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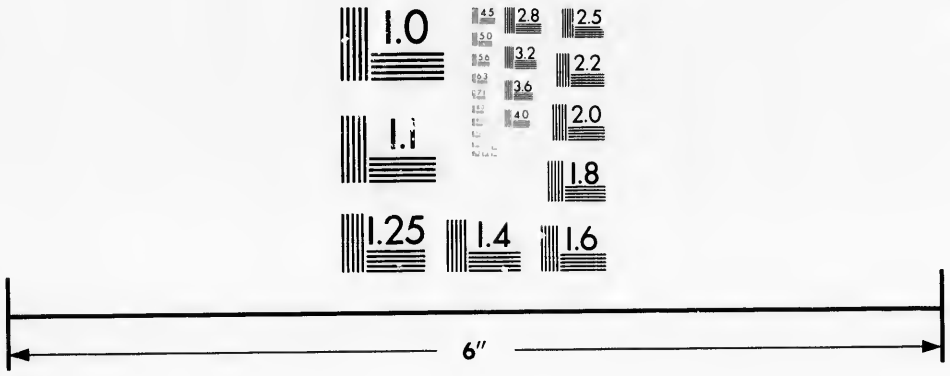

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Reasons why there are so few Candidates for the Holy Ministry,

BEING

A SERMON

(*ENLARGED*)

Preached in St. Gabriel Church, Montreal,

BY THE

REV. R. CAMPBELL, M. A.

MONTREAL:
Mitchell & Wilson, Printers, 464 Notre Dame St.
1871.

SERMON.

But when he saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.

Then saith He unto his disciples, The harvest truly *is* plenteous, but the labourers *are* few.

Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

—MATT. ix. 36—38.

THE grandest sight I ever saw was a crowd of people, large and dense, and so arranged that I could take them all in with a single look. It was when the foundation stone was laid on Abbey Craig, near Stirling, of a national monument, built by Scotsmen, to the memory of the great patriot and warrior, William Wallace. And what made the dark thick forest of men and women so impressive a spectacle—a more impressive spectacle than if it was so many trees one gazed upon? They were a company of living, acting, thinking, feeling beings—so that the artist or the historian saw something striking and picturesque in their combination, each different from each;—but to the devout and religious mind the most significant feature in that vast mass of human beings was that they were all immortal spirits, and candidates for eternity, now in a state of probation; and that in a few short years they were to enter upon that eternity to be for ever either happy or wretched. If a mere man with his dull perceptions, limited views, and feelings and emotions too much under the control of selfishness, could be so moved at the sight of thousands upon thousands of people, fancy how it agitated the Saviour's loving heart and exercised His far-seeing mind, when He looked down upon a crowd of human souls hurrying onwards, unheeding and unprepared, towards the dread realities of eternity, with few or no efforts put forth to block up their way or rescue them from their ignorance and false security, and manifest peril.

The context brings such a case before our notice. The most joyous of the annual festivals of the Jews was the Feast of Tabernacles at the conclusion of the harvest; and on this occasion the grateful people flocked to Jerusalem to express their sense of the goodness of the Lord their God in bestowing upon them a bountiful yield. And this shows us how skilfully the Saviour could seize upon every natural incident and opportunity, and turn it to account in His Father's service. The people whom He addressed had probably just completed a very rich harvest, so rich that they could scarcely find hands enough to house it properly; and they would at once see the point of His metaphor, in speaking of the spiritual harvest that was lying ready for the sickle, the harvest of souls, going to waste more rapidly than even the ripe grain does when it is not attended to in its season.

Since Jesus spoke these words, as His pitying eye and loving heart contemplated the multitude of souls that were collected in Jerusalem at the Feast of Tabernacles, much has been done to bring men to God, and a greatly larger proportion of the human race is in possession of Divine truth. One-quarter of the whole family of man are now at least nominally in covenant with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. This is matter of congratulation, and something at which the blessed Saviour rejoices. But, dear brethren, the condition of the greater part of mankind is such as must still occasion great heaviness of heart to the sympathizing Saviour, as He looks around, not from some eminence near Jerusalem upon the representatives of a single nation, but from His throne on high upon all the tribes of the world, the countless millions, of one blood which He hath made to people the whole earth. They have no man to care for their souls, and are helplessly astray in error and sin and shame, hopeless wanderers from God, as sheep without a shepherd.

