

THE
PRESBYTERIAN EDUCATION REPOSITORY.

1856.

ARTICLE I.

GOD'S UNIVERSITY; OR, THE FAMILY CONSIDERED AS
A GOVERNMENT, A SCHOOL, AND A CHURCH.*

BY THE REV. THOMAS V. MOORE, D.D., RICHMOND, VA.

THERE are two institutions that have come down to us from Eden, to perpetuate some of its purity and peace. The first is the Sabbath, that suspends, for a single day, the primeval curse of toil; that arrests for a time, the frenzied rush of our worldly life, to give man and beast a season of repose; that invades for a season the despotic rule of grasping avarice, and erects weekly to the eye of man, a memorial of the rest that he has lost on earth, and a foresign of the rest he may find in heaven. But as many are ignorant and many neglectful of this relic of Eden, another has been left, more constant and universal in its influence, a relic, unchanged by the flow of human things, unbroken by the fall, unharmed by the deluge, and untouched by the decay that has dissolved so many of the memorials of the mighty Past. This relic is the FAMILY.

Believing it to be the divinely appointed institute for the training of the young, and the neglect of its agencies to be the grand cause of juvenile delinquency at the present time, and the proper use of its discipline, instruction, and worship to be the desired remedy, we propose to consider this great educational institute, which, as the only one that God has made universal on the earth, we have ventured to term *God's University*, or the divinely appointed means for educating the human race, for time and eternity, in all those particulars not specifically assigned to the Church. We shall look at its general design, and then consider it under the aspects of a government,

*This excellent article was one of the "PRIZE ESSAYS ON JUVENILE DELINQUENCY," originally published under the direction of the Managers of the House of Refuge, Philadelphia.—Ed.

sincere friend, a benevolent neighbor, a law-abiding citizen, a diligent, upright, disinterested ruler? Has any part of his training qualified him for these relations? And if nothing can be expected from him in this life, what, in that interminable future for which the present is but a brief preparative? What will it profit him, a hundred or a thousand years hence, that, while on earth, he was profoundly conversant with Greek and Roman lore, had explored the mysteries of nature, had weighed and measured the planets, and had called the stars by their names; if, having neglected the word of God, and undervalued το ὑπερβαλον της γνωσεως Χριστου Ιησου, he had failed, with all his getting, to get understanding—that fear of the Lord which is the beginning of wisdom?

I know, indeed, that one may be familiar, even with the Scripture, and yet fail of eternal life: but is there not reason to hope, that God's blessing will accompany its daily and careful perusal, so that our youth may be led from its literary to its spiritual beauty and excellence? And for my part, God grant that the beloved pupils whom we may have the privilege of instructing, may be so directed to the Father of lights and the Saviour of sinners, that we may hereafter meet them in that land where our present misty knowledge shall have vanished forever in the bright sunshine of eternal truth!

Gentlemen, it was written over the vestibule of Plato's celebrated Academy, "Let no one ignorant of geometry enter here." You have this day inscribed upon the portals of Hanover College the nobler Christian sentiment, Let no one depart hence ignorant of the Bible!

ARTICLE IX.

COUNSELS TO YOUNG MEN LEAVING COLLEGE.*

BY THE REV. DAVID ELLIOTT, D.D., OF ALLEGHANY CITY, PA.

HAVING completed your collegiate course, you are about to leave us for a different position, and for the pursuit of objects ulterior to those which have here occupied your attention. What may be the occurrences of your future life, or what the *special* demands which Providence may make upon your talents and resources, cannot now be foreseen. Certain it is, however, that if your life and health be spared, it will be that you may have the opportunity and privilege of employing them actively in the service of God and your fellow-men. How you may best employ your talents and acquirements in this service, is a question, to the right solution of which, much careful reflection will be necessary. It involves the choice and study of a profession for life; the adoption of such general rules of action as will, in their application, render your efforts most certain and efficient, together with the ultimate object to be kept in view, as a

* A Baccalaureate, by David Elliott, D.D., formerly *President of Washington College, Pa.*, and now a Professor in the Western Theological Seminary at Alleghany, Pa.—ED.

motive to high and successful exertion. Upon these several points, you will allow me to offer you a few suggestions, dictated by the most friendly regard, and the earnest desire which I feel to be instrumental in promoting your permanent welfare.

I take it for granted that you intend to enter one of the learned professions. On this presumption will be based many of the remarks, which I shall offer to your attention.

