No. 120.

On the manner of attending religious worship and instruction.

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Acts 7, 33. "Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God."

This passage would be an excellent motto for all who profess to worship God, to attend to religious instruction. It expresses the exact state of feeling with which we should come to the house of God, with the use of any of the means of its improvement. Sometimes, the Roman centurion from whose address to Peter, our text is selected, was an upright and devout man. Though he had been educated in the midst of the darkness and vices of Paganism, yet his mind was one, which could not be held back, depressed, or fettered, but was always open frankly and honestly to receive light and guidance. By being stationed in Judea

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he had opportunities of becoming acquainted with
the true God, if possibly he did not fail to embrace
them; for he is characterized as one that "had God's
good work among all the nations of the sons." He
was afterwards led to the reception of the in a manner
attended by extraordinary circumstances, whatever,
we may think of the manner, the effect certainly
was most voluntary and permanent. In him the speaking
of the yes to the Gentile world first commenced, it was on this occasion, that the obstacles of religion
were broken down as the objections of prejudice
existing in the mind of the Apostle Peter were re-
moved. There was a feeling prevalent at that time
exclusively Jewish, which led men to imagine that the gift
of the Holy Spirit was intended solely for the benefit of Israel.

The Jews, in our days, could scarcely think of having the Spirit,
indeed the idea of every man's receiving the Spirit was strange and foreign to the church of Israel; it is the same feeling which has been
fastened like a curse upon religious existence, yet even
now in all the manners of all men, as was said on another
subject of occasion, induces men to give up to party what
was meant for mankind. The delight to appropriate
all the blessings of justice, to a small and
select band, those who have such and such qualifications
of such a sort, they would scarcely accept of
heaven itself...and they will not believe it would be devoted
to those only who agree with them; instead of being the
engrafting of the good promises from all the earth to
the celestial family of God. It was well said by a
most wise and pious man: "Let it be enough that we
secure our interest of heaven, though we do not ape a-
bout to appropriate the mansions to our sect." The
Apostle Peter was one of this narrow bigotry by a
vision from heaven; when he rose on rebellion
against the command, he was bid to remember that
what God had cleansed he might not call common;
the sheet being at the four corners in it were all manner
of four-footed beasts of the earth, creeping things ; a
foot of the air" was an emblem of man, and the res-
all things that were commanded him of God.

From these words we may derive some important
bents respecting the conscience, in which we should receive
religious instruction—a subject to which it is sometimes as
necessary to attend, as it is to attend to that instruction
itself. The state of mind, with which your humble servant
Peter, as precisely the state of mind in which we should give
ear to the lessons of divine truth. When we are assembled
in the house dedicated to the service of God, the
rests, it may particularly be said, "now that these are
are all here present before God, to hear all things that
are commanded of God." It is true, religion is comprised
to no place or edifice. God is no respecter of places, more
than of persons; some of the most pious and excellent
lessons of instruction are received in common scenes of common
occasions. The disinterested hearts to see the hand of the
heavens, to hear the voice of the Almighty, will never want grati
fication. But we must in some measure associate our own
feelings, always with certain times of places, in order to
make them vigorous & lively... If we had no doubts, &
I have thought that some plain practical remarks on this topic might be an appropriate sequel to the reflections which occupied our attention this morning. Bearing as a religious society for the first time in a clear place of mind, we may find it edifying to consider in what manner and with what disposition we should receive religious instruction. I therefore remark that the state of mind is..
this summer, for the new meeting house
erecting for your society, will thank you
if convenient, to inform the gentlemen
who have the procuring of a bell,
that we can furnish one on at good
terms as can be procured in the country
I shall be pleased to hear from them
on the subject.

Respectfully yours,
A. H. Hooper Co.
no houses of worship, the sense of religion, weak as it is, would be yet so strong in some places would a salary vanish. Since, then, our associations with scenes of devotion, thoughts, are strengthened by habits of local worship, in some degree dependent on them, it is constant that we should attend at these times, places, and such scenes of feelings, as will lead to the highest degree of improvement. It is unreasonably to reflect how large a part of those who usually join in the public exercises of religion, do it in such a way that there is reason to fear their profit is small. Hence from instituted forms of direction, instruction is not the least, and often we have the complaint, that is is too easy to join. It is too easy, that one cannot afford to give much hours even the external appearance of religion on the Sabbath, that they must spend the day in the usual cares of labour of the days, or amuse it in idleness or where it home, or in the pleasures of dissipation abroad. It is too easy, that the sense of God is excited for such frivolous trivial causes, that he often it is either too hot or too cold, if the ad

1. We should do it with the solemn conviction, that we are in the presence of God. Now then for me all these present before God's eyes, our text. Not that the presence of God is local or in any degree peculiar to any place, but still our sense of feeling of His presence must be in some measure local. None think of saying that God by his knowledge of agency is everywhere.