And this is a matter that does not concern the Lord Jesus Christ alone: it concerns us as much as the condition of the weary, fainting multitudes, that drew forth the Saviour's compassion, concerned the disciples. Upwards of 1800 years have passed away since these memorable words were uttered, and still the condition of the larger portion of the human race remains unameliorated. And why? Just because the later disciples of the Lord have not caught up the deep and loving sympathy that moved the Saviour to compassionate perishing souls—they have

not been thoroughly imbued with the feeling with which He sought to inspire His first followers. They have not had the faith or put forth the efforts which characterized those disciples to whom these words were immediately addressed. Brethren, we must be up and doing: the whole Christian Church must be more intensely roused to a sense of the great work that remains to be accomplished for the evangelization of the human race. Now, what is wanted? Unquestionably the great thing is labourers, labourers in sufficient number and of the right sort. A praying Church and an efficient and laborious staff of missionaries and pastors are the special means required for overtaking the spiritual destitution of the world. Labourers are wanted, and these are to be supplied from a praying Church.

All Christians are to be labourers. Every man born again is bound not to hide this gift from God wrapped up in a napkin; but he is to make diligent use thereof, and let his light shine before men that they seeing his good works may be led to glorify his Father in heaven. But while all Christians are co-workers with God, the care of souls is committed specially unto those whom He calls by His word and providence and Spirit to the ministry of His Son; and it is to such labourers reference is made here, when Jesus taught the first Christian assembly to pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth labourers into His harvest. Never in the history of the Church was there a greater need for labourers than in the times in which we live, and never was the call more urgent to the people of God to discharge the duty enjoined in the text.

The fact is, all branches of the Christian Church, at least of the Reformed Church, are beginning to feel a sad lack of efficient candidates for the Holy Ministry. And it very deeply concerns the interests of Christ's kingdom to find out, if possible, the reasons of this, and to discover and apply the proper remedy. This is not a ministerial but a popular question—it affects you even more than it affects me. Why is it, brethren, that in these days compared with the time past, there are so few labourers offering themselves for the Lord's harvest? The answer to be given to this question, it may be assumed, is a complex rather than a simple one. Many lines of causes very probably converge to produce the lamentable lack of students for the Christian ministry of which we complain; just as many lines of colour

united form a sunbeam. A few of these we shall endeavour to indicate at this time; but the occasion admits of our doing so only very briefly.

1. I am afraid that the fewness of the candidates for the Ministry of our Lord must be taken as an indication that true piety is at a low ebb in the Christian Church. To my mind this question does not stop short with ecclesiastical politics; it runs deeper—it belongs to the foundations rather than to circumstances. Our Saviour wished it to be treated as a religious question, as is implied in the very nature of the remedy He enjoined, namely, prayer, the highest religious exercise. And there can be no doubt that the evil we are deploring exhibits a phase of the religion of the age. The time was when the best talent of the land, and the sons of gentle and simple, rich and poor alike, deemed the sacred office a place of honour and distinction, as well as of usefulness, and had no loftier ambition than to be found filling efficiently a Christian pulpit. Now this was the blossoming and fruiting of the religious sentiment of past generations. More especially was it the case with our own ancestors. Our God-fearing Presbyterian forefathers always cherished, as their fondest wish, the hope of seeing at least one son of their families exercising the Gospel ministry; and their custom was to devote that boy who showed most capacity to the Lord's service, at least in their purpose, from his *tender* years. It might be objected, and has been objected, to this, that the result of such a course would likely be to fill the pulpits of the land with men who had no zeal or special taste for their work, because their profession was not of their own but of their parents' choosing; and that the sacred office will be more efficiently filled by those who have been *called of God*, than by such as *men* have set apart to occupy it. I am not afraid to meet this issue, and to put the matter to the test of both reason and experience. To be called of God to the work of the ministry, I hold as strongly as anybody, is absolutely essential to success therein, but I will explain what I understand by this call. I take it that a man is called thereto whose education therefor has been favoured by God's providence, who has evinced an aptitude for the kind of study required in preparation, who has been able to satisfy the Church of his outward attainments, who enters upon that work duly impressed with the momentous interests at stake, and prepared to do his endeavour to

