him opportunity to earn some money, to do some good, to have some practice in a general way; but it does not serve as any trial of him in this important portion of his training under the care of the Presbytery, and with a view to the advantage he may obtain from their counsel and help as well as supervision. As the facts now are, he really has no advantage in this direction from the Presbytery; and sometimes he has formidable obstacles placed in his way by those who should render aid. It is probable that there would be less of this which is considered objectionable, were there no bar to that which our theory recommends.

There is another particular of possible advantage from proper Presbyterial care which should have even more emphatic mention. It should regard the spiritual state of those over whom it extends. There is constant subtraction from spiritual vigor resulting from the earnest study made necessary by the wide range of preparation for the ministry. Though engaged with biblical truth, and subjects connected with Christianity and the Church, and methods for preaching the Gospel, there is danger that the devotion of students to these themes may be perfunctory and professional; that familiarity with sacred things may render them of less practical and personal power; that ardent piety may be chilled by the constant contemplation of what, in other circumstances, might feed the flame. Of course, it is expected that purely devotional services in the Seminary, and the devices and counsel of the Faculty, and the air which should pervade such holy ground, will have some effect to counteract this tendency. Yet these do not release the Pres-



bytery from responsibility upon so vital a matter; nor can these accomplish what the Presbytery ought to be able to do. Respecting what should parental oversight and interest be exercised, so much as respecting the humble, and glowing, and more and more controlling, piety of these young men? Can such oversight and interest be satisfied with a few general questions, asked when they are first received, and even a less number asked three or four years after, when they apply for license? Certainly, the theory we adopt contemplates much more than this; and while it does not become the privilege of any individual to indicate how the duty shall be performed, it is clearly the duty of the Presbytery in some way to care for the spiritual welfare of theological students. A godly ministry will be gained by the Church when godliness has a prominent place in their preparation; and no problem deserves more thoughtful and prayerful and continued study than that which bears on the best means for its cultivation in our Seminaries. Presbyterians will wisely take much more time for this study than has been taken for many years past, or sad consequences of the neglect will afflict the Church.

II. There should be more direct and vital connection of our Theological Seminaries with the Church.

Enough has been said, perhaps, to show the evil effect on both when they are separated. There should be no necessity for argument to prove that all the interests involved make their positive agreement and co-working essential. But for the facts, as they are frequently presented, it would seem like a work of supererogation to call attention to the subject, or suggest any ways by which such union in work may be secured. The sentiment is mischievous, that a Seminary is merely a repository of creeds, in its library and professors; or a storehouse of those resources of philosophical and historical and scriptural knowledge, which may be needed when the Church is attacked, or communicated to her preachers; or, in any sense, a cloister or monastery or university to be kept apart from the people, and only designed to send down to them periodically a class of men whom an established order of things makes necessary as leaders. Serious evils will ever result from such separation of educational institutions, secular or religious, from the body of the people. They must be brought into contact, at least so as to feel the influence of a reciprocal sympathy. In this is seen the difference between the old European system of education, which was designed only for the few, and the modern system in both Europe and America, which reaches and receives the masses. The one was like the sun at the horizon, glancing his rays only upon the eminences, the mountain-tops of society, while the

vast regions below are in deep shadow and gloom. The other is like the sun in the zenith, sending his rays all abroad, and lighting mountain-top and valley with one grand and universal splendor. Especially must our schools of the prophets be maintained on a plane with the Church, with open avenues of communication, with more cords of love and more opportunities to feel the heart-beat of those with whom they mutually are afterward to have such intimate relations. As affording such means of communication, there should be a number of seminaries distributed over the territory which the Church occupies, when that territory is as large as in this country. Every one of them should be the rallying-point, the place of common thought, the bond of union, the fountain of healthful streams, for the region in the midst of which it stands, adapted to supply the wants of its churches, and under their direction. It should be the direct recipient of their interest and patronage and constant regard. Never can the Church rear a ministry that has a warm place in her heart, and for this reason will be welcomed into her pulpits, until this is at least approximately true. It is important that students may escape the chilling influence of isolation while pursuing their studies, and that the Church may have a ministry reared so that they will be acceptable and available in all departments of her work from the beginning. It is almost as necessary to the prosperity of all these departments of church work, that the members should be accustomed to say "our Seminary," as that a family should say "our home." And it is absolutely necessary that men, who by the requirements of their office are to reach hearts and save souls, should be in warm and affectionate contact with those who feel an interest in them, if they are to have marked success.

