

His commands in the future tense. "Go, work to-day in My vineyard," Matt. xxi. 28.

Past sinfulness may be used as an illustration of God's grace and power to change and sanctify. Care should be taken not to dwell on a Christian's former sins in a way to make the impenitent feel that they can sin outrageously, and then turn, and receive pardon. No latitude in wrong doing should be encouraged, even in a tacit manner, depending for pardon upon God's love and forbearance at the eleventh hour. Paul did not rehearse his former evil-doing in a way to produce this unfortunate effect.

God's plans for us are often at great variance with our plans for ourselves. "It often occurs that faithful servants of God imagine that a special blessing would attend their labors in a particular place, rather than elsewhere. But God says, 'Nay, thou dost mistake,' and sends them away from the spot where they desire to remain." Paul lived to see the glorious vindication of God's plan. Had he remained in Jerusalem, the results would have been practically fruitless as compared with the marvellous ingathering among the Gentiles.

Envy and jealousy are prime weapons in the hand of the enemy of souls. The Jews were peculiarly intolerant of the idea that the Gentiles could in any way be the sharers in their religious blessings. One reason of their rejection of Christ was His attitude toward the Gentiles. They had for so many generations considered themselves the people chosen of Jehovah, that the very thought of a Messiah shared in by the despised outer people inspired them to fury and madness. Envy and jealousy work deadly evil in the Church of Christ. The love of power, the spirit that if it cannot rule will wreck and ruin, perils the peace and even the very existence of many a church.

CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR.

DAILY READINGS.

First Day—Paul conforming to Jewish ceremonies.—Acts. xxi. 18-26.

Second Day—"That I might gain the Jews."—1 Cor. ix. 16-27.

Third Day—Paul seized in the temple.—Acts xxi. 27-40.

Fourth Day—Paul a prisoner at Jerusalem.—Acts xxii. 1-30.

Fifth Day—Paul before the Council.—Acts xxiii. 1-10.

Sixth Day—"Ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings."—1 Pet. iv. 1-19.

PRAYER MEETING TOPIC, Oct. 10th.—HOW THE MINISTRY IS TRAINED: OUR COLLEGES AND THEIR WORK.—2 Tim. ii. 1-3; iii. 14-17; vi. 18.

HOW THE MINISTRY IS TRAINED; OUR COLLEGES AND THEIR WORK.

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The wording of our subject suggests the direction in which our thoughts are to run. But it is not the only direction. Our colleges do perhaps the major part in the training of our ministers, but a most important part is performed elsewhere and by other agencies. A saintly mother, a God-fearing father, a faithful pastor, has often exercised an influence in the younger years of a man's life that is the secret of his future usefulness and power as a minister. The Sabbath school also and the Young People's Society should not be forgotten. Here are begotten some of life's holiest aspirations and noblest purposes. And no life is complete without these. The operation of many a silent spiritual force will also be assumed. Every one feels that no minister has been trained for the sacred office whose heart has not been filled with the Holy Ghost, and thrilled with the life and love of Jesus Christ. For a minister must be sympathetic as well as intellectual. Then there may be other special environments and providences which perform their part in moulding his character; and in a hundred ways he is being unconsciously prepared for his life work, before he comes directly under the supervision of the church in a formal training for the ministry.

But it is on this latter aspect of the subject we are expected to dwell.

When a man has decided to enter the ministry of our church he first of all makes application to his Presbytery to be recognized as a student for the ministry, and to be recommended as such to the Senate of one of our Theological Colleges. This is usually done when High School work is finished, and he is ready to start for college; though some do not decide fully to enter the ministry till well on in their Arts course, and, consequently, defer appearing before Presbytery. But no student can be recognized as a candidate for the ministry until he obtains the Presbytery's certificate. From this time on he is under the direct supervision of the church. During the college terms he must answer to the college Senate for his conduct; and while out of college in the summer he is amenable

to the Presbytery within whose bounds he resides. This at least is the intention and rule of the church.

