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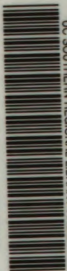
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AMERICAN ENTERPRISE.

BY

ALBERT BARNES.



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April 29th 1934

AMERICAN ENTERPRISE ;

OR,

CHRISTIANITY ADAPTED

TO THE

Active Powers of American Youth :

A DISCOURSE,

**DELIVERED BEFORE THE PHILADELPHIA INSTITUTE,
IN THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA,
DEC. 2, 1832.**

BY ALBERT BARNES.

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AMERICAN ENTERPRISE, &c.

I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay-tree: Yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not; yea, I sought him, but he could not be found. Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.

PSALM XXXVII, 35, 36, 37.

THE sentiment of this text is, that an absence of religious principle may be connected with eminent reputation, and office, and honour; but that in the divine government, such an elevation is temporary; and that the character and condition of a good man is rather to be desired, for his end will be peace. This sentiment I wish this evening to illustrate. In doing it, I shall pursue the train of thought which seems to me to be adapt-

ed to the end in view in these Lectures ; and to the character of the audience before me. My desire is, to persuade the Young Men whom it is my privilege to address, to be Christians. I aim at no other object ; and shall be satisfied if I can so present this subject as to convince you that the Christian religion commends itself to those in the vigor of their early years ; those just entering on the important fields of action opening before them ; and those destined to an immortality beyond the grave.

I have not, on any former occasion, been called to address an audience in which I have had emotions such as now fill my bosom. A minister of Religion cannot but feel, and deeply feel, when he attempts to give a direction to the energies and talents of Young Men. The thoughts run onward to future scenes, and dwell upon the influence which they must soon have on every thing dear to us

in our own country, and in the Church of God; and on the great principles of civil and religious freedom which are working their way among the nations of the earth.

One of the first thoughts that strike the mind in looking at an assemblage of Young Men, relates to the variety of talent, energy, passions, hopes, and aspirings, that are already existing, or are soon to be called into action. We have become familiar with the fact that in an assemblage like this, there *must* be a vast amount of mighty energy that will soon tell on the destiny of our country, and be felt in all the interests of our schools, and colleges; all our Churches, and in all the relations of civil and social life. It is not a disposition to flattery which prompts to language like this. It may be from far other feelings. It may be connected with deep apprehension; with fearful misgivings about the nature of that influence which is to go forth; with alarm about a

tide of evil influences that may sweep down every thing that is now lovely, and pervert and ruin every thing that is now vigorous and mighty. The cloud that rolls up the western sky, dark, grand, and mighty, *may be* charged with ruin and disaster to the landscape, as well as with the fruitful rain. On the mighty energies of assembled Young Men, therefore, we cannot look but with deep emotion. We know too well how soon the powers of youth will develop themselves in the vigor of manhood; how soon your fathers shall sink to the cold tomb; how soon you will occupy our places in the counting-room, at the council board, in the pulpit, and the sanctuary; the benches of our courts of law, and the seats in our halls of legislation.

These energies of body and mind will be soon developed, and it may be worth our while for a moment, to remind you of what, in this country, will be likely to call them into action.

It is not usual that the powers of the mind develope themselves without foreign excitement; that is, without some external object that shall call them forth, and give them direction. It *may be* indeed that some profound plan shall be digested without any immediate foreign cause: where the scheme was originated in the troubled workings of the mind itself. Such perhaps was that little understood, and ill-starred project, devised by Aaron Burr and Blannerhasset. But you are familiar with the fact that this is not the ordinary way in which the powers of the mind develope themselves. Two well known illustrations will place what I wish here to say in full view. The talents of Napoleon, originally vigorous as they were, might have slumbered, or have spent themselves in some obscure employment of Corsica, if the French revolution had not occurred just at that time, and been fitted to call forth all that was

mighty and terrible in the mind of that wonderful man. Some daring spirit was needed to control the whirlwind, and direct the storm of revolution; and if the Corsican had not been there, some other master mind in the French capital, might have rode on that storm, and his name been emblazoned where that of Napoleon now is. The Father of our country is the other instance. In any times he would have been a good, and an eminently wise man. But the peculiar times when our great Republic struggled into liberty, were fitted to call forth all that was great in the patriot; valiant in the soldier; firm in him who could fix his eye on the dangers, and the future liberties of this great people; I will add, all that was humble, consistent and prayerful, in the Christian. And the character of Washington is just such an one as an American loves to contemplate. Such as the perils of our revolution were *fitted* to form, and such as

those times *must* have, or our land could not be free. It may be, that in the vast mass of minds that have existed in the deep *strata* of human society in the dark ages of the past, there *may* have existed spirits that in other times might have been like those of Napoleon, or even of Washington. At any period of the world there is talent adapted to all the exigencies of the human race ; and that is the most perfect state of man which is just fitted to bring out all the original susceptibilities of our nature, and to give them their proper place and direction in the great objects contemplated in the organization of human society. You will here at once recal the beautiful stanzas in Gray's Elegy, in a country church-yard.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene,
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear,
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village Hampden that with dauntless
breast,