persuade men to be reconciled unto God, and who feels moved thereto by love and gratitude to Jesus Christ, whom he has first learned to know as his own Saviour. I do not look for any remarkable interposition of heaven, by way of calling him, such, for instance, as accompanied the commissioning of Moses and Elisha: It is rather the still small voice of duty, or like the call of Jesus to Matthew and Peter and John, "follow thou Me," or that of Samuel, before he had yet that vision of the night, dedicated to God by a mother's devotion and gratitude. The youth who has undergone the ten years of preparatory study has had abundance of testing, for at the end of that period he has long been familiar with the idea, and often with the practical work of the ministry. If he is not called thereto, the probability is he will be repelled from it, so that it may be left to the power of what may be termed natural selection to weed out those that are not fitted by taste and inclination for the sacred profession. They will abandon the work if they are not drawn towards it, generally before they have fairly entered upon it; as, of all professions, it needs that men shall be imbued with an enthusiastic predilection for it. The conclusion I would bring you to, then, is that in general we may assume that the person who has gone through the prescribed course of preparatory studies successfully, and has run the gauntlet of the several examining bodies which the churches have appointed for securing a requisite standard of attainments, and asks to be employed in the work of the Lord, that is, has been called *outwardly*, and renders acceptable service to the Church, so as to secure a call to the pastorate of a Congregation, is, so far as we can judge, also called inwardly. What? do outward training and the satisfying of boards of examiners, and ability to speak to hearers to their interest and edification, necessarily either bestow or indicate the presence of faith and love, and the indwelling of the Holy Ghost? No; but I will tell you what *is* likely to secure these results. The prayers and training of pious parents may be relied upon to do for the young now what they did for Samuel and Timothy of old. The mere fact of a father and mother ardently desiring to see a son of theirs serving the Lord in the ministry of the word and sacraments, may be taken as presumptive proof of those parents' piety. And tell me, have a father's and mother's prayers and devout aspirations to God on behalf of their child no prevailing power with heaven? Try it,

parents, if you have not done so in the past. The success of Hannah and Lois and Eunice and Monica speaks out for your encouragement and perseverance. And do you think the earnest thoughts of godly parents do not follow their son to college, even supposing that at the outset of his preparation he has not felt the work of the Spirit in his own soul; and their effectual fervent prayers, being seconded by all the religious influences brought to bear upon his mind and heart during those first years, may be trusted to produce the requisite change of nature which issues in being born again. Brethren, the success that has attended the course which I have sketched out, amongst our Presbyterian ancestors, is the best proof of the soundness of my arguments; for no church has been served on the whole more faithfully and efficiently than the branches of the Church in Scotland by men of zeal, piety, devotion, learning, and hearty sympathy with their calling. I hold, then, that the devoting of their sons to the work of the holy ministry by parents, is the best evidence of piety in the bosom of the Church. The cream of their religion is thus thrown to the surface. Of course, there are other ways in which the piety of the people may be indicated, apart from separating the young *early* for this office, by the number of candidates for the gospel ministry proceeding forth therefrom. Not a few of the best ministers in our own branch of the Church, as well as in the past history of all churches, have been men whose minds were turned in this direction comparatively late in life, after they themselves had become the subjects of saving grace. All such ought to be welcomed into the pastorate, even though the chances are that they have lost the aptitude for the minute points in learning which belongs to youth. But it is manifest, considering the long course of preparation demanded by most Christian Churches, that it would not do to make the continuance of a ministry dependent upon cases of this kind. The work of preparation must in general be begun *early*, even though there be no signs of grace in the heart of the student; and trust must be put that the Lord will give him the necessary spiritual qualifications, as the course of providence points out his *mental* and *moral* fitness, so that those who at first are only separated by the pious wish and purpose of godly parents, are afterwards effectually called of God, the Lord blessing the means employed to glorify Him in this, as He does in all other cases. And here is encour-

agement to you parents, who are now listening to me, and who are interested in this matter, to think seriously what duty demands at your hands, and to use your utmost efforts to direct your children's minds towards the work of the ministry. Induce them to begin in youth a course of study therefor, and leave it with God to give them the necessary spiritual qualifications. Have faith that they will turn out well in that profession, as you must trust that they will succeed in other callings—for you cannot tell beforehand what will be their fortune in any other line of life they may enter, any more than in this one.

2. Nearly allied to, and as a branch of the fundamental obstacle to the increase of the number of labourers in the vineyard of the Lord, the lack of piety in the Church, is the next topic I must touch upon—the want of reverence for sacred things and of due respect for the occupants of the sacred office. There is "the golden mean," that true measure which belongs to all things, in this as in other matters. Superstition attaches too great importance to those called "sacred persons"; but the tendency of modern times is surely going further still from the true standard of right, when it makes light indiscriminately of those who bear rule in the Church of God, and labour earnestly in word and doctrine. Of course a distinction should be observed between the servants and their master, between the cause and the champions of that cause—the former always enlisting sympathy and evoking co-operation, while the latter may repel both. But the trouble is that the two come to be looked upon as identical; and if the ministers of religion are despised, the danger is that religion itself will be held in contempt; just as that which imperils the casket also injures the jewels, and the destruction of the shell endangers the kernel. In all ages the minister of the gospel has been looked upon as holding a social position equal to that of the highest in the land, and has stood before kings and nobles, not as their inferior but their equal, while he was on an equality on the other hand with the humblest and meanest in the realm, and so a link binding together all ranks and gradations of men in the community. Now, it is to be feared that the preachers of the word are often regarded rather as objects of compassion than of manly respect; and if this sentiment prevails among the senior members of families, the younger members will necessarily catch the tone of the elders; and no wonder that they will not aspire to an office which is held in such slight regard.

