

7
LITERARY DILIGENCE

RECOMMENDED.

A

BACCALAUREATE DISCOURSE

DELIVERED TO THE

CANDIDATES FOR DEGREES

IN THE

COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY,

ON THE SABBATH IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING THE ANNUAL
COMMENCEMENT IN 1820.

✓
BY ASHBEL GREEN, D.D. LL.D.

Late President of Princeton College, New Jersey.

4.12.05

From the Library of
Professor Samuel Miller
in Memory of
Judge Samuel Miller Breckinridge
Presented by
Samuel Miller Breckinridge Long
to the Library of
Princeton Theological Seminary

SCB
10991

Sam: Miller.



THE HONORABLE JOHN W. WOOD, ESQ.

Vice Pres^t of the Coll^g of N. J.

1815-1816

My Dear Brother Breckinridge,

You solicit me for an essay or a sermon, for your forthcoming periodical. I have neither time nor strength to write any thing, *de novo*. But I send you my Baccalaureate Discourse to the candidates for degrees in the College of New Jersey, on the Sabbath immediately preceding the annual commencement, in 1820. This Discourse has never yet been published: and, although not exactly appropriate to Theological Students, yet I think it contains a good deal, which, if duly regarded, may be profitable to them, as well as to all other studious youth.

Yours affectionately,

ASHBEL GREEN.

Philadelphia, August 15th, 1832.

LITERARY DILIGENCE, &c.

“Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings, he shall not stand before mean men.”—Prov. xxii. 29.

“IN the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread,” was a part of the malediction pronounced on man, at his first apostacy from God. From that time to the present, almost every human attainment or possession, of much value, has been the fruit of industry and vigorous exertion. The law of our present condition, however, which usually renders laborious diligence essential to the acquisition of whatever is valuable, though originally a penal enactment, furnishes a striking example of that divine benignity, which is seen in very numerous instances, mingled with the divine chastisements. Take man as he is in his fallen state, with all his disordered propensities, appetites and passions, and he is always unhappy when found without employment; without something that gives excitement to his mind, activity to his body, and occupation to his time. A man of much leisure is commonly dissatisfied; an idle man is always wretched. On the other hand, he who is constantly and laboriously employed in lawful business, has usually the best enjoyment of life; the best health

of body, and the greatest serenity of mind. He is animated by hope and expectation, conscious that he is pursuing the course which leads directly to all those attainments and distinctions, which are the objects of human desire; which aspiring minds covet for the gratification of their ambition; which virtuous minds seek and value, that their ability to do good may be increased. These remarks are plainly sanctioned by our text—delivered, let it be remembered, under the guidance of inspiration, by the wisest of men; by a prosperous prince, most deeply skilled in the knowledge of human nature, and most thoroughly acquainted with the course and tendency of human affairs. “Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings, he shall not stand before mean men.”

I have chosen this sacred maxim as the foundation of the present address, because, though I am aware that it is applicable to business of every kind, yet I think it peculiarly applicable to the occupation and pursuits of a Scholar. In discoursing upon it, my object will be to recommend literary diligence, by showing its *nature, necessity, and happy consequences*. The subject, in all its extent, is too copious to be treated with the requisite fulness, in a single discourse; and as the first of the points I have mentioned, namely, the nature of literary diligence, may be considered as a whole by itself, I shall confine myself to this on the present occasion.*