The little tyrant of his fields withstood:

Some mute inglorious Milton, here may rest,

Some Cromwell, guiltless of his country's
blood;

The applause of listening Senates to command,

The threats of pain and ruin to despise,

To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,

And read their history in a nation's eyes,

THEIR LOT FORBADE:—

I said that the energies of the mind would be called forth by appropriate objects, and receive direction from external circumstances. I mean this as a general, not as a universal truth. No external object may exist in view of the mind, and yet it may be too great, or too vigorous to sink into inactivity. It shall then endeavour to create a world for itself in the regions of imagination, and live in visions divested of reality. Such is the world in which the poet, and the man of genius, often live amid the beings of their

own creation—often unallied too with any thing that is real and tender in life. When away from those regions and reduced to the flesh and sense of sober existence, the mind shall prey upon itself, it shall be the victim of sadness and gloom; it shall have few sympathies with men: happy also if it be not preyed upon by envy, and misanthropy, and find relief from these gnawing vultures, in the intoxicating bowl. Such were Savage and Byron. Or the mind may sink into lassitude; the powers may slumber; the energies be expended in some laborious and most humble occupation. You may have often been struck with the existence of remarkable shrewdness and wisdom in humble employments. Scenes adapted to call forth that wisdom or shrewdness, may give lustre to the halls of science, or to the councils where the constitutions of empires are to be formed. Such was the case in our own Franklin; and such

too in that mechanic, of profound thought and profound wisdom, than whom, perhaps, a wiser man sat not in our early Congress,—I mean Roger Sherman. But in common, such minds have slumbered. Age after age of this world has passed away, and no remarkable genius or talent have been developed. The common mind has sunk to ignoble repose. If talent was put forth, it was in the case of here and there an individual, that rose like a meteor, over the vast recumbent mass on which dark shades reposed, and shed no permanent light, and itself soon went out. Such was the state of all Europe during the dark ages.

I have said that the best state of society, is that which calls forth the powers of men into appropriate action. We are led then to the inquiry, what is the fact in regard to our own times, and to the causes of excitement placed before American youth? I shall not dwell on the

truth with which you are all familiar, that this is an age of action. One single remark may place this in strong light before your minds. In perusing the few scanty records which we have of Europe in the dark ages, and in turning our eyes from our book, and suffering the mind to recal the thought that we are in the United States, we seem all at once to have passed to a new order of beings. We are indeed, in a new world; a world whose mountains, hills and plains, were not more unknown to the people of Europe, than are our energies, and our intelligence. This is not the language of national vanity. I speak now simply of the *putting forth* of the powers of mind and action. It may be right or wrong. But the fact is before us; that the energies of our ten millions of free-men are roused into action, and are actually effecting, each year that we live, mightier changes, and more important

purposes, than have been witnessed in any single entire generation of men in the staid and leaden movements of the old world.

It is a deeply interesting inquiry, not altogether foreign to the design which I have in view, what is it that calls forth these active powers, and are our institutions fitted to give the utmost expansion to the powers of young men? I do not mean, now, are they adapted to call them forth in a right direction, but are they fitted to call them forth at all? I may here refer you to a few things in our condition which the time and the occasion will permit me barely to mention. The first is our complete equality. I mean by this, that every man here may attain to his proper level in any of the departments of human employment. When Americans boast of their equality, and it must be admitted that we too often employ the language of boasting rather than that of gratitude, we

do it in distinction from other nations of the earth. We remember that, in Greece, Athens had twenty thousand freemen and four hundred thousand slaves—the mass of mind, even in those republics of boasted freedom, could not rise.* We remember, too, that in Rome it was a struggle between master and slave—between the conqueror and the conquered. Gibbon relates that in not a few private families there were four hundred slaves; and instances were known in which more than four thousand were the subjects of a single man of wealth.† In such cases the mass of mind could not rise. We remember that the distinction of caste and rank are over all the eastern world; and that it is as easy for men to rise to be angels, as to ascend to a superior rank and caste in society. Talent there must be

* "Not a tenth part of the people of Athens were admitted to the privilege of voting in the assemblies of the people; and, indeed, nine-tenths of the inhabitants throughout all Greece were slaves." Kent's Commentaries, vol. I, p. 232.

