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ART. I.—*The Origin of the Episcopate in the Christian Church.* By Dr. F. C. Baur. Tübingen, 1838. pp. 187, 8vo.*
J. Addison Alexander

THE Presbyterian and Episcopalian are agreed in this, that the affairs of the primitive church were administered by Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons; that Bishops were ministers or preachers of the gospel, of the highest rank; and that they possessed the power of ordination and of discipline. So far as these points are concerned, nothing is gained, on either side, by proving from the Scriptures or the Apostolic Fathers, that there were three orders of church-officers, and that the Bishop took precedence of the others. This is admitted and contended for, on both sides. If Clement or Ignatius says that nothing can be orderly performed without the Bishop, or insists upon his title to obedience and respect, this is nothing more than modern Presbyterians profess to teach and practice. The point, at which the parties really

* Ueber den Ursprung des Episcopats in der Christlichen Kirche. Prüfung der neuestens von Hrn. Dr. Rothe aufgestellten Ansicht. Von Dr. Ferdinand Christian Baur, ordentlichem Professor der Evangelischen Theologie an der Universität zu Tübingen.

ART. II.—*Gildas Salvianus; or, The Reformed Pastor.*

By Richard Baxter. Abridged for the Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1839.

By Archibald Alexander

IF any minister of modern times had a right to admonish pastors, and to prescribe to them rules to be followed in the management of their flocks, that man was Richard Baxter. For he exemplified in his own conduct every thing to which he exhorted others; and his success was equal to his fidelity and diligence. The fruits of his labours at Kidderminster were very remarkable, and they were permanent; for the change produced by his ministry in the religious and moral condition of that town are not entirely worn out to this day. And we are happy in having his own account of the means used, which were attended with such signal success. “Every Thursday evening, such of his neighbours as were desirous of it, met at his house for conversation and religious exercises; each one having liberty to propose his doubts, or to ask any questions. To those he gave suitable answers; and before they separated, it was his custom to call, first upon one and then another, to lead in prayer, besides praying with them himself. This, with the singing of a psalm, was all that was done. On another evening, some younger persons met and spent two or three hours in prayer. On every Saturday evening, it was customary to meet at each other’s houses, to repeat the sermon of the preceding sabbath, and to prepare for the duties of the next day. Once in a few weeks they had, on one occasion or another, a day of humiliation and prayer. Every religious woman who escaped the dangers of child-birth, kept, with a select company of her neighbours, a day of thanksgiving for God’s mercy in her safe deliverance. Every week, he and his assistant took fourteen families each, for catechising and conference; the assistant going into the country, and Mr. Baxter attending to such as were in the town. He first heard them recite the words of the catechism, and then examined them about the sense; and lastly, urged upon them the state of mind and practice which corresponded with the truths recited. He was careful not to press them hard, when through ignorance they were unable to answer, but passed them by, and said something by way of exhortation. He spent about an hour with each family, and permitted no other persons to

be present, lest through bashfulness any should be embarrassed and prevented from answering freely; or lest one should be lead to speak of the ignorance and mistakes of his neighbours. Every Monday and Tuesday afternoon was spent in these family visitations; and the mornings of the same days were spent by his assistant in the same exercises.

“Every first Wednesday in the month, a meeting was held for parish discipline; and every first Thursday of the month was the ministers’ meeting for discipline and disputation. His public preaching met with an attentive, diligent auditory. Before he entered the ministry, God blessed his private conversation to the conversion of some who continued to be exemplary Christians. These, in the beginning of his ministry, he was wont to number as his jewels; yet, after a while, they so increased that he could not keep count. His church was commonly very full, and the hearers so increased, that it was found necessary to erect several additional galleries, for the accommodation of the people. On the Lord’s day, there was no disturbance to be seen in the streets; and, as one passed along, he might hear a hundred families singing psalms, or engaged in repeating sermons. When he first came to Kidderminster, there might perhaps be found one family in a whole street who worshipped God. When he left the place, there were some whole streets in which there could not be found a single house in which the worship of God was not maintained. Even in those houses which were the worst, such as taverns and ale-houses, there were commonly found one or more who feared God and called upon his name. Such as conducted themselves scandalously were excommunicated; and of six hundred communicants, there were not twelve of whose piety he did not entertain a good hope.

“Some of the poor men of the congregation competently understood the body of divinity, and were able to judge in difficult controversies; and some of them were so able in prayer, that very few ministers were equal to them in order and fulness. Abundance of them were able to pray in a very proper manner with their families or others, possessing a remarkable gift and lively utterance, which rendered it edifying to hear them, and the innocency of their lives, and the temper of their minds, were such as to call forth the praises of all who regarded the truth. The professors of religion were generally of humble mind and carriage, of meek and quiet behaviour to others, and of blameless conversation.”