But what a mistake it is to disparage that which is by far the loftiest occupation that can call forth the sympathies and energies of any man! The noblest and ablest and wealthiest in the land should deem themselves *honoured* in being put into the ministry of Jesus Christ; and those who rightly divide the word of truth and give themselves heartily to this service, need not feel abashed in the presence of any fellow creature, however distinguished, from a worldly point of view, because they have the education and delicacy and bearing of gentlemen, and above all are ambassadors of Jesus Christ, and are entitled to honour in consideration of the Master whom they serve, just as earthly plenipotentiaries are honoured in proportion to the greatness of the sovereign whom they represent.

3. Another of the reasons why so few present themselves as candidates for the holy ministry, no doubt, is the inadequacy of the provision usually made for the maintenance and comfort of the incumbents of that office. It will be seen from the order in which I have stated these points respectively that *I* do not attach the importance to this defect in the Christian Church, as it now exists, that many do, who look upon it as the radical mischief. I don't think ministers of the gospel ought to expect to be rich, or that their office was designed to contribute to that end; as I believe wealth in the Church of God would have a baleful influence. But there is surely a wide gap between the present incomes and possessions of the greater number of ministers and what might be denominated *wealth*.

I hold also, as I have already hinted, that a minister's status in the community is to be determined upon other considerations than the splendour of his furnitue, the richness of his dress, the grandeur of his equipage, or the weight of the luxuries under which his table groans. When the ambassador of Jesus Christ lets go his faith and reliance upon the *true* sources of his importance in the community, and tries to compete with his neighbours in the magnificence of his display, in order to maintain a high position, he is sure, in the nature of things, to be distanced and beaten in the worldly race. But, brethren, we do not desiderate display—all that we ask for the servants of Jesus Christ is what the Lord himself stipulated for them, for He has sent no man a warfare at his own charges—that the workman shall receive his hire—or, as St. Paul puts it, that he who ministers at the altar shall live of

the altar—that they who minister spiritual things unto others, shall reap of those others' carnal things. Tried by this principle of computation, surely members of congregations estimate at a very low rate the spiritual things they receive, when all their benefactions for the maintenance of their minister, combined, do not make up a sum equal to what any *one* of them pays to his clerk or book-keeper. Surely I need say nothing more under this head.

4. But apart from the wrong which congregations do individually to those who labour earnestly amongst them in word and doctrine, in the scanty pittance which they dole out to them, the Church in its corporate capacity is too apt to overlook the interests and rights of those who have faithfully served her. The fundamental principle underlying the Church of Christ, as we understand it, is that ministers are the servants not of individual congregations, but of the whole body of Christ, the Church at large, and that it is their duty to labour where the Church may send them, and be most efficiently served by them. Of course, there are some positions therein of more extended usefulness and influence than others; and as every man is bound to do the most good in his power, it is not only natural but right that he should aspire to such situations as would enable him to exercise his gifts and capacities to the very best advantage. And as in other matters, so in this, promotion should be the reward of diligence and success, for that is the principle which obtains in the realms of grace as well as in those of nature—those that have served the Church and served her well, in humble and subordinate spheres, should expect that when opportunities offered they should not be forgotten; but what is the fact? What is the tendency in all churches? Is it not rather to trust in the unknown than in the known? Is it not to look far away when an important vacancy is to be filled, instead of considering the claims of those at home? It is said by monarchists that no man has a chance of rising to the head of a republic who is at all well known in the land, because something will be remembered against anyone who has won distinction by some person or other in whose way he has stood; and hence the only available man is he who has not been sufficiently prominent and active in the community to have procured the enmity or opposition of any body. That is to say, some slight blemish is made to more than counterbalance a whole gallery of brilliant parts and distinguished ser-

vices; and the negative man, he who has never done any known wrong, is thrust into the highest position in the State. Whether this accusation is just or not, as applicable to the controversy between monarchists and republicans, there is no question of its justice as regards the distribution of distinctions in most Christian Churches. And more particularly is this the case in a church in the circumstances of our own. Every colonial church, as well as every colonial government, must in the first instance, of course, be equipped from the parent church. But the need of this, as well as the policy of this, in due time comes to an end. Every colony soon trains its own lawyers and doctors and legislators, as well as its own clergy; and these are deemed qualified in due time to undertake the functions of their respective offices, indeed *specially* well qualified by reason of their training in such colony. Now if this applies to the legislators and judges of a new country, why ought it not to the ministry thereof? And yet the same men that would raise a hue and cry, if any of their rights and privileges were invaded through strangers being elevated over their heads to places of distinction and power in their respective spheres,—foreign lawyers, say, being made judges, or foreign politicians executive ministers—lend themselves without compunction to perpetrating a parallel injustice upon the clergy of their country, upon those men who, whether native or not, *have already done good service* in the country, by systematically bestowing the few prizes in the church upon strangers. That good British sense of fair play which resisted the attempts of William the Conqueror and the first Georges to inundate the mother country with continental influence and to fill important offices with adventurers from Normandy and Germany respectively, revolts against such treatment; especially when experience demonstrates that those already in the country are in every respect equal to these strangers. I am not going to mince matters in regard to this question. I believe that public opinion must be brought to bear upon it, for our own branch of the Church, as well as other branches of it, is suffering grievously from this very wrong. Congregations of influence have lent themselves to the principle that the country can produce nothing good enough for them; whereas every opportunity of competition afforded has demonstrated the colonial mind as capable as that of the mother country. Our students have uniformly won distinction in the

