

THE

PRINCETON PULPIT.

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BY

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“ Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded.”—TITUS ii. 6.

THE Epistle of the Apostle Paul to Titus, from which our text is taken, may be considered as a charge to a minister of the gospel as to the manner in which he ought to perform the duties of his sacred and solemn office. In it the Apostle instructs Titus respecting the doctrines which he is to teach, the example which he is to set, and the duties which he is to enjoin on different persons, according to their age and condition in life. To persons of every age and condition, Titus is to preach salvation by the grace of God, through the redemption purchased by our Lord Jesus Christ, and the necessity of holiness of heart and life. Yet the Apostle does not content himself with general precepts of Christian morality applicable to all descriptions of men. He enters into a detail of the sins to be avoided, and of the duties to be performed by persons of different ages and classes in society. There are temptations and sins peculiar to men of different ages and condi-

tions in life. Sin, which is common to all, assumes various aspects from childhood to old age. The same temptations which seduce the young, do not ordinarily affect the aged, or even those in middle life. The rich and the poor, the master and the servant, do not usually commit the same sins. In the verses immediately connected with our text, the Apostle directs Titus to accommodate his instructions to the character of various classes. To aged men and aged women, to young women and to servants, he directs peculiar and specified admonitions and warnings to be given. And in our text, he adds—*Young men likewise exhort to be sober-minded.*

Young men are proverbially rash, impetuous—guided by the impulse of the moment, regardless of consequences; and on this account they need to be exhorted, to reflect, to meditate, to consider, to exercise the attributes of rational and accountable agents, to listen to the voice of God speaking to them in his written word, in the dispensations of his providence, in the experience of those more advanced in years, and in the suggestions of their own conscience.

To be sober-minded, in the sense in which the Apostle uses the expression, does not require young men to be dull, stupid, lethargic, moved by no generous impulse, aiming at no high and noble object, exerting no physical and intellectual power. So far from instructing them to aim at such a listless, inactive, and idiotic state, the Apostle elsewhere exhorts them, as well as others, to be “diligent in business, and fervent in spirit;” to lay aside every

hindrance, and to exert themselves with the vigor and energy of those who strive for the mastery in running, in wrestling, and in whatever men are wont to put forth their highest efforts.

Nor does the term *sober-minded* in the passage before us mean, that young men should be morose, austere, melancholy, averse to all social cheerfulness. In this respect, the teaching of Jesus Christ and his Apostles, unlike that of the ancient Stoics, does not aim to extinguish the passions of men, but to lay them under such restraints, and to give them such a direction as is accordant with the will of Him who made us what we are.

A man may be what the Apostle means by *sober-minded*, and be at the same time a most interesting and pleasant companion.

The original Greek word, σωφρονεῖν, translated *sober-minded*, is composed of two words—the one (σοος or σως) signifying sound, healthful, free from disease; the other (φρον) signifying mind or intellect. And the word composed of these two elements, signifies a sound or sane mind, free from such corrupt bias as would prevent an individual from deciding or acting in a discreet, judicious, and wise manner. The object, then, which the Apostle, inspired by the Holy Spirit, would have young men exhorted to attain, is a discreet, sound, healthy state of mind, free from the infatuation which possesses many of this age, and which sooner or later leads them to ruin. Such I understand to be the meaning of the Apostle—*Young men likewise exhort to be sober-minded.* And in obedience to this injunc-

tion, we shall exhort and endeavor to persuade young men to seek a sound, healthy, and sane mind, free from such prejudices and passions as obscure the intellect, stupify the conscience, and prevent the attainment of high moral excellence.

In most men there is a species of infatuation similar in its effects to intoxicating stimulants. They become unduly excited under the influence of some dominant passion or ruling motive, and they rush on headlong, as if they were blind-folded, until they have approached so near the fatal abyss, that to arrest their progress is impracticable.