The account which he gives of the means made use of to produce such a blessed state of things, are also worthy the attention of every pastor. The people among whom he was settled had not been previously hardened under the preaching of the gospel. They had never before enjoyed an awakening ministry; but only a few formal, cold sermons. Baxter himself was in his vigour, and full of ardour and animation. His voice too was naturally penetrating and moving, which with common hearers is a great matter. He preached also with the feelings of a dying man; for, on account of his bodily infirmities, he had the prospect of death continually before him; for his impression at this time was, that a year or two would terminate his earthly labours.

But the circumstance which seemed to gain him the most ready access to the hearts and consciences of his people was, the impression made on their minds that he sincerely sought their good. If the people had entertained the least suspicion of the purity and benevolence of his motives; if they had supposed that he was erroneous, scandalous, or covetous, the effect of his ministry would have been small. "A bishop must have a good report from those that are without." He was also greatly aided by the prayers and efforts of the godly in the place. They thirsted after the salvation of their neighbours, and being dispersed all over the town, they were every where ready to discountenance vice and error, to justify piety, and to convince, reprove, and exhort men, as occasion offered, and as there was need. They also inculcated the duty of prayer, and the sanctification of the Lord's day. And it was a custom for those who were intelligent and serious, when they had a meeting at their houses, to repeat sermons, &c. They invited their ignorant neighbours to attend, so that often the houses of the better sort of people, on such occasions, would be crowded with poor people. Their holy, humble, and exemplary lives were of the greatest advantage to the success of his ministry. Nothing so convinces men of the truth and reality of vital religion as the living example and meek and humble spirit of its professors; while, on the other hand, there is no greater obstruction to the gospel than the inconsistent lives and unsavoury spirit of many who are in the communion of the church. The unity and concord which were preserved among the pious were also of great benefit. The place was also, in a good degree, exempt from those sects and heresies which abounded at this time in most places of the land.

“Private meetings were found to be an effectual help to piety in the place, for by this means the truths that had slipped away were recalled, and serious impressions which were in danger of being worn away were renewed, and good desires cherished. These meetings were found also greatly to increase the knowledge of the people; and by the continual exercise of the gift of prayer, many improved in their gifts, and the younger learned to pray, by hearing those that were older. They furnished the preacher also with an opportunity of knowing the persons who were beginning to be serious; for, if any one was wounded by the arrows of truth, in the public dispensation of the word, he would be sure to drop into these meetings. By the means of these also, idle meetings, and the loss of time, were prevented; and so far were these religious meetings from producing schism, that they were the chief means of preventing any thing of the kind; for the pastor was commonly there in the midst of them; solving their doubts, silencing their objections, and moderating them in all things.

“It gave him also no small advantage, that being a single man, and spending little on himself, he was able to distribute the larger part of his income among the poor. And when he found any of their children possessing promising talents, he would, by means of his own funds and the aid of his friends, send them to be educated at the university. Several of these became useful preachers, and with their brethren were ejected by the act of uniformity; while others conformed and remained in the ministry. In giving charitable relief to the indigent, he never made it a question whether they were good or bad; for he thought the bad had souls and bodies which needed charity most. And he left this encouraging and important fact on record, “*That what little funds he ever acquired were obtained when he gave most away,*” and that when he has been able to give little his increase has also been diminished.

He also promoted the good work, by giving away good books. Most of these he wrote himself; and of some small books which he published, he gave every family one, which amounted to near eight hundred.

It was a saying of Baxter, verified in the experience of many pastors, “That freeholders and tradesmen are the strength of religion, and of the community, while gentlemen, and beggars, and servile tenants, are the strength of iniquity.”

“Another great help to his success was the practice already mentioned, of dealing with every family apart, catechising and instructing them. That which was spoken to them personally, seemed to awaken their attention much more than the same truths heard from the pulpit,

“The faithful exercise of church discipline also, was no small furtherance of the people’s good; for Baxter found, that without discipline he never could have kept the religious part of the church from divisions and separations. Pious people have, from their very character, an inclination to separate from the irreligious and profane; and if they had not seen a disposition to separate such from the communion, they would have been disposed to withdraw from the society. Many abstained from coming to the Lord’s table for fear of discipline, for out of sixteen hundred of proper age to come to the Lord’s table, there were no more than six hundred communicants. It was the custom, however, for all to come that would, so that their exclusion was their own act; and as to the posture in partaking of the ordinance, every one acted according to his own judgment. He baptized the children of all sorts, but he required the parents to give him, privately or publicly, an account of their faith, and if any father was a scandalous sinner, he made him confess his sin openly, before he would baptize his child. If the father refused, the administration of the ordinance was postponed until the mother brought the child; for he says, he rarely found both father and mother so destitute of knowledge and faith, as in a *church-sense* to be incapable of receiving this ordinance for their children.

