

of his hearers respecting the character of God—the character of man—and the way of salvation through the righteousness of God our Saviour, that is not revealed in the Bible? A cursory view of human nature is sufficient to shew, that training a person to be a Minister has a baneful effect on the mind. Who has not seen a modest, unassuming young man, with apparent piety, go to an Academy to learn to be a Minister? His mind is grateful with the prospect of being titled by the ungodly epithet of “The Reverend,” or “Doctor.” I call them ungodly, because unscriptural, and contrary to the spirit and letter of the precept of the Lord Jesus: “Be not ye called Rabbi.” The latent feelings of the heart are roused by that pride that is natural to man, the modest blush is exchanged for a man of consequence; having got an ounce of education, he considers it a pound, and in all his intercourse with his lay brethren, begs them to pay due submission to his decision. This is the man that is set up to make the word of God more plain than He made it. Besides, after such a host of explainers, even supposing them necessary, can we look for more accurate explanation from your academicians?

You proceed to make a comparison, of a novel kind, between a General marshalling his army, and a Minister of your learned profession arranging his discourse. I question much if the 10th chapter of 2 Cor. iv. 5 was present to your mind, and I am strongly inclined to think, that it will be very obvious to any one who reads your Circular, that it is an attempt to deprive God of the glory in the conversion of sinners, and ascribe it to rhetoric and eloquence. But astonishment may cease at any of your positions, when we read in your Circular that you characterize your learned, trained, preachers, “the ambassadors of Christ.” If they be such, they must have an *immediate* communication, as well as commission, from Christ; and they must be capable of working miracles in confirmation of their being his accredited ambassadors; then we will have proof that our learned Ministers can not only “explain” the true and infallible meaning of the “abstruse Scriptures,” but deliver oracular instruction.

I must here say, that I do not despise learning; I value it in its own place, as a valuable accomplishment calculated to rouse and bring into action the powers of the mind. What I object to, is, the system of learning and training, with a view to, and for the avowed object of, being Ministers, because it is nowhere countenanced in the word of God. It was unknown in the primitive church for three hundred years, till Constantine the Great saw the cross in the clouds, with the inscription, “Thus conquers;” then the era of clerical domination began to dawn, which arrived at its climax under Charlemagne. And I object to it, because the system has a malignant or mischievous effect upon the mind of the man who engages in it as a profession, from which he expects to derive emolument and dignity.

As regards the assumption, that learning is become the succedaneum to and for miraculous gifts, it is inconclusive; inasmuch as these gifts were various, such as “the word of wisdom,” “the word of knowledge,” “faith,” “the working of miracles,” “prophecy,” “discerning of spirits,” “divers kinds of tongues,” “the interpretation of tongues.” Now, what shall we place as succeeding to each of this wonderful variety? or shall a knowledge of dead languages, Logic, Mathematics, and Metaphysics, be the grand panacea for them all? Again we find (1 Cor. xiv.) that the use of the “gift of tongues” is checked in the church; and “prophecy” (*i. e.* speaking to edification and comfort) approved, as serving for the church; whereas tongues were for a sign to the unbelievers.