I once visited an old mission cathedral in California, in which were a company of Gray Friars. With its ruined surroundings and shattered walls and time-eaten pictures and insignia of worship, standing over the tombs of its dead priests in the crypt, and containing those who live only that they may chant their idle service and perform their useless rites, regardless of the claims of the great world, till they too shall be laid beside the ashes of those who are gone, it was in contrast with all that I conceive the priesthood and the Church should be. It is the wreck of a religion that separates itself from the world, as a leavening, transforming power. It is the demonstration of history that a ministry may be learned, and able with magnificence and pomp to maintain the rites and doctrines to which they devote themselves on a plane above the people, yet be as valueless as the mummeries they practice, or the formulæ of truth they only announce. Such exhibitions of religion might be made for ages, as they have been, and salvation would be no more general because of them.

There must be the reverse of these in what we present to men. An earnest ministry and an earnest Church, these so near together that they can feel the pulsations of the same life, are to move the world. Hence, our Seminaries should be filled with proofs of regard and favor from the Church. The young men should feel that while in them they are in a special sense the children of the Church. They should study in the very atmosphere of prayer, exhaled from the Church. Everything around them should forbid the conviction of exile and cultivate the feeling of obligation and love.

How may these things be accomplished? The difficulties have been assumed to be insurmountable, even by those who would be glad to see them out of the way, yet they may surely be greatly diminished both in number and dimensions. The Church should welcome reasonable calls for money with which to equip the Seminaries, that they may be efficient and comfortable. There should be no complaint if these calls are more frequent than selfishness would regard as necessary. It would be an evil if they were so completely endowed that there would no longer be a necessity for such frequent giving, as must continue the sympathy of the churches, and keep their attention fixed on those who teach and those who are taught, as their representatives and a part of themselves. We are interested in that which costs us something; and a Seminary will be more firmly entrenched in the affection of the people, and will have a larger endowment of prayer and good-will, if all classes and all of every class give something for its maintenance, than were it endowed as to funds by the large sums of the rich alone. It is a misfortune to the churches as well as to the Seminaries, that this is not really accepted as true; and a part of the duty of pastors and church officers should be to cultivate in all a sense of responsibility respecting what most are wont to leave entirely outside the range of Christian obligation, so far as they are concerned.

There should be more frequent and general interchange of visits. It is the habit of ministers to go but rarely to any Seminary, and then only to the Commencement, and almost invariably to that of their own Alma Mater. It is the habit of elders and members generally, never to visit a Seminary, and really to know nothing about any of them. Not long since a church officer of more than average intelligence, asked respecting one of our most prominent Seminaries, located in his own State, whether it was different from an ordinary college, and whether it was in any sense connected with the Presbyterian Church. Such ignorance is as pitiful as it is sad, and the saddest feature of it is, that it is so prevailing. Some of these institutions have resorted to various devices by which to attract some at least of their

alumni to their halls occasionally, yet even these succeed but poorly; and by none is cherished any feeling of responsibility touching such inter-communication.