1. In relation to *the choice and study of a profession*. This is a matter of much greater difficulty and more serious concern, than young men frequently imagine. Incidental circumstances of the most trivial kind often determine young men to select and enter upon an employment for life. Hence, great mistakes are frequently made in this selection, and men's usefulness greatly impeded or curtailed. Many who would be respectable and useful in one department of business, by going into another for which they have no peculiar fitness, are lost to society, and remain in obscurity all their lives. Great care, then, should be taken in the selection of a profession or employment for life. Young men should examine well their own talents, tastes, peculiarity of temperament, moral and physical aptitude for particular duties, &c. They should also ascertain, from correct sources, the nature, extent, and difficulties of the duties arising out of the different professional avocations. By a comparison of these particulars, they will be able to determine respecting their own adaptation for the one or the other of these professions, and to place themselves where they will be most likely to be useful.

It is believed that young men generally have selected their profession before the end of their collegiate course. This, for the most part, is a good rule. The earlier the selection is made, the better, provided it be done in the manner already stated, and the mind be sufficiently matured for the settlement of so difficult a question. When the selection is made early, a particular direction is hereby given to the thoughts, desires, and studies, by which all will be rendered tributary to the object in view. Thus, many hours, which would be spent in loose, undefined reading, will be appropriated to the attainment of such knowledge as will be of special use in the department selected, and prepare for action there with greater advantage and distinction.

If you should have made your selection already, all I would suggest is, that you carefully review the grounds on which it has been made, before you enter upon your course of professional study. Endeavour to satisfy yourself that you have selected that department, to which your talents, dispositions, and acquirements are best adapted, and where you believe you can do the greatest amount of good. If you have yet to select your profession, while you do it cautiously, do it quickly. Time is too precious to be wasted by delay and uncertainty in relation to the object of pursuit. No one should have it to say, "I do not know what I am going to do," when there is so much to be done, and when every moment is deduct-

ing from the opportunities of doing it. The world is a great *laboratory*, in which there is room enough for all to work, and where none should be idle.

In *the study* of a profession, you should aim at a thorough acquaintance with all that properly belongs to it. In order to this, you must take time. Too short a period is allotted by young men generally, in this country, to the study of a profession. They are too anxious to get forward into professional life. Their funds are sometimes limited, and rather than undergo the drudgery of teaching to secure more, or receive them from other sources, they abridge their course and enter upon their profession, imperfectly acquainted with its principles and its duties. The consequence is, that we have comparatively few men who are ripe scholars, in the appropriate learning of their profession. Young men, no doubt, calculate that they will make up their deficiencies afterwards. This, however, it is very difficult to do. The active employments of professional life, leave much less time for systematical reading, than those who have no experience anticipate. And, although much knowledge will necessarily be acquired in professional pursuits, this will never atone for the defects of a scanty course of preparatory study.

My advice to you, then, is, not to fix upon any definite period for professional preparation, but to take whatever time may be necessary to put yourself in full possession of all the knowledge that is essential to the ready and efficient discharge of your professional duties. Besides, you are to recollect, that in addition to your professional reading, you are to retain and improve upon the scientific acquirements, which you have made during your collegiate course. These will soon be lost, unless preserved by continued attention. By such attention, however, they may not only be preserved but greatly augmented, and rendered subservient to purposes of the highest utility.

2. It will be an object worthy your attention, to *fix upon such general rules of action as will, in their application, render your literary attainments and efforts most certain and efficient*. I can offer you a few suggestions only, on this subject.

One good general rule is, *never to claim more than you possess*. There is a quackery in science, with which we sometimes meet, which is ever obtruding itself upon the community by loud professions, but which is invariably followed by lean performances. Against this, I would warn you. Substantial acquirements and real merit need not to be told. They will speak for themselves, when opportunities are presented for their development. And such opportunities are never long wanting, in this country, in any of the professional departments. Modest merit will rarely fail of rising to its proper level, or meeting its appropriate reward. For this, there is ample security in the growing intelligence of the community. The same intelligence, however, which will discern and reward solid acquirements, will detect and expose the vapid pretensions of those, whose chief merit consists in noisy professions. For a time, obtrusive igno-

rance may impose upon the community, but it will ultimately sink into merited contempt. Better, then, for young men to claim less than they really possess, than by claiming too much to raise an expectation which they cannot satisfy, and thereby subject themselves to the charge of an empiricism, as contemptible as it is useless.