“Another thing which facilitated his success as a pastor, was the manner in which he brought forth the truth in his preaching. He adapted his sermons to the peculiar circumstances of the flock. The subject of his preaching was the fundamental doctrines of the gospel, which were so frequently exhibited that they became familiar to the thoughts of the people. But to keep his hearers humble, and to prevent vain self-sufficiency, he was accustomed to put something in every sermon, which they did not know before. By this means they were kept in a learning state, and their thirst for knowledge was both excited and gratified. For he thought, if preachers tell their people but what they know already, they will be tempted to turn preachers themselves, and suppose that they have learned all the minister can teach them, and have become as wise as he is. Minis-

ters will be despised if they do not possess knowledge superior to that of their people, but if he communicates to them things which they did not know before, by a daily addition to their former knowledge, they will be led on with desire and delight. He never thought it expedient to take up their time with unprofitable controversies, which could not produce edification; nor did he affect novelties in doctrine, contrary to the received opinions of the universal church; but such things as tended to illustrate the great doctrines of the gospel.

“One important circumstance connected with the success of this eminent pastor was, THAT HE KEPT HIMSELF FREE FROM ALL WORLDLY ENTANGLEMENTS, so that his whole time was devoted to his ministry, except what was taken up by sickness. Personally he had nothing to do with the tithes of the parish; every thing of this kind he committed into the hands of others; and he directed that where his parishioners were poor, the debt should not be exacted, but entirely remitted.”*

The preceding account of Baxter's labours is taken from the History of his own Life and Times, written by himself; and it contains the best practical commentary which can be given of his “Reformed Pastor.” And a better model can scarcely be found for the imitation of the clergy of all denominations in our day. It is true, that Baxter was a man of great abilities and extensive learning; but these qualifications do not appear to have been those which contributed most to his success. His fervent zeal, his tender compassion for souls, his manifest sincerity, his wise selection of appropriate means, and his indefatigable diligence, were the true reasons of his success. And can it be shown, that any minister ever possessed these qualifications of an evangelical pastor, and yet laboured without effect? Why may not that which was done by Baxter be done by every pastor? Perhaps few can preach so well as he did; but if the hearts of ministers were now as much in their work as was his, their preaching would be with power, and a blessing would attend it. And if they would “watch for souls as they that must give account,” they would find work enough to occupy their hearts and their hands. Entire devotedness to the duties of their office seems essential to an efficient ministry. Their worldly pursuits and avocations may be in themselves very innocent; but it is enough to condemn them that they are *avo-*

* See Baxter's Life abridged for the Board of Publication.

cations which call them away from their proper work. When it was recently announced by a clergyman from the other side of the world, that the missionaries of a certain society had been deeply engaged in land speculations, how did it shock all our best moral feelings? And if it should be told that any of our American missionaries had so managed their small salaries that by judicious speculation they had become rich, and were living in splendour, what should we think? How should we feel? But who will undertake to prove, that pastors at home are not bound to be as dead to the world, and as much devoted to their work, as any missionary? Is not the ministerial character as sacred here as in foreign countries? and is not the salvation of the souls committed to them as important as the salvation of an equal number of the heathen? There is little doubt, but that the true reason why missionaries do commonly excel in piety, is because they are entirely cut loose from the possessions of the world. They give up all prospect of owning property. They have made up their minds to sacrifice entirely what the world calls *independence*, and to expect to have nothing but food, raiment, and shelter from the weather; and for these necessaries they are content to rely upon the free-will offerings of the church. If they can turn any talent to profit, it is not for themselves, but for the common cause. What a noble example, to see the venerable Carey labouring assiduously in teaching, not to enrich himself, but to bring every dollar of a large salary and cast it into the common treasury; and contented to receive from them no more than the common share of the poorest missionary. O, could we see such examples at home, of self-denial and disinterestedness, we might begin to hope that Zion was about to arise from the dust, and that God had put a new spirit into her watchmen. There is no vice, perhaps, which the clergy in our country are so liable to be infected with as covetousness; and yet this is no less a crime, according to the word of God, than idolatry. Ministers, it is true, are generally poor, but they may be greedy of gain notwithstanding this, and may neglect the responsible duties of their awful calling, for the sake of filthy lucre. The necessity which is often laid upon them by the unjust parsimony of their people, to provide by their own exertions for their own households, often becomes a snare to them. They get accustomed to worldly business, and perhaps expert in managing pecuniary matters, and when any man once gets his hand in, in the way of making money, by

