

is an *earnest* and an *educated* ministry. Living near to Christ will give the former, and constant study is necessary for the latter.

If the facts were fully known it is to be feared, the discovery would be made that very many ministers in all the churches do not keep up habits of systematic study, even along the lines of their special work, and that but very few pursue any general courses of reading or study beyond that work. In ten years after leaving college, how many of our ministers know their Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Mathematics, Science, or Philosophy, better than when they graduated, if indeed as well? How many have made such progress as is surely desirable in the critical study of the Scriptures, in church history, and in a knowledge of the doctrines and defences of the Christian faith? With all our attainment in regard to an educated ministry, an honest confession here would often be humbling. When candidates for the ministry are to be examined by Presbytery, how often do members of the court feel, if they do not confess, that they are *rusty* in Greek, Hebrew, etc., and hence are compelled to conduct the examination with such timidity, caution, and limitation, that the work is only very imperfectly done. Making every allowance for the busy life of the pastor, and many calls that break in on our precious time, it is surely a pity, if not a misfortune, that such is the case, and if possible this state of things should be carefully guarded against.

One fruitful cause of the evil lies no doubt in the mistaken idea many have as to the purpose to be served by a college course. Some seem to entertain the notion that during college days nearly every thing will be learned, and that the days of systematic study may be considered at an end when college halls are left; whereas, the truth is

but a few things are learned at college, and that there the beginning, only, of a long course of systematic study is made. All a college course, however complete, can do is to map the mer- outlines of the continents of knowledge afterwards to be explored, and take a bearing, or put down a land mark here and there. A college training, rightly understood, gives us not so much a vast store of useful knowledge, from which we may draw all our days, as the plan of work, the method of study, the tools with which to work, and some idea how to use them. If this idea were kept clearly in mind by the student during his course of study, and rigorously acted on after he leaves college, we would doubtless find neglect of post-graduate study much less general than it often is now.

Another cause of the neglect of the study we speak of is the way a minister's time is broken in upon by unexpected calls of every conceivable kind. This no doubt is the great practical difficulty which stands in the way of systematic study by one in the active duty of the ministry. Apart altogether from the various duties connected with the pastor's own charge, his time and service seem to be considered a kind of public property. He is expected to take an interest in all educational, and charitable institutions, to attend all the tea-meetings, socials, bazaars, etc., in the community, and at the same time discharge all the duties of social life. And moreover, the minister seems to be the special prey of book agents, public lecturers, magic lantern exhibitors, and patent medicine vendors, etc., so that not only is the grace of forbearance and longsuffering cultivated, but much valuable time is absolutely lost. The only remedy here is to set determinedly to work, and either take or make time for real study. The minister cannot afford to forego this, if he would be efficient. He must to a certain extent