2. It would be well if we could find a place where we could all meet. There are several places where this might be done. Not that the presence of God is local or in any degree peculiar to any place, but still our sense of feeling of His presence must be in some measure local. None think of saying that God by his knowledge of agency is everywhere.
Whether it be in the deep, solitary of the wilderness, "there since there walked the Lord God, or living farther been; or in the toils of the city, in the crowd, midst of business, "the rest of nature's mustitudes; whether it be in these towering cities, or making haste to the storm, or in the humble, peaceful valley, and let it be at the altar in the sanctuary of God, or in the domestic side of health, happiness, still in every scene the devoted and may find enjoyment be God. And though its presence be universal, our sense of its presence is not, perhaps cannot be, universal. We are not, for we cannot be aware of its presence in this world. We have a thousand, yes, a thousand cares, competitions, to lay aside to distract the mind, some of them necessary, others unnecessary. We are engrossed in all the toil and anxiety, of providing for future wants; for what we will, we cannot avoid being sometimes shaken by the hurry, agitation of the scene around us. Now there is something in this world of flesh, extremely irremovable to the duty of cherishing a deep sense of the presence of God. These passions of our minds are kept, the soul in the stretch of anxious toil, pants, most necessary to that event from it, the thoughts of God. Such being the condition in which we are placed, to our arms by the things of sense, absorbed by insignificance in which we weigh down the soul, here important is it, that we do retire from this battle, eternal, and should leave behind us as many passions of the constant feelings of life, embracing with the solemn conviction, that we are with God, that at what time we do recline on the anarchy, agitation of the world, should not be given up to the thousand cares, duties, so engrossingly left, be devoted to cherishing the sense of the presence of Him, whose presence fills the earth, is universal in its extent, by a husband or a wandering disposition. When we meet the p. for the purpose of instructing one another, instruction, we should be for that hour, for no more, shut together upon the world, and with ourselves, in the place where we are more present before God. "The sanctuary of the soul, should be a calm retreat, a though this temple is all space, yet we must make use of an association..."
consecrated places, to deepen and strengthen the conviction that the eye of God is upon us. Is it to be, in whose presence are we assembled? Not in the presence of a few friends only, who have chosen this mode of passing an easy hour, as a breach, a sort mutual like ourselves, placed here to furnish something for your curiosity? Are these the only scenes that belong to this place? Oh, no, we are here before the Majesty of heaven and earth, to come to pray and render to them, as we live for ever, we are alive. We come to lean on the arm of a friend, to throw ourselves on his compassion, to confess our sins, to devote ourselves to his service through it, to learn what he has revealed to us of himself, of ourselves, of our destiny. In a few years these memories will have passed away; your prayers will ascend. There is no more: no more will the mind of God reach your ears from this place; the folly of your attendance cannot be retrieved; lost opportunities cannot be recalled, all that ingratitude is lost forever. These walls have been witness, will aver before you with better retribution. In the thought that we are all here present before God, all must return to the place of death; instruction with minds prepared to be subdues and humbled by that awful recollection, then I see me.

2. We should, like the brazen altar, attend with a deep sense of the supreme and essential duties of life. This requires to bear all things that are commanded of God. This implies a great degree of candor, as well as of just estimates of the conduct of others, a spirit ofOriginally published by Andrew Hume, Jr., in his book "The Bible in a Series of Sermons," these thoughts reflect on the importance of faith, morality, and the role of religion in society. The text emphasizes the need for a deep sense of reverence and a humble attitude before God and His majesty, urging individuals to reflect on their actions and the impact they have on others. The author also highlights the necessity of following divine authority and the importance of moral integrity. The passage underscores the significance of religion in shaping personal and communal values, encouraging a life guided by God's principles.
The main object, to be animating education in the path of the improvement, is forgotten; various ignorance objects to take its place. Or perhaps there is no object at all, nor the case with the careless hearer. Those who attend on religious instruction, think of every thing else but that which is truly giving at the poles. All minds are fixed on trifles; little of anything coming from one topic to another readily.

Most important subject, as they are with respect to education, are critical reason; the latteredly for the purpose of making anodic sciences. They consider preaching as an exhibition of the skill of talents of the preacher, as others. It is something which they have no power in them than to exercise their judgment on the appearance. Of the distance of such thoughts. Others again are constantly having in mind to discover something amongst the doctrines of the preacher, with merit to be measured by the standard of his conformity to their own opinions. They do not go, like Corinthians, to hear all things that occur. They would not have all things that try their selves believe, or if they do not hear them, they think the lip is not pierced. They cannot tolerate the omission of the doctrines of their own faith, nor the omission of those who have heard the argument to try at different faiths. May be subjected. Now this is certainly wrong. Do not mean that any man should accede in the opinion of any preacher further than he sees reason. Some may have a scriptural belief, while he that he should give up his faith to every teacher, he may happen to hear. But, my friend, I certainly have a right to expect that men should have the same candid minds, when they cannot listen to religious instructors: that they should not conclude that a preacher must be unfaithful to the cause of x., because he does not agree with them, upon other reason. He has devoted his time to the study of the subjects of which he treats; he has searched the Bibles with care and diligence; under a sense of his high own responsibilities, he has weighed well over he should teach, and he should omit. If anything he has done thank it is that he should not make the hastily condemned by those who have stretched words of all the subject, those means of information and
safety, or where religious notions are there only in what received in childhood? But fit, that you should be angry with a preacher, who has deviated from common
in every sect, doctrine. It is surprising what a man, who perhaps was
ages ago in times of ignorance or mental slavery, or the distinc
tions of controversy, when men were clamoring they knew not for what, can come to judge of his
himself, and judge of others. He has always been most firmly believed in points of darkness, the ex-
pressions of which he has not understood. He must doubt what he entertains at
light and information have been taken by the subject of what have been noticed or strongly for the opinions of
the preachers made by the hands of impartial examiners.
No, my p. he who comes to listen with such a disposition does not come, like Corinthus, to hear all things that are un-
minded. *Corinthus* he comes to hear the commandments of our
taught the doctrines, is displeased if he is displeased.
If then you attend when the public offices of religion
with that coldness, many shut, will leave you to reap
the instructing step here, or something must be forgot
ed; but if you attend only to criticize, to praise or to blame, but not to learn
better, or if you come prepared to condemn another ex-
animation every thing that does not agree with your
own principles, then must surely the state of ignorance
is very noble from what it would be to be made to receive in
structed without, i.e. very different to the state of mind
in which the pure instruction is pressed. In the text...