European Universities, and not unfrequently have distanced all competitors; and yet our congregations perpetrate the unaccountable folly of rejecting those very men who have earned for themselves such a relative position and preferred such as may have been eclipsed on their own ground. But I need not say it is unaccountable; for the Saviour has accounted for it, as He Himself suffered from it: "A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country." Congregations being familiar with the names and characters and performances of the ministers they have been accustomed to see and hear, this familiarity breeds contempt, whatever may be the real merits of such ministers, and the people are shallow enough to forget that the same principle, elsewhere applied, disparages the strangers whom they choose, as well as those with whom they are acquainted, and that the supposed advantage of being unknown is one that will be speedily lost. It is the old fallacious principle—"distance lends enchantment to the view." Whereas, matters of such grave importance as are involved in every influential congregation demand that *the most tried capacity* and *proved success* should receive the preference. These are the qualities that sober thought and sound sense would indicate as the fitting marks for promotion. Yes, those very men are passed by, when an opening of influence occurs in the church which they have served and in which they are known, who would be as likely as any one else to be selected for such vacancy, were it their lot to live and labour in another country, instead of having the implied misfortune to be sons of the soil, or to have already aided in supporting the credit of the church in comparatively humble spheres. That this is a monstrous grievance, every one who thinks of it must admit, and that it must speedily tell upon the spirit of the ministers labouring faithfully and efficiently in obscure parts of the land, and so upon the supply of students, which depends much upon the influence and encouragement of the ministers, is beyond question. It was by a different policy that the churches of the parent country built themselves up so strong. Ability and diligence and success in a lower sphere always met with their reward, by promotion to a higher.

When I argue that those who serve the Lord faithfully and efficiently in subordinate spheres should be rewarded by [illegible] tion when openings to higher positions offer, I do not wish [illegible] the least to make light of the dignity and honour that attach to the

ministry in the humblest and obscurest congregation in the land. Those who are content to labour in these spheres to the day of their death, are entitled to all honour and esteem. There are laurels to be gathered in such situations as well as in those which a legitimate ambition aspires to; and it is very much to the credit of our ministers, natives and others, that they have wrought away zealously and efficiently, repairing the waste places of our Zion. The place of honour after all in the church, as in the army, is the place of difficulty and hardship—the filling of the breaches being entrusted to the bravest and best. But this does not the less entitle them to consideration, even though their modesty and unselfishness should seek no recognition of their services, when chances of promotion are opened.

5. And it is not only against congregations I have a charge to bring in this connection; but also against those within the pale of the ministry who have had the ear of the church. No church that is well advised will long be found following a policy so suicidal. All experience shows that every country must produce a *native* ministry, before the work of evangelization can expect to be thoroughly overcome; and hence wise and statesmanlike ecclesiastical leaders will do all in their power to foster and encourage native talent and energy.

6. But I think we ministers have not ourselves been free from all blame in this matter. We have submitted to this state of things with a meekness that has been of doubtful wisdom, and have failed to assert our rights as our lawyers and doctors would have asserted theirs in parallel circumstances.

By this I do not mean that we should evince any coldness towards such as come among us from abroad, called by our congregations. Not at all. Their presence with us cannot but do us good, preserving a catholic spirit and keeping up the connection with the churches of other lands and imparting to us somewhat of their healthy tone. We do not forget that we owe our very *existence* to those who came to this land as strangers, when they were virtually expatriating themselves for the sake of the gospel of Jesus Christ. To those ministers, then, who come to this land, at the request of our people, we owe nothing but kindness. And if they were willing to take their risk of humble spheres as well as of higher ones, and shared in the labours of the ministry and won their position amongst us by their services or

ability, we ought to hail with joy the advent of any number of them, and at the present emergency they would be so received. It is not with the fact that they are brought from other churches and other lands, we find fault; but it is with the recent tendency to fill up only the *best* positions in the church with strangers, whereas the supply for obscure positions from the same quarter, has for many years past failed.