† Decline and Fall, vol. I, p. 26.

pressed down; and degradation be perpetuated from age to age. We remember that the feudal system reigned in all the long night of Europe; that the few held the control over the many; and that learning and office were, of necessity, in the hands of the few. And we cast our eyes with deep emotion upon modern Europe, and see the remains of that ancient system, modified indeed, but exerting its power in all its kingdoms; broken, indeed, somewhat, but still lingering with oppressive influence in their nobility and aristocracy. We have seen the long struggle there between the people and their titled lords; between the subject and the sovereign; and how all the authority of almost antiquated laws, and the remains of the ancient systems, and the terrors of ancient armour, and the reverence for an ancient name, still keep the mass of mind low, and forbid the people to rise to office or to honour. Nor do we escape from these oppressive burdens, until we

place our feet on this western continent. And we at once see, that in all this world there has been no such appeal made to all that is active in the human bosom as here. We do not mean that one man is to be as rich as another, or as learned, or as honoured—such a state of things is forbidden by an organization that has come from a higher source than human institutions, and to expect it, is one of the wildest chimeras that ever entered the brain of infidelity or delirium; but that there are no barriers of rank, and caste, and nobility. The rights of men are secure, and every man may find his proper level in society. All offices are open, and all have been entered and adorned by men at first of humble life and employment. But this is not all. The land itself is fitted for just such a constitution. It is large, free, rich, fertile; almost boundless. It is the only field in this world where the great principles of civil and religious freedom have had

room to strike their roots deep, and spread their boughs afar. In the old world, the principles of freedom began to be felt at the time of the Reformation. When men shook off the yoke of papal power, and were freed from that galling tyranny, they felt the need of civil liberty also. They panted for freedom. Christianity inspired them with an insatiable desire of independence. The desire could not be restrained, and monarchs felt it, and began to tremble on their thrones. But the kingdoms of Europe were too small to admit the expanding desire of freedom. There was not room for man to put forth his new-born energies. A mighty pressure, besides, was on the people; and the ancient order of things was defended by armies, and castles, and by public opinion, and an array of mighty confederations, to keep down the panting desire, and maintain the old order of things. At this auspicious period, God disclosed to human view this new continent—this broad, rich, vast ex-

pause of lands, and hills, and streams—as if *fresh* from his hand, and as if it had been new created, or reserved from age to age, useless hitherto to mankind, for some such mighty display of the principles of Christian freedom. It was just such a rich and glorious vision as the pent up spirit of liberty in the European world demanded. But for this amazing discovery, the excited spark of freedom might have died away, as it may have done a thousand times before. But for this, the reformation begun by Luther might have lingered awhile, and the light have shone feebly on ancient thrones of tyrants, and the dark prison-houses of the mind, and then have sunk again into the deep shades of night. Our fathers, too, were just the men to come to these shores. They were fitted for active enterprise and toil, on this almost boundless theatre of things. They were holy, hardy men. They dug deep, and laid the foundation firm. And the

result is before us. On this theatre of things we are called to act; and whatever there is in wealth, or power, or professional eminence, in all the departments of political life, in the mechanic arts, or in the almost untrodden fields of eloquence and of song, is before the young American. The soil on which he treads is his. The highest summit of fame may be his. Wealth, ample to his utmost wish, may be his. Our danger, as a people, just now, is not *mainly* to dissipation and pleasure. Amid baronies, and vast hereditary estates, where there is no opportunity to rise to honour, and no excitement to hardy enterprise, men fill up life with pleasure and vice. To live there, is to revel. To enjoy life, is to find it in dissipation and in artificial pleasures. But that young American must have strangely forgotten the land and times in which he lives, who gives his early days to pleasure and vice, and who thinks only of *life* as consisting

in those gross and sensual enjoyments which exist in the haram of the Mussalman, or which would have even shed disgrace on an ignorant and rude feudal Baron.

I come now to the main object which I have had in this discourse. I have been willing to present these openings of ambition and wealth as they are—that is, in the most attractive form in which they have stood before men. And I have done it for this reason, among others: I was willing to show you that a Christian may be sensible to the thrilling appeals which our country makes to all that is active and mighty in the mind of a young man; and to show you, that having surveyed these things, we can turn from them and look at Christianity, and feel that there, after all, is a far nobler field for whatever is active and mighty in the powers of mind. I have done it, because I am not insensible to the common emo-

tions with which young men turn from the objects of fame and wealth, to contemplate the Christian religion. Perhaps I might appeal to you who are present, to read in your own bosoms some such emotions as the following: Christianity has nothing with which to meet these strong and active desires. It can never satisfy this youthful vigor which is summoned forth by the circumstances of our age and times. It must be the work of feeble minds, perhaps calm and contemplative, but of too little vigor to be influenced by the great appeals which are here made to vigorous talent. Minds to be religious may have excellence of a mild and lovely order, but they are minds not sensitive to the great pursuits of life, and not endowed with the ardor of heroic achievement. To be a Christian is to let down these energies from their proper place; to sacrifice that which is noble; to restrain prematurely the passions; to substitute tame-