What we see every day passing around us, justifies us in saying that this infatuation is more common, as well as more fatal, in young men than in any other. In whatever way we may account for the fact, we see many young men acting as if they were bereft of their senses, as well as destitute of reason. The winged insect that sports around a lighted taper in a summer evening, is not more certain to fall a prey to the dazzling object around which it flutters, than these young men are to meet inevitable ruin. Hundreds and thousands in every age, have pursued the same course, and they have fallen victims to their own folly; and yet others rise up and take the same course. They seem to be under the influence of a species of insanity or madness, so that the motives which ought to govern rational beings, have no influence on their conduct. Grasping at the phantoms that flit before their imagination, they lose objects of real and substantial value.

The parable of the prodigal son, recorded in the gospel, is an apt and striking illustration of the character and conduct of many young men. In this parable it is plainly intimated, that the prodigal labored under a species of infatuation—that he was actually deranged; for it is said *when he came to himself*—that is, when he had recovered his reason, and was delivered from the delusion that possessed him, he formed the purpose of returning to his father's house. He then began to think, to reflect, to compare the wretched condition in which he found himself, with the quiet, peaceful, and substantial enjoyments of his father's house. His delusion vanished—*he came to himself*—reason resumed its office, and conscience prompted him, ungrateful as he had been, to return to his duty. *I will arise and go to my father*, was the first rational expression that had escaped from his lips from the time he had left his father's house. How many imitate the folly of the prodigal son, who never come to themselves, and form the purpose to return to their duty, until it is too late! And why is it that young men do not profit by the sad experience of those who have gone before them? Why is it that the loss of health, of property, of reputation, and the certainty of eternal ruin, do not cause them to turn their feet from the path that has led others to a wretched end? It is because they lack that sober, sound, discriminating mind recommended by the Apostle. They suffer themselves to be deluded by the dazzling phantoms created by a heated imagination, and permit their appetites and passions,

and not their reason and conscience, to become their guide.

Young men are beset with temptations from within and from without. Their appetites are keen, their passions strong and easily excited, and objects are daily presented suited to feed the fires within them.

At this age, the animal part of our nature is more fully developed than the intellectual and moral. The immediate gratification of the appetites and passions is too tempting to be resisted. If the first taste of criminal sensual pleasure was as bitter as when the cup is drained to the dregs, it would be rejected with disgust. But it is not so. There is a pleasure connected with the sins which men commit, especially in early life. And the first gratification tempts to a second, and that to a third, until the whole soul is absorbed in the indulgence of some cherished lust or passion.

Moral painters, who have noticed the actings of human nature, are wont to represent the commencement of the paths of vice as strewed with flowers, and those of virtue, at the beginning, as rough, difficult, and laborious. And if it were not so, where would be the temptation to sin? We will admit that there is as high enjoyment in the gratification of the appetites and passions, natural to youth, as the votaries of sensual pleasure may please to affirm—that the pleasure is so exquisite, that it captivates, enchants, and excites the soul even to ecstasy. And what then? It produces that very state of mind which is the most, danger-

ous and ruinous. The animal part of our nature is raised above the intellectual and moral. The order and harmony of the human constitution is deranged, and that part which ought to act in subserviency to the nobler powers becomes predominant, and the wonderful machinery works its own speedy ruin. The songs of the fabled Sirens are said to have been enchanting, and their cup delicious. But the music was intended to decoy the unsuspecting mariner on the fatal rock, and the cup, when tasted, transformed human beings into the lowest and most filthy brutes. I am aware of the excuse or apology which young men offer for indulging their appetites and passions—I have heard it a hundred times; and ninety-nine times in a hundred I have seen in the end that it was utterly false and deceptive. Their self-confidence has been their ruin. They say they have no taste for intoxicating drinks; that they have their appetites and passions under perfect command; that they will be prudent, and will never, except on rare occasions, go beyond certain limits. And what has been the consequence? We have seen these strong men laid low—these prudent men, of firm and unshaken purpose, become so *infatuated* and *enslaved*, that they suffered no opportunity to pass without falling into debasing self-indulgence.

Young men have usually sufficient buoyancy without using artificial means to raise their spirits. Stupid fools may need something to quicken their genius; but, after they have taken the exciting

draught, they are, in the estimation of every one except themselves, fools still.