In entering on this discussion, I earnestly intreat you

* The *necessity, and happy consequences* of literary diligence, were considered in a subsequent discourse:

to keep in mind that it is to be considered throughout, both by the speaker and hearers, as the discussion of an interesting part of *religious* truth and duty. This is important, not only that we may mutually regard what is incumbent on us, on this sacred day, but in order to do justice to the subject itself; for I am persuaded that it can neither be fully understood nor felt, with its proper force, unless it be examined and contemplated in the light of religion. I do not, indeed, deny that men may sometimes be found who, upon mere worldly considerations, are regular in their lives and industrious in their habits. But I do affirm, that as nothing but a regard to the authority of God will ensure his approbation, either in this life or in that which is to come, so there is nothing as effectual as this, to lead us to a clear and extensive view of what is really incumbent on us; nothing that will make us feel the obligations of duty so sensibly; and nothing, consequently, that will furnish so powerful an excitement to a life of persevering and laborious activity in our proper callings. Beyond all question, he who regards exertion and industry as a part of the duty and service which he owes to his Maker, is influenced by a consideration which must operate with the greatest force and steadiness; which will be most likely to preserve him from all improper means or endeavours to promote his own interest; and which must also powerfully invigorate and support his mind, and even fill it with pleasure and satisfaction, from the hope of receiving the approbation of the greatest and best of Be-

ings, whose commands he obeys and whose service he performs.

It is to be understood, however, that although, in illustrating and enforcing the text, I shall make it my care to exhibit and inculcate the truth which it contains, as a doctrine of religion, and as deriving its weightiest sanction from the divine authority; yet this will not prevent my showing that it is a doctrine which may be sustained, illustrated, and enforced, like many other religious truths, by reason, experience, and the principles of human nature.

In considering the nature of literary diligence, that I may render the subject as practical as possible, I will begin with stating some things which are adverse or hostile to it—some difficulties with which every industrious student will have to contend, and some errors which he must endeavour to avoid.

Indolence, you know, is the exact opposite of industry or diligence. Whoever, therefore, intends to be industrious, must guard against the indulgence of indolent feelings and habits, with all the resolution and vigilance of which he is capable. He should think much of the *sin* of being idle, and of losing any part of that precious time, for the whole of which he must render a strict account to God. Man was not permitted to be unoccupied even in Paradise; and we have had occasion to remark, that since his fall, it is, in a peculiar manner, the law of his nature and state, that he must labour. No affluence of fortune, no distinction of rank or birth, can justify any one in leading an idle life. The indispensable law of the Gospel is, that “no man liveth to

himself." He is bound to serve God and his generation unceasingly—with his best exertions, and with all his influence, talents and property.

The man who would cherish the spirit and habits of industry, should think often on the loss which every idle hour will occasion; a loss absolutely irreparable, since every subsequent hour will demand its full share of duty. He should consider, that although it may require an effort, sometimes a painful one, to throw off lazy feelings, yet that a man always feels better when this is done, than when he gives way to indolence and inaction; and that he provides not only for present, but for future enjoyment; because he does that which will, *on reflection*, afford him pleasure, instead of pain. Sluggishness and sloth are so truly degrading, that it is scarcely possible to fear them, hate them, and despise them too much. To guard against them effectually, it may be useful for young men, at least till habits of industry are well established, to prescribe to themselves a daily task, and to resolve, in ordinary circumstances, not to sleep till it be accomplished.

Again: he who would be diligent in business, must carefully *avoid spending too much time in company*. Retirement, you know, is essential to study and literary improvement. Nothing, indeed, can be farther from my views, than to recommend an unsocial disposition, or recluse habits. Advantages of the most important kind, and obtainable by no other means, are to be derived from social intercourse, and mixing suitably and discreetly with the world. It is, moreover, by such intercourse,

that the man of true benevolence finds many opportunities and occasions, which he would otherwise miss, of doing good to others. But an excess in this particular, is certainly one of the greatest dangers, against which a studious youth, especially if he be fond of society, will find need to guard. Of the company of idlers and loungers he must resolve to rid himself effectually—without offending them, if it be practicable; but by offending them, if he cannot otherwise accomplish his purpose. But we must go farther. In order to be industrious, especially in literary pursuits, we must be careful of spending too much time, even in the best company. From not duly considering this, young men of great promise have sometimes marred their prospects, and disappointed the expectations they had raised. By an inordinate love of company, from which they suspected no injury, because it was reputable and honourable, it has come to pass that they have remained superficial, when, otherwise, they might have been profound; they have become gentlemen, but not scholars; in a word, though they have adorned society, they have never been capable of managing its most serious and weighty concerns. It is, therefore, of much importance to learn and practice the self-denial requisite to forego the pleasures of society, whenever they would interfere with regular study, or professional engagements. Nay, an industrious student must endeavour, as far as the obligations of religion, benevolence and courtesy will permit, to prevent unseasonable and useless visits to himself: and with suitable address, this may usually be done, without giving lasting or serious