This ought not so to be. Pastors of churches should take pains to acquaint themselves with those in the Theological schools, with what is taught in them, with the methods of teaching, that they may inform their people who have no other means of reliable information. Representatives from these schools should visit Synods, Presbyteries, and when it is possible, churches, to awaken and cultivate interest, to turn the attention of children and young men to the matter of personal consecration to the ministry, and to strengthen the bond which should unite them all. There can be no reason why Sessions of churches within reasonable distance should not spend a day, from time to time, in the class-rooms of the Seminaries; and no reason why Sessions more remote should not occasionally send a member on such a mission, to the cheer and profit of all concerned. Certainly, there can be no reason why these class-rooms for nine-tenths of the year are as much secluded from both pastors and elders as though they were on some lofty mountain, with closed doors. Being actually on the plain together, every consideration of safety and satisfaction on the one side, and of gratification and cheer on the other, urges the advantage of far more interchange, by letter, by personal association, by formal and informal visits, all bearing upon a more positive acquaintance.

There should be the more frequent expression of confidence and love. It is not wise always to assume that these are cherished. There is gain from the expression of what may be in the heart, at times when this is proper. Even husbands and wives are happier and better, if they occasionally tell each other of their love, and exchange the kiss that speaks more than words, not being willing always to take for granted what is so vital to their happiness. Possibly there has been error here, as respects the relation of our Seminaries to the Church, which needs correction. Some of our most honored and able Theological Professors have felt that they were held aloof from the hearts of their brethren, have shivered under the cold assumption of all, that they were worthy and excellent men in their places, and have gone to their graves with hearts almost broken, because they had longed for some warm, generous, loving voice of actual sympathy, but longed in vain. On the other hand, Professors have sometimes maintained a dignified distance from those engaged in other work of the Church, and taken no pains to express the relation of the Seminary to these interests, and the affection they really felt for their brethren thus engaged. The consequence has been that churches have thought themselves shut away from communion they would have valued, and

have regretted such a necessity. After real acquaintance and knowledge of facts have been gained in the ways that have been suggested, there should be the generous and worthy declarations of confidence and regard which are natural to those so associated in a common cause. There may be the fulsome praise on the one hand, and the degrading sycophancy on the other, which always disgust men who expect in any circumstances to do their duty. But this is a possibility which should not weigh against any real advantage, and it can hardly be doubted that what is here proposed would be an advantage we should not be willing to lose.

III. It is proper, when discussing this general subject, to refer to a question which excites much interest, viz: At what time is it wise that theological students should be licensed to preach; and should they be permitted to preach before they are licensed?

It is a rule in all our Seminaries, probably, that no students shall preach until they have permission from their Presbyteries, and the expectation is that this permission will not be granted until the end of the middle year. It is true, however, that in nearly all the Seminaries, this rule is observed with such exceptions that it may hardly be regarded as in force, and sometimes it is treated by students as practically null. They do not call the exercises in which they engage preaching; but they hold meetings, conducting them as preachers would, and performing the services usually performed by preachers; they have charge of chapels, pursuing much the same order of worship as that observed by other leaders of worship in churches; they officiate in asylums, hospitals, various charitable institutions, after much the same manner as do veritable ministers in the same institutions; and those who hear them call them preachers. Not unfrequently they do even more than this, actually taking their place in the pulpits of neighboring pastors, or supplying those which are vacant, obtaining leave to do this when they can do so, but often improving opportunities which come to their knowledge, believing that they are competent to judge for themselves respecting them. The reasons given to Presbyteries why they should be allowed to be useful in this way, and to the Faculties of Seminaries why they should not forbid them, are often very cogent. They are so poor that it will be impossible for them to continue their studies, unless they can in this way supplement their other resources; or, they are married, and the demands of those dependent on them are too imperative to be disregarded; or, they must have books with which to enter upon their pastoral work, and they can buy none, unless money can thus be obtained for this purpose; or, they are specially deficient in those qualifications which these public services will supply. The evils resulting are various,