Few men, under the influence of their cups, have a clearer head, a sounder judgment, or even a more brilliant wit, than when not thus excited. The imagination may indeed be roused; but it is wild, erratic, leading the man to form projects, to execute designs, and to perpetrate crimes which he would not have thought of in his sober moments.

The evil of this sin is, that it prepares the way for the commission of every other sin. No man beforehand can say what he will not do, when under the influence of this maddening and demoniac spirit. Tell me what crime it has not excited men to commit? What obligation it has not violated? What form of human degradation and wretchedness it has not produced?

Within a few years much has been said and much has been done to arrest the progress of this destroyer of human happiness. But still the delusion, which leads young men to immolate themselves on an altar smeared with more blood of human victims than ever stained the cars of Juggernaut, is not dissipated. Many try how far they can go within the verge of the fatal whirlpool, and yet resist its suction; and they direct their frail bark round and round the yawning gulf until resistance is hopeless.

Is that young man of a sound and sane mind who, for the sake of gratifying his taste or of amusing his companions, will go within the limits of the enchanted circle and hazard these dangers?

Through want of more extended observation, young men labor under one great disadvantage. They see the beginning, but they do not see the end. They see the temporary excitement of their companions. All is gayety, and mirth, and social enjoyment. None of the party are habitual drunkards. They look with abhorrence and contempt on the degraded being who is staggering in the street or hanging about the tavern door.

They do not know, or at least they do not consider, that the ruined man, whom they despise, once occupied the same position which they now hold; that he was once as gay, and as cheerful, and as far from being an habitual drunkard as they are, and that he sincerely thought he could never be reduced to his present debased condition. Confident that he could at any time desist, he advanced step by step, until he is utterly lost.

We have noticed intoxicating stimulants as the first cause of exciting the infatuation of young men, because it is the most common and fatal. But there are other causes. The Prodigal Son, to whose case we have already referred, wasted his substance not *in riotous living* only, but also with *harlots*.

The delicacy of the present age almost forbids us to name this subject before a public audience. It was not so in the teaching of our Lord and his Apostles. They denounced lewdness in all its forms in plain and unequivocal terms. Our boasted refinement is no certain proof that in this respect morals are more pure than in the days of our

Lord and his Apostles. Whatever may be the cause of this extreme sensitiveness, one thing is certain, that this sin has lost none of its moral turpitude and baneful consequences. God has marked his abhorrence of this crime, in the haggard countenance, the decrepit frame, and premature death of its votaries, in the degradation and wretchedness of the female sex, in the mortification and untold agonies of parents and friends, and in the unnatural and horrid crimes to which a desire to conceal their shame, not unfrequently impels its victims. And yet there are young men, who speak lightly, and even boast of this sin, which, if generally prevalent, would rob social and domestic life of all its endearments. The relation of husband and wife, of parent and child, of brother and sister, would lose all their charms—all the sacred ties that bind affectionate hearts would be broken, and our public as well as domestic institutions would be torn into fragments.

It is a delusion, an infatuation of the worst kind, which tempts young men to hazard consequences so appalling. "Let them beware of the smile on the lips, and the roses on the cheeks of the Deceiver, sensual pleasure.—*Her end is bitter as wormwood, sharper than a two-edged sword: her feet go down to death, and her steps take hold on Hell.**"

Gaming is another practice which inflames the blood and fires the brain of some young men, even to desperation and madness.

* Logan.

To persons not initiated into the mysteries of the gaming-table, it, seems strange and unaccountable that rational beings can spend hours and whole nights shuffling cards or rattling a dice-box; that the interest thus excited should become so intense as to exclude from the mind every other thought except that of winning or losing a game depending more on chance and fraud than on dexterity and skill. Such we understand is the fact even when no pecuniary interest is at stake. But when cupidity or the desire of gain is added, as is usually the case, the ardor and intensity of thought and feeling cannot be expressed. The eye is fixed, the lips closed, the breath suppressed, watching the issue of a lucky or unlucky moment. I speak not now of the cold-blooded, heartless, professional gambler who would strip his best friend of the last cent, and leave an amiable woman, and her helpless children, without a crust of bread to eat, or a rag to cover them. I speak of more decent, respectable men, who unhappily have contracted a passion for gaming, and who, unmindful of the claims of a dependent family, hazard all, at the gaming table or horse-race. I speak of young men of respectable family connections, in honorable and confidential employments, who are driven by this fell passion to rob their employers, to betray their trust, to commit forgery, in order to pay what are called debts of *honor*. The penitentiary or suicide not unfrequently closes the drama. Is that young man of

a sound mind who takes the first step towards such a catastrophe?