Another good rule to be observed in the practical application of your scientific attainments is, *to make them bear on the fixed principles of social order and human happiness*, avoiding those eccentric movements, which are bounded by no rule, and which care not to break through all the settled arrangements of society, and of the divine administration. It is the folly of some men to believe that their fathers have lived in vain—that long as the world has existed, there is yet nothing fixed or certain—that social order itself is an experiment not yet completed,—and that every one who enters the field of action, is to be considered as an adventurer upon its trackless surface, and a candidate for the honour of first settling the great principles of human belief and moral conduct. The consequence is, that these men aim at the subversion of all existing institutions and principles of order and belief. They are restrained by no rules, regard no existing arrangements, trifle with all the social relations, and flout as an antiquated prejudice, every opinion and system, which has not been elaborated by their own inventive genius.

Against such an anomalous course, I would place you on your guard. For, favourable as I am to improvement in relation to every legitimate subject, I believe the world has not reached its present age, without having settled all the great fundamental principles involved in the advancement of man's happiness and God's glory. Upon these principles, then, as settled and fixed, bring your talents and acquirements to bear, without wasting them in those eccentric efforts, which are productive of little else than confusion and disorder in human society. By pursuing such a course, you may not, indeed, satisfy that rage for novelty, so extensively prevalent, nor be esteemed so great a genius by the ignorant crowd; but you will do more substantial benefit to your fellow-men, and receive the approbation of the more enlightened part of the community. In this way, you will aid in advancing the cause of truth and good order, and will be applying your learning in a way that will be productive of lasting good to mankind.

By these remarks, intended to guard you against the invasion of the settled principles of social order and happiness, you will greatly misunderstand me if you suppose that I wish to limit inquiry, or suppress research, in any branch of science dependent on reason and experiment for its reception and improvement. In all the physical sciences, in the mechanic arts, and even in relation to the right application of settled moral and social principles, there is, doubtless, a vast field to be explored, and a great deal of room for progress. Here genius may range, and talent find scope for exercise of the most intense and boldest kind. But even here fixed principles, as

far as they are founded on the solid basis of facts and experiments, must ever limit the luxuriance of fancy, and correct the extravagance of wild and unbridled speculations.

Another general rule of action which I would suggest is, *to act from a sense of duty and a due regard to the just claims of your fellow-men*, rather than from a desire to receive their applause. This will give an elevation and stability to your conduct, which will not fail to secure the respect and confidence of the community; whereas, if you make popular opinion your rule of action, you will find it difficult to preserve any kind of consistency or uniformity in your course. Besides, you will be in danger of making shipwreck of a good conscience, and of involving yourself in guilt; for, as was remarked, with more force than eloquence, by a very learned man, formerly at the head of one of our American Colleges, "the road to popularity is a dirty path, in which no honest man can travel without contracting defilement." The approbation of the wise and good is, indeed, an object to be desired—but this will be best secured by an unbending course of integrity and honesty in your department, dictated by a sense of duty.

A due regard to the just claims of your fellow-men will be of importance to you in the private walks of life. It will gain the confidence of those with whom you have intercourse, and give you a hold on their affections which will be highly useful to you in the exertion of your influence for their benefit. In your professional avocations, also, if you should enter upon the practice of a profession, you will find this rule of great importance, as it regards both your honour and usefulness. As it regards your conduct towards your professional brethren, it will be expected that you treat them with courtesy and justice. Some young men, when they enter on their professional career, are so intent on gaining for themselves a name and a place, that they seek to reach their object without a due regard to the rights and claims of others, who have entered, or are entering, with them on the same field. Hence, they seek to cross their path, to break in upon their associations, to interfere with their line of action, and, by truckling to the popular appetite, to raise themselves at the expense of their peers. This is dishonourable. It is beneath the dignity of professional enterprise. Besides, it is *wrong*. It is interfering with the just claims of others, in a way in which they, as honest, honourable men, cannot meet their assailants. I say *assailants*—for competitors they are not. Such injustice should be avoided. Young men, when they enter on a profession, should prescribe to themselves a high and honourable course of action, in the prosecution of which others shall have no reason to complain that they have violated the laws, either of courtesy or of justice. In our growing country, there is room enough for the full exercise of all the professional talent which can be put in requisition, and there are rewards sufficiently great to stimulate to enterprise, without a resort to any of those little things, which are the appropriate aliment of little minds.