I do not argue for *protection* to home talent, or ask that it shall have any advantage secured to it; but only that both classes shall be placed on a level—that is, that strangers shall have to work their way up to honour, distinction and power, as others have to do, from ordinary positions in the church. I know it is the wish, as it should be, of every minister in the land to give a hearty welcome to those who come from afar to cast in their lot with us. We are under obligation to them for responding to our people's call. And it is gladly acknowledged that in one aspect of the case the church has received a great accession of strength from these quarters. Certain individual congregations may, indeed, have benefited by the tendency I am deprecating, as we have received ministers in this way who would unquestionably be a credit and source of strength to any church. These gentlemen will not misapprehend me, when, in contending for a general principle, the truth of which I am sure they themselves will admit, I say that even the credit they individually bring us may be too dearly bought, if the prosperity of a few congregations is procured at the expense of deterring the talented and ambitious young men of the country from becoming candidates for the ministry, thus entailing loss upon the church at large. At all events our friends from abroad are entitled to our kindest attention. But receiving them with kindness is a very different thing from heaping upon them all the honours and dignities in the gift of the church, as soon as they cross our threshold. Now, that has been the tendency, and there is no doubt it has had a mischievous effect. It has doubled the injustice done to those who have laboured long in the service of the Master here, and whose interests for life are entirely identified with those of the church. First, they have been held to be disqualified for the most elevated positions in the land, and then they have been cheated out of those secondary honours, distinctions and responsibilities which lie in the gift of the Church, because not ministers of influential

congregations. I repeat, the Ministers themselves are to blame for perpetuating this minor evil; and ought to exact the condition that a man must confer some services upon the Church here before he is preferred over others to high places.

7. If what has been already advanced is true, it follows that the obtaining of students for the Church rests very much with the ministers of congregations, and that everything which tends to daunt and discourage those who are already in the service of the Church, must in the nature of things strongly affect the number of candidates for the sacred office. It follows, also, that if the Church is to be served by men of intellect and culture, she must remove all those barriers I have been speaking of, to the success of her own immediate sons, her students. When this is done, there will be no excuse for Ministers not bestirring themselves in behalf of the interests of the Church in the way of seeking out and encouraging promising young men who shall become students of divinity. They have a great deal in their power with regard to this matter. This is evidenced from the fact that those pastors who have been alive to the importance and need of a native ministry, and have encouraged young lads in their congregations to prosecute a course of study for the Church, have been successful in obtaining students. It has been the same, I believe, in the sister church. The great majority of the divinity students are furnished by a very few localities and congregations. And if the spirit evinced by a few ministers in this regard became general, there is no reason why our halls should not be thronged by eager and able students. And these not, as at present, mainly from the humbler classes, but from all the classes in the Church. Then the reproach which at present rests upon several of the large and influential congregations in the cities, that they have not contributed a single minister to the Church, would be wiped out. After all I have said by way of stating the grievances under which our own Church labours, I can conscientiously recommend the office of the Gospel Ministry to every young man of talent and piety who will listen to me. Even in this life the servant of Jesus Christ reaps probably as much happiness as any class in the community, in spite of the privations he may be called upon to endure, and the self-denial he must necessarily practise. His income is not large, but it ought to be sure, and in general his wants are but few. I dare say if we, who in times of temporary

embarrassment are apt to contrast our lot with that of other men who started out in the race of life with us, and who were perhaps our inferiors in capacity, but have become rich and eminent in their several spheres, and to think it has fared hardly with us in comparison; knew the whole truth, we should find that even in a worldly point of view we are probably as well off as they—that is, have less anxiety with regard to money matters, and have less difficulty in meeting our engagements. I do not therefore, sympathize with the feelings of those ministers who would dissuade young men from the office which I myself hold, the office of my own choice, and which I would rejoice to think my son after me will choose. Let us who are ministers endeavour to remove as far as possible all hindrances to the success of our own students, and then let us encourage as many of them as we can influence, to give themselves to God in the ministry of His Son.