Let me remark that the same spirit actuates many young men, who are never seen at the gaming table or race-ground, or betting at elections, or dabbling in lottery tickets. I refer to a large class, who neglect the means ordinarily connected with the attainment of a desirable object, and whose prospect of success depends entirely on something in which they have no agency.

Such is the wise ordination of Providence, that certain means are connected with particular ends: so that when the means are neglected, the end is seldom reached.

There are some young men, who have no particular or general object in view, and consequent they employ no thought in selecting means, and make no efforts in pressing forward to an object before them. Like the bubble that floats on the surface of an agitated pool, they move in whatever direction the impulse of the moment drives them. They are literally creatures of chance. The providence of God, which extends to the falling of a sparrow, never comes into their thoughts. Both their temporal and eternal interests, so far as any agency of their own are concerned, is a perfect lottery, and their chance of success, either in this world or in that which is to come, is less than one to a million. Brutes following the blind instincts of their nature, may attain the end for which they were created, but man, without thought and effort wisely directed, cannot.

There are others, who have an object in view, and they are sufficiently ardent in their desires to possess it, but they neglect the means by which it is ordinarily attained. For example; they desire to be rich, and they regard industry and economy, the old fashioned way of acquiring wealth, as too slow and plodding; they must reach the object at a single bound. They enter into wild speculations, and commence an expensive style of living. Our country, at the present time, presents too many examples of such folly and madness. The humble and useful employments of agriculture and the mechanical arts are despised and abandoned; every young man must needs be a gentleman; that is, he must not stain his hands, nor soil his clothes with manual labor. Few young men at the present time, like Roger Sherman and Benjamin Franklin, pursue with diligence an honest and laborious occupation, while they seize every leisure moment to store their minds with useful knowledge.

Again; there is another class of young men, who, in the providence of God, are placed in such circumstances, that they might devote their whole time to the improvement of their minds, and to the duties of a liberal profession. They, too, hope to reach the temple of fame, not by such means as Cicero and Demosthenes and others employed, but borne on the wings of their genius, or wafted by some propitious breeze, they hope, without effort, to reach the heights to which others have climbed by gradual and laborious steps, and when sad experi-

ence has dispelled the delusion, we see them with wasted estate, unfit for any useful employment, begging some humble public office, or what is worse, washing from their minds, in the grog-shop, the remembrance of their early folly. How far the course of reading pursued by the class of young men described, tends to form their character, and to determine their fate, is a matter worthy of serious consideration. It does seem to me that the novels and romances, and licentious poetry, found on their tables, and occupying the time that ought to be devoted to grave and laborious studies, have no small influence in inflaming the imagination, kindling the passions, and in forming that insignificant and worthless character manifested in future life.

Once more ; the company with which a young man associates is another means of perverting his moral sentiments, corrupting his morals, and hastening his progress in the road to ruin. Man is a social being, formed for intercourse with his fellows, and dependent on others for a large portion of his enjoyment. But this blessing, like every other, is capable of being perverted and abused ; so that, in the present state of human nature, there is no more certain means of hastening a young man's ruin, than that of placing him in the society of corrupt associates. Perhaps, no direct attack may be made on his moral and religious principles ; nothing gross and offensive to delicate and virtuous feelings may at first be presented to view ; on the contrary, the manners of his new associates may be fascina-

ting, their attentions kind and courteous, and their whole deportment calculated to impress the mind with the idea of frankness, generosity, and other social qualities. Such companions, if their principles be corrupt, and their practice licentious, are vastly more dangerous than the foul-mouthed and grossly profane profligate; because the approaches of the one are repulsive, and of the other attractive. The young man who can be pleased with the openly profane and avowedly licentious, is himself already corrupted, and needs no aid to urge him forward in the downward road. But the comparatively innocent may be led astray, when the green path which he is invited to tread is strewed with flowers, and the atmosphere around him is serene and balmy. Let the young man who values his future peace, beware of the smiles and caresses of a fascinating and corrupt companion; sooner or later, he will sympathize with his associate, imbibe his spirit, and imitate his practice.

