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### Miscellaneous Communications.

Reported for the Presbyterian Treasury.

#### DEBATES ON THE BOARDS OF THE CHURCH, IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, BALTIMORE, MAY, 1848.

[The last General Assembly appointed a committee to investigate the pecuniary affairs of the different Boards of the Church. Dr. PLUMER made a long and detailed report, containing the result of his investigations; and suggesting no retrenchment or improvement in the mode of conducting operations. This report was, on motion of Judge HEPBURN, of Pennsylvania, referred to a committee, of which the Judge was appointed chairman. The Judge soon brought in a report, recommending various retrenchments, such as lowering salaries, abolishing travelling expenses, reducing the number of officers, &c. The following is a sketch of the debate:]

JUDGE HEPBURN said, he was not hostile to the Boards; but he thought they needed reformation. For example, the *Board of Publication* ought not to have both an editor and a publishing agent. He thought that the Executive Committee ought to do the work of editing. This would save annually the salary of editor, which was \$1200. As to the *Board of Education*, he thought that its two agencies ought to be both abolished, as there was no good gained by them. Besides, he had two charges against the General Agent, which were sufficient for his removal. One was, that he had insisted upon offering a salary of \$200 to a Western agent, and had said by way of argument, that the opinion of the Board in regard to his receiving it was like that of the Medes and Persians, unalterable. The other charge was, that the General Agent, or the Board, had added to the travelling expenses of one agent for the purpose

of concealing the large amount which belonged to another; for it appeared that one agent, whose travelling expenses were \$1675, was put down as expending \$100.12½. He had, also, known a case where an agent visited one church on Saturday, returned home on Monday, and then went back to another church in the same neighbourhood on the next Saturday. As to the *Board of Domestic Missions*, why should the Corresponding Secretary have so large a salary? Moreover, in the West, the expenses of the agents were not so much as those of the East. This showed either that the Western agents did not travel enough, or that those in the East were very prodigal of the Church's money. Why these disproportions? He believed that all these travelling expenses ought to be done away with altogether. They were unknown any where else except in the Church. As to the *Foreign Board*, some of their expenses were unreasonably high. One of their agents had a larger salary than the Chief Justice of Pennsylvania, and yet had large travelling expenses paid besides. In short, he thought a reformation was necessary.

[The question first came up on consolidating the offices of Editor and of Publishing Agent in the *Board of Publication*.]

DR. KREBS thought these two offices should not, and could not, be united. The Executive Committee could never attend to the selection and editing of books, without the aid of an Editor. This last office was one that could not possibly be dispensed with. The pastors on that committee could not attend to this work, in the midst of their other avocations.

DR. LORD, of Buffalo, said that our Boards were the representatives of the Church principle in conducting benevolent operations, and he hoped they would be models of economy. But we must be careful not to agitate these matters

in an ill-advised way. He agreed with Dr. Krebs on the particular point in question.

DR. CUYLER said, the consolidation of these two distinct offices was an impracticability.

[Here the Assembly adjourned. When they met again in the evening,]

JUDGE HEPBURN arose and said, he was satisfied that his suggestion about the Board of Publication ought not to be adopted, and requested leave to withdraw it, which being unanimously granted, he added that his principal objection to the Boards was *their travelling expenses*.

The question now occurred about the recommendation as to the *Board of Education*. The Corresponding Secretary of the Board was here called upon to state the views of the Board.

