

HOME,  
THE SCHOOL,  
AND  
THE CHURCH;  
OR THE  
PRESBYTERIAN EDUCATION REPOSITORY.

EDITED BY  
C. VAN RENSSELAER,  
CORRESPONDING SECRETARY OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

VOL. III.

---

PHILADELPHIA:  
265 CHESTNUT STREET.

PRINTED BY C. SHEEMAN.

1853.

THE  
PRESBYTERIAN EDUCATION REPOSITORY.  
1853.

---

ARTICLE L

DEFICIENCIES AND MEANS OF SUCCESS IN  
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION.\*

BY THE REV. E. BICKERSTETH.

CHRISTIAN education is a most important part of every parent's duty, and the root of innumerable future blessings. It is common to hear complaints, that the children of pious parents disappoint the expectations which are usually, and not unnaturally formed; and it is true that this is too often the case; and that in some instances children piously educated, will, when they break through the restraints of education and habit, become excessively wicked; and they may even, like Eli's and David's children, perish in their wickedness. In these extreme cases, there has probably been either some serious neglect of parental duty, or the formation of unhappy connexions with others; at least every Christian parent is dumb before God under such awful dispensations, and is feelingly alive to the conviction of his own sinfulness.

But, after all, the mass of Christian piety in a country will be found to be in the generation of the pious; and though God shows his own sovereignty in raising up, sometimes, an eminent instrument of good from among the most wicked, he also shows the riches and the faithfulness of his own promises: "The generation of the upright is blessed: Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

It may be useful briefly to notice some causes of want of success, and also to touch upon the means of a successful Christian education.

I. In considering the causes of want of success we must first notice the *disregard of one of the most important religious principles*, a due knowledge of which lies at the root of all success in this work—that all children are by *nature* born in sin, and the children of wrath; that they inherit from their parents a carnal mind, which is enmity against God. However pious the parent, his nature is cor-

\* Part of the *Introduction to DOMESTIC PORTRAITURE* of Legh Richmond, &c., by the Rev. E. BICKERSTETH. Republished by R. Carter and Brothers, N. Y. 1850.

to give good things to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him." "Pray ye the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth labourers into his harvest."

In conclusion, the attention of our ministers is invited to one point—whether prayer to the Lord of the harvest ought not to be *included in the stated service of the sanctuary* and of the prayer meeting? Unless this whole subject is elevated in the thoughts and feelings of the people to its true and solemn importance, no real improvement can be expected. Among the means adapted to produce, under God, a permanent progress in our Church in the number and strength of its ministry, none is so essential as prayer—private prayer, social prayer, and public prayer; each in its proper season; in the closet, the lecture-room, and the church. And in order that prayer may not be neglected elsewhere, let it be stately uttered in the church by the voice of the servant of "the Lord of the harvest," guiding the supplications of the worshipping assembly on the day of sacred rest.

On behalf of the Board of Education of the Presbyterian Church,  
 C. VAN RENSSELAER,  
*Corresponding Secretary.*

---

ARTICLE XIX.

THE CHURCH'S DUTY TO RAISE UP AND SUSTAIN  
 THE MINISTRY.\*

BY GEORGE POTTS, D.D., OF NEW YORK.

THE observance of a day of special prayer for the increase of candidates for the ministry takes for granted our belief of certain truths, as, for example:

1. That the extension of the Gospel is infinitely desirable.
2. That the *preaching* of the Gospel—and, of course, a ministry specially designed and set apart for the purpose—is not a human, but a divine arrangement.
3. That it has vindicated its divine authority by its effects on society.
4. That a sound education, moral and intellectual, is necessary to give to this ministry its highest efficiency.
5. That an increase of able and faithful labourers is desirable at the present time.
6. That we are not to expect such an increase by miracle—but by instrumentalities which God has himself pointed out.

\* This Address was delivered by appointment of the Presbytery of New York, at a meeting held in the First Church, N. Y., on the day of special prayer, in February last, for the blessing of God on our institutions of learning. It is published, by request of the Editor, in this magazine.

