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"Because of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek thy good."
Psalm cxxii, 9.

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IMMUTABILITY OF GOD.

God is unlike all other beings in the universe. All other intelligences and all created things are subject to change, and are constantly changing. But God is unchangeable. He is the same, yesterday, to-day and forever, without the least variableness or shadow of turning. Angels and the spirits of the just have the image of God, and are in some degree like him in holiness and happiness. But they are still mutable:—although they are confirmed and elect, and exalted above the power of sin and death; they are changeable: for they are no doubt advancing in knowledge and happiness—rising to higher degrees of perfection; and every accession to their knowledge or happiness is a change. Immutability therefore, as well as the perfection of his attributes, distinguishes God from all other beings in the universe. “His ways are not as our ways, nor his thoughts as our thoughts, for as the Heavens are high above the earth, so are his ways above our ways, and his thoughts above our thoughts.”

That **GOD IS IMMUTABLE**, is a grand and important truth. An enlightened view of this attribute is indispensable to a knowledge of his perfections and government; and a knowledge of the character and government of God is the foundation of all true religion. The greatest mistakes in religion, both in sentiment and practice, among Christians and among Heathen, arise from erroneous or partial views of the character of God. This subject then, is an important one.

Before entering upon the discussion of it, it is proper for us to recollect, that in learning the character of God, in forming ideas of Him, the Bible, and the Bible alone, must be our guide; his Word and Spirit alone can direct us, for his nature and attributes are incomprehensible. They are too high to be attained by reason. They cannot be conceived by human understandings, or comprehended by finite minds. We are creatures of yesterday. We were, but a few days since, called into life, and opened our eyes for the first time on the works of God:—and we have, perhaps, exercised our reason very little, in inquiring about Him, and con-

historian will record the names and characters of the animals, the fruits and flowers, the minerals, and atmospherical phenomena of his neighborhood.

The next topic of interest will naturally be the inhabitants of the land. Who were the Aborigines? Name the tribes, and commit to writing all that can be discovered of their history, language, manners, religion, fate, and monumental remains. Again—who were the first European settlers? Did they migrate directly from the other continent, or from older colonies in the new? What was the date, and what the circumstances of their settlement? Name the leaders in the enterprise, and such families of their descendants as remain. Detail their history, and the history of the country. Proceed to record all that can be learned of their subsequent adventures and fate, including anecdotes of remarkable characters, and important events of the past or present time. The religious history of the country will next demand attention.—Who first introduced the worship of God? What sects have flourished, or now exist? Enumerate the places of worship, and collect anecdotes of the clergy. State the comparative force and prospects of various denominations. The accurate observer will after this be prepared to say, what are the wants of the people; in what respects improvements are needed, and how far they are practicable.

All these particulars may be arranged and methodized under their appropriate heads. The gentlemen of different counties may have a mutual understanding, and joint conference. Associations may be formed, and in time a Historical Society for the state may be matured. Gentlemen of leisure, professional men, ministers of the Gospel, and academical professors, will find in these inquiries abundant recreation; and the archives of such a fraternity would undoubtedly prove a treasure to the country. Each man by thus concentrating his powers, may be accurately and extensively acquainted with his own district, and our public journals will be enriched with facts, which but for this care, would sink into utter forgetfulness.

QUIS?

EDUCATION FOR THE GOSPEL MINISTRY.

“Are the efforts now making to educate young men for the Gospel Ministry, authorized by Scripture?”

In elucidating this question, our remarks will be arranged under the following heads;—1. The efforts now making to educate young men for the Ministry;—2. The object contem-

plated by those who make these efforts ;—3. The Scriptural authority on the subject.

1. The unexampled increase of our population, and the alarming deficiency of Ministers, have led wise and good men of different denominations to consider, whether any proper means could be devised for supplying this deficiency, and for extending religious instruction to the vast multitudes who are in danger of perishing for lack of knowledge; and it seems they have all come to the conclusion, to pursue, substantially, the same course; namely, to establish Theological Seminaries, to form Education Societies, and to raise permanent funds for the purpose of supporting Professors to teach, and students while they are taught, those branches of learning which they think adopted to make able ministers of the New Testament—supposing those who pursue such studies to possess other qualifications, which all acknowledge to be of indispensable necessity.