lawful means, it will be difficult for him to relinquish the pursuit. And as to stopping when he has a sufficiency, this he is no more likely to do than other men who make riches the object of their pursuit. That point of *sufficiency* is a vanishing point; when the man approaches it, it recedes from him, and still keeps as far ahead as at the beginning; so that the pursuit which at first promised to be short and soon ended, proves to be interminable. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon," says our Saviour. This is eminently true as applied to the ardent pursuit of wealth, and the duties of the holy ministry. No man can be much occupied with worldly cares and business, and at the same time have his heart duly engaged in the duties of his pastoral office. These last will either be neglected, slightly performed, or the genuine spirit which should pervade and animate the whole service, will be wanting. And then it will be like a body without a spirit. Another danger is, that the leading and wealthy part of his parishioners, wanting an apology for their own love of the world, will be secretly delighted to find their minister, who should be their reprove, animated by the same spirit, and as thoroughly engaged in the pursuit of wealth as themselves. And how can he be faithful in declaring the whole counsel of God concerning the love of riches? Will not his mouth be stopped? Or, if inconsistently he performs his duty in the pulpit, will not every one be ready to apply to him that proverb, "Physician, heal thyself?" "Thou that teachest another, teachest not thou thyself?" The worldly minister, when he meets his parishioners from time to time, has so much to say about the common objects of their attention, that he cannot edge in a word of admonition or divine instruction. Indeed, such ministers have commonly little talent for religious conversation; and people do not expect it of them; or if, against the current of their thoughts and affections, they force themselves to give utterance to some common-place remarks on this subject, they come out so drily and formally that, instead of warming, they freeze the feelings of their people. Such ministers would relinquish the sacred office, if they could do it honourably; and surely it would be more consistent for some to give up the office than nominally to continue to wear the clerical character, while they perform scarcely any of its duties. Here is the secret of the frequent dissatisfaction between pastors and their flocks, and the cause of such frequent disruption of the sacred bond cast around them at their in-

stallation. When has it been known, that a people have been solicitous to be freed from the oversight and preaching of a truly devoted, faithful, and laborious minister? Though he may not be a first rate man as to talents, yet if he is humble, affectionate, sincere, and laborious, in the study, in the pulpit, and in the family, such a man will find himself seated in the affections of his flock; and if a few fastidious and conceited hearers wish for more learning, more eloquence, and a more fascinating style of preaching, the great body of the people will cleave to him, and with docility receive the word from his mouth; and will always rejoice to see their pastor entering their dwellings. The poor, among whose humble cottages he often directs his steps, will hail him as a friend and benefactor, and will bless God for giving them so faithful a guide and instructor.

While some pastors are rendered almost useless by worldly entanglements, others sink into a state of discouragement. When preparing for the sacred office, they pleased themselves with the hope of doing much good. In prospect, every thing looked fair and pleasing; and they anticipated that their labours would produce a great visible effect. But when they go forth, and are fixed in a charge where the people are careless and ignorant, and pay little attention to their instructions, and afford no visible fruits of their labours, they become disheartened; and perform their parochial duties with langour, because without hope of success. Fault is found with the situation of the parish, or the character of the flock; and some other place must be sought. But they cannot find a congregation of angels, or even one made up of saints; and they are never likely to be suited. We entertain the opinion, that more than half the cases of the removal of ministers will not be sanctioned by the great Head of the church, who sees and observes all the affairs of his kingdom on earth. Good men often make sad blunders in this matter. They literally *go from home*, because annoyed by some perverse neighbours, or unreasonable parishioners, who, finding how easily their sensibility is wounded, take pains to vex them. They cannot bear this thorn in the flesh, the piercings of which are not deep and dangerous, but constant, and they cannot get clear of it. O, if they would look to that God whose grace is sufficient to enable them to bear all trials, they would not leave their place to escape an evil which very probably, in the end, would do them good. We are much inclined to the opinion, that when a minister has been