7. And finally—overtopping and crowning all these, we take for granted that other great truth—conspicuous in the word of God and confirmed by the experience of the Church in all ages—that in the beginning, the continuance, and the ending—the absolute dependence of the Church, in respect to the character and number of its ministers, *is God*. “Pray ye the Lord of the Harvest that *He* will send forth labourers.”

Let these first principles penetrate deeply into the heart of the Church, and we shall find them revealing themselves in a *devout activity*, which is the highest form of spiritual life. I say *devout activity*—for activity without devotion—or devotion without activity—will always show that the Church does not properly recognise the relation of means and ends—and the dependence of both upon God. If it be a sad thing to see zeal that works in forgetfulness of the truth, that it is God who worketh to will and to do, on the other hand, it is equally deplorable to see *prayer* separated from labour, and exhausting its sense of responsibility in words. To wait on God—and to work for God—always to wait and always to work—this is the true proportion of Faith: this makes the *activity* of the people of God, humble, trustful, and strong only in God and in the power of his might, and, on the other hand, it makes the *devotion* of the Church a fruit-bearing, self-denying, labouring, and giving principle, which proves and perfects its Faith by its works.

You, my dear friends, have been often taught this connexion between prayer and effort—we need not reason with you as to its justice. You do not need that I should inculcate the propriety, and, indeed, necessity of presenting yourselves in the attitude of devout suppliants and consistent operatives, ready to spring up to any work, to any use of appropriate means which will bear upon the end we pray for—the multiplication of able and faithful men who shall preach the word with the blessing of God. Except it be in this spirit, we had better not pray. If we want Pauls, Luthers, Whitefields, Alexanders, raised up—we must not only pray for them, we must do our best to take hindrances out of the way of their appearing, and, when they appear, encourage and sustain them. Perhaps they may be in embryo, in some of our families, or schools and colleges;—perhaps they are now in some obscure occupation;—we are to do our best to encourage them to come forth, and by our family instruction—by our magnifying the work of the ministry—by our earnest interest for them—by our direct and indirect influence—we must remove obstructions, and provide means for their ultimate engagement in the work of the Lord. This is what the Church must do, and what *consistent prayer* to the Lord of the Harvest pledges her to do, in reference to the object which convenes us. To be consistent (and God abhors a wilful inconsistency between our words and our acts), we must not only pray that labourers may be sent forth, but we must do what we can to promote their going forth.

You will find the key to these remarks in the fact that one, and,

I think, a principal reason, why it has become necessary to make a special appeal to the Lord of the harvest, is, that there has been a gradual but steady diminution in the number of candidates for the ministry, in several denominations, our own among them; a diminution the more alarming when the growth of the nation is taken into account. Is there any cause which will account for this, and which can and ought to be removed out of the way?

I believe there *is* one which is operating powerfully, and to it I will confine these few remarks. I believe that when God has raised up the promised instrumentality, the Church has not accepted it with a grateful spirit; has not prized it, has not done her best to support and strengthen it. I do not say, that this is the *sole* explanation of the remarkable fact, that so many youth of the Church—and those, too, consecrated to God by their own profession of faith—are seen actually turning aside from the ministry of reconciliation and engaging in other pursuits. But—why is this? Why, when the rough material is provided, is it not hewn and carved for the beams of the sanctuary, instead of being applied to other uses? Admit that Christian parents are much at fault in not impressing a higher type of piety upon sons, admit that the prospect of worldly aggrandizement in other directions is attractive—I think, if we look further, we shall find that the defective support which the Church affords to her ministry (I speak of the Church generally, and not of exceptional instances), contribute *very* powerfully to loosen the sense of obligation from the minds of both parents and sons. If the Church has said in acts, more powerful than words—we will not sustain the ministry when we have it—it need not wonder if it should soon be without it. Let the Church undervalue God's gifts, and they will be withdrawn. The candlestick will be removed out of its place, if we do not prize its light.

