What is the painful truth? This, that either a body of inefficient men has swelled the ministerial ranks, or the individual members of that body have not the energy and enthusiasm to seek wider fields far from the madding crowd. Now such a state of things can continue only to the Church's hurt. The remedy is with the Presbyteries mainly; and, with the remedy, the responsibility.

But, to effect anything, they must begin at the beginning. It is manifestly conceivable that there are cases in which a careful enquiry accompanied the granting of the Presbyterial Certificate. It speaks eloquently for the mental and moral character of the men who compose the rank and file of college students, that the Presbyteries as a rule make no enquiries in the matter. For our own part we hope our character would bear scrutiny; but the fact that it might, does not exculpate the Presbytery in neglecting to ascertain the truth. We have labored under four different Presbyteries, and so far as we are aware, not one made specific enquiry regarding our character and fitness. We go further, and say that, in a large number of cases, the Presbytery has no official knowledge of the fact that a certain young man has the ministry in view.

The Presbytery would indeed have gone far in rigorous examination of the motives, and character, and attainments of the prospective student before they should incur censure in this duty. At the risk of being dubbed antiquated and unprogressive, we would recommend that the old Scotch custom of "fencing the tables" be revived, and extended to the "fencing" of the colleges. It would be well for the Church, well for the college, well for the student. The Church would have a ministry of a high intellectual, moral and spiritual order; the college would be a school of prophets in all the dignity of the conception; and the student, being thus thrown back introspectively upon himself, would realize with a completeness, perhaps otherwise impossible, the sacredness of his vocation, and the tremendous responsibilities which it carries.