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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-

it could not be known. Therefore, the foreknowledge of God is proof of their election, or as Peter expresses it; they are *elect according to the foreknowledge of God, the father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.*

HERMEN.

THE MINISTER OF CHRIST.—No. I.

ADDRESSED TO A YOUNG PREACHER OF THE GOSPEL.

My Dear Brother,—In our frequent conversations on the subject of the ministry, it has been my object to draw your attention to the character and duty of the christian Pastor, rather than to involve you in disputes respecting church order. Since you have assumed an office so responsible as that of an ambassador for God, it is necessary that you should meditate profoundly on its nature. Many, as I doubt not, enter upon the preaching of the Gospel with narrow and erroneous views on this subject. You are right in considering yourself as no longer your own; and should you be allowed of God to be put in trust with the Gospel, you are forever to forsake pleasing men, or seeking their favor. It is God, who trieth the heart to whom you are to commend yourself.*

I trust that you have made an unreserved sacrifice of yourself to the Lord; that you have laid your health, your substance, your time, your endowments, your reputation, and your life at the foot of the cross. The Lord Jesus claims you henceforth as his servant. Have you counted the cost? Have you reflected upon all possible privations and sufferings, which you may be called to endure? And are you now living, with a cheerful and cordial disposition of soul to relinquish all things for your Lord? These are questions of moment; let them therefore be carefully weighed, and answered with caution and sincerity. You will remember that the Apostles when called to be fishers of men, left all, and followed Jesus without the hesitation of a moment;† while one who desired first to go and bid them farewell, which were at home, was rejected. “No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”—These instances may not have any exact parallel in our day of external prosperity; yet beware of deluding yourself by supposing that there is any more freedom granted to the disciple of these days, as to the love of earthly things. Henceforth, your sole business is to glorify God, by the salvation

* 1. Thess. ii, 4.

† Luke, ix, 6.

of souls. Whatever business you undertake, whatever purpose you mature, which is not in subservience to these ends, is a dereliction of your proper duty. Labor to impress upon your mind the truth that your powers, your labors, your life are to be exhausted in this one cause. Concentrate your mind, and your efforts upon this single point; and break away from every occupation, and every enjoyment, which lies out of this clearly defined path.

The urgency of the Saviour's call forbade even these attentions to what men consider imperious domestic duties. One instance has been cited: "Another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father." Here the brief, but decisive reply; "Follow me, and let the dead bury their dead."* The immortal souls of men are perishing: lose not a moment even in deeds of solemn respect to the dead. "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me."† The most tender bonds of parental and filial love must sometimes be rent with violence, if we would make full proof of our ministry. And the cross thus taken up is among the heaviest burdens which you can be called to sustain. Yet in bearing it, you do but follow the footsteps of those, who by faith and patience inherit the promises.

Remember the trials of primitive believers. Call to mind the persecutions inflicted upon the christian converts by their nearest relatives; and by all these reflections, accustom yourself to the thought that you are called to follow Christ, at the hazard of all things. Consider your very life as nothing when set in competition with the love of Christ. "He that findeth his life, shall loose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall gain it."‡ Life itself is to be spent for God, and given up to him; "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's."§ The zeal and devotion of Epaphroditus are recorded for our imitation.— "Hold such in reputation," says the Apostle Paul, "because for the work of Christ, he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life to supply your lack of service toward me."||

It is a common thing in these days, and in this country, to find some ministers of the Gospel, who devote the greater part

* Matt. viii, 21. † Matt. x, 37—39. ‡ Matt. x, 39,
§ Rom. xiv, 7—8. || Phil. ii, 30.

of their time to concerns purely secular, such as the instruction of youth, and the culture of the earth. These are honorable callings, and I would use great tenderness in speaking on this subject, because in many cases, these are the only terms upon which the preacher can exercise his spiritual functions. Forgetful of the plain declarations of the Scripture, congregations too often leave their pastor to this sad alternative, by refusing him the support to which he is entitled. Yet some guard ought to be set against an evil so manifest. Nothing short of necessity should lead any minister to engage in pursuits thus incompatible with the total dedication enjoined in the word of God. Those who sympathize with the pastor in his necessities, should be preferred to such as leave him to work for his bread; and men of the world should not be encouraged in an illiberal course, which deprives the church of that time, and influence, and instruction which God has demanded. We find in the sixth chapter of the Acts, that upon the murmuring of the Greeks, the Apostles said, "It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word." If a matter so closely appertaining to church affairs as the disposition of alms, and the care of widows, was deemed inconsistent with the constant and peculiar services of ministers; how much more reason have we to withdraw ourselves from those avocations which are entered upon for the sole purpose of worldly support. The remark of Cyprian is pertinent. "Scriptum est enim: Nemo militans Deo obligat se molestiis secularibus, ut possit placere ei cui se probavit.* Quod cum de omnibus dictum sit, quantum magis Clerici molestiis et laqueis secularibus obligari non debent, qui divinis rebus et spiritalibus occupati, ab ecclesia recedere, et ad terrenos et seculares actus vacare non possunt." You will find the passage in the ninth Epistle of the first book, in the edition of Erasmus.

Were your life twice as long as the ordinary term, it would not afford you one hour too much for the service of God.— Revolve, therefore, in your mind the exhortation of Paul to Timothy, respecting ministerial duties: "Give thyself wholly to them;"† and then indeed will your profiting appear unto all.

The sum of all is this, give yourself up, soul, body, and spirit, to the ministry of the Gospel. Other things, however great, attractive, or delightful, are nothing to you. Learning, except as it conduces to salvation, is not your end. Re-

* 2. Tim. ii, 4.

† 1. Tim. iv, 15.

linquish all sciences when they come into competition with the science of salvation. Turn a deaf ear to all entreaties which would prompt you to engage in worldly pursuits. You may become rich; you may by proper application become a noted politician; you may arrive at eminence as a scholar, a man of science, a polished gentleman; seek them not—burst through all such entanglements, and say with Paul, “Henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.” Gal. vi, 17.

THE RAZEÉ.

A FEW years ago I attended a public meeting in —, where the subject of Missions came up for discussion. A minister of the gospel, in the earlier part of life, delivered a speech in favor of the cause. He was truly eloquent, if I am to judge of the effect produced on others, from my own feelings. It was the cause of Domestic Missions which he chiefly advocated. Thousands and thousands of our own countrymen were placed before us, perishing for lack of that knowledge which the faithful Missionary was to bear to them. This Herald of the cross was to be sent quickly; for those needing his labors were departing daily to the world of spirits. The condemnation of each one who perished for want of the gospel, seemed to be laid at my door; and I began immediately to think how much I could save for this purpose by *retrenchment*, how much by *economy*, how much by *pressing the cause on the attention of others*. &c. Presently the speech ended; and the speaker, that he might see, no doubt, whether or not he had exceeded the proper time, drew out a gold watch, of the most elegant and expensive kind. This, or something else, drew my attention to his dress, which, every part of it, appeared to be of the most expensive materials. That operation called the *Razeé* so forcibly occurred, that I could not drive it from my thoughts.

This watch cost from 250 to \$300. A silver watch of \$50 value would answer all important purposes just as well. Here, then, in this article, is \$200 capital. His dress, without diminishing his comfort or respectability a single degree, could spare \$12 each year. This is equal to \$200 more of permanent fund. This gentleman invited myself and some others to dine with him. We entered a parlor decorated with splendid ornaments and the most rich and elegant furniture. Here, by the application of the razeé principle, could be spared, at the lowest calculation, \$200 more of capital, and yet leave