offence. To a diligent man, time is invaluablely precious. It will always grieve him when any portion of it passes unprofitably; and in every lawful way he will be careful to save it, or to turn it to some good account.

Farther. One who intends to be really and effectively diligent in studious business, *must not indulge a desultory, fluctuating, or unsteady state of mind.* Scarcely any thing is more hostile than this, to the necessary acquisition of science, nor, indeed, to a thorough knowledge of any subject. Such knowledge can rarely be acquired but by gradual, and sometimes by slow advances; and he who is impatient of such advances, he who will not steadily and perseveringly pursue a subject till he understands it clearly, and comprehends it fully, will seldom be more than a smatterer. Sir Isaac Newton is reported to have said, that he thought he possessed no uncommon talent, beyond an aptitude for patient thinking and laborious investigation. We sometimes see men, not otherwise incapable of improvement, nor, so far as we can judge, disqualified for rising to eminence, who seem as if they could keep to no one study or pursuit long enough to bring it to a successful termination. They often enter on an enterprize with eagerness, but before it is half accomplished they are out of conceit with it, and must try something else. In active life, this unhappy temperament manifests itself by driving its subject from one profession to another, or from one place or project to another, without end, and with certain loss both of property and character. To counteract this unpropitious disposition of mind, a portion of which is no un-

common misfortune, studious youth should make a point of resisting it resolutely, from the very first. Let them deliberate well before they enter on any undertaking; but when entered on, let them resolve never to give it up through weariness or disgust, till it be accomplished. Let them fix it as a maxim, to complete whatever they begin. Have they selected a subject for composition? Let them never change it for another, whatever inclination may suggest, but pursue it closely, till they have discussed it in the best manner which their talents will permit. Have they set out to make a literary attainment? Let them not alter their purpose, nor flag, nor waver in it, till the acquisition be achieved. Have they chosen a profession? Let them think only of eminence and usefulness in that profession, and never suffer their minds to be discouraged, enfeebled or depressed, by dwelling on the advantages, the pleasures, or the honours of another. Have they commenced business in a particular place? There let them pursue it, with a determination not to remove, but on the most weighty considerations. All general maxims admit of some exceptions, but to those now suggested the exceptions ought certainly to be few.

Another enemy to effective literary industry, nearly allied to that which has last been characterized, is *the love of miscellaneous reading*, or of the pleasanter parts of general literature, or of *attempting light compositions*, indulged to the neglect of those severer studies in which eminence, both in science and in professional business, must always rest, as on its proper basis. This

is a mischief which often begins early, and continues through life. It frequently commences in a grammar school, or during a college course, where the youth disregards or neglects the regular studies of his class, or contents himself with a very superficial knowledge of them, and consumes his time in reading entertaining books, of every description and variety. Such a youth is no very promising candidate for distinction in after life, as a scholar, a divine, a lawyer, or a physician. He is in danger of retaining his early habits, so that though he read much, his reading shall profit him but little. He may accumulate a heterogeneous mass of information; but still without possessing a thorough acquaintance with any one branch of useful knowledge. Of his professional business, if he is ever found in a profession, it is likely he will know less, than of many other subjects. Such a man may become the author of a tale, or an ode; but will, probably, produce nothing valuable on any important concern of life.