called, in providence, to take charge of a people, if he would resolve to lay himself out to promote their best interests of every kind—if he would begin to instruct the ignorant, to train the youth, to warn the unruly, to feed the flock with the pure milk of the word, to make every sacrifice for their benefit, and to bear with uncomplaining patience all their ill treatment—still praying for them, and tenderly watching every opportunity to do them good, his difficulties in time would be removed or lessened; his enemies would become reconciled; the careless would take on them the serious profession of religion, and what was like a wilderness would become like the garden of the Lord. Who had a harder lot than Oberlin and Neff, among the wild rocks of the Alps, and a people as wild as the land which they inhabited? and yet, by patient endurance—by unceasing effort—by wise measures of improvement—and by the spirit of ardent, inextinguishable piety, they were enabled, by the blessing of heaven, which is sure to attend such labours, to see the work of God prospering in their hands. They had the pleasure of beholding such a transformation in the aspect of society as filled their hearts with joy and gratitude, and their mouths with praise. And what was there in Kidderminster, when Mr. Baxter began his labours there, which promised much comfort or success? But by faithful, persevering labours—such labours as are within the reach and ability of any pastor, if only his heart be right, he accomplished a glorious work of reformation, and was the honoured instrument of saving a multitude of souls, who are now as stars in his crown, while he rejoices with them before the throne of God.

To some, this kind of life, replete with labours, and cutting off the preacher from all the advantages of earthly gain, honour, and comfort, seems to be unreasonable. They are ready, not merely to apologize for the course pursued by ministers who engage in worldly pursuits, but to put in a plea of justification. Ministers are but men, and too much ought not to be expected of them. They commonly have families for which they are bound to provide, or be worse than infidels. They are educated men, and possess feelings as refined as others of this class; and why should this profession be doomed to a life of self-denial and hardship? If their people are unable or unwilling to make provision for them, they have a right, and are bound to attend to worldly affairs, in that degree which is necessary to furnish them with a sufficiency of this world's goods, if not an

independence. And by mingling with the people in the commerce and common intercourse of life, they conciliate the men of the world, and remove the prejudice so extensively imbibed, that religion renders men austere and unsociable, and is inimical to the innocent pleasures of life. And if, under the favour of providence, they acquire property by lawful exertions, they should not be censured for that which all other men are indulged to pursue and possess. Now, in this defence, there is so much truth and error mingled, that we will not undertake to discriminate between them. But, let us suppose that a fragment of authentic ecclesiastical history had come down to our times, containing the following statement of facts. "The Apostle Paul, though much devoted to his Master's service, yet was not inattentive to his own wordly interest. Travelling much, he had the opportunity of seeing the improvements of one country, and introducing them into another. By watching his opportunities of increasing his fortune, he was able to lay up money enough to purchase a handsome house at Corinth, which he furnished in a plain, but rich and elegant manner; and, while at Ephesus, he found an opportunity of making a very favourable speculation in some lots and houses, which were brought to the hammer, through the failure in business of their former owners. Some of his brethren, who were less skilful in trade, or less favoured with opportunities of making valuable acquisitions of this kind, seemed disposed to censure him as acting inconsistently with his high vocation; but he despised such censures, as knowing that they proceeded from envy of his success in business. And as long as he lived, though he met with some losses, he continued to increase in wealth; so that when he suffered martyrdom at Rome, he was worth an estate valued at ——." But we must stop. No Christian feelings can endure such a representation, either in the case of Paul, or Peter, or John, or Apollos, or Timothy, or any other primitive preacher. Such a narrative as the above, if it had been contained in the Acts of the Apostles, would have ruined the Christian religion. And our feelings are so correct on this subject, that any representation of a similar kind of traffic in the world, and acquisition of wealth by any of our missionaries abroad, would raise such a hue and cry against them, that the missionary cause could not sustain itself, in these circumstances, for a single year. But on what principles do we make so wide a difference between what was unbecoming and incon-

