

ARTICLE IV.

AN EDUCATED MINISTRY—THE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

[by Samuel D. Campbell (1807-1863), Geneva, AL]

General Arnold was a man of courage. Washington often commended him; and to him and to General Schuyler, rather than to General Gates, we are indebted for the victory of Saratoga. Even when a boy, he was noted for a wilt daring spirit, and his favorite amusement was to seize the arm of a huge water-wheel and ride round on it—now lifted up on high, now plunged beneath the foaming water—while his companions stood trembling and gazing in amazement. This bold spirit had not left him when he penetrated the wilderness to Quebec, nor when he stood on the deck of his riddled galley, behind Valcour's Island, nor when, with five hundred militia, he faced two thousand regulars at Ridgefield, and made them fly to their ships. But Washington, in two different letters in October, 1780, said, "General Arnold has gone to the enemy." And in another to President Reed, in the same month, he said, "Arnold's conduct is so villanously perfidious, that there are no terms which can describe the baseness of his heart." Yes, Arnold, with all his talent, energy and tried courage, went to the enemy. He was unworthy of a part in the great contest for American liberty. More than one talent was necessary for those who took the lead in that protracted struggle. If Arnold had possessed the high integrity, the generous spirit and the true patriotism of Washington, he would have been the second officer of the war. But in all great public undertakings, especially in all revolutions and times of general excitement, those who are placed in conspicuous stations, those who control public opinion, or who lead the van in attacking the enemy, must not be men of one idea or one talent. In such times, to be a blessing to their fellow men, the leaders must be men of a diversity of talent. They must have all the various moral and mental qualities which constitute wisdom. Courage without integrity, in such times, is a dangerous talent. And moral qualities, without mental abilities, are not sufficient to take the

lead when dangers threaten, or long established evils are to be attacked.

But the greatest struggle the world has witnessed, is the struggle between sin and holiness; that contest in which Christ and the Church of Christ are now engaged with the powers of darkness, the hosts of hell. And in this contest the ministers of the gospel are the leaders. They are to control public opinion; they are to attack the strongholds of Satan; they are to stand up and urge onward the ranks of the righteous against the advancing foe. And how dreadful are the consequences when of one of these leaders it is said, "He has gone to the enemy." And dark is the day in the church when "His watchmen are blind; they are all ignorant; they are shepherds that cannot understand." If one talent was not sufficient for a leader in our war of independence, how much more is it necessary that a Minister of Jesus Christ should be well furnished for the station which he holds, and for the work he has to perform. He has the kingdom of heaven for an object. All the governments of the earth are nothing compared with this. Temporal liberty, temporal wealth, temporal happiness, are nothing compared with that inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that faded not away. And the leader in a contest for any earthly object is nothing compared with a herald of salvation, summoning all rebels against Got to lay down their arms and repent. And he who takes upon himself this responsible calling without due preparation, voluntarily becomes a blind leader of the blind. For all men are naturally blind in spiritual things; and he who would lead these blind without being himself enlightened, assumes a station for which he is not qualified, and becomes a blind guide.

Many qualities are essential to a good leader, and if one or a few of these are wanting, he is so far blind. And in regard to leaders in the spiritual warfare, this blindness is of two kinds—first, blindness of the head; second, blindness of the heart. The man who is unlearned, who is deficient in science, whose knowledge has not been enlarged by a general education, whose mind has not been improved by the discipline of

close and continued study, that man is intellectually blind; and unfit to be a teacher of the deep things revealed to us by God. And not being a scientific man, if he undertakes to teach the most profound of all sciences, the science of religion, he becomes a blind leader of the blind.

