

COLLEGE MATTERS.

N. A. O.

Appropos of the question of the Preparatory Department now again under discussion. I may perhaps be permitted to refer to an article of my own, published elsewhere. Some two years ago, in which the same matter was touched upon. The question in hand at the time was, the "Economy of the two-by-two distribution of ministers." The paragraph read as follows:

"The question of the colleges of the church is one upon which the matter . . . might be found to have a bearing. The literary department in the colleges, preparatory to the study of theology, is looked upon with much disfavor, for it has been much abused. The universities are easy of access, and the high schools throughout the provinces have been brought to so high a degree of efficiency, that it is a rare thing to find a man proposing to study for the ministry whose case is really the 'special' one for which the preparatory course was first intended. There are special cases. Yet (we ask) might not the literary departments of the colleges be done away with? . . . Inasmuch as the number of cases rightfully demanding a special course preparatory to entering upon the study of theology is very small, let there be enough elasticity about the associating of men two-by-two that these few ministers-in-embryo might be associated with grave and lettered seniors, who would gladly and ably assist their efforts in preparation for the regular course in theology. . . . An aspect of the two by two arrangement of men that gives it the dignity of a college, and that of the truest character."

It is no stretch of the imagination to say that there is an abundance of energy outside the colleges that ought to be utilized in this way to the relief of the colleges themselves and to the church's advantage. Moreover, it is not difficult to see how some who think their case a special one would, by this means, find out before it is too late that they have no case at all. These would then relinquish the intention of entering the ministry, and do so without scandalizing themselves. Had they not had the opportunity of finding out their unfitness for the public ministry by the means proposed, ere easy and honorable retreat had become almost an impossibility, these men might bright scandal upon the church. The man who retires from the ministry for other than the evident reasons of old age or broken health is a marked and sometimes a suspected man.

Let it not be supposed for a moment that I entertain strong feeling in the matter at all, except so far as energy in the defence of the right and profitable course may demand. When associated some few years ago in editorship of the since defunct *Knox College Monthly*, every man in residence knew me to be opposed to the preparatory department, but not one of them all ever suspected me of unfairness or harshness. I have changed neither front nor tactics. The college needs money. The literary department cannot be shown to be necessary to the efficiency of the college nor to the needs of the church. Let the literary department be abolished.

Another matter, Mr Editor. Why should not the colleges charge a fee? Colleges in Arts, Science, and the Fine Arts always do. Why not the colleges in theology? Because our young men propose to enter the ministry? The most unpractical kind of nonsense! Are they not men? If some of us had had to face a good stiff tuition fee perhaps we would have done better financing since than we've done. Had I the ability to do it I would not be a day older before I would forward to the treasury of Knox College an amount equal, to three years fees at Toronto University, for my time there. I promise myself to do it someday, and then, having discharged my indebtedness, still contribute of my ability.

THE RELIGIOUS NEWSPAPER.

At the regular meeting of the Presbyterian Ministers' Association of Pittsburg and Allegheny, Monday morning, November 22nd, the Editor of the *Presbyterian Messenger*, by appointment, read a paper, entitled "The Religious Newspaper," from which we make the following extracts:

Such a thing as a religious newspaper was not known 100 years ago. This fact has led some good people to object to it as being an innovation and having no divine authority. They say that the world got along for centuries without a religious newspaper and can do so still. It may be said in reply, however, that 300 years ago there was no such thing as a secular newspaper in all the world. The first authenticated newspaper published in England was *The Certain News* published in London, and bearing date, May 23rd, 1622. The first newspaper published in this country was the *Boston Newsletter* which made its appearance May 24th, 1704, being half a sheet of paper 12 by 8, with two columns on each page. Scarcely more than 150 years ago, when the third newspaper was started in this country, it was claimed that this country could not support more than two newspapers. The world moved along for centuries without any newspaper of any kind, but the world has changed greatly in the past 150 years, and the civil Government that, in this age, ignores the printing press or seeks to shackle it, will soon cease to exist. Secular as well as religious newspapers cannot lay claim to great antiquity, but the newspaper has become a great and essential factor in all the movements of both church and state.

In the early ages of the Christian church the written Word had a most important place in religious affairs. There were preachers of righteousness before there were inspired writers, for "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," but, when the time came to have a written revelation of what we are to believe concerning God and what duty God requires of man, the written Word was given first place. Writers were divinely inspired to give to men, in permanent form, an infallible rule of faith and duty that could be appealed to, and this written Word will continue to occupy the most important place in the Christian church.

The discovery of the art of printing enabled the church to give this written Word to the world in hundreds of different languages and dialects. Bibles are printed by the million every year. The printing press is giving important aid in the study of the Bible in the form of commentaries and theological treatises. We can hardly overestimate the influence of books in the extension and upbuilding of the Kingdom of Christ in this world.

The Christian Church, like civil government, is a divine institution. The well-being of men in the world and the establishing and extension of the kingdom made the organization of Christians an absolute necessity. Under divine guidance the Christian church now appears in the world in the form of great, organized denominations of Christians, and the watchword of every denomination should be "The world for Christ." In order that there may be mutual sympathy and co-operation in the different organizations, having this one great aim, it is necessary to have some kind of a religious newspaper that will be a medium of communication. It is necessary, too, that the different members of the same denomination may have communication with each other so that there may be united and harmonious activity. Being members of one body they must be in communication with each other in order to work together harmoniously and efficiently. The religious newspaper may not be provided for as definitely by divine appointment as the preaching of the Word by the Gospel ministry, but, in the providence of God, it has come to occupy a hardly less important place in the Christian church. The denomination of Christians that would attempt in this age to make progress without having some kind of a religious newspaper would very soon fall to the rear.

Three practical questions arise in regard to religious newspaper. First, there is the question, What constitutes an ideal religious newspaper? Second, Who should make it? Third, How should it be treated by the pastors of the different churches?

There may be difference of opinion as to what constitutes an ideal religious newspaper. Indeed, there are thousands who say that the religious newspaper is not essentially different from the secular newspaper; that the secular newspaper gives religious news, while the religious paper gives secular news. You might nearly as well say that there is no difference between a secular book and the Bible, since the Bible treats of