When a number of young men are banded together for the purpose of seeking criminal self-indulgence, or of executing any evil purpose, an *esprit de corps* is generated, and no one, however contrary the acts proposed may be to the dictates of his conscience, dares to break ranks. They move forward in a compact phalanx, mutually inspiring each other with confidence, and in their united capacity do acts which the most abandoned among them would not dare to do separately. From this principle it is, that the rush of a mob is as blind and impetuous as the mountain torrent,

sweeping every thing before it, and no one feeling responsible for the outrages on justice and humanity committed. Reason has fled, and the voice of conscience is not heard amidst the shouts of the multitude. Let the young man who wishes to preserve and cultivate a sober and sane mind, beware of entering into a combination to do evil, how plausible soever may be the pretext.

Other causes of infatuating the minds of young men might be mentioned, but we hasten to inquire by what means this delusion may be removed, and the healthy and sane state of mind recommended by the Apostle may be attained. In the first place, we remark, that the young man who would obey the injunction of the Apostle, must pause, consider, and exercise the faculties of a rational being. But how, it may be asked, is this to be done, since this is the very point in which young men are generally deficient? As soon, you will say, as they are brought to think and act in a rational manner, the work is done—they are then sober-minded. We answer, it is true young men are rash, impetuous, and often wild in their opinions, and act as if their minds were infatuated; still they have reason, although it is not exercised in a right way; and they have a conscience, although its voice is not heard amidst the din of their passions and the tumult of the world around them. To these two principles, reason and conscience, imperfect and defective as they are, an appeal must be made. We must *exhort young men to be sober-minded*. And if they will not

listen and weigh the motives presented, they must be left to take their own course, and bear the consequences. And will not those whom we address suspend, at least for a short time, the usual train of their thoughts, and consider whether they have not heretofore been laboring under some fatal delusion!

Our first position which we wish young men seriously to consider is, that sin leads to misery.

The laws of the moral world are as fixed and certain as those of the physical. *Whatsoever a man soweth, that also shall he reap*, is as true in the one case as the other. And here you will notice that this truth does not depend on abstract reasoning—nor is it a truth affirmed by divine revelation without any confirmation from experience.

That *the way of transgressors is hard*, is a fact which we see daily established by visible proofs. What is the result of intemperance, of lewdness, of gaming, of idleness? We need no prophet to announce to us what will be the end of those who become addicted to all, or to any of these sins. We see it in the loss of property, of reputation, of health. We see it in our alms-houses, hospitals, and penitentiaries; we see it in the poverty and wretchedness of helpless families—in the blasted hopes of young men, once of high promise—in the shame and grief of broken-hearted parents. Does not God thus, in the dispensations of his Providence, as distinctly pronounce that his curse rests on such as do these things, as if we heard a voice coming from Heaven saying—“Woe, woe to the in-

fatuated young man who yields himself to the gratification of his sensual appetites and passions." Yet these are the persons who are avowedly seeking pleasure, saying to each other, in all the gaiety of their hearts—"Come, fellows, let us crown ourselves with rose-buds ere they be withered. Let no flower of the spring pass away—let us drink the cup of pleasure, and give care and sorrow to the winds."* Thus far all is well. But let it be remembered that the profane jest and licentious song is the prelude to pain, and lamentation, and woe.

You may say you will enjoy the pleasures of youthful folly, and in mature age you will become *sober-minded*. Let me entreat you to recollect that mysterious and powerful principle of your nature—habit—habit. It has been aptly called a second nature. *The Ethiopian can change his skin, and the leopard his spots, as soon as they who are accustomed to do evil can learn to do well.* And, if through the sovereign grace of God, a change in your character should take place in future life, your repentance will not prevent many of the consequences of your early folly. It will not restore the opportunities of improvement lost in idleness. It will not replace your wasted property, repair your broken constitution, or prevent a premature death occasioned by youthful excesses. You will carry with you to the grave the scars of the wounds received in the service of Satan, as a warning to others not to follow your example.