while all feel that it is very difficult to prevent them. The course of study is seriously invaded by the preparation necessary for these outside engagements; the young men become irregular in their Seminary habits; those who cannot obtain such engagements feel that they are at a disadvantage; and there is a temptation to pay no attention to these violations of rules, because often young men will go where they can have such privileges without opposition. But a more serious evil than these, is the fact, a hint of which has already been given, that these preaching exercises are generally conducted in a careless and irresponsible manner, so that they are of little profit as training, and become only tributary to a kind of professional dissipation. The Presbytery, under whose nominal care the students are, have no opportunity to observe and criticise. The Faculty have no opportunity to make them the basis of suggestion and advice. Pastors in the vicinity have no opportunity to test in them the abilities or the acquirements of the young men. The real fact is, that for the most part they preach only to the people who feel no special interest in their future, and for the purpose of obtaining the money thus added to their income. The remedy does not seem to be that Presbyteries grant licenses earlier in the curriculum of study, for the departments of this curriculum furnish most of the knowledge in view of which license is granted; and the order of study would be well-nigh broken up by general permission to preach when the students wish to do so, and as they please. Such lowering of the standard of ministerial qualification would be more disastrous now than in past years, because our times require that the pulpit be occupied by men of more culture and greater power than were then deemed essential, and our Seminaries have arranged their courses of instruction to answer this demand. They have a right to guard the courses they adopt, and to the extent that they are able to do this they should insist that students pursue these thoroughly. It would no doubt be better, in all respects, if license were always withheld until candidates finish the Seminary curriculum. Still, it is a debatable question, whether this is now as complete as it should be in view of the demand, which it is folly not to heed; and it is possible that the subject discussed in this paper may supply some arguments upon that question.

This is certainly true, that Presbyterian churches in this country have never sought superior skill in popular speech with such eagerness as is now manifest when they make inquiry for preachers. They are anxious to have leaders who are thoroughly furnished with material for sermons; but they are quite as anxious that they be able to preach their sermons with such interest that all will be glad to hear. This is no time to neglect the most careful training in the *delivery* of sermons; no time

to leave this to the little teaching and drill of the class-room alone ; no time to limit it to the occasional, hap-hazard, irresponsible practice, gained in the preaching now so common while candidates are in the Seminary. The young men feel this, and all ought to feel it who are interested in their success. The only prospect that they will have this part of their preparation in needed proportion, is seen in the more general return of our Presbyteries to the exercise of the *care* for which our constitution and theory provide, and which includes supervision and exercise, to the extent that Presbytery deems necessary, in trials before the churches of their ability in this direction. Such preaching or trial would be very different from that now practiced, and it would bring all this unwise and unprofitable preaching to an end. There is not one of our Seminaries so situated that this could not be practicable, as the Presbytery should coöperate with the Faculty in attaining it ; and we should have no Seminary so situated. But even were the object to be gained at a cost far greater than is now necessary, its importance should cause that cost to be gladly paid.

Let our students know that they are to prepare sermons, and preach them, under the eye of the Presbytery, as a body, from time to time, or by committee, or through the Faculty, who will report not only their own judgment, but so far as they can learn this, the popular opinion of their efforts ; and that these will become a prominent element in the final decision whether they should be licensed ; and a stimulus would be given to this portion of their preparation, not now felt, and which would give most cheering promise of success. There might be necessity to change somewhat the course of preparation now adopted. It might leave some of the details of study now pursued in the Seminary, for the investigation of after years. But it would introduce a higher grade of preaching ability into our pulpits, and it would do much to meet the desires of the Church. Of course it will be objected that Presbyteries cannot be relied on to assume such care as this ; but if it is true, they are just so far wanting in justifying the constitutional reasons why they exist. There is no great advantage which is without attending labor and self-denial, and it is not easy to see that any Presbyterian duty has more direct relation to the progress of the Church than has proper care of those who are to be her ministers. It may well be true, that it shall awaken a more lively sense of responsibility, that more positive and costly plans be devised for its accomplishment, and that actual study be given to the execution of these plans. That there are difficulties to be overcome does not remove obligation, nor will the necessity that individuals have a new conviction of personal duty, if the end is gained, release any from its pressure. We have tried vague, indefinite, general care ; let us try

such care as may be worthy of the name, and was anticipated when it was imposed upon Presbyteries and called "parental oversight" as an intimation of its quality. This will not license candidates before it is known whether in all important particulars they are worthy of this official guaranty that they may be safely accepted by the Church; but it will afford better knowledge of these particulars, so that there need not be mistakes; and Seminaries will be much less disturbed and more aided in the work of preparation.