Do any say, a self-denying, self-sacrificing spirit, a spirit that aims not at the honours or wealth of the world, should characterize the ministry. Granted. But is there not a counterpart to this truth? namely, that they who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel; and that they who starve their oxen will not soon have oxen to tread out their corn. We are not to expect that God will suspend the influence of one set of causes, in favour of another. The laws of His kingdom are even in their bearings. Duties are reciprocal. A faithful Church, doing its duties to its ministers—praying to obtain them, supplying their reasonable wants—supporting them in their fields of labour at home or among the heathen—will never, never want labourers of the *right* spirit, lovers of the work—for even then those who offer for the work, saying, “here are we, send us,” will have to exercise a large degree of self-denial. But, on the other hand, every attempt to throw the burden of self-denial off the shoulders of the many, upon the shoulders of the few, will be followed by the frown of God.

Let the Church, then, not forget to examine itself to-day in

respect to this very thing, and ask, Are we doing, and giving, and praying, in a consistent spirit? Let individuals ask, whether, in respect to their own pastor, or the distant frontier or foreign missionary, they have done their duty in furnishing them, not the luxuries, but the comforts and necessities, of life? My friends, I tell you that God has been better to the Church than it deserves, in supplying so large a number of self-denying men, to work in the hot sun, upon the high places and low places of the field, although they knew beforehand that comparative obscurity and poverty must be their lot through life. I feel it to be right that we should *magnify our office*, by affirming, that the same amount of talents and energies applied in other directions would enable many of these to reach distinction and wealth. We refer to this fact, because it *glorifies the grace of God*, who has continued to supply our harvest-field with labourers, in spite of the fact that so many of them have been half-fed, half-clothed, half-provided with the fair amount of facilities for their work. Yes! even from the midst of the stinted supplies, the worldly discomforts and pitiable struggles of many a pastor's family, He has raised up a son to follow in his father's track, with the probability of inheriting his father's trials and deprivations. It is right that we record the striking fact that a large proportion of our present ministers are themselves the sons of ministers.

But this will not always continue to be so. An ill-sustained ministry will, by and by, fail to have successors competent to their work. In many cases, the burdens are already too heavy; nor can the delinquent Church complain, if, seeing the state of the case, parents shrink from offering sons, and sons from offering themselves, sacrifices to a life of distracting, disheartening, belittling, and sometimes agonizing, struggles with poverty.

If I have dwelt on this, it is because we must remember *this* as among the lets and hindrances to our prayers on this occasion. May we not fear that this which now letteth will let until it be taken out of the way? And if so, if we pray now for an increase in the ministers of the Gospel, must we not pray also that this hindrance may be taken out of the way, and do all that lies in our power to put it out of the way? When we pray that God would descend in his grace upon our assemblies of young men, and incline their hearts to ask, as Paul did after his conversion, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" we must either expect them to walk blindly into the work, or knowingly to plunge into the work in spite of the unwelcoming reception they will meet with when they enter on their labours. Yes, dear friends, we must pray not only for labourers, but for a suitable welcome and a competent encouragement at least from Christian professors. We must not expect any longer to find men who will offer to go on *our* warfare on their own charges.

And it is not one of the least of the happy effects we look for from the observances of this day, that it will turn the attention of the Church to this, among the other hindrances to the success of her

