

**REFLECTIONS ON THE CHARACTER AND OBJECTS  
OF ALL SCIENCE AND LITERATURE, AND ON THE  
RELATIVE EXCELLENCE AND VALUE OF  
RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR EDUCATION, AND OF  
SACRED AND CLASSICAL LITERATURE: IN TWO  
ADDRESSES AND AN ORATION WITH ADDITIONS  
AND IMPROVEMENTS**

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Reflections on the character and objects of all science and literature, and on the relative excellence and value of religious and secular education, and of sacred and classical literature: in two addresses and an oration with additions and improvements by Thomas Smith Grimké

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**THOMAS SMITH GRIMKÉ**

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IN  
TWO ADDRESSES AND AN ORATION WITH ADDITIONS AND  
IMPROVEMENTS.

WITH AN APPENDIX CONTAINING

A letter, on the study of the Bible, to the Committee appointed by the  
Literary Convention, held at New York, Oct. 20, 1830; and an  
address, delivered at Charleston, (S. C.) at the dedication of  
a building designed as a depository for Bibles, Tracts  
and Sunday School Books, and for anniversary  
celebrations of Religious Societies.

BY THOMAS SMITH GRIMKÉ,  
OF CHARLESTON, S. C.

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### PREFACE.

THE three following tracts are on subjects, among the most important and interesting, that can engage the attention of Americans. I have believed that to revise and reprint them at this time, with a view to some discussions connected with the University of the city of New York, would neither be useless nor unacceptable to its Founders, and Patrons, and to the Friends of Education generally. I do not indeed flatter myself, that I shall produce any decided impressions favorable to my views, at all events immediately; for I well know that the majority of educated men are against me, on most of the points, which I present, especially respecting mathematical and classical studies. I have not, however, been deterred by the array of great names, in Europe and America, from the exercise of a candid, independent judgment, on our existing schemes of education. To my conclusions against the opinions and practices of so many great and good men, I have been led gradually and deliberately, through the experience and reflections of more than twenty years. The prepossessions of youth and of early manhood, were all in favor of the Classics and Mathematics. I have then, at least, the satisfaction of knowing, that, like the heathen converted to Christianity, I have wrought out my present convictions against the power of prejudice, the authority of instructors, and all the influences of my own education. May I hope to be pardoned for these sentiments, apparently irrevelant, but, as I believe, really connected with a just regard to myself, and to a cause, in

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which I feel perhaps too deep an interest. And yet, who can feel too deep an interest, in our country especially, in the construction of an enlightened system of education, Christian, practical, useful, national!

It is the duty of Parents and Guardians, of Teachers and Trustees of education generally, to examine the theory and practice of existing institutions, to inquire how far they have promoted the glory of God, and individual, social, national welfare: and to consider solemnly, thoughtfully, how far defects can be supplied, and abuses corrected. That these do exist, can hardly be doubted by any one, who reflects on the actual operation of our schools and colleges, as attested by the unimproved state of the great majority of minds that have been subjected to their influence. In the mass, who come out of our schools and colleges, how few have acquired any religion at all, or much valuable knowledge, the habit of study, a taste for reading, the love of improvement, and the great art of thinking soundly and reasoning accurately. Yet all these things our institutions profess to teach; although if we look to facts as the criterion, it is, in forty nine cases out of fifty, little more than profession. I speak this, not under the influence of bitterness and contempt, but with feelings of deep regret and mortification. It has been our privilege, under the blessing of Providence, to exhibit, for the instruction of all mankind, the theory and practice of Government purified and regenerated, and Religion disencumbered of the civil and political burthens, under which it groans in the old world. The precepts and examples of the Gospel, not those of Classic Antiquity; the rational principles of British freedom, not the wild and disorderly impulses of Grecian and Roman liberty; the plain, strong sense, inherited from an English ancestry, not the taste and acuteness of an Athenian people, have wrought these achievements, not for us only, but for the ignorant and degraded

posterity of boasted Greece and Rome. I feel assured that the same principles, the same precepts will never rest satisfied till they have redeemed education from the thralldom of European theories, unsupported by experience, and of European authority, contradicted by reason and observation.

It seems to me that our country has yet to learn one great truth on this subject, that the whole European scheme of education ever has been intimately associated with states of society, forms of government and religious establishments totally inconsistent with ours: that the great object there has been to educate *the few*, and *not the many*; to train up *the subjects of monarchies*, and *not the citizens* of a republic; in a word, to *perpetuate aristocracy even in education*. Let us learn then, that education with us, like Society, Government, Religion, must be *essentially American*, and not European; that it must partake deeply and extensively of the vital spirit of American Institutions; that it must, in order to ensure its durability and usefulness, be adapted to our state of Society, forms of Government and modes of Religion: and that this conformity can never be discovered, much less preserved by any imitation of European plans. With the Bible in one hand, and our own history in the other, we shall be able to judge best, what education our country needs. Literary Education in its highest sense, a sense but little known in this country, is much the same every where; but religious and moral, political and civil education, in a word, for the preparation for practical duty and usefulness, private and public, must be to a great extent, national and local, therefore peculiar. Ours ought to be an education, adapted to our peculiar character, circumstances, and destiny, as a free, educated, peaceful, Christian People. It ought to be eminently adapted to our development and progress, to the improvement and preservation of our institutions, in a word, to the great truth **THE PEOPLE GOVERN**. Our



SCHOOLS are for the education of that PEOPLE, our COLLEGES for the education of the PUBLIC SERVANTS AND PROFESSIONAL AGENTS of that People. But all have one end, one object, THE GOOD OF THE PEOPLE. The youth in our colleges should be educated on this great principle; that they are to be *Servants of the People*. Let our Schools and Colleges be regenerated then upon the principle, that the Religious and Political departments are EVERY THING, the Classical and Mathematical comparatively, nothing. Now, these are every thing, and those almost nothing. Our ignorance or neglect of these great truths, is producing a host of evils in our country. Let us meditate profoundly on these things: and resolve no longer to educate our children, as though, on the one hand, they were Heathens, on the other, Europeans.

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