2. As to the OBJECT which the friends of the education cause have in view. Some ill-informed, we will not say—ill-natured persons, speak of the efforts in question, as designed to make Ministers of the Gospel without any reference to Spiritual qualifications. They say we propose to make men Ministers, merely by giving them human learning, as we would train them for any other profession. We call these persons ill-informed, because, if they had made the necessary inquiries on the subject, they never could have entertained such an opinion. The *avowed* design of Education Societies in this country, is to assist young men who appear to possess piety, talents, and a desire to be useful, in improving their minds, so as to qualify them for explaining and enforcing the great doctrines and duties of the Bible, and for exerting a high degree of moral and religious influence in society. Accordingly, much care is taken in selecting those young men, who appear to be distinguished for their *piety*, and they are required to present a certificate, or to furnish satisfactory evidence of their good standing, as members of some particular church. In addition to all this, they profess to have the conviction that it is their duty to devote their lives to the service and glory of God, in the work of the Ministry, if he in his Providence shall furnish them with means to obtain the requisite literary qualifications. If these means be withheld, they would conclude that it was their duty to serve God in some other calling; but if, in his Providence, he furnish the means of obtaining intellectual improvement, and make the way plain, for their entrance upon the work, while he gives

them a heart to it, and a delight in it, and exerts such an influence upon their minds as seems to bear them onward, and to render them comparatively regardless of the motives which might lead them to any other vocation; they think the evidence is clear that they have, what is commonly termed, a call to the work of the Ministry.

Now, it will prepare the way for a correct answer to the question, to consider whether it be the duty of young men of this description to make any efforts to improve their intellectual faculties, to obtain any additional knowledge, and a greater facility of communicating it, than they now possess?

The exhortations of Paul to Timothy, will throw some light upon the subject. *Neglect not the gift that is in thee, &c. Until I come, give attendance to READING, &c. that thy profiting—or improvement—may appear unto all.* It seems that with all the extraordinary spiritual endowments by which Timothy was distinguished, intellectual improvement was important to him, and he was exhorted to labor after it so diligently that his proficiency might appear unto all. It is true Timothy was already ordained to the work of the Ministry, whereas, those to whom the question refers, are not. But is there any reason why he should labor to make proficiency in mental improvement, and in christian oratory—such proficiency as would be seen and felt by his hearers, that would not apply with equal force to those young men who although they have not received ordination from men, nevertheless, give evidence that they have been separated unto this work, by the Great Head of the church? Here is a young man who feels the constraining love of Christ;—his ability at present is very limited;—he can only venture to address a few Sabbath School children, or a small company of the most ignorant persons he can find. Suppose he can now speak so as to edify these; yet he desires to do good on a larger scale;—to be able to instruct in the precious truths of the Gospel, persons who would not now think it worth their while to hear him; and he verily thinks, and may, consistently with unfeigned humility, think that he has talents which might be so improved as to enlarge his sphere of usefulness, by gaining the attention of hundreds, and perhaps, of thousands, who would otherwise be inaccessible by him, ought he not to feel a desire for this improvement for the same reason that he desires to be useful at all? Why should he desire to be instrumental in saving one soul, and not desire to be instrumental in saving a thousand. Now the Scriptures not only authorize, but requires us to cherish such desires, and that, without limitation;

of course they authorize and require us to use the means which are necessary to accomplish the object to which these desires are directed.

Moreover, it is to be considered that the Head of the church does not distribute his gifts without design. If he gives to some of his servants, talents which may fit them for the office of *Teachers*, it is a proof that he designs them to be *Teachers*; and if these talents are *susceptible of improvement*, that fact, indicates his will that they should be improved. If it be wrong for *them* to spend any part of their time in preparation for more extensive usefulness, can any reason be assigned why it was right for Timothy to spend a part of his time in improving *the gift that was in him by reading, &c.*

But an objector may say, "if they have a call to preach, let them go and preach. A call to preach, is not a call to spend six or seven years in a College." To this we answer, 1. That Timothy had a call to preach, and thousands were perishing for lack of knowledge then, as well as at the present day, and yet consistently with that call it was enjoined upon him as a *duty* to employ a part of his time in improving his ministerial talents. 2. We suppose young men who are preparing for the Gospel Ministry, to be now engaged in doing good; in endeavoring to save souls, as far as their talents and opportunities will enable them; and this is as much as could be said of Timothy. For the same reason then, that it was the duty of Timothy to improve his gifts, so as to extend *his* usefulness, it is *their* duty to improve *their* gifts for the same purpose. 3. The call here spoken of, is a call to what?—to go forth immediately with an ignorant, undisciplined, uncultivated mind, to engage in a work which involves so much difficulty and responsibility, that it constrained the Apostle Paul with all the gifts of genius and of inspiration, to exclaim—*who is sufficient for these things!* No:—it is a call to *do the greatest amount of good that can be done, with the talents which God has given them*; and in order that this result may be realized, these talents must be improved agreeably to the direction given to Timothy on this subject; and the student while thus employed, is as really obeying the call of God, as he will be when he shall engage in the immediate work of the Ministry.