REV. C. VAN RENSSLAER said, that so far as the Board of Education were concerned, the recommendation of the committee was very different from a question about travelling expenses. It proposed to abolish all their agencies. It, therefore, struck directly at the very foundation of all their *principles of administration*. The Chairman had brought two charges against the General Agent. As to his having insisted that a Western agent should take a salary, the offer was made under peculiar circumstances. The Western agent was doing a laborious work for the Board, in visiting the churches of the Synods of Wheeling and Pittsburgh; and besides, had an academy, where one or two young men under the care of the Church were receiving their education gratuitously. While on his agency, he hired a teacher to assist him at the academy. He could ill afford to make these sacrifices; and the Board could not in justice and decency ask him to do so. Under these circumstances, the General Agent was right in urging his brother to accept the salary proffered by the Board. The remark about the laws of the Medes and

The Rev. Dr. TALMAGE, *President of Oglethorpe University, Ga.*, said that the words of Christ were still true, "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few." The office of the ministry is the sublimest on earth. Although men in this world are often placed in circumstances peculiarly interesting, as Lamarine at the present time, yet what circumstances so interesting, so solemn, so sublime, as those in which a minister is placed, speaking in the name of God to dying men! What is civil liberty compared to the salvation of the soul!

\* \* \* \* \*

The office requires spiritual and intellectual education. Moses under the Old Testament, and Paul under the New, were specimens of ministerial qualification, which may well be held up to the Church. More learning is needed now than in any former age. Great errors must be met with strong refutations. The world is advancing in knowledge. The minds of men were never sharper, more acute, or more prone to fortify their opinions by reasoning. And if any system of religion needed able and well-informed men to sustain it, it was the system of *truth* revealed in the Bible, or in other words, Calvinism. Ignorant men may teach with a smooth tongue specious forms of error; but ignorant men cannot teach Calvinism. Our standards, therefore, wisely provide for the education of our pious youth, and our Church wisely provides for the means of educating those who are in indigent circumstances.—Especially is it wise to do so, in consequence of the fact that so few young men of property come forward to this great work. God uses means in the advancement of his kingdom. Our Church is authorized to use means in carrying out His will. Among these means, the simplest and the least equivocal on this point, would seem to be, to furnish aid to those pious youths of the Church who feel called to serve their Master in the ministry. We all have duties to perform in this matter. An Antinomian view prevails in some parts of the Church on this subject which threatens to do evil. We cannot roll away our own responsibility. The Church, acting under her great Head, must use all the means in her power, to turn the minds of her youth to their duty in relation to the great work of preaching the gospel to every creature. A neglect here is fatal error, and will be followed by disastrous consequences.

Rev. Dr. McClusky, of Western Pennsylvania, said that the Church must come up to this great work with the organization and discipline of military life. Our victories in Mexico were won by the skill which characterized the arrangements of the army, and then by the spirit in which those arrangements were carried out. Our Church may learn a lesson from this. Our Boards are wisely arranged; now let us carry forward their operations with united zeal and energy. The Board of Education have done a great work in aiding to the ministerial office many of our most worthy ministers. Every pastor must be awake to his duty, in turning the attention of the pious youth in his congregation to the claims of Christ's last command. We must begin at the fireside. Education at home must aid, and always has aided, our Church in obtaining her ministerial supplies. Dr. McClusky mentioned some facts to illustrate these views. He insisted upon the duties of pastors; and alluded to a case, which resulted in turning the minds of four brothers, pious young men, to the ministerial office— young men who adorn their vocation. In his

view, the Board of Education was an important, if not the *most* important, of all the organizations of our Church.

The Rev. Dr. LORD, of Buffalo, N. Y., commenced by saying, that we cannot too highly estimate the importance of the office of the ministry, or of the means to perpetuate it. What was it that gave the Church her triumph in the early age! It was the preaching of the word of God. He rejoiced that the Church paid attention to this work. Some said, "what is the use of an educated ministry; learning may do for professors, but not for pastors." But the fact was that there was no use of learned professors, unless they succeeded in training learned pastors. The pastor, after all, is the man who comes in contact with errorists. *He* must refute heresy, clear the truth of its obscurities, and guide the people into the way everlasting. It was equally absurd to say that ignorant men will do for the Western and destitute settlements. Was there ever a greater delusion! Strong, educated, spiritually discerning men are needed every where, especially in places where errorists abound. The cause of Foreign Missions, too, is intimately connected with the cause of ministerial education. Educated men are best suited to direct the heathen away from false idols to the living God. Sanctified learning is one of God's instrumentalities in overthrowing the refuges of lies. It is said that young men of promise can get into the ministry without aid. Some may, and others will not. Other professions allure with their temptations. Young men need encouragement, or they will go off to worldly avocations. It is expensive to get an education. A poor young man must have help in going to the Academy, the College, the Seminary. If we erect barriers to the education of the poor, we do injustice to them, and inflict an injury on the Church. Let us sympathise with our pious youth who need assistance, and give them that encouragement which is so eminently characteristic of the Gospel, and subservient to its progress.