sistent with the sacred office, in the apostles' days, and in our times? Is it not the same Lord that we serve? Is it not the same gospel which is intrusted to us? Is not eternity as near to us and as important as to them? And is not the day of judgment many hundred years nearer? Is not the salvation of immortal souls as deeply interesting now as it ever was? And do not ministers now take upon them as solemn ordination vows as were ever assumed by men? Where, then, is the ground of our different feelings, in regard to certain courses of conduct? It has no just foundation. It may be traced to our own selfishness, which blinds us in regard to all that relates to our own interest or ease. But if it might be supposed that the circumstances of the apostles and primitive teachers, exposed as they were to persecution, and having the whole world opposed to them, might make them indifferent to worldly things, which, if they possessed, they could not retain; yet how shall we account for the high requisition which the Christian world makes on the missionary, compared with the pastor at home? Do we not condemn our own worldliness, self-indulgence, and indolence, while we would censure in a missionary what we, as a matter of course, allow ourselves to pursue or to enjoy? Certainly, ministers at home are as much bound to be self-denying, faithful and laborious, as those who go to foreign countries. The missionary may be exposed to more hardships necessarily; but we defy any man to show, that the minister at home is not under obligations to labour as faithfully, and to make for the cause of Christ as great sacrifices, as those beloved men, who have forsaken their native land, and all their dear relatives, without the expectation of ever seeing them again. Indeed, as these painful sacrifices are such as ministers are not required to make, they seem to be bound, in other ways, to show an equal attachment to Christ's kingdom; and to labour more indefatigably for the conversion of souls, perishing all around them. There is no escape from self-condemnation in this case; and the only way by which we can evade the condemnation of our Judge is, to condemn ourselves, and humble ourselves in penitence before him, lest he deal with us according to our sins, and reward us according to our iniquities. Let us remember, that the time is short; and that what we do must be done quickly. We must work while the day lasts, for soon the night cometh when no man can work. Is it not a sign of God's displeasure that he is calling off from the harvest field, some

of the most faithful and efficient labourers? But there is slight lamentation in the churches, for these great losses. "The righteous perisheth and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come." And let the ministers of God begin to lay to heart their true condition, and the evils which threaten the church. The enemy is coming like a flood, and yet the watchmen hold their peace—they are asleep—they sound no alarm—they appear to be at ease in Zion. "Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, spare thy people, O LORD, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them. Wherefore should they say, among the people, where is their God?"

Let us indulge our imagination for a moment, in conceiving of two ministers of equal talents and opportunities, but one of whom only has been faithful, self-denying, and laborious, entering together into the presence of their common Lord, and appearing before his judgement seat. The first is accosted in a language which surprises him, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord;" the other is confounded and abashed before he hears his sentence—his own conscience has already anticipated his doom. We need not be surprised that he trembles, and would gladly hide himself in some secret cavern. But stern necessity is laid upon him, and he is arraigned, and the charge against him is not for any enormous crime. No, his conduct was always moral and decent, but it is for sloth and unfaithfulness. He had a talent, and did not improve it. He was a steward, and yet he was unfaithful in dispensing his Lord's goods; and the dreadful sentence is, "take the wicked and slothful servant who neglected to do his Lord's work, and cast him into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." O, wretched man! where now are your treasures, your houses and lands, and all your earthly possessions, for the sake of which you betrayed your Master, and ruined your soul?

There is a class of ministers whose situation is truly deplorable. We know of no set of men who claim our compassion more. They are such as having been invested with the sacred office, by ordination, are unable to find any people willing to accept of them as their pastor; or, if they should happen to obtain a settlement, for want of acceptableness,

are speedily pushed off, and sent afloat upon the wide world, without the means of comfortable subsistence for their families. They wander about in search of a place of rest, and after spending much time, and being at inconvenient expense, in visiting vacant churches, are after all disappointed, and are often reduced to great straits to obtain the bare necessaries of life. No doubt there are good men, who have gone through the usual course of preliminary studies, and have had the hands of the presbytery laid upon them, who, nevertheless, are entirely unfit for the work, and however they may be regularly called by men, have never received the call of God to be ministers in his church; for, when God calls a man to any work, he always furnishes him with the necessary qualifications. If any person is found destitute of these, and cannot acquire them, though he may be, in the sight of the church, a regular minister, and his ministrations valid, yet he has mistaken his road; and sometimes such persons are convinced of this, when it is too late. For, according to the doctrine commonly received among us, the ministry can be laid down only by a regular deposition from office, by the competent authority. Whether this be a correct doctrine, has been with us a matter of serious and increasing doubt. If deposition were not attended with lasting disgrace, we should not be disposed to dissent from the received opinion. But take this case:—A young man is put to learning by his parents, that he may become a minister, and when he arrives at the proper age, he makes a serious profession of religion. His intellect may be sound, and his literary acquisitions may be good, but he speaks in a way so stammering and so cold and uninteresting, that it is painful to every one to hear; and to be obliged to do this once a week would not only be unedifying, but would be a penance, which few persons would be contented to endure long. Now, this young man ought to have had his attention directed by his friends and advisers, to some pursuit not requiring public speaking. And the presbyteries and Classes, when candidates appear before them, on trial, should make particular experiment of their gifts in this respect; which, however, is much neglected, and young men, who are scarcely ever proper judges of their own defects, are introduced to an office for the duties of which they possess no competency. Formerly, it was a part of every candidate's trials for the ministry, to preach in public, and the sermon was, on this account, called "a popular discourse;"