I mention another rule which will aid you in the application of your talents and requirements—it is, *that you seek to acquire the entire control of your passions*. It is a common remark, that he who would govern others, must learn to govern himself. This is true, not only in relation to the *science* of government, but also in relation to that *controlling influence* which talents and learning are fitted to exert on the community. The finest talents and loftiest attainments will lose much of their power, if subject to no other control than the ever-varying temperature of passion. They will be often misapplied, or, if applied to proper objects, it will be frequently in a way little calculated to secure that which is intended. Hence, Solomon says: “He that is soon angry, dealeth foolishly:” he acts without wisdom, and, by the misapplication of his talents, or learning, produces no greater an amount of influence, than if he were destitute of both.

Permit me then, to press upon you the importance of seeking the entire control of your passions, and that calm self-possession which will enable you, under the most trying circumstances, to employ your powers for the exertion of a favourable influence over your fellow-men. It is believed, that the history of the world furnishes few, if any examples of men who have exerted an extensive and lasting control over their fellow-men, who have not been distinguished for their power of self-government. A hurricane may, indeed, in its fury, sometimes produce results corresponding with those arising from the regular morning and evening breeze. But these are not its legitimate and accustomed results. Its appropriate effects are confusion and widespread desolation—and, it is to be recollected, that in the production even of these, its strength is wasted and lost. So passionate men may, under the impulse of excited passion, produce upon society effects of a very favourable kind. But these are incidental to the nature of sinful passion, the natural tendency of which is to produce evil, and to expend itself in the violence of its movements. If, then, you would acquire and exert a prominent and beneficial influence on society by the application of your talents and attainments, cultivate the science of self-government.

3. I only add as an ultimate motive to high and successful exertion, that you *should keep in view the great end of your existence*. God has made you for his glory. That you may furnish contributions to this, he has endowed you with talents, and afforded you opportunities for their cultivation. At the advancement of God’s glory, therefore, you should aim, in the application of all your acquirements. You should beware of making your own glory or fame the ultimate object of your exertions. These should only be sought as the means of reflecting and promoting the glory of the great Creator.

Recollect that your residence in this world is only the incipient stage of your existence. Formed for immortality, you must live beyond the grave, and glorify God, either by enjoying his favour and serving him actively, or by suffering the vengeance of his wrath. In the midst of your other pursuits then, forget not the concerns of your

soul, and your high destiny as an immortal being. Remember the agonies which the Son of God endured for the salvation of a lost world. Let nothing prevent you from seeking an interest in his blood which "cleanseth from all sin." No extent of literary attainments, no elevation in the temple of popular fame will ever compensate for the want of a part in the salvation of the Son of God. The highest attainment on earth is to be a disciple of the Lord Jesus, and the greatest glory in eternity will be to occupy a place before his throne, and dwell forever in his blessed presence. That you may attain this glory, as it should be the leading object of your pursuit, so it is my first and highest wish on your behalf.

In parting with you, I would remind you that the period of the world in which you are about to enter the field of action is one of great and growing interest. It is becoming every day more strongly marked by the moral and intellectual power which is accumulating and asserting its legitimate claims to universal dominion. It will be expected of you, as one who has enjoyed the benefits of a liberal education, that you add to this power, which, under God, is destined to govern the world. To those who have assisted in giving direction and impulse to your minds in the acquisition of the necessary principles of action, it will be no mean gratification to find you among the foremost in sustaining all the great movements which tend to the enlargement of human happiness and the glory of God. In the hope of this, we now bid you our affectionate adieu, with our prayers to Heaven, that while, by the accuracy of your science, the integrity of your character, and the correctness of your habits, you honour the institution whose approving testimonial you have this day received, you may, by the purity and elevation of your piety, in a still higher degree, honour your God and Redeemer.

ARTICLE X.

ON A CALL TO THE GOSPEL MINISTRY.

BY THE REV. JAMES WOOD, D.D., OF PHILADELPHIA.

As a call to the sacred office is a personal matter, it should be considered with a serious and prayerful spirit. To run uncalled may bring upon us the doom of Uzzah for his unhallowed touching of the ark; and to excuse ourselves from engaging in this work when divinely called to it, is a great sin, like that of which Matthew, Peter, or Paul would have been guilty, if they had declined the service when Christ called them to the apostleship.

A call to the ministry is either extraordinary or ordinary. Of the former was that of the Apostles, whose call being peculiar is not applicable in all respects to ministers of the present day. It involved, however, some of the elements belonging to an *ordinary*