ness of spirit in the place of honour; and to cut off youthful aspirings by a premature looking at death and the judgment. And you have been struck with something which you have thought mean or degrading, when we have talked to you of repentance, and faith, and humility, and prayer, and the hopes of heaven. You may have felt that to *sanctify* vigor and talent, is but another name for *degrading* or *destroying* it. That the effect of religion is to enfeeble mind, to cripple enterprise, to annihilate generous emulation, and to reduce men to a common unenviable level. Perhaps you may have found more delight in contemplating even the wicked, if in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay-tree, than in marking the perfect man, and beholding the upright, though the end of that man be peace. Of these feelings, I, for one, confess I have been conscious; and in detailing them, have given you but an im-

perfect transcript of my own thoughts as I once contemplated the bright fields of fame that spread out before the young American, and then turned to look at the Christian religion. Let us look at them, and see if they are just.

Here I might dwell on a thought which has gone far to lead the mind to this result. It is that the *models* which you are accustomed to contemplate and admire, are those who have not been characterized by goodness and piety. Those of you who are familiar with the classics, will instantly remember your emotions when you turn from some ancient warrior or statesman, to the character of the Christian. In admiration of Leonidas, or Pericles; of Epaminondas, Alexander, or Cæsar; you will remember your emotions when you have looked at the mild and unwarlike virtues of Jesus Christ. The ancient statesman or warrior was first enthroned in your affections, perhaps became

the model of your character, and we are to encounter *all* that influence in persuading you to love the Saviour. It is unfortunate for Christianity that such ancient models should have engrossed affections which might have clustered around the cross. But it is too late to help it. The historic muse, and the charms of eloquence and of song, have lent their power to captivate the affections, and turn them away from the meek virtues of the Son of God. Religion always has had to contend with this untoward influence. It always will, until the business of education shall be so conducted as to bring the *best* and *purest* models to control and influence the youthful mind.

But without availing myself of what *might* be made out of this thought, I call your attention to the *actual fact* about the development of the powers of the mind in this life. I ask you to fix your thoughts on the *actual results* of the employment of

intellect where there is no religion. Give to your aspirings their widest scope. Give them most ample room. Let them rise, expand, grasp at all, till all shall be gained. And what then! Are the capacities of the immortal mind met? Is there an approximation to the filling up of the susceptibilities of the undying soul? Is there a satisfying of

“This pleasing hope, this fond desire,
This longing after immortality?”

Is there in these things a voice that responds to

“— the divinity that stirs within us,
The heaven itself that points out an hereafter,
And intimates ETERNITY to man?”*

Your own observation will have suggested the reply. You have seen the result. You have known the feeling. You

* Addison's Cato, Act v.

knew that the hopes, the fears, the joys of man—the original, deep, profound susceptibilities of the human soul, are never met except by religion. They never ascend to their appropriate object till they look away from time, and fasten on the boundlessness of eternity. The old man, once full of hope in the dancing visions of his early days, now sits down and weeps that in all life's ambition he has never realized what he anticipated. The big tear rolls down the cheek worn with age and care, when he remembers how he gathered him silver and gold, and made him great works, and builded him houses, and made him gardens and orchards, and was great and increased in honour, and withheld not his heart from any joy, and then, like Solomon, sat down and coolly wrote, vanity of vanities, all is vanity.* And there the old man, with jaded powers and blighted hopes,

sits at the close of life, capable of as lofty anticipation as ever; there he sits weeping on the borders of a boundless ocean, waiting for some new bark to bear him to the undiscovered Elysium, or to some land of bliss which he has not yet found.—The question has been answered again and again in history. Alexander wept when a boy at the prospect that his father Philip would leave him no kingdoms to conquer; and Alexander, scarce thirty years of age, first of conquerors, wept on the throne of the world that there were no more worlds to subdue. Charles the Vth, weary with the intrigues of ambition and the toils of empire, pressed with the weight of a diadem which he had long worn with signal splendour, followed the example of Dioclesian, and descended from the throne and found peace in the shades of private life. When Solon was travelling through Asia, he shared the hospitality of Cræsus, the rich king of Lydia. Who is the happiest

man, said the wealthy monarch, to the stern lawgiver of Athens, expecting that seeing *his* riches and honour, there could be no hesitation about a reply. Tellus, the Athenian, is the happiest man, said Solon, that I have seen. Who are the next? Cleobis and Biton, was the reply. Why should not the condition of a rich and powerful prince, said Cræsus, be esteemed happier than a private citizen? It is impossible, said Solon, to judge of the unhappiness of any condition before death. *All things should be measured by their end.* Cræsus was taken captive by Persian arms, and stretched upon a pile to be burned. Solon! Solon! was the exclamation of the unhappy captive, a cry expressive of his conviction of the wisdom of the Athenians, and of the vanity of wealth and a diadem to confer happiness in the hour of death.*