8. It will be observed that I am far from laying the responsibility for the fewness of students upon those whom it has become the fashion to fix it upon—the professors in our colleges. Let me say just a word about this. They are but shallow in their perceptions who lay the whole blame or even the principal part of it at the door of our institutions. The evil, as we have seen, is to be traced to the Church—the ministers and people rather than the colleges. I believe these institutions can afford an adequate training for our students. I do not know that our professors of divinity lay claim to any special genius for teaching; but I believe they are as conscientious, earnest and laborious as can be found in any similar institutions in the world. And they have been successful too, as the subsequent record of their students has testified. I do not know that those who have forsaken their prelections and have gone abroad to obtain instruction, have given evidence of any superiority to those trained under them at home. And the fact is, that all the use professors in general are of, is to direct the studies of their pupils, and exact from them the requisite amount of work. It is not so much to supply knowledge to the student, as to make him search for it himself, that colleges exist. Now I believe we have professors who fulfil these offices most effectually. Their business is to educate not to cram students—and this is done by the pressure brought upon pupils to make them work—with the addition of the stimulus which the enthusiasm, every teacher ought to possess, imparts to those sitting

at his feet. If we had an additional professor in each of our colleges, I believe our appliances sufficient to meet the wants of the Church; and all that is required is that our professors get encouragement to prosecute their labours with enthusiasm, by the Church furnishing them with the materials to work upon.

If any reflection is to be made upon our Colonial training institutions, it is of a different kind. I am not sure but they have aimed and aspired at being universities rather than colleges for the Church—that is, at furnishing education to all comers, and have sought students at their literary courses without much regard to whether many or few of these were intending students of divinity. Nor am I sure that the influences which might legitimately have been brought to bear upon the youth of the church studying in the literary halls, have been employed to induce them to enter the divinity hall. And that the colleges have ambitions of their own, apart from the interests of the church, and do not deem themselves bound as their first aim to subserve the good of the church, seems shown by the fact that they plume themselves rather upon the students they send into other departments of public life than upon those they send into the ministry, and follow the former rather than the latter into their subsequent career, as their reports from time to time manifest. This looks like putting a premium, so far as any stimulus they can impart goes, upon those who select other professions than preaching the gospel. It is very well for our colleges to claim to teach all and sundry that seek admission to their classes, whatever their creed and future intentions; but they certainly fail in the mission expected of them by the church, unless they keep it before them as the main end of their existence, to educate students for the ministry.

You see I do not acquiesce in the modern cry that it is because the pulpit has lost its power that so few able men are coming forward for the ministry. As an instrument in the salvation of sinners it occupies an unequalled vantage-ground, and has no reason to be jealous of the press or any other modern appliance for enlightening and persuading men. It rather delights to make all other agencies subsidiary to itself, and should rise in its power in proportion to the increased influence of those agencies. In the unchallangeable position it offers for influencing the views, feelings and character of men, both for time and eternity, the gospel

ministry can never cease to have attractions in itself, which no other occupation has, for the best and noblest minds and spirits. So that whatever is the reason why few are drawn towards it, it is not because the pulpit has lost its relative importance and power.

Brethren, I have endeavoured thus to reach the real causes of the lack of students which we deplore. These causes are numerous, but none of them is hopelessly incurable. You see I have not indulged in compliments. And why? Is it because I am unwilling to employ them? There is scarcely any man who will not, when he can, and I share in the common desire to make myself agreeable to others. But we have arrived at a crisis in the history of our church, and that crisis imperatively demands that there shall be plain speaking. It is no time for compliments when there are upwards of twenty vacant charges in the church, and no prospect of young ministers to fill them. It is always easier to speak smooth words than rugged ones. It would be far pleasanter for me to be able to congratulate the church and the colleges upon their prosperity, than to have to enter upon this analysis; but I love both my country and my church, and I am determined, at whatever risk, not to keep silence when I see their future interests imperilled,—let others do and think what they choose. Timid people will call me imprudent; but if Jesus Christ had been prudent in the sense of letting evil pass unnoticed, He had never incurred death at the hands of the scribes and pharisees; and if Polycarp had been prudent he never needed to go to the stake for the truth's sake. It would be much easier to flatter everybody all round; but I have before my eyes the fate of the foolish king of Israel, who listened to the lying prophets that prophesied according to his wishes, but who "hated Micaiah, the son of Imlah, because he did not prophesy good concerning him, but evil,"—deceived by them he went up to Ramoth Gilead to his destruction. It is not written "let every one of us please his neighbour," but "let every one of us please his neighbour for *good to edification*." Holding as I do the conviction, to which I have just given utterance, it would show that I was more alive to what men should think or say of me personally than to the interests of truth, if I should hold my peace for fear of incurring the disapprobation or ill opinion of others. We must not compromise the truth for the sake of popularity, place, power, or

profit. It is better to tell the truth and be hanged for it, than to be upheld in state by flattery and dishonesty. I have accordingly chosen my part, and have sought to expose the weaknesses in the present policy of the Church in Canada, knowing that by so doing I shall call down the opposition of many.

Now I fancy some one saying, granted that all these things are true, what good is there in drawing attention to them? Does not such a course only increase the evils? That is a strain with which I am quite familiar. Those who profit by any abuse are always accustomed to raise this cry. But, brethren, there is sophistry as well as selfishness at the bottom of it. One would fancy to hear them speak that he who *reveals* the evil *creates* it. Whereas every one knows who is acquainted with such matters, that the only way to cure such evils is to expose them, and let the purifying light of public opinion stream upon them.