That a liberal education is essential to a minister of the gospel, has been uniformly maintained by our church from its first organization in this country, a hundred and fifty years ago. And the Church of Scotland has not departed from this policy for more than 300 years, and they now adhere to it with the firmness of men taught by the experience of many generations. We are also confirmed in the wisdom of this policy by observing the changes which have taken place in those denominations who formerly differed from us in this particular. The time has been when the horns of Calvinism were not more frequently attacked, or more bitterly reviled, than a "high learned" ministry. The very stands that fifty years ago boasted that they had no educated college-bred preachers, now boast that they have more colleges and classical schools than any other denomination in the Union. And the very sermons that were preached by our fathers forty years ago, in defence of this policy, against the attacks of men "two years from the plow," deserve the credit for this salutary change in other churches, as well as for preserving a goodly heritage in our own. And even that schism from our church, which was made in the low lands of Kentucky fifty years ago, on this very point, now has a Princeton with a College and a Theological Seminary, from which go forth ministers who need not be ashamed.

After all this experience of our own, and of our opponents, and of those who have gone out from us, we are prepared to say, woe betide the man who ever again attempts, in our church, to introduce blind guides as teachers in the sacred office. Every generation of Presbyterians should be watchful, lest the standard of ministerial character be lowered, and lest, in the loud call for laborers, we send forth any who are not duly qualified to expound the Scriptures correctly, and to

teach all truth therein revealed, as well as to rebuke sin or exhort to repentance.

The talent for talking and for exciting feeling may be acquired in a short time, and with little study. But to be able to say something of real value when we talk, to be able to unlock the treasures of God's word, and feed the flock of Christ with food nourishing to their souls, we must make a long, laborious and prayerful preparation. He who has an experience of twenty or thirty years in the ministry, knows how to appreciate the precepts, "Not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil." "Lay hands suddenly on no man."

But we are charged with setting all the value on education and none on piety; that when we license or ordain a man, the question with us is—has he been graduated? and not has he been converted? This is a false charge. It is a charge which arises from that very ignorance against which we provide. We are as much opposed to blindness of the heart in the ministry, as to blindness of the head. Yea, more. The constitution of our church directs the Presbytery to base their examination into the literary qualifications of candidates upon a previous inquiry into their experimental acquaintance with religion. "It is the duty of the Presbytery, for their satisfaction with regard to the real piety of such candidates, to examine them respecting their experimental acquaintance with religion, and the motives which influence them to desire the sacred office. This examination shall be close and particular."

No man is qualified to preach the gospel who has not felt the power of the Gospel on his own heart. However learned he may be, whatever natural talent he may have, or with whatever eloquence he may be able to speak, his preaching must be presumptuous unless he be able to answer every man that asketh him a reason for the hope that is in him. And it is a duty which every minister owes to God, to the church, and to himself, frequently to test his own piety, to examine himself closely by the word of God, and to pray that he may not be deceived, lest, having preached to others, he should himself be a cast-away. And it is worse for the flock

to have a blind guide in experimental religion, than to have one uneducated and illiterate. Men are often led into error by their fellow men. Sometimes they are designedly deceived, and again they are deceived without any evil intention. The wickedness is altogether in the former case, but the evil results may be as great in the latter. And it is a small thing to lead into errors in farming, or in trading, or in any earthly business, compared to an error in religion. An ignorant man in the pulpit may lead his ignorant hearers into errors on points of infinite and eternal importance. It was not without reason that the Apostle gave us so fully the character of a Bishop, and described so minutely the qualities or characteristics by which he should be distinguished. And the object of our Saviour in asking Simon Peter three times, "Lovest thou me," was to teach him and us that without the love of Christ in our hearts, we are not worthy to feed the sheep or even the lambs of his flock. And Paul says to Timothy, "the things that thou hast heard of me, the same commit thou to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also." The words *faithful*, and *able* here used, imply the two qualifications for which we contend, religious conscientiousness and mental ability. If we commit the ministry into the hands of men who are pious but not educated, they may be faithful but cannot be able. And if we give it into the hands of men who are educated but not pious, they may be able but cannot be relied on as faithful. In one of the reports of our Board of Education, it is said, "There are two popular errors on the subject of religion, which have been productive of great evil. One of these consists in representing religion to be a mere matter of intellect; whilst the other denies that it is intellectual at all, and dispenses with all knowledge as superfluous or hurtful. Our church maintains her true character in opposition to these two extremes."