Let me not, however, be misunderstood. I would be so far from condemning all light, or general reading, that I would remind you distinctly, that no scholar ought wholly to neglect it. There is, as Cicero has long since remarked, a kind of common bond of union among all the liberal arts; so that they are mutually auxiliary to each other. General knowledge always enriches and liberalizes the mind; and it will ever be advantageous, in various ways, to a professional man, to possess a considerable portion of such knowledge.

I frequently refer to professional qualifications, because

in this country, at present, there are not many men of education who are not professional men. It may be regretted that such should be the fact, and we have been reproached on account of it; but, from the state of society, it could not be otherwise. Few among us have, hitherto, possessed the means of obtaining a liberal education as a matter of ornament, or as a source of refined pleasure, or with the expectation of writing for the public on subjects of taste or science. It will readily be granted, that those who entertain any of these views may properly indulge their inclination for general reading, more freely than others. But even these will err egregiously, if they do not pursue improvement on some definite plan or system; and if they do not also devote a principal part of their earlier studies to the attainment of that substantial literature, on which alone they can, advantageously, superinduce the more elegant and ornamental parts.

“Not even in trifles, triflers can excel,
‘Tis solid bodies only polish well.”

But to those who have professional employments distinctly in view, general reading ought, through the earlier part of life, to be an amusement rather than a business. At most, it should be no more than a by-business. Both duty and interest dictate, that the strength of their minds be laid out on genuine science, and professional studies.

Form your habits, therefore, on this plan, and retain them unbroken, till you are satisfied that you may

change them without injury. In a word, be of the character which the text contemplates—let your diligence be *in your business*. Let other things be your recreation, or the subjects only of occasional attention. It should indeed be a part of the plan of every busy Scholar, to render even his relaxation improving to himself, and if possible, useful to others.

Once more—Diligence in business, if we would secure its full benefit, must be so conducted as *not to injure health*. This is a most important consideration, which few studious youth estimate as they ought, till they are taught by experience—by an experience, alas! which often comes too late to be useful. Let it by no means be supposed, that it has been my intention, in any thing you have heard in this address, to recommend that your application to study should be unceasing—Far from it. Such an application, I well know, is not even calculated to effect the greatest progress in study itself. An incessant poring on a subject renders the faculties obtuse, and stupefies and bewilders the mind. To study advantageously, the mind must be clear and vigorous. In that state, more will be done in a few minutes than in hours, or days, of lassitude and exhaustion. It should never be forgotten that the mind, as well as the body, may act feebly; and that, in regard to both, it is by vigorous efforts only that obstacles are removed, and difficulties overcome. Now, in order to act with energy and perspicacity, the mind must have suitable rest; and he who does not rest enough to qualify the mind to put forth all its energies, will certainly not study to the

most advantage. To loiter and doze over a subject or a book, is one of the worst practices in which a student can indulge. Better it is by far, to apply vigorously, while vigour can be sustained, and then to relax altogether. Different individuals can, no doubt, bear different degrees of close study; but there are few who can, with safety or benefit, employ in this way, more than six, or, at the utmost, eight hours, in the day; and these ought generally to be divided into two or three portions, with an interval of complete relaxation between them. It is also to be recollected, that not only must the mind have rest, but that the body must have exercise. For the want of this, we have seen numerous and melancholy instances of youth, of the best hopes, whose literary career has been interrupted almost as soon as begun; and themselves, indeed, frequently consigned to an early grave. Whether there be any thing in the American climate, constitution, or habits, which is peculiarly unfriendly to a sedentary and studious life, I am not prepared to say; but it seems to me, that it is far more common in this country than in Europe, for studious men to ruin their constitutions, so as either to die young, or to render life a long disease. To prevent this as far as possible, I am of the opinion that a student ought to make it, not merely a point of prudence, but a part of his religion, to take daily and sufficient exercise. Besides what he owes to himself, is he not bound to render to God and to his fellow men, the greatest amount of service of which he is capable? And do we not know that this service is greatly diminished, nay, often