IV. There is one other item, to which the care for which we plead may have reference, and that is the judicious selection of those youth in Christian families and in churches, who may become candidates for the ministry; and the proper cultivation of the spirit that will prompt such youth to desire the sacred office.

In large measure, families themselves are to do the Lord's work in this early stage. Yet, Sessions and Presbyteries can do much to prevent failure, and to excite interest in parents and children, upon a subject which our whole economy makes vital. That there may be increase of interest in Sunday-schools, and more efficiency in conducting them, institutes are held in connection with meetings of Presbytery, in which important points are presented and instruction and advice are supplied; committees are sent to the churches to encourage and direct; and the personal influence of pastors and laymen eminent for success in Sunday-school work is brought to the help of those who are deficient. If it is desired that more attention be given to Home Missions, or Foreign Missions, in some of the churches, the subject has careful consideration in the Presbytery, means for rousing the inactive are suggested, and measures are adopted which will be heeded by all, till men and women respond to the interest thus expressed. But rarely is any similar method employed, by which interest may be cultivated and increased in the supply of the ministry at the fountain-head, though it may be supposed that this should naturally be first in eliciting the parental anxiety of the Presbytery. Its supervision can have no more important object. Its care can have no more appropriate recipients than the sons of the Church who are needed for the pulpit, but who are likely to be attracted in other directions. It is not enough that there be an open door for the few who struggle up with no encouragement and ask admission to Presbyterial attention. It is not enough that there be a formal acceptance of those who, as strangers to most of the members, come in to avow their purpose to preach the Gospel.

There might be a Standing Committee, and it should be composed of the most earnest, and wise, and faithful ministers and elders in the body, whose duty it should be, by all the means they



may employ, to furnish motives and considerations to the young men in the Presbytery who are church members, in respect to heeding God's call for ministers. They should visit Sunday-schools, and so far as possible become acquainted with families and the children who have been consecrated to God. They should take pains to interest these children in themselves, till they are willing to heed their advice, and by such means as may be successful be able to select and influence those whom they may recommend to the Presbytery, as worthy to be cared for and willing to study theology. The present lamentable cry for men will be repeated with more and more emphasis from year to year, unless some more systematic and thorough care is given to the matter of supply from some direction; and there is no probability that it will be exercised with reliable success if neglected by the Presbytery. Suggestions in detail, as to the ways in which this might be effected, will not be looked for in an article like this, yet it may be assumed that if all the Presbyteries of our Church were to take up this subject, with zeal commensurate with its urgent importance, and really manifest the care concerning it which could not fail of reward, our Seminaries would soon be furnished with students who could answer the full demand of the Church. There would be an end of the complaint that we have too many Seminaries. Our advance work in missions would no longer be checked. The columns of our sacramental host would all be well officered and led, and vigor and success would cheer all hearts. Nothing need here be said respecting the support of those thus introduced into the line of candidates for the ministry, for the interest which would supply the young men could be relied on to supply the money for their support, if such aid were given; and both might well come within the range of Presbyterial care. Nor need anything further be said in regard to the subject at large. It is manifest that if it is practicable, much more may be accomplished by our Presbyteries than it is their habit to undertake, in the supply of a competent and satisfactory ministry for the Church; and it should be made practicable, unless there are sufficient reasons for shortcoming. Viewed from any point, the most momentous question with which our ecclesiastical bodies can be engaged, at this time, relates to the supply of ministers who can lead the Church, and whom the Church will follow. Because of their prescribed duties concerning it, the responsibility as to the answer to this question comes most directly on the Presbyteries; and with the blessing of the Great Head ever promised, they will sound the bugle-note of advance along our whole line, when they begin to exercise in its full measure the supervisory, parental care which our experience assures us it is not safe to neglect.

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