but this salutary custom begins, at least in the presbyteries in this section of country, to be laid aside; and the candidate is only required to read his popular sermon before the presbytery, as he does any other written discourse required of him. In consequence of this, no proper trial is made of the candidate's capacity to speak audibly and fluently in public. But the point to which we wish to direct our remarks is, that a conscientious person, who has been induced to enter the ministry without the necessary qualifications, when he is convinced of his incompetency, should be permitted, with the consent of the presbytery, to resign his office. If he may not, then a man who has become a preacher without the call of God—and all will acknowledge that such a case may occur—must be forced to remain in an office, the duties of which he is unable to fulfil, and which he ought never to have entered. And hence it comes to pass, that there are among us many presbyters who preach not at all, and hang heavily on the skirts of the church, and are an encumbrance to our ecclesiastical bodies. We see not why, even in cases of confirmed ill health, which disqualifies a man from preaching, as when the voice is lost, a minister should not be permitted to resign his office. But what if he should so recover it again as to be able to preach? we answer, that all that would be necessary would be to recognise him again as a minister. He would need no new ordination; as, indeed, the custom is not to re-ordain a minister who has been deposed and excommunicated, when he is restored to his office and standing in the church. We are aware that our Book of Discipline makes no provision for a minister's resigning his office after ordination; but the question is, would it not be well to have such a provision? and do not the circumstances of our church call for something of the kind? What we have said on this point, we wish to be considered as not the expression of a decided opinion on the subject, respecting which probably the conductors of this REVIEW would not entirely agree; but as intended to turn the attention of the church to the point, and to elicit discussion, which may lead to the adoption of a new section in our Book of Discipline; or may confirm us more fully in the doctrine which has been commonly received, and in favour of which we are aware that there are some able advocates.

We would take this occasion to declare, that we hardly know a more responsible and awful duty, which men are ever called to perform, than the conferring the sacred office

on a fellow creature. The regulations of our church on this subject are truly excellent; and if they were always carried into effect with that strict fidelity which the importance of the transaction demands, all would be well—at least, as well as human wisdom and care could make it. But we seriously apprehend that these trials are too often but superficially entered into; especially as it regards personal piety. If a young man is a member of the church—if he has been through College, and the Theological Seminary, and seeks to be a minister, it is thought to be hard to throw any obstacle in his way, after his having spent so much time and expense in preparation. We think that the laxity of presbyteries does not relate so much to the literary qualifications and orthodoxy required, as to the examination on experimental religion, and making a thorough trial of the ability of the candidate to preach to the acceptance and edification of the people. In regard to the first, we remember a case in which a young man of education presented himself before a large and respectable presbytery, and when called upon to give some account of his experimental acquaintance with religion, had literally nothing to say, and could only answer to some leading questions—which is a very unsatisfactory method of examination. The presbytery hesitated, and called him in again, but still there was nothing like a narrative of a work of grace: they voted to receive him on trial, and in due time, he was licensed. He had been but a short time a probationer, before he declared himself an infidel. Afterwards, indeed, it was reported that he had repented, and renounced his errors; but surely he ought never to have been licensed.

In regard to the ability of the candidate to preach to the acceptance of the people, this it may be said is sufficiently provided for by his licensure, when he enters on this part of his probation. But we are of opinion, that it is attended with great evil, even to license a man as a probationer, who is not fit for the ministry; for if we bring a man thus far, unless he commit some scandalous offence, he will contrive to get into the ministry. And people generally are accustomed to make very little distinction between a licentiate and an ordained minister. Let the man be fairly, but strictly tried, before he is sent out. Presbyteries are not restricted to the particular trials specified in the Book of Discipline; they are at full liberty to institute other trials, if they think it necessary. And why, we ask, would it not be expedient, to have some trial of the ability of the candidate in

extempore speaking; and in giving the sense of passages of scripture, without the opportunity of recourse to commentaries? for who is so dull, that he cannot write down what he finds in books of exposition? We are of opinion, that no man is truly qualified for the ministry, who is not able to express himself promptly and clearly on any plain subject, without having recourse to books, or to his pen. Not that we would discourge the use of the pen; but we would have the tongue trained to ready utterance, as well as the hand to compose.