But, connected with this view of the sub-

* Universal History, Vol. IV. 112. 399. 400.

ject, there is another thought. It is, that the mighty powers of the mind are as often employed in a *wrong* devotion as a *right* one; and that they are ill adapted to the immense pressure which they are called to endure. The result in the employment of the active energies, is not merely to *disappoint*, it is often to *ruin*. Let those energies be called forth without proper checks, and the effect must be disaster. It is to wear out the machine, to tear to pieces the excited and overworked powers. God never tempered the human frame to bear that which is sometimes placed upon it. It is not fitted up for the excitements of intemperance; nor for the perpetual burning and raging of one single passion. When under the dominion of one master principle of excitement, of intemperance and dissoluteness, the powers run, and rage, like the steam-engine without a balance-wheel, or governor, and tear themselves to pieces. You are all familiar with results of this kind;

and can in an instant recal the case of some vigorous and talented young man who gave the reins to raging passion, and the firmest constitution was not proof to the excitement, and the exhausted frame, sunk useless to an early and disgraceful tomb. Thus let *any* principle of action obtain the mastery, and the effect will be the same. Ambition unrestrained will send disaster and blighting unto all the departments of the mind. It will wither that which is noble; supplant that which is ingenuous; annihilate that which is tender; corrupt that which is pure. The man becomes selfish, wily, cunning: skilled indeed in the art of reading, or deceiving man; but lost to tender and noble emotions. If acted out on a vast theatre of things, it deluges nations in gore; erects its monuments on the bones of the slain; finds its trophies in desolated towns; and wears a laurel, wet with the tears of the widow and the orphan. Let the love of money become that pas-

sion, and you know its power to wither all that is tender and kind. It becomes a tree of Upas to all within its reach, and all virtues then cease to bloom, and soon expire. You have seen its effects in the man of cold-blooded avarice; in the ruin of all that is generous and manly; in the gradual dying away of virtues that we once loved in early life, till one by one all are gone, and we see a living being with but *one* emotion; and that, burning upon his soul like the compound-blow-pipe, until the last remnant of the *man* seems to be extinct. Perhaps you have witnessed the legitimate result of this, in the room of the gambler. There, when all the powers of the mind are concentrated on this one thing, and the last dollar is gone, and want and ruin stare him in the face; in those looks of despair, and this living image of what will constitute an eternal hell, you see the result of one unrestrained passion, that has usurped do-

minion over the soul. That great dramatist who knew the workings of the human heart, has presented all this in the character of his Shylock. And a melancholy result of this you will read when this passion fired the bosoms of Cortes and Pizarro, in the empires of Mexico and Peru, and showed the effect in the crimes and woes that disgraced the conquest of the new world.

Now from this, it results, that the active powers of men demand restraint. To give them protection, and healthy use, they *must* be put under control. They must be excited by appropriate objects—called forth with due restraint—bound by the wholesome laws of justice and of charity. This matter is understood. You can kindle a fire in your own bosoms that shall consume all your energies, and sink you soon ruined to the grave. Give a loose to one single passion; let the love of wealth, or fame, or pleasure, gain do-

minion; let vice, and lust, and intemperance, kindle a fire in these bosoms, and they will be ruined. God has not tempered the human frame for such a dominion.

The question then is, whether the Christian religion will meet the susceptibilities of the mind, unmet by any thing else; and whether it will afford that needful restraint, which shall check a headlong and ruinous propensity, and yet call forth the powers into active and just proportions. When we speak of *immortality*, and announce to you the great truth that there is an eternal heaven, we meet at once all the great susceptibilities of the soul. We come to man as he sits and weeps at the failure of ambition and pleasure to give him rest, and ask him to lift up his eyes, and stretch his vision over the vast ocean of the future, and tell him that *there* every proper propensity may be met and satisfied. In those fields of light and truth,

he shall find objects of eternal contemplation and pursuit. There hope shall be realized, never realized on earth. There love shall find objects pure and worthy of the highest affections. There eternal employment shall be given to the undying mind. The single word IMMORTALITY, meets all that is painful here in disappointment; all that is unsatisfying in pleasure and ambition; all that is fearful and terrific in death; all that is cheerless to human view in the grave. Mind, ever active, may find employment in those distant worlds; and the rose of Sharon shall shed its fragrance over the grave where stood the mournful cypress. I submit it to you, respected Young Men, whether we are letting down the subject, when we turn your anticipations from all the splendid attractions of wealth and fame, in the loved land which gave you birth, and fix them on the ever-enduring glories of a world where you shall never die! You

will remember too that in doing this, we dash no well founded hopes in this life; we impair no vigor; we stay no enterprise. We shall soon tell you that under the influence of Christian principle, you may put forth still all the powers with which God has clothed you.

