

OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

EXAMINATION OF CANDIDATES FOR THE MINISTRY, BETWEEN GRADUATION AND ORDINATION.

MR EDITOR,—Permit me to offer a few remarks concerning the examinations to which candidates for the ministry are subjected between graduation in Theology and ordination.

According to the regulations now in force, a candidate for the ministry, after graduating in Theology, is required to appear before some Presbytery, and submit to an examination in Latin, Greek and Hebrew, Philosophy and Systematic Theology; also, as to his personal religion, and his motives for entering the ministry. If this examination be sustained, application is then made to Synod for leave to take the candidate on public probationary trials.

When this leave has been obtained, the candidate is submitted to a second examination, which embraces the following subjects: A Greek or Hebrew critical exercise, a Latin thesis, an expository lecture, a popular sermon, and an examination in Theology and Church history. If this examination be sustained, the candidate is duly licensed by Presbytery to preach the Gospel, and becomes a licentiate of the Church.

Then again, when such licentiate receives and accepts a call to the pastorate of a congregation, he must submit to a third examination previous to ordination. This examination consists in the following exercises: an expository lecture, a popular sermon, a Greek or Hebrew critical exercise; also an examination in Biblical Greek or Hebrew, Theology and Church history. If this examination be sustained, the licentiate is then solemnly ordained to the office of the ministry, and inducted into the pastorate of the congregation whose call he has received and accepted.

It will thus be seen that no fewer than three examinations are before the candidate for the ministry between graduation in Theology and his ordination. Now, it cannot for a moment be doubted but that it is the duty of Presbytery to exercise a very careful oversight of the candidate for the ministry during the whole of his preparation, both in Arts and Divinity. It is also the clear duty of Presbytery to ascertain, as far as possible, that those about to be ordained to the sacred office possess the necessary gifts and graces, as well as the attainments in scholarship, which the Church deems requisite for the ministry; but it may be doubted whether the regulations now in force, as at present put in practice, really serve this important purpose as fully as could be desired. It is just possible that, in some cases at least, the multiplicity of examinations to some extent prevents the Presbytery discovering, as clearly as it should, the gifts and graces, especially the degree of scholarship, possessed by the candidate. This arises, no doubt, from the fact that, where there are so many examinations, there seems to be an almost certain tendency that they become very formal and superficial in their nature, and hence cannot afford a very intelligent ground for the Presbytery to proceed to ordination, and cannot be at all satisfactory to the worthy candidate.

Two remedies are available. The first is that Presbyteries all, as not a few do, take good care that these examinations do not degenerate to a mere name, instead of being what they are intended to be, a real, though not too rigid, test of the candidate's attainments. If Presbytery appoints certain of its members to examine in the prescribed subjects, and if those so appointed thoroughly prepare themselves with good test questions, not "catches," then these examinations will have meaning and use; but, as matters are in some Presbyteries, it may not be impossible for a candidate to pass through all these examinations, and yet not really have attained to the standard, which the Church professes to require for entering the ministry.

The other remedy is to have only one examination of the candidate between graduation and ordination, which both Presbytery and candidate understand is to be a thorough test of attainment in scholarship, etc. Then let Presbytery appoint one of its number to examine in each department, and let him conscientiously perform his duty, and let the candidate be thoroughly prepared, and it is quite probable that better results would follow than under the present system and practice. This one rigid examination might be connected either with licensure or ordination, as might be deemed best. If with licensure the proced-

ure would be as follows. Let the candidate present the certificate of graduation in Theology to Presbytery, then let Presbytery, when satisfied with such certificate, apply to Synod for leave to take on trial, and when such leave has been obtained, let the Presbytery proceed to the rigid examination of the candidate, with a view to license. Then when the licentiate receives and accepts a call, let ordination and induction be effected without further examination.

If it were connected with ordination, which is certainly the most important of all the stages in the candidate's course, implying, as it does, the call to the ministry, the necessary qualifications, and the call of congregation, then the procedure would be as follows. The candidate would present to Presbytery the certificate of graduation in Theology. Presbytery would apply for leave to take on trial, and when such leave was obtained, would proceed to license without any examination, and then, when the candidate received and accepted a call, let him be subjected to a thorough examination, previous to ordination. Then in the case of those who were not graduates of our own Colleges or of Colleges approved by our Church, such oversight and examination as might be deemed necessary in such particular cases could be attended to by Presbytery. In no cases, save very exceptional, should persons seeking admission to the ministry of our Church from other Churches be allowed to enter with a lower degree of scholarship than is required in the case of our own students; for the standard of attainment the Church requires in her ministry is determined by the lowest rather than the highest found in its ranks; and that standard should be gradually raised as circumstances may permit or require.

There is another question naturally suggested in this connection, viz., the desirability, if not necessity, of securing greater uniformity amongst Presbyteries in regard to the method in which the examinations are conducted and in the standard candidates are expected to reach; and along with this a very important question might be proposed, viz., Whether a central board for the whole Church, or for each Synod, might not, if properly constituted and conducted, be the best agency to conduct the examinations above alluded to.

But this letter is already too long, so I close, expressing the hope that, if the suggestions in it are worthy of any notice, yourself, or some of your correspondent, may give their views regarding them.