But to return to the subject of pastoral duty. We entertain the opinion, notwithstanding the fierce opposition to the clergy which is rising and organizing itself in the east, that the pastoral office is the most honourable, the most useful, and, when rightly filled and executed, the most happy office in the world. But, at the same time, we are ready to admit, that to a man destitute of genuine piety, it must be a heavy yoke, and intolerable drudgery; and that to the man who serves God in it, with a mind divided between its duties and the pursuit of the world, and distracted with secular avocations, it must be a painful service; that the conscience of such a man must be ill at ease, and his comfort in the exercise of the office very small. To enjoy this holy service, the heart must be unreservedly devoted, and every thing made subordinate to its claims upon our time and our energies. Let us then again bring into view, what is required by the great Head of the Church, of those who undertake to be ministers of the gospel. We shall say nothing at present of the missionary service; our concern is with the ministry at home, and especially with the pastors of the churches. And to such, we would affectionately, but solemnly, say, divest yourselves at once of all worldly engagements and entanglements, that interfere with your making full proof of your ministry. Though avarice may plead—though the love of ease and pleasure may solicit—be resolved and cut off the right hand, and pluck out the right eye, which offend, and begin your work anew; not under the influence of a momentary impulse, but from a conviction that God calls you to engage in this work with renewed zeal and effort. An account of your stewardship must be rendered, and that soon; and surely you ought to desire to be in a situation to give this account with joy and not with grief. Set apart a day for humiliation and prayer, and for the solemn consideration of your past ministerial life. Be determined to look honestly into the case;

and if you have been remiss—if you have been unfaithful in “warning every man, and teaching every man”—determine now that you will hereafter keep your great business so habitually on your mind, that you will not suffer any opportunity of doing good to escape you. Never be in any company without recollecting that you are there as the ambassador of Jesus Christ, and that you have a commission to seek the eternal salvation of every man, woman, and child, with whom you may meet at any time. Be ‘fishers of men.’ Throw out your bait, and draw into the gospel net as many as you can. Omit nothing which promises to be a means of winning men to Christ. Personally address such as in your conscience you think will be benefitted by such application. Let not the fear of giving offence, or of hurting the feelings of your friends, prevent you from kindly admonishing them, and patiently instructing them. Go around among your people—begin with the poor—pass not by the wretched dwelling of the profligate. Who knows but you may save a soul from death, and cover a multitude of sins? Sometimes, the blaspheming drunkard has a wife, whose heart, broken with afflictions of the heaviest kind, is prepared to receive the consolations which the gospel brings. Learn to bear with patience the abuse and even the curses of the wicked. Make no other return, but to bless, and pray for those who spitefully use you. Remember, that great will be your reward in heaven.

Try to engage others to co-operate with you. Go to your elders, and exhort them to untiring diligence and conscientious fidelity in performing the duties of their office. Make it a point to convene them once a week for prayer and conference, in relation to the affairs of the church, of which you and they are appointed rulers. Instruct them in their duty, and urge them to go among the poor and ignorant, and to visit the sick and afflicted. But your best hopes must rest upon the training of the young. Catechise them in the family—catechise them in meetings appointed for the purpose, and also in the church. Enlist others in the work. Give a class to pious young women to instruct. And whatever you do, do not neglect to form your young people into classes for Bible instruction. Try every lawful method to make your instructions interesting to the young. Enter into the service with all your heart. Prepare yourself for the meeting. Communicate as much solid instruction as you can, and the good seed lodged in the tender minds of youth will

not be wholly lost. And when their minds are open to receive instruction, will be the best opportunity to make effectual addresses to the heart and conscience. One such opportunity affords fully as hopeful a prospect of saving benefit, as a public discourse to a promiscuous multitude. If your people are distinguished into ranks, who do not mingle together in social intercourse, have different classes in different places, and become all things to all men. Some ministers who profess to be great friends to revivals, seem to think that nothing can be done until the revival comes; and therefore when they have preached on the sabbath, they sit down and fold their arms and complain. People should be prepared for a revival by sound instruction, or they will get little good from having their feelings powerfully excited, or even their consciences awfully awakened. The main thing that men do is to sow the seed and water it, and to look to God, by incessant prayer, that he may give the increase.

When ministers live near each other it answers an excellent purpose to aid one another in preaching and visiting. Two ministers are enough, or three, at most. The same truths inculcated every sabbath by the pastor will sometimes come with a new power when uttered by the voice of another. And a stranger can often take greater liberty in reproofing some sins, and treating some subjects, than the pastor; and while the preaching of one is suited best to one class of hearers, the preaching of another, though inferior, will make a deeper impression on another class. Let ministers join, on these occasions, in visiting each others' congregations.

And when ministers meet in presbytery, let it be a main object to stir up and edify one another, and to promote religion in the parish where they are convened. How delightful and how profitable these ecclesiastical meetings of ministers might be, if, exempt from all jealousy, envy and ill-will, they should come together in the true spirit of their Lord and Master.