Now—to come to the point—if it is the duty of such a young man to improve his talents, and if he has not the means of support while laboring to do so, it is certainly the duty of those who *have* the means, to assist him; and it is proper that he should be placed in circumstances most favorable to this

improvement; and what could be more favorable than the advantages of Literary and Theological Seminaries?—Every argument therefore which goes to prove that it is the duty of a young man who has a call to the ministry, to improve his talents so as to enlarge the sphere of his usefulness, is equally conclusive in favor of the efforts now making to assist in the education of such. If the one is authorized by scripture, so are the others.

1. The above argument appears to concede that there is nothing in scripture which *expressly* authorizes the efforts in question. Admitted. But in reply it may be asked, is *express* authority necessary for *every thing* we do in the way of promoting the interests of religion? If so, where shall we find such authority for building houses for public worship? The first christians had none, so far as we know. But the propriety and utility of such houses are so evident, that it was taken for granted, that the common sense of christians would lead to their erection, in all circumstances where it would be practicable. God does nothing unnecessarily, and it was not necessary that inspiration should expressly enjoin that which common sense would certainly dictate. All this applies with equal force to the propriety and utility of mental cultivation in those who, without the aid of inspiration, are called to the office of religious teachers; and to the duty of those who have it in their power to assist in giving such cultivation to men who by nature and grace, are prepared to make the best use of it.—Again; Where are we expressly commanded to translate the bible into all languages, and send it to all nations? If the principle of the above objection be correct, this thing must not be done. But who, besides the Pope, and those who have the spirit of popery, will undertake to prove that the efforts of Bible Societies are not authorized in scripture? It is, moreover, to be considered that the sacred writers did not expressly make provision for *any* state of things which did not exist at the time when they wrote. But they laid down general principles which the good sense and piety of christians would lead them to apply as the exigencies of the church might require.

2. The Apostles were not men of liberal education. It is a sufficient answer to this objection, to say that the Apostles enjoyed the benefit of our Lord's personal instructions, which was an unspeakably greater advantage than could be derived from the instructions of all the professors at the most distinguished Universities and Theological Seminaries of modern times.—Besides—the Apostles were *inspired* teachers. The

instructions which they were to communicate to others were imparted to them, immediately, by the Holy Spirit.—But as the former of these advantages—our Lord's personal instructions—could not in the nature of things be enjoyed by their successors; and as it was neither necessary nor expedient that the latter should be continued, after the system of revelation was completed, it follows that it is the duty of those who are now called to the office of teachers, to avail themselves of the *ordinary* means of preparation, i. e. means which are found by experience, to be best adapted to enable them to understand the scriptures, and to communicate the knowledge of their contents to others.

3. "We have no example of a Theological Seminary in the Bible." It is acknowledged, the *terms* are not to be found in the Bible. But what were *the schools of the prophets* of which we read in the Old Testament? Were they not institutions designed to train young men for the prophetic office under that dispensation? If they were not, let those who make the above objection, tell us what they were? and what purpose they were intended to answer? We wish them also to consider this question. If a particular training was necessary for those who were expected to be taught and influenced by the spirit of immediate inspiration, is not such training much more necessary for those whose business it is to teach the great truths of revelation without such an infallible guide?—It will be found by examination that no argument can be brought to bear against the affirmative of this question which does not go upon the assumption that those who are called to the office of the gospel ministry are miraculously furnished with the necessary qualifications for that office. If however this assumption is unsupported by either scripture or fact, then, every such argument must be given up, and the truth which these arguments were intended to overthrow, must remain in all its force and authority. It behoves all christians to consider their responsibility in reference to this truth.—Are not many withholding from this great object that countenance and support which God requires them to give to it? even while the words of Christ are sounding in their ears—*the harvest is great, the labourers are few; pray ye therefore, the Lord of the harvest that He may send forth laborers into his harvest.* Do they ever offer up this prayer? If they do not, then they are guilty of positive disobedience to the command of Christ. If they do, and *yet neglect to use the means which they have in their power, to promote the object*, then they stand convicted of the sin of hypocrisy.