* Logan.

Thus far we have spoken of such sins as are generally punished in this life. First, because we wished to have something visible and tangible. We wished to show young men, by examples daily presented, that those who indulge in such practices are sinning against their own souls—bringing on themselves, even in this life, certain ruin. Secondly, because we need the aid of motives drawn from self-interest as well as from duty, to restrain men from sins subversive of the order and peace of society, and ruinous to themselves. We have not distinctly pointed out the true source of the malady, nor the only effectual means of restoring men to a sound and sane state of mind.

The real cause of the delusion under which men labor on the subject of duty, lies in the heart—in its alienations from God, the source and pattern of moral excellence. Men do not naturally love God, and regard his authority as supreme. This is the prolific fountain of all the sins which men commit. To remove this malady which lies deep within, there is no effectual remedy except that which God, in sovereign mercy, has provided. Considerations of self-interest and a regard to the happiness of others may induce men to abstain from the commission of gross sins, and to do many things highly laudable and beneficial to mankind. And these motives are not omitted in the Bible, and ought not to be neglected by the ministers of the gospel; but these are not the chief means on which we should rely to restore men to their right mind, and to raise them from their moral degradation.

To the question, *Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?* the Psalmist gives the true answer—*By taking heed thereto according to thy Word*; that is, by making the Word of God the rule of his conduct. This will enlighten his mind in the knowledge of duty, and dispel the delusions which lead many young men astray. Here we are taught what are the attributes and character of the great God, the relation which we bear to him as creatures and sinners, what provision he has made for our redemption from sin and its consequences, what we must do to be partakers of this salvation. Here is a perfect rule of moral duty placed before us, and here are motives calculated to touch the heart and conscience. In this book also we have the promise of that aid, without which all human means, to cleanse the soul from sin, are hopeless; and we are taught how that aid is to be obtained, namely, by prayer to the Father of Mercies for the gift of the Holy Spirit.

If this holy book were diligently studied, and its truths believed, how many errors would it remove from the minds of young men! If its precepts were practised, from how much wretchedness and sorrow would it save them in this world, and with what bright hopes would it inspire them on entering on that which is to come! But see, in the indifference and neglect, not to say the contempt, with which too many young men treat this precious book, the highest proof of their folly and madness. The grand means which God has provided and appointed to heal the diseases of their

minds—to purify their hearts—to guide their steps in the slippery paths of youth, to secure their happiness in this world and in the next, is despised and neglected! The book which informs you that God gave his only begotten Son to die for your salvation is thrown aside, and novels and romances, trash calculated to corrupt your minds and inflame your passions, already too ardent, are sought and read with eagerness. If any such hear me, I pray God to give you a better mind—to teach you that both your interest and your duty require you to *take heed to your ways according to the Word of God.*

YOUNG GENTLEMEN OF THE SENIOR CLASS :

To what I have already addressed to you in common with others of the same age, I have only a few words to add.

Permit me to remark, that if at any period of your lives you need the exercise of a sound and sane mind, it is now in the circumstances in which you stand. Having finished your academical studies, you are now to go forth into the world, and to be exposed to many trials and temptations.

I take it for granted that none of you, after the advantages which you have enjoyed, will bury your talents; that you will select some useful employment or profession, and will pursue it with diligence. The selection of a profession or occupation is one of the most important acts in the life of man. On a judicious choice in this matter, your success and happiness during life greatly depend. In this point many fatal mistakes are made. We

have known young men who had talents well adapted to a particular calling, and who, through pride, ambition, or the desire of wealth, selected another for which they were not qualified; and disappointment, mortification, and disgrace were the consequence.

In making your selection will you not need the exercise of a sober, discreet, and sound mind? And in deciding to what department of business you shall devote your lives, many circumstances are to be taken into view. Can this be done rashly, without thought and sober reflection?

