

College, ignorant of actual life, inexperienced in the ways of men, and so, unprepared for the prudent discharge of the pastoral and administrative functions. Some, doubtless, are naturally fitted for these duties, and others quickly gather experience, especially in a Colonial sphere of labor—but the broad fact remains, that young ministers have to learn how a congregation should be organized and its affairs conducted, after they have assumed pastoral responsibility. The consequence, as might be expected, is a copious growth of blunders and annoyances. In particular, two extremes appear.

Some ministers do not manage at all. They are haunted with a dread of being thought to domineer, and in a poor subservient spirit run about to please the people; or in a selfish spirit, they consult their own comfort in attending to their studies and pulpit preparations only, while all the business of the Church is allowed to fall into neglect. In some cases, the result is the sheer ruin of the Congregation. In others, certain of the more energetic office-bearers and members take the reins into their own hands, and manage after an irregular democratic fashion:—all departments of Church work, save only that which pertains to the pulpit, being taken from under the minister's surveillance and control.

Some ministers, on the contrary, manage too much. Ever asserting their position and powers, they leave nothing to the wisdom and zeal of the Elders, Deacons, and people—and are constantly pulling the reins and cracking the whip, to show that they sit on the driver's box. They hear every tale, enquire into every rumour, magnify every petty detail, disturb every plan that they have not themselves laid, and allow no sufficient scope for those varieties of taste, and judgment, and mental habit, that must exist in every considerable body of freemen. This over much management, this continual meddling, in time irritates even the best friends of a minister, and ultimately undermines his authority altogether. A very common feat of the managing minister is to manage to throw himself from his seat. The saying of Seneca is as true of Church government as of State policy,—“Power exercised with violence has seldom been of long duration, but temper and moderation produce permanence in all things.”

In what we have said, we do not wish to represent the position of the Presbyterian Minister as one of extraordinary difficulty. He who gives himself to this calling with a godly sincerity, who prepares himself carefully for the pulpit, and is diligent in pastoral work, will, even with a moderate degree of skill and prudence, triumph over many difficulties, and retain around him an attached and orderly congregation. Nevertheless his place in the Church is such, that any lack of prudence is quickly observed and felt, and may possibly result in deplorable turmoil, and provoke many “troubles in the congregation.”

2. *The faulty constitution of Congregations.*—In some localities, written constitutions have been prepared and formally adopted by congregations, for their own guidance, as if they were independent, self-regulating societies. We can only characterise such procedure as a strange anomaly within a Presbyterian Church. The idea must have arisen at some period of ignorance or anarchy. But whether there be a written constitution or not, of this we are well assured.