But is there not, after all, something degrading in those features of Christianity, which require repentance, and faith, and humility? I have time only to answer, not if the *facts* assumed by all systems be true, that man is guilty, and in ruin. To raise up enfeebled men from a bed of pain by the healing art, is no degradation to him, or to the medical profession. To lift up society from a state of ignorance and barbarism, and diffuse the blessings of civilized life, is no degradation. It has been the professed object of all philosophy, philanthropy, law. And to do this, in all the world, is the design of Christianity. To confess a fault

when we are wrong, is not disingenuous and unmanly. If it were, then true nobleness is to persevere in conscious crime; and then the highwayman, the pirate, and the duellist, are the most noble of men. And then too all the acknowledgments of statesmen about the imperfections of society, and the crimes of the world, are degradation. Yet to do this, and to forsake sin, is repentance. To confide in a parent is not degradation. To trust the word of a friend, instructor, and guide, is not to degrade ourselves. To have confidence in the mother who watched over the sleep of your infancy; who broke her own slumbers to guard yours; who was first in danger, and bore all your sorrows that she could bear, is not degradation. Then why is it to confide in Jesus Christ, who bore our griefs, and carried our sorrows? Why in God, who framed the world, and directs each pulsation in your veins? Yet this is faith. And this is re-

ligion. Yet still you feel perhaps that there is something unworthy of active and vigorous powers, in a religion of humility, and charity, and love. So thought not Newton, child-like sage, or L^ocke, or Boyle.

But look, I beseech you, over the records of the past. What was the spirit in ancient times that has commanded most unanimously the suffrage of the world as coming nearest the proper employment of the human powers? Was it the spirit of Dionysius, of Tyberius, of Cataline, or even of Cæsar? It was the mild virtue of the labouring Cincinnatus; the tender, calm, lovely spirit of Socrates. Yet in all antiquity these men stand forth as most resembling—I know it was a distant resemblance—the pure virtues of Jesus Christ. But is there degradation in the virtues of peace, and love, and charity, and prayer? Beware that you brand not as degrading, the loveliest scenes in this

world, the happiest places you have ever found—the tenderness and joy of a father's home ; the emotions of a sister, or wife ; the kind sympathies that meet and mingle around the bed where one member suffers, and all suffer with it ; the deep-felt joy when disease has left an afflicted member of a family ; or the solemn emotions when they bend their heads together, and weeping go to the grave of their departed friend. These scenes break in upon the selfishness of men's hearts. They stay the progress of those passions of mad ambition and avarice, which, unchecked, would plunge you into ruin. They are spreading the loveliness of the first Eden over the world ; producing an alliance between human powers and those of angels ; and fitting them to put forth their vigor in the noble employments of an eternal world.

But still I meet the feeling that though *goodness* is very well, yet that *to be good*

is not to be compared in grandeur with those other objects which present themselves to the view pertaining to this life.

I know the strength of this feeling; and am aware of its insidious nature. But I can show you that no active power of man is degraded by being under the influence of benevolence. You remember the often-quoted maxim of Lord Bacon, *knowledge is power*. It is so—and the world has furnished not a few melancholy illustrations of a maxim even like this. The Roman subdued the world to himself, by his knowledge of the science of war—and the effect is known. It was to extend oppression and slavery over the population of the entire globe. Men possessed of knowledge, and of the power which it puts forth, will exercise it. Others will feel its influence. It becomes a question then whether *knowledge* becomes degraded if put forth in the cause of benevolence? Hitherto, as

you will see by the cases to which I shall refer you, it has been too often merely the instruments of oppression. I call to your mind cases which you may have heard before alluded to in this connection, and with which you are familiar. Cortes, with a band of a thousand men, made a descent in arms on the Mexican dominions—a land embosoming millions of men—and millions whose great aim was to repel the invader, and save their land, their city, and the temple of their gods. Pizarro, fired with the same execrable thirst of gold,* descended on the plains of Peru—a land abounding in wealth, in people, and in the rude instruments of war. *Knowledge*—the knowledge of the few elements of destruction that have been shaped for the purpose of battle, gave them an ascendancy over this swarming population, and they sank away before the march of the Spanish inva-

* *Auri sacra fames.*—VIRG.