Another fault I should remark on the manner
of attending religious instruction, is the want of self-
application, i.e. it is a radical essential fault to come on
does more than any thing else, to make it. Examine the ef-
facts of the best teaching in the world. By what means

to improve, Corinthus, sets for Peter. Certainly not that
he might gratify an idle curiosity by hearing some
plain the truths, exhibit the evidence, enforce the

duties of duty, one that after listening to the temptation
of Peter he might think fit to add to the account of

No. he had an earnest feeling of his own need of instruc-
tion, he felt a personal interest in the greatest truths

His faith of the Gospel. And this is the point with

...
to one more, but have nothing to do with us. We think both from the feeling of a personal interest concern in the admonitions of the teacher. We are very much righted in discerning his virtues, that persons might profitably apply what they hear, you must reflect that perhaps those very persons are wondering why none or not apply it ourselves. Thus it is that the admonitions of the preacher are burdensome, as each one thinks that they will get some he else, better than himself the right me when, fall to the opposite without of because are lost, let no man suppose, that because he is not so abandoned a sinner as some are, because he does not, or staid, is not intemperate or licentious, he has therefore no interest in the instructions of religion. This is a new, but obvious delusion. Have you thus never a fault to be corrected, a vice to be reformed, an error to be rectified, because you have not sinned with such a weapon as others have? Must the rebukes of the advice of religion play around you, prayer, fall only on your shoulders? My first is declaiving unkindly with ourselves. Thus, to put by the advantages we might gain by a personal application of the instructions of divine truth. When one come to hear from the lips of the teacher all things that are commanded, of God, each one should seriously, honestly ask himself, inward as then on this black and in the manner of treating it, to whom I may be on finally, to if I am not guilty of the sin especially from described, am I not guilty of it in some other matter equally heinous? Is the promise or the to be held out, such as my life enables me to claim, my own contempt commitment? Do not take the very temptation which has already led me astray, I shall not grant a false path? It is by such questionings, many that we can better come from religious instruction, personal help on the path of holiness. When Nathan asked the easy time, he repays it to the heart of David, he said, then art the man, yes, each one of us when he listens to the warning, expressions of religion, should as far as possible say, I am the man.

Have thus spoken of the manner in which we should listen to religious instruction, devotion. The subject is one in which we should occasionally at least come before our minds. Do not let all in vain that we have the institution of religion, if it be not all in vain that we have the institution of divine truth, I mean that the means...
Let us remember that the more seriously we keep in view the religious purposes of a state, the more likely we shall always be to have that spirit, in which depends the true prosperity of any.

Remembering that our union as one, obliterates respect to the highest objects of an immortal being, even to the culture of the mind & the good of the individual life, we shall feel that all the attention given to the interests of our society is somehow more necessary than an empty name. We have no time to spend on anything that is more

Yet a Christian thing much more than any thing else, are many profound philosophical precepts. God is such that the teacher's, religion may be gained from this faith of the Christian, when from time to time again and again assembled for the purposes of devotion & instruction, let the words of Jesus be engraven on your hearts: "more than these are all these great things, the things commanded of God." (Ps. 18:21)
God of truth and holiness, give us over the deficiency we are aware of in the means of religious instruction and devotion. We thank thee that we are permitted to come before thee with expressions of gratitude, with the voice of praise, with supplications for thy favor. As many are doth the poor, temper the spirit. May we feel that we are ever in thy presence, that thine eye is upon us, that thou art acquainted with all our ways, that we are here present before thee. We fear all things that are commanded of thee. May we apply the truths of them to our own improvement. It is never too late. We are made better by what we hear. Sensibly to us all, the means of religion not are enjoyed. May the instruction of heavenly wisdom reach our hearts, and our pride, continually make us more and more fit for the inheritance of saints in light. Pining sorrow with the blessing, thy we shall be safe to thy house. go on with us through life, taken the shell read.