THE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

Much the larger portion of Presbyterian ministers have been from poor families, or at least from families in the middle walks of society, too indigent to afford a liberal education to their sons, even when desirous of entering the ministry. And

before there was an organization expressly to aid candidates who were destitute of means, many received aid from individuals, from churches, from Presbyteries and from Synods. And many struggled into the ministry through great difficulties, and obtained means to support themselves by teaching, or other pursuits. And it may be admitted, that these last were a valuable and reliable class of ministers, able to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. But our wants and our experience have taught us that an organization expressly to aid destitute candidates, is of great advantage to the church, and saves much anxiety and toil, both to the beneficiaries and to their patrons.

In any particular church, when a pious young man, who is destitute of means, desires to enter the ministry, what is to be done? Says one, let him take the Bible and go to preaching without delay. Says another, as he has not the means of procuring an education, let him go back to his plow or his trade, he does not seem to be called of God to preach. But, says a third, there is great need of more ministers. We need many for destitutions near at hand; we need more to send to the West, and still more to carry the gospel to the heathen. This young man seems to have a heart prepared to preach, but he is ignorant, he needs an education. Let us give him some help. I will give so much, says another, and a third, I will give so much, and so much. The young man is sent to an academy, and these church members sustain him. They appoint one of their number to receive the money, and dispose of it according to their directions. He is the treasurer. Another is appointed to see if others in the church or neighborhood will not help. He is the collector. Here is an education society. From a beginning of this kind has sprung our Board of Education. It is a society, not for one church or congregation, but for the whole denomination; and not for one young man, but for all who apply. In some congregations there is wealth, but no candidate for the ministry who needs help. In others there are poor pious young men desirous of entering the ministry, but none able to help them. Our Board of Education attends to this business. They receive money from

and parts of the land, and they give aid wherever it is needed.

And this Board derives great advantages from its connection directly with the General Assembly, and indirectly with the Presbyteries. It is not only a reliable organization, being under the observation of the whole church, and having no authority or power but what is bestowed upon it by the Assembly, but it has a kind of ubiquity which no voluntary general society can have. The American Education Society was, in its best days, a local institution, except so far as it could operate through auxiliaries. But it is impossible in many parts of the country to sustain auxiliaries. They soon languish and become extinct when they have no church connection. This has been abundantly proven by the history of the American Bible Society, whose auxiliaries are kept alive only by the expensive machinery of local agents in every State. But to our Board every Presbytery is an auxiliary, ready to co-operate whenever there is need, whether formally connected with the Board or not. If a Presbytery could be found on the frontier which had not so much as heard that there was a Board of Education, and a young man in its bounds should apply to the Board for aid, even through that Presbytery the Board could obtain all the needed information respecting his character and circumstances. And as the Presbyteries cover the whole of our territory, and are all virtually or availably auxiliary to the Board, the Board is thus an organization co-extensive with the whole church.

And as the Board is local, except as it operates through the Presbyteries, its first general rule is not only wise and good, but absolutely necessary. "Every person looking forward to the ministry is required to present the testimonials of a Presbytery before he can be assisted by the Board."

Another rule adopted by the Board shows how confidently we may rely upon the liberality of the churches to sustain candidates who are worthy. "As a universal principle, the Board will refuse to receive no one who has been regularly recommended by a Presbytery in conformity to these rules." It is easy to raise money for any deserving young man desirous of entering the ministry, and without means, if he stands before

us, and we have a personal knowledge of his character and his wants. The officers and members of the Board cannot, from personal knowledge, commend every applicant for aid to the liberality of the churches. But they can say to the churches, every one to whom we give aid is commended by the Presbytery where he lives. And they can say to the Presbyteries, be careful whom you send to us, for our rule is to sustain every one recommended by you, and we do not wish to impose on the liberality of the churches. And it is cause for thanks to the Great Father of all, that under his favorable providence the Board is able, from year to year, to grant aid to all that apply, and yet that there is no abuse of this liberality. All conduct themselves well, enter the ministry, and do good service.