ders. Perhaps no where has the truth of the maxim more signally appeared that knowledge is power. The result you know. Two mighty empires streamed in blood; millions of men sank to the tomb before Spanish arms; other millions became slaves, and were doomed to work their own mines for the foreigners; their monarchs, victims of duplicity and power, descended to the tomb, and the Spanish sceptre was extended over the vast territories of the mightiest kingdoms in the western world. Here was active enterprise. Here the power of arms. Here the effect of knowledge. Here was vigorous and concentrated effort in pursuit of a single object. But who ever approved, or admired, the deeds of Cortes and Pizarro? Now, let us suppose that this energy and knowledge had been consecrated to better purposes. Suppose it had been all under the mild influence of the Christian religion. Suppose the Span-

iard had gone there with the arts of civilized life, with letters, and the Bible; and had aimed to meet and relieve the mighty evils that met his eye in these waste wilds, and to teach the lessons of Christianity, and of civilized man. Would it have been degradation to have landed on these shores with the spirit of Jesus Christ, and to have proclaimed to the host of living men that there was an immortality; that a community might be blessed by civil laws, and the arts of life; to have established the press, and to have built, in the rich domain of the Mexican or Peruvian, the school house, the college, and the Church? Yet in doing this there would have been ample room for all the *knowledge* of the Spaniard, and all the vigor of Spanish enterprise.

The world is, to this day, witnessing the remains of the most melancholy illustration ever known of the maxim that knowledge is power. The slave-dealer still

seeks the shores of unhappy Africa, to sever every tie of tenderness there, and to outrage all the feelings of humanity. By art and cunning, he holds fifty millions of men in abeyance, and the whole coast of vast Africa trembles at the coming of the slave-ship. That fifty millions have no organization to prevent his descent; no walls that he cannot scale; no sanctuary of life that he will not invade. Greedy of human sinews, he shall, in a moment, descend on the peaceful dwelling, and the son and daughter, in chains, shall weep, and take a last look of father, and mother, and home. *Knowledge is power*—and the power is felt, and felt long and deep in those weeping abodes. Now, tell me, if it would degrade the name of civilized man, if all this knowledge and power were accompanied and sanctified with the principles of our meek and pure religion? If that ship, freighted with human guilt, and tyrannizing over human wo, should

return with the arts of civilized life ; with the peaceful message of salvation ; and if that power should build school-houses, and asylums, and Churches, all along that coast that has been so often stained with blood, and almost literally deluged with tears. If mighty Christian Europe and Christian America, at last weeping tears of penitence, like a returning sinner, over the wrongs of that ill-fated people, should go united in deeds of mercy, as they were in wickedness, to redress these past wrongs to pour into all those villages and mighty towns the blessings of the Christian religion, of learning, and of law. There, in those vast plains, would be an ample field for Christian philanthropy, as there has been for crime ; and there the maxim that knowledge is power, might go forth with new lustre. Yet this would be only to put forth, on a larger scale, that active energy to which we exhort you. In this, there could be nothing to degrade. It

would be noble, manly, godlike. And yet the difference between the putting forth of your active energies in vice and infidelity, or even ambition, and the love of gold, and your possessing the mild spirit of religion, would be the same as the difference between Pizarro and the slave-dealer, plunging nations in tears, and civilized man, making use of his energies to diffuse liberty, peace, and salvation, among the wretched and degraded tribes of men.

But I must bring these protracted remarks to a close. Were there time, and did I think it right to trespass on your patience, I could recal to your memory a series of most mighty and stupendous doings of consecrated vigor and talent. We might point you to the names that are splendid but distant lights in the dark sky of past ages, and show you that the most mighty talent has found full employment in the achievements of Christian en-

terprise. The friend of Christianity can recall the fact, that in the list of Christians he can enumerate the chief ornaments in science since the Saviour came. The name of Pascal alone towers above all the names that French infidelity could ever boast. There, too, is the name of Grotius, the father of the system of the law of nations, and who may almost be said to have alone given statutes to Christian Europe on peace and war.* There is Boerhaave, learned in medical science. And in our own history—I mean the history of the people who speak the English tongue, for the history of the English and American people, for centuries, is the record of common ancestors, and *we* have as great an interest in her Barrows, and Newtons, and Bacons, as the modern Englishman—you know there stand the names of men never suspected of want of talent and ac-

* Kent's Commentaries, vol. I, pp. 15, 16, 17.

tive power; and never *suspicious* that they degraded themselves by bearing the name of Christian. Who will ever cease to admire Cowper, or Henry Kirk White? Who was Bacon? Who was Milton? Who were Locke, and Hale, and Newton? To group these men together, is to blend names that have shed a radiance over all the world, and that are destined to live when gorgeous palaces, and cloud-capt towers, and solemn temples, shall dissolve, and leave not a wreck behind. We could take you back to the times of Luther, and Cranmer, and Knox—times when the deepening shades of many centuries had been piled, cloud on cloud, in Europe, and when the prison-house of the human soul had reared its dark walls to the skies, and ask what hand it was that could break down these walls, and scatter this deep and horrid gloom? The hand of *the Christian* attempted it; and the utmost powers of human energy, conse-

crated unto God, were needed to emancipate the human mind. Then ardor found a field large enough for its utmost aspirations; and then the energy which alone could free Europe from these chains, rebuked the sneer of the scoffer that religion was adapted only to weak minds and pusillanimous hearts. As one single bright illustration of all I have to say here, permit me to remind you of Howard—one Christian, at least, whose praises are in the lips of all men. When the prisoner forgotten sighed; and his bolt, long since rusted, had been made fast; when thousands of wretched men, amid pestilential damps and dungeons, dragged out a weary existence, there was one eye that looked upon their unpitied woes. One vast estate was at the disposal of benevolence. The mighty energies of one man, who feared not the dangers of foreign powers, or the breathing of pestilential vapors, were needed. And one Christian dared

to traverse Europe, and the prisoner blessed his name, and the dark dungeons of the world to this day feel the mighty benefits of the consecrated talent of Howard.