After prayer by the Rev. H. R. WILSON, the meeting adjourned.

#### PREMIUMS FOR SCHOLARSHIP.

The following remarks on an interesting and important subject, are from a source that entitles them to careful consideration. The Board of Education have not been inattentive observers of the feature of the Scotch scheme of education, alluded to by our respected correspondent. We rejoice that he has called the attention of the Board to it, in this specific form.

For the Presbyterian Treasury.

#### COMPETITION.

In the Free Church of Scotland the principle of competition is extensively introduced. To encourage and aid young students, bursaries of £10 and £15 are established. But in order to avail himself of the benefit of one of these, the young candidate must compete for it. By this means, the talents and acquirements of the applicants become known, and the competition operates as a stimulus to excite the vigorous exercise of the faculties, and also serves to increase the diligence of the student.

The same principle is put into operation in the bestowment of scholarships in the higher departments of education. Competition is also resorted to with great advantage, in allotting to school-teachers the different grades of salary which have been provided. For example, there

are three degrees of emolument for teachers. The highest is £45 per annum, the next £30, and the lowest £20. The competitors are informed at what places, and under whose superintendence the competition is to take place. The examination is by written questions, and these are prepared beforehand by skillful persons, and are the same at every place. Last year (1847) there were but five competitors for the highest salary: for this the questions are more difficult than for the others, and require much more learning to answer them; therefore, the competitors were few, especially as the time allowed for preparation was short. But the report says, that the five who offered answered admirably; yet among them there existed a marked difference.

For the salary of £30, twenty-four competitors offered themselves; but only twelve of these were considered as coming up to the standard fixed for this salary; but the remaining twelve were judged entitled to the salary of £20. For this last, eighty-two persons entered the list; and such was their proficiency, that every one of them was judged to be entitled to the lowest salary, which, with the twelve already mentioned, makes the number ninety-four, who will receive the salary of twenty pounds sterling.

There seems to be no scruples in Scotland in the minds of any, respecting the morality of the practice of competition. In this country, where *ultraism* on many subjects prevails, there would be much diversity of opinion on this subject. It is admitted, that the constitutional principle of emulation is exceedingly liable to abuse, and must be vigilantly guarded and cautiously regulated, or it will readily degenerate into an odious vice; but if it be an original principle of human nature, it ought not to be denounced as an evil *per se*, and its exercise in all cases prohibited.

The question may fairly come before the Board of Education of the Presbyterian Church, whether the practice of competition might not, with advantage, be introduced into their system. A. A.

#### WATCHFULNESS.

The Church cannot be too much on her guard in the examination of candidates for licensure and ordination. Different Presbyteries will, of course, have different standards of qualification and requirement. This diversity can be best removed by a required adherence to the Confession of Faith, in connexion with the diffusion of intelligence and the cultivation of piety. We do not believe in the efficacy of the additional remedy, proposed by one of the Presbyteries of the Free Church of Scotland; but we publish it for the sake of showing the vigilance which that Church is beginning to exhibit, and for the sake of urging a similar watchfulness on the part of our own Church, in conformity with her constitutional and wise injunctions.

#### PROPOSAL IN REGARD TO CANDIDATES IN THE FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

The following overture was moved and unanimously agreed to by the Presbytery of Haddington and Dunbar:

"Whereas it is matter of great and growing importance that the trials of students for license, and of probationers for induction, be efficiently conducted, and such as *bona fide* to test the