prayers. It is one of the blessed characteristics of sincere prayer, that it reacts benignly upon the petitioner, and tends to create a deeper feeling of the value of the objects prayed for. This day of prayer, we may trust, will be blessed to the suppliant Church by awaking attention to the relations of the ministry to the Church, and of both to the nation and the world. We trust it will call this subject up before delinquent congregations who are stinting their ministers,—before church sessions and presbyteries who ought to be all alive to the alarming facts of the case,—and before our more favoured and wealthy congregations, who must help those weaker churches who are really unable to sustain a minister. It will, we hope, increase everywhere within our borders the conviction that the ordinance of the ministry holds a large place in the plans of the blessed Head of the Church, and that it is as his representative that it claims to be heard, and revered, and sustained. It will serve to present to the eye of God's people the magnitude of the desolations to be reached, and the interests to be affected, by the presence or absence of a faithful and able ministry. It will recall facts too lightly regarded,—namely, that the harvest-field is the world; that salvation hangs upon a preached Gospel; that the land in which we dwell, and for whose future generations we are in our measure accountable, is peopling with a strange rapidity,—surge after surge of human beings breaking on our shores, and bringing, not poverty and sorrows (*that* we need not deprecate), but deep ignorance, or a bitter and malignant hostility—which already is heard shouting its bold defiance to our Protestant Christianity.

This day, we hope, will refresh and deepen the impression of these facts, so easily lost sight of amidst the excitements of our material prosperity. So much is at stake, indeed, so much of individual salvation and great social interests, that it must be clear to every thoughtful observer that we never stood in greater need of an increase of firm, bold, humble, able, God-fearing and man-loving soldiers, to engage in this great "fight of Faith" against the combined forces of Atheism and Superstition.

Our youth, fresh with morning dew,—our youth, gathered into the nurseries of learning and religion,—are, under God, the objects to which Faith and Hope look, as standard-bearers in the conflict. It is by their hands, if at all, that the Spirit of God will lift up the standard, when error comes in like a flood. It is that their hearts may be turned to the work, and a languid Church roused to sustain, encourage, and fight with them side by side, that we have assembled to pray.

Let me remind you that this is not a prayer that should be confined to this hour. No; it should find a place in every coming service—of every Christian closet, every sanctuary, every day, every Sabbath day.

Parents! go home and pray for this enlargement of Zion's forces. But, while you pray, look into the bright face of your boy, and ask,

Am I willing—nay, more than willing—he should be lent to the Lord as long as he liveth. Where are our Hannahs? Did they abound more, we should have more Samuels, Elijahs, and Elishas. Ask if you have ever told your son how it is the duty of every one to serve God in the most effectual manner? If he be already a professed child of God, and endowed with requisite bodily and mental vigour, tell him that, while no Christian can have too much, no one ought to have too little, piety to become a minister of his Master. Tell him that it is a great work, in its obscurest form, and a good work, and (in Heaven, at least) a well-rewarded work;—for “they who turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever.”

---

ARTICLE XX.

THE YOUNG MEN IN OUR LITERARY INSTITUTIONS.

AN ADDRESS, BY JAMES W. ALEXANDER, D.D., NEW YORK.\*

It has been computed that the young men in the colleges of the United States amount to about ten thousand. Here, on this single fact, the thoughts of every reflective Christian must rest and ponder. When imagination presents this great and interesting portion of our people, severally gathered in larger or smaller groups, the heart of fathers, mothers, sisters, and brothers begins to beat in response to the resolution of our Church, which invites us on this day to pray for the outpouring of the Spirit of God, that many of these may be called and qualified by divine grace for the work of the ministry.

This is the class out of which the levy is to be made for the army which our times demand. Having spent most of my life either within a college, or very near to it, I declare with confidence that there is not on earth a more engaging collection of persons than such an academical corps. Their very frailties and follies have the freshness of spring; their mind and heart are at the precise point of intellectual bloom; and, when grace comes in, the result is a spiritual loveliness, which, in spite of inexperience and occasional excess, wins the admiration even of the aged. Hence, the more mature we grow in knowledge and religion, the more solicitous are we that God would, out of these beloved youth, seize on an elect host to carry forward the standards which begin to tremble in older hands.

Confining our view to any one seminary of learning, we observe in it some who *have already confessed Christ* and given themselves to his ministry. I wish I knew how to communicate something of the

\* This Address was delivered by appointment of the Presbytery of New York, in the First Church, New York, on the last Thursday in February, 1852, being the day of special prayer for colleges. Published here by request of Editor.