Then I can imagine some one saying, is that the way to attract students to the sacred profession? to parade before them reasons why they should adopt any other calling than this one? Dear brethren, the evil has reached its height, and I believe we shall have few students until these abuses are removed. Let them be done away with, and then no one shall have a chance to call attention to them. The physician has to be impressed with the gravity of the crisis in his patient before he will bestir himself to check the disease. And so the way to bring health to the ecclesiastical, as well as the physical atmosphere, is to stir it well up.

Others will again hint that these things are to me personal matters, otherwise I should not attach so much importance to them. If it were not that to many selfish natures it is inconceivable that men can be actuated by other than motives of personal interest, and that such will therefore admit no disclaimer as of sufficient force to remove the suspicion of selfishness, it might be enough to say that those who venture to impute motives always run a narrow risk, and that they do greater mischief to themselves than to those whom they uncharitably suspect. But, brethren, you know me better than to judge my motives harshly. By your partiality I was chosen your minister, when the prospects of this congregation might be regarded as doubtful, and by your zealous co-operation, through the blessing of God upon our joint endeavours, it has in the course of five years risen to a high position in

the church, and my confidence is that a great future is in store for us, that by a continuance of the same kind spirit and hearty co-operation the prospects are that ere long the congregation shall be second to none on the Synod roll. I have, therefore, no reason personally to complain, although I feel that I owe nothing to any countenance the *Church* has ever given me in my humble efforts to serve her. This much of a personal nature you will pardon me for speaking; but I felt that it was necessary to forestall those ill-natured remarks that are sure to be made by those who cannot gainsay the truths I have advanced.

It may be also objected that those who are deterred from entering the ministry of Jesus Christ for such reasons as I have stated, must be fainthearted and withheld by worldly considerations, so that it is no loss to the Church to be without their services. The answer to this is that men are impelled by a *network* of motives, some higher and some lower, which cannot be separated from each other, but are all in their place legitimate. Thank God, there are some men of heroic and devoted natures who are attracted towards the ministry in this land, in spite of adverse circumstances, to whom the thought is invincible that after all, what position is so ennobling as the pulpit, from which a man has a right, unchallenged, to address his fellow sinners, commanding, rebuking, and exhorting them, and shaping their eternal destiny. But as the young are insensibly moulded by the opinions that are found floating, like disease germs in the atmosphere, every unreasonable and surmountable obstacle to the encouragement of the ministry that exists, must tell against the prospects of numbers becoming candidates for that office. So that the way to increase the chances of the Church securing a large number of students for the ministry is to remove every hindrance to the comfort and incitement of those who are already labouring in the Church. This will react favourably—ministers will be able conscientiously to recommend the young among their flocks to devote themselves to this work, and will give their own sons thereto.

You may be wondering within yourselves, but what have we as a congregation to do with much that is said? I answer that these are questions—intimately affecting every congregation, and that may any day need to be thought upon by you. It is from the people—from the families of our congregations—that the

future ministers of the church must come. It belongs to congregations to make adequate provision for the comfortable maintenance of ministers. The congregations are the callers of the ministers. And it is the duty of congregations not only to cooperate with those who are already ministers, and to pray for their success; but also to pray for an increase in the number and efficiency of the labourers in the vineyard of the Lord.

It is your duty to give of your substance to advance the Redeemer's Kingdom in the world, according as the Lord has prospered you; but, further than that, it is your duty to encourage your sons to devote themselves to the ministry of Jesus Christ. The best patrimony you can leave them, if you have the means, is the necessary training for this work, and an endowment besides, not rendering them wholly dependnet upon the income they receive from the people amongst whom they labour. Instead of giving your sons a few thousands to begin business with, lay the same amount out in educating them for the christian pulpit and in purchasing an annuity for them in addition, and in no way can you contribute more largely to the comfort and happiness of your children. For, I need not say, perhaps, that after all, taking everything into account, no man's position is more favourable to virtue and happiness and ultimate glory, than that of a faithful and able minister of Jesus Christ. So that I hope the effect of all I have said to-day will be to induce some of the young hearing me to make up their minds to enter this very noble, attractive and influential calling.

Let us seek to elevate the piety, especially the domestic piety of congregations. Let our people be impressed more fully with the dignity and importance, and commercial value, if you choose, of the sacred office. But specially let us invoke the help of the great Head of the Church, who can remedy all evils and stimulate to all good. While we use the means to correct what is amiss, let us never forget that "Paul may plant and Apollos water, but God alone giveth the increase;" and let us never cease to pray to "the Lord of the harvest that He will send forth labourers into His harvest."