

unsuccessful, who might carry the stains and habits of the world into their ministerial agency. Besides, it is only in a comparatively few instances that we could expect the competent qualifications in those who had not been specially educated for the ministerial office—even estimating these by the lowest standard. It will be admitted that Ministers of the gospel should be critically acquainted with their Bible, in order to explain aright and enforce its doctrines; this is scarcely attainable without a knowledge of the languages in which it was originally composed, and this skill in ancient languages cannot be acquired without years of study. It will be admitted that the teachers of religion should be men of some erudition,—acquainted with the history of ancient and modern times—at least so far as it may illustrate the scriptures,—skilled in the science of nature, and every branch of philosophy that may shed light on the constitution and destiny of man. Now it is only a small progress which a student can make in these various studies, even when his time is wholly devoted to them. How very superficial then must his acquirement be who has bestowed on them only a few random hours!—But farther, it will be admitted that a minister should be critically skilled in his native tongue; that he should have words promptly at command wherewith to clothe the conceptions of his mind; that he should possess the power of combining his ideas in lucid and persuasive arrangement; that he should be able to adapt his instructions to every class of men, the learned and unlearned; the polished and the rude; that he should be well skilled in human nature, to deal with its multifarious character in the preaching of the gospel and the government of the Church. These

qualifications are not inborn; they must be acquired; and such know little of mental labour who suppose that they can be acquired in a day, or in a few leisure hours, snatched from harassing and laborious occupations. We admit that much good may be sometimes done by men who possess them in a very limited degree,—just as the person who has little skill in medicine may occasionally administer his few simples with advantage,—and were such to confine themselves to their proper sphere, they might be esteemed useful vessels in the sanctuary of God. But while we admit that quacks may cure, we do not forget that melancholy experience has also shown that quacks may kill; that, for the most part, they are very presumptuous whether they intermeddle with physic or divinity; that they are always prone to go beyond the measure of their knowledge; that they are generally at enmity with those who are wiser than themselves; and that although they not unfrequently lead the multitude captive, their pretensions have ever been rejected by the enlightened; and finally we may aver that so many dangerous concomitants must always attend those who embark in employments for which they are not fully prepared, that the certain evils flowing from any system that tolerates it, will ever be but poorly balanced by the precarious and at best partial advantages.

IV. We are now prepared to examine the last supposeable method of preparing the Christian Ministry—that it may be rendered the duty of those already invested with the office to raise up, by careful and appropriate training, those who shall assist and succeed them as pastors and teachers.

Before proceeding to the illustration of this topic, it may be proper briefly to advert to its bearing on the duty and