But your country opens a wide field for all that is active and mighty in the talents of young men. In the former part of this discourse, I endeavoured to look at this as young men commonly do. It is as wide and as lovely a field as human aspiring could wish; and I would not dash your hopes, or cramp your powers. But we did not tell you all. We did not tell you half. This is the land for Christian enterprise. Here mighty dangers are coming in like a flood. Here foreigners of all opinions seek an asylum. Here the nations of all the world are already represented, in the oppressed of other people, seeking freedom; or in their outlaws seeking on our shores an asylum from justice. Here a vast continent is to be brought under the influence of Christian truth and

Christian freedom. Here confederated forms of wickedness are to be broken up; the infidel subdued, by argument, not by dictation; the ignorant taught; the five hundred thousand drunkards reclaimed, and our young men to be stayed from this all-sweeping vortex: here almost two millions of human beings sigh in bondage, and the captive must yet go free, and an asylum must be found for the oppressed; here public sentiment must foster all that is noble, all that is pure, all that is sacred. Here embattled hosts are not to restrain a free people; but our colleges, our associations of benevolence, our Sunday schools, our Bibles, our Sabbaths, our public press, must do what standing armies have vainly sought to do—preserve the constitution of a free people. Here the Christian religion, mild, expansive, free, is to shed its blessings on all the cities, towns, and hamlets of our republic, or we are a ruined people. Here, without be-

ing cramped or crippled in its energies, or pressed into an unnatural alliance with any system of state policy, or "wedded"

———"like beauty to old age,
For int'rest sake, the living with the dead,"

it may show its native power for blessing men. More than this. Our influence stretches across the ocean. Our voice is on the waters; and the name of America sounds alarm in the ears of distant monarchs, and they become pale on their thrones when they look at us. Engrave it, young men, on your hearts, that *this land is the only obstacle in the way of universal tyranny and oppression*. Strike the sun of our Christian freedom from the heavens, and all will again be dark—dark for ages. One loud shout of triumph will go through all the abodes of despotism, if we totter and fall. One universal yell will rend the heavens, if we

become corrupt, and our Christian light is extinguished, and we sink in the common grave of republics.

Who is to stand foremost in this Christian warfare? Who to urge on the great principles that are to bless mankind? Who but the young men of this nation—strong in the dew of their youth—entrusted with the last hopes of man. In this great arena of things you will be called to act. Will there be aught of meanness or degradation in summoning the vigorous powers of youth to the great business of virtue, of liberty, and of God; in forming the deep-felt purpose, this night, to be Christian men, and to dare to face intemperance, and misrule, and profaneness, and infidelity, and to go forth to meet the mighty powers of human crime? I plead, first of all, that your hearts may be given to Jesus Christ to-night. And then I spread out before you this good and vast land—this hope of man—this asylum of

liberty—this pillar of the Christian Church, as a field wide enough for all your powers. I summon you to this great work in view of the richest blessings ever conferred on man; in view of the hopes and liberties of the world. I do it, too, with that tremendous fact full in my eye, that these powers shall soon be weary, these limbs shall faint, and seek repose in the tomb; and that these active spirits shall soon be summoned to the judgment bar of Almighty God, to receive an eternal doom.

Respected Young Men, your country looks to you. The Church has fixed her eye upon you. A world fastens her intense gaze upon your movements. Heaven's gates are open, and the arms of Eternal Mercy want to embrace you. The world is before you—the paths of vice, and ambition, and licentiousness, and avarice; and the paths, too, of virtue, of liberty, of religion, and of peace. In view of all this, I solemnly put the question to you

now, can you suffer these talents to burn and blaze for a little period—to spend their energies in the ways of vice and seduction, and ruin—to be the wo of your parents, the grief of your country, and the curse of mankind, and then be extinguished for ever? Or will you so employ them as that a long stream of brilliant light shall attend your movements, so as to be regarded as benefactors of man, and friends of God; and finally, so as to shine as stars in the firmament for ever and ever? I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay-tree; yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not; yea, I sought him, but he could not be found. Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace!

THE END.

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AMERICAN ENTERPRISE.

BY

ALBERT BARNES.