

thorough and adequate preparation for the important duties of that sacred office. Amid the seethings of modern thought and the opposition of a skeptical science to revealed religion, it is more than ever important that the champions of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, who are set for the defence of the faith, should be men fully equipped for their important duties. They are the standard-bearers of the Church, her conscripts who fight her battles against error, and they should be fully armed for the conflict. If they be sent ill equipped into the field of controversy, the subtle shafts of their eagle-eyed adversaries will soon find out the defective joints in their armour, and the cause of truth may suffer from the lack of skill or knowledge of its defenders. Amid the intellectual quickening of the times, and the general diffusion of intelligence throughout the congregation, it is important that the pulpit be able to command the respect of the pew, or its influence will be greatly lessened and its religious authority impugned.

There have been some very good people, however, who have looked askance at any special effort toward promoting ministerial education. It was supposed in some way to detract from spirituality of character. The feeling has often found expression in the objection to what was called "a man-made ministry," and in what was felt to be the profound aphorism, that the Almighty and All-Wise had no need of human knowledge to carry out His purposes of grace. It would seem to be a sufficient reply to this remark, that still less would the Divine Being need the aid of human ignorance. But these inconsequent reasoners quite overlook the fact that the Most High has very often selected the most rarely gifted intellects for carrying on His work in the world: a Moses learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians; a Solomon wise in the deepest lore of the age; a Paul brought up at the feet of Gamaliel; an Origen, a Chrysostom, an Augustine, master of all the philosophy of the schools—

" . . . vindicate eternal providence,

And justify the ways of God to man."

Especially have such objectors to "human learning" forgotten the remarkable beginning of the movement called Methodism. They were no illiterates nor mere enthusiasts, those Fellows of