F. R. BEATTIE.

Baltimore, Ont., 13th July, 1880.

INFANT DAMNATION.

The Rev. Leroy Hooker, one of the leading ministers of the Methodist Church of Canada, uses the following language in his pamphlet on "The Divine Authority of the Bible." "If the fleetness of two horses is to be tested you must not harness them to the same vehicle. Had the Calvinism which used to consign infants a span long to hell remained harnessed with Arminianism in the Methodist Church, it would not be as nearly defunct as it is today" (page 9). Now, I have stated the name of a work in which, and the number of the page on which, a certain statement regarding Calvinism is made. Let Mr. Hooker do the same in support of his statement, but I defy him to do so. A copy of a Calvinistic work, teaching the doctrine which he mentions, can be found only in the hand of a mermaid.

Yesterday a Baptist minister told me the following. A Methodist lady once asked him if he were a Calvinist. He said that he was. She then asked him if he believed that there are children a span long in hell. He answered that he did not. She said that her reason for putting such a question to him was the fact that her minister had lately stated in the pulpit that Calvinists held the doctrine referred to. My friend said that he would call on her minister, and speak to him on the subject, but he first wished to be sure that he did say so. She said that she was not in the least mistaken, that a large congregation was present on the occasion referred to; and that several of her acquaintances who were present understood his language just as she did. My friend went to her minister, and asked him if he had publicly said so and so. He replied that he had. My friend asked his authority for the statement. He gave the name of a certain Calvinistic Baptist minister known to them both. He professed to have no doubt as to his authority. My friend said that he would write to that minister on the matter, as he was determined to be

at the bottom of it. The Methodist one said that it was too troubling for him to put himself to so much trouble about it. My friend said that he thought far otherwise—the statement which he had made was a foul slander on Calvinism. The Methodist minister then said that it was not impossible that he had misunderstood the Baptist minister whom he mentioned. My friend said that he would be satisfied if the other—that is the Methodist minister—would say so in the pulpit. The latter promised to do so. My friend then left the place. When he returned—which was not till a year after—he asked the lady friend, already referred to, if her minister had ever in public corrected his statement about Calvinists holding the doctrine of infant damnation. She replied that he had never said one word about it. Now, I unhesitatingly say that that Methodist minister was guilty of downright lying. He made, in public, a statement most hurtful to Calvinists. He was unable to prove it. He promised to correct it in public, but paid no attention to his promise.

The circumstance above mentioned took place in the Province of Quebec. I am ready at any moment to give the names of all the persons connected with it. T. F.

The Manse, Melis, Quebec, July 17, 1880.

INDIAN MISSIONS.

MY DEAR MRS. HARVIE,—I believe that I have nothing but "odds and ends" with which to make up a letter, no leading article or item of special interest, as at this season we must remain in-doors from early morning until sundown, hearing nothing but the creaking of the punkah or the sound of our own voices the live long day. Miss Roger is not here at present. Ten days ago she went to Mhow for a brief visit but was taken ill the first morning after her arrival there and has not as yet been able to return, so that Venoo and myself are alone here. Owing to the unusual heat of this year I have not been able to attend to my Zenana work in the middle of the day. Last hot season I went out as usual until the end of April with comparatively little discomfort, but it is impossible this year to venture out save in the early morning or evening. Even natives complain of heat. While Miss Roger is absent I go down to her little school in the bazaar and keep it open for her. There are only eight or nine scholars, but they are such nice little girls, I think I must tell you about them. I wonder if you fancy rows of benches and children in apple pie order or even imagine that you see them coming trooping in at a certain hour. I dare say not, as you have heard that most of our western customs are reversed here and children do not come to school until they are called, that is, some one goes to each house and summons them. We get the ghari ready in the morning and put two or three low stools in it. These we call "moras." They are round, made of cane and high enough for a little child to sit upon. They are not for the children, however, but for ourselves. Fancy each teacher in a large school at home bringing her own chair or stool. The little Hindoo maids sit on the floor where they are much more at ease than on any seat. The school-room, I may mention, is in a nice clean locality. We have one alphabet board, for all and they sit in a circle, sometimes all repeating together, and more frequently one or two jumping up and skipping round the room without any ceremony, coming back to the lesson when they see fit. They learn, however, though the discipline must be of the mildest character, if we would not frighten the little creatures away. One "wee brown-faced lassie" said this morning in a very coaxing tone as she got quite close to me, "mem sahib sing." I replied, "not until after the lesson." "Then mem sahib may I call S—?" a little girl who had not come. I gave the desired permission and off she flew but chose not to return at once. Her sister is a dear quiet child having a face strongly marked with small-pox, which, owing to the native dislike to vaccination makes terrible havoc sometimes amongst them—I mean in personal appearance. An old woman came to the door this morning and wanted one of the children to go away and have a drink of lime juice and come back. Such is the school system in Indore. One little girl brought her baby brother, and he, with true Hindoo ideas of superiority, began striking right and left with a huge stick until I had to call him to order. We finish the exercises with a Bible story and a hymn, then make a "salaam" and go. It is Miss