Our young people will remember that we have in Canada six colleges for the training of the ministry. They are situated at Halifax, Quebec, Montreal, Kingston, Toronto and Winnipeg, and during last year there were two hundred and forty five students in theology in attendance. The college work consists of two parts. The first part is preparatory to the second. It is composed of purely secular studies, and is usually taken at one of our Universities. A full Arts course is what our church asks, though it has not yet made a definite regulation to that effect. But a candidate for the ministry who does not take the University course is now expected to furnish a good reason for his action. Sometimes men are too advanced in years, sometimes their health will not permit, sometimes, as in the case of French students of Quebec, they cannot take lectures in English satisfactorily, sometimes there is undue haste to graduate, and sometimes it is not easy to see the reason. For such as these the church maintains in most of our colleges what is known as a Literary Department. The course of study prescribed in this department extends over three years instead of four as in the University, and is of the same general character as in the latter. If a comparison of the two courses be asked it may be said that everything depends on the man himself. The liberty he may have in the Literary course will permit him to make it superior to the best Arts course, or less than equal to a good High School training, according to the "stuff" that is in him. It is usually safe, however, to take the Arts course. There is a definiteness, a stimulus, and an enthusiasm about it that most mortals need. And students for the ministry are only mortal. The percentage for men taking Arts is on the increase, though the wish of the church is not yet as fully responded to as might be desired. Of the seventy three graduates last spring, forty three hold University degrees.

It will be seen that the purpose of these preparatory studies is chiefly twofold: to furnish a training and culture for the mind, and to acquaint the student with certain branches of knowledge that are intended to be of practical value to him afterwards in the work of his calling. But the second part of the College work is the one to which he usually looks forward with greatest desire and expectation. This is the purely theological course. Its range and character are indicated by the regulation which says that it "shall extend over three full sessions of six months each, or such other period as the Church may enact, and shall embrace the following subjects of study, viz.: Apologetics, Systematic Theology, Exegetics, Biblical Criticism, Church History, Homiletics and Pastoral Theology. Perhaps it will not be considered pedantic to tell briefly what some of these big words mean. Apologetics is that branch of theological study which seeks to arm a man for the attacks that may be made on his religion, and also to enable him to speak persuasively and comfortingly to those whose faith is wavering. Systematic Theology is an attempt to state in an orderly fashion all that is known or revealed of God, His will and purposes regarding the world and man, and of man's possible and proper relations to God. Exegetics is the critical reading and study of the Scriptures in the original languages. Biblical Criticism may be said to be a consideration of the authority and authenticity of the Bible either as a whole or in part. Homiletics deals with the principles of sermon construction and the formal aspects of preaching. Pastoral Theology treats of the practical duties of the pastor. Besides these subjects lectures are usually given on Church Government, Elocution and Biblical Theology. And each student has to prepare and submit to the Professor a homily, a lecture, a sermon and a critical exercise on some passage of Scripture. These are read before the class and criticized, first by the other students, then by the Professor. It is while this is going on that many a man begins to wonder if he hasn't mistaken his calling.

It will thus be seen that the training of men for the ministry has been undertaken very seriously by our Church. And yet we have looked at it in merest outline. We have said nothing of the incidental aid rendered by student life. The College debates, tricks, scuffles all do good work; even the far famed College board has its own effect. Nor have we referred to the practical training received in our Home Mission fields during vacation months. This is of invaluable benefit to the student. We heard of an old elder who once told a student that he (the student) would derive more benefit from his preaching than the congregation. But it is just as true that some of the best work done for the Master is done by the student missionary.

Having graduated he passes once more into the hands of the Presbytery and in due time is settled. And now the Session, the Ladies' Aid, the C.E., the Board of Managers, or the Church Magnate have their innings. What the result of their training will be who can tell? If he is a God-fearing man nothing can harm him. If he is a man-fearing man God alone knows where or in what his career will end.