

theological course are believed to have been planned in wisdom, and to be sustained by the general testimony of experience. Ministers are never found to regret having remained in the Seminary the full period prescribed by its regulations. On the contrary, many a lamentation has been made by those who have unwisely shortened their theological course, and entered upon their work without adequate preparation. No future diligence can make amends for a deficiency at the beginning. It is far better for the candidate whatever his application as a student may be after he has engaged in the ministry, to lay a good foundation in the Seminary, on which to build the superstructure of his future attainments.

The Board are far from affirming that there may be no worthy exceptions to the three years' rule, but their observation has led them to notice that those students whose attainments are the highest rarely wish to abandon prematurely the privileges of the theological institution. The candidates who are the least qualified to go forth into the vineyard, are too often those who are seized with a desire to give up study. The practice of licensing young men while in the Seminary may be a good one if it is linked with the obligation to complete their preparatory course. Otherwise, it is believed to be commonly fraught with evil.

2. In the second place, the evil of allowing a few candidates to leave the Seminary in the midst of their studies, throws temptations in the way of all, and relaxes the authority of a general and salutary rule. It is probable that a large number of candidates, if they had their own way, would leave the Seminary at the end of the second year, if not before. Positive requirements are necessary to enforce the duty of mature preparation for the work of the ministry. Just in proportion therefore, to the departures from the strictness of the rule, will be the tendency to unsettle the minds of students in regard to their own particular cases.

The Professors of one of our Seminaries at the West lately memorialized a Synod, on the subject of resisting the tendencies in candidates to shorten their time of study. It is believed that if the Presbyteries would be more strict in this matter, the young men would consider it a settled thing, to pursue their studies for three years, and would rarely think of interpreting providence to mean an escape

from a full course. A thorough impression on the minds of Students, of the necessity of remaining in the Seminary to the end of its session, is the surest mode of correcting the tendencies complained of.

3. In the third place, a wrong is inflicted upon the congregations over whom superficially prepared ministers are placed.—Our people expect to be instructed and edified by those who are set over them in the Lord. It is obvious however, that this hope is impaired by allowing candidates to shorten the process of their education. The requirements of our Church even in their strictest letter, are not so high as to occupy time unnecessarily, nor do they aim at any attainments which may be dispensed with in safety. Our congregations, being composed very generally of thoughtful minds, and almost always numbering those who are well informed and educated, have a right to rely upon the authorities of the Church for well furnished ministers. In cases where a call has been inadvertently made out to candidates, such as have been referred to, experience soon reveals imperfections of ministerial qualification which other congregations, in rotation are left to the misfortune of discovering.

4. Superficial training brings into discredit the Board of Education, and the Church's entire system of benevolent aid. A large part of the candidates of our Church require assistance in the prosecution of their studies; and such assistance can only be rendered by retaining the confidence of the people in the working of the system. Every incompetent or ill-trained minister is a herald of woe to our educational operations. The amount of evil which a single man can thus inflict upon the plans of our Church, it is not easy to estimate. The suspicion, even, of laxity in our system, retards its efficacy and impairs its capacity of usefulness. No good cause can be sustained in the midst of the indifference and lukewarmness produced by authenticated failures. The Board of Education and the whole agency of our Church, in providing for the training of indigent youth, can only be successfully administered on the principle of a strict, unvarying, and high standard of ministerial qualification.

5. The Theological Seminaries of our Church have also a great interest in preventing unfurnished men from entering upon the ministry. They will lose all