Let me tell you, that it is not always what business or profession is likely to be the most profitable or honorable, that ought to determine your choice—but rather in what department you can be the most useful and answer the great end for which you were made, namely, to “glorify God and to enjoy him forever.” The young man, who leaves out of view this important consideration, errs in the very commencement of his career.

On this subject let me also remark, that a young man ought not to delay long, before he decides what shall be the main business of his future life. We have known educated young men, who spent years in doubt what they should do; and the effect of this indecision was always injurious to their character and success in life. I have often been asked the question, whether a young man, who has selected his profession, should commence studies preparatory to that profession immediately on leaving college, or should devote a year or two to general

reading and improvement. My past observations would lead me to say, commence your professional studies as soon as practicable. I have seldom seen much improvement made by private desultory reading. Spend the longer time in preparation for your profession, and fill up your hours of relaxation with collateral reading. This course will tend to bring all you read or observe to bear on the great business before you, and enable you to collect materials from all quarters conducive to your main object.

In the preceding discourse, I have pointed out some of the rocks on which many precious youths have been lost; and I beseech you, by all your hopes in time and eternity, not to approach those coasts whitened with the bones of thousands. Your fate will be similar to that of those who have gone before you. Such is the wise and just appointment of the Author of our being, that from the penalty of his wise and immutable laws there is no escape.

From marking the course of many young men, I am led to the firm opinion that more fail to answer the expectation of their parents and friends from the want of moral character than from the want of talents. And did the occasion permit, we could prove from the nature of things as well as from a detail of facts, that this *must* be so.

Independent of the influence of regular habits on your success in life, sound principles and pure morals ought, on their own account, to be sought and cherished. The chief dignity and glory of

man consists not so much in the extent of his knowledge, the vigor of his intellect, and the splendor of his achievements, as in the integrity of his heart, the purity of his morals, and in his paramount regard to the claims of duty. The most malignant and odious being in the universe may have vast intellectual powers, and may excite our admiration and terror, but he cannot inspire us with confidence and love. But the good man who aims to do what is right—who employs his talents, whether great or small, in faithfully performing the duties arising from the various relations of life, “is the noblest work of God.”

Beware, my young friends, of imbibing that erroneous opinion, confidently asserted and zealously propagated by men destitute of moral principle, that wildness, eccentricity, and licentious manners in youth, is an evidence of genius and of high promise in future life—that the government of the passions and a regard to the rules of moral order is a proof of dulness and insignificance. It is false, abominably false. That some men of splendid talents, who were profligate in youth, have risen to high distinction in after life, is freely admitted. But their early excesses were no indication of their future greatness; their dissipation retarded rather than hastened their elevation.

Where is the wretch so stupid, so brainless, that he cannot curse, and drink, and game, and give full scope to every low, sensual passion? And do young men hope that by imitating the vices of great men, they also are to become great? Rather let

them expect by such means to sink to a level with the lowest and meanest of our race.

Young men, be *sober-minded*. At this interesting period of life, act prudently, act wisely. Remember you are now sowing the seed of the future harvest—it may be precious grain to be gathered in due season into the granary above, or it may be tares to be burnt with unquenchable fire. As rational and moral beings you are accountable to God for your conduct; and if you would secure his favor and rise in the beauties of holiness to the true dignity of your nature, you must repent of your sins, and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, who is exalted at the right hand of God, to give repentance and remission of sins. The gospel method of making men good, and holy, and fit for heaven, far excels every other. It is adapted to the sinful condition of man—suited to heal the diseases of the mind and of the heart. The belief of the doctrines, and the practice of the precepts of the Gospel, is the only effectual means of enabling a young man to cleanse his way, to escape the pollutions of the world, and to prepare for heaven. Take this Gospel as the rule of your life, the foundation of your hopes, and the charter of your immortal inheritance. Did I know that you all had made your peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, I could bid you adieu with a heart full of joyful hopes respecting your future welfare. Then whatever ills may befall you in life, your eternal well-being is secure. Once more I say, Young men, *be sober-minded*; and, in the sincerity of your hearts,

let each one, addressing his Father in Heaven, say—
Father, from this time wilt not thou be the guide
of my youth? The Lord hear your prayer, and
bless you. Amen.