The money granted to beneficiaries is not considered a loan; it is not to be returned to the Board, even when the recipient becomes able to do so, except at his own option. Why should money paid to candidates be considered in any different light from money paid to missionaries? Both are in the service of the church. The former in preparatory service, the latter in active service. If, however, the candidate fails to enter the ministry, or changes his church relation, then he is required by the Board, as well as by justice, to refund. The church does not educate men for secular callings, nor for ministers in other churches. We are too feeble, and have too many wants of our own to be thus liberal. And the beneficiary who departs from us, having received aid from the Board, and makes no effort to refund, must have a conscience seared as with a hot iron, and his departure from us is our gain. We are happily ignorant of there having ever been such a case, and hope there never may be.

In their last report, the Board says, "There has never been so little outward *agency* in the collection of funds as during the past year. The plan of systematic benevolence, or of free-will offerings from the churches, at regular periods, under the supervision of the pastors and sessions, is working with great efficiency—as might be expected from a plan that has the direct recommendation and sanction of the Scriptures. So

well has this plan worked in securing funds for the education of candidates, that the Board has not found it necessary to make any special appeal to the churches." This is very gratifying progress. But, under these circumstances, why should not the amount paid to candidates be increased? Theological students receive from the Board only \$120 a year. But this is by no means sufficient for their support. They must necessarily procure additional aid from some source, unless they have funds of their own. The Board might now safely trust the churches so far as to allow \$150 to Theological students, \$120 to students in College, and \$100 to those in Academies and private schools.



ARTICLE V.

THE CHURCH A SPIRITUAL POWER.

The writer of this article was a member of the last General Assembly. The only great drawback to a complete satisfaction in attending its sessions, was due to the want of time for a full discussion of many important questions of church polity, which sprang up in the course of business. It seems to happen, unavoidably, that the ecclesiastical matters of highest interest arise for disposal in such a body towards the close of that period beyond which members usually listen with ill-concealed impatience to lengthened argumentation. Hence the principal amount of intellectual labor, called forth during the two weeks now commonly allotted to the existence of a General Assembly, is expended upon routine business alone; leaving new questions of church theory or church management, or new phases of old and established policies, to find what room they may amid the fag ends of the discussions upon reports of standing committees. It has accordingly come to pass, in these last days, that the press is laid under contribution for the ventilation of the most grave and vital subjects connected with a

thorough understanding of the true nature and true mission of the church. On some accounts this is as well. It affords ample space for elaborate thought. It is calculated to enlist the mind of the entire church, in setting forth to the people well-considered views of truth. Its effect is, to keep the hearts of God's people awake to the theoretical differences which may yet divide opinion, and to lead them to long for the period when all the leading thinkers in the church shall see eye to eye. Not that controversy among us often assumes an angry tone. It is impossible to avoid giving thanks to God that there is so much good feeling amid so much fervor of discussion. It is evident that all the great minds of our church are united in their views of fundamental doctrine and of long-established ecclesiastical order. The only striking divisions of sentiment have reference to the best modes which wisdom may suggest for carrying out and making efficient the peculiarities of our ecclesiastical standards of faith and practice. Or, if there be an exception to this remark, it is now beginning to be apparent in the case of that one subject which, just broached in the late Assembly, is now fairly launched upon the sea of debate. We allude to the subject which, in one of its aspects, was introduced to the notice of a thrilled and enraptured house at a closing hour of the session by a distinguished Southern divine. This eloquent debater embraced the only opportunities that were given to announce a doctrine, not new, indeed, but most important, and comparatively novel to the rising generation of Christians. He brought into a clear light the proposition that the Church of God is exclusively a *spiritual* organization, and can wield none but a *spiritual* power. This proposition has been ably combated in the *Princeton Review*, and excited general interest throughout the Church. And no wonder that it has awakened attention; for it expresses a fundamental doctrine which is fruitful in consequences, that wise men are bound to consider. We know of nothing, indeed, more important, at the present day than a final settlement of the question: *what is the true nature of the Church?* And if the present generation of Bible students