

these charges what means are at our disposal? The services of a single ordained Missionary, and of two Catechists. These are literally all. Beyond the limits of vacant charges, there are "fields never regularly occupied by us, that are calling loudly for supply." Whence is that supply to be had? Verily, we are "poor and needy," and have little more than "a name that we live."

"Our immediate necessity," says the H. M. report, "is for at least six ministers, three Gaelic, and three English speaking." Whence may we hope to procure these ministers? Scotland, it is loudly asserted, can barely supply her own wants. Her Divinity Halls are diminishing in number of students. The few from among our own young men who have heretofore devoted themselves to the ministry, have, in the majority of instances, forsaken our shores. Had we the means, among ourselves, of educating young men for our work, with God's blessing we might hope for revival and extension. But we are destitute of those means. And besides, it would appear that the work of the ministry is, in all lands, ceasing to attract. Among all the churches a cry is heard that "the labourers are few." Churches most splendidly equipped with provision to educate men for preaching the gospel are uttering lamentations over the growing scarcity of students. Thus, in every aspect under which our situation as a church may be regarded, the gloominess of our out-look, humanly speaking, cannot be gainsaid.

Here, you may point to the fact that we have been permitted to initiate a mission to the heathen, as suggestive of encouragement. And so it is. Thankfully may we regard it as a token for good, a gleam of light vouchsafed amid our darkness. But in vain may we hope to maintain our position abroad, if we are decaying at home, and decay as a church we must, without an increased pastoral supply; for "where there is no vision the people perish." Surely "there is utterly a fault among us" concerning this matter. And the grave and serious question arises, with whom does this fault lie? Let us recall the fact

already referred to that on all hands, in all churches, the proportion of students at our universities devoting themselves to the ministry is alleged to be diminishing. Why is this? The determining of a young man's career in life rests largely, it will not be disputed, in the hands of his parents. Where the parents "show piety at home," where the paramount importance of religion is daily exemplified and lovingly impressed upon the minds of children from their tenderest infancy, and the duty of upholding ordinances by devout regularity in attendance, and conscientious liberality in contribution, is diligently enforced, all experience justifies the expectation that such promises as that contained in Isaiah 59, 29, ("My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever,") and hosts of others, shall not fail of fulfilment. But where religion is neglected, or its duties are perfunctorily discharged, where children are taught, in effect, that gold is God, and that the main business of life is to "heap up riches," and where, accordingly, the more lucrative professions and occupations are habitually referred to as most entitled to respect, can it surprise us, that the children of such households should decline devoting themselves to the ministry?

Is the character of our people becoming thus tainted? It is much to be feared. Riches is the idol of our age. The ministry is not a money-making profession. Viewed as a mode of subsistence, it is uncertain, it is poorly remunerated. Preparation for it involves the expenditure of a large amount of capital and time for a dubious and pecuniarily inadequate result. Hence it is despised, or at any rate, is being shunned.

In the households of our people, to the spirit there manifested, to the conversations there habitually listened to, and the example there exhibited, must be traced, in large measure, the lack of candidates for the ministry. In large measure, I say; not