entirely prevented, by the want of that health which due exercise is essentially necessary to preserve? Let no one say that he is too young, and firm, and athletic, to be always guarding against disease. I am not recommending an effeminate anxiety about health and life. This often defeats its own purpose; and is, in fact a disease in itself. No truly—But I do earnestly inculcate the importance of constantly recollecting, that health is more easily kept, when it is possessed, than regained when it is lost; that as both our comfort and usefulness depend on it, it is a sacred duty, which we owe both to ourselves and to others, to endeavour to preserve it; that, under the divine blessing, it is chiefly to be preserved by a proper regimen; by forming and maintaining good habits, of which the taking of daily exercise is one of the very first importance. As, therefore, every thing we shall do, is best done by system, let every student prescribe to himself what he deliberately judges necessary, in regard to the point before us, and then religiously adhere to the rule which he adopts.

Having thus noticed, at some length, what is most adverse to literary industry; the errors in regard to it which must be avoided, and the difficulties which must be surmounted; a very short and summary statement will now suffice, to show in what it directly and distinctly consists. It consists, then, in a steady, laborious, unwearied, but discreet attention, to the most important subjects of study, while one is in training for active life; and in the same attention to professional studies and duties, after he has entered on such a life.

In his preparatory course, the youth who is diligent in business, in the spirit of our text, will bend his mind most assiduously to the acquisition of language and science, as the essential prerequisites and preparatives for every liberal profession or pursuit. He will not slight any study in a system of academical education, under a vain conceit that it would, if pursued, be useless to him, or do him little good. He will, in this, yield himself entirely to the opinion and direction of his teachers; having already learned that the utility of elementary knowledge cannot be judged of by him who is acquiring it. He will, therefore, apply himself to the acquisition of classical learning, of mathematical and physical science, of the knowledge of composition and eloquence, of logic, and the philosophy of the human mind, of historical information, and of the principles of morals and religion. On these he will diligently employ his time and his best efforts. When he has selected his profession, his great aim will be to understand it thoroughly. No general and superficial knowledge of it will content him. He will endeavour to go deep into every part of it—to become acquainted with its radical principles, with all its details, connexions, bearings, results and applications—in a word, to be a master of it. With this view, he will make a considerable part of his general reading auxiliary to his professional pursuits.

When he enters on the practical duties of his profession, he will consider himself as devoted to those duties. All his arrangements will be made to favour and forward their full and perpetual performance. To this

the order of his family will be made subservient. For this he will give up every interfering pleasure and enjoyment. For this he will refuse no necessary sacrifice, nor grudge any requisite labour or exertion. Those who seek him in the business of his profession, will easily find him always ready to attend to their concerns, and find that it is always safe and advantageous to confide them to him. In fine, he will consider the duties of his profession as constituting the great business of his life, and as forming a sacred trust, for which he holds a high responsibility both to God and man.

I must pointedly notice, that every thing must be reduced, as far as possible, to method or order, by him who would be diligent in business to the most advantage. He must make an orderly distribution of his time, fixing, as far as he can, his hours of study and business, and those of rest, amusement, relaxation, and exercise. He must also make a methodical disposition of the different parts of his business; so that he may take up every thing that he does, in an orderly manner. His papers and his books—the implements of his occupation—must have a careful and orderly arrangement; so that every thing may immediately be found when it is wanted, without confusion and the loss of time. It is thus by putting method into all his business and concerns, and inflexibly adhering to it, that a man is able easily to accomplish what, to one who is unacquainted with the effects of order and industry united, appears utterly impracticable. Let me add, that as neatness

and order are certainly favourable to each other, a scholar should, from the first, be careful never to separate them. I must also particularly remark, that strict and scrupulous punctuality, in regard to appointments, and to engagements of every kind, must characterize him who thinks to save time, to do much business, and to possess the greatest weight of character. But before concluding this part of the subject, I should feel myself chargeable with a most criminal neglect of official duty, if I did not tenderly counsel and entreat the youth whom I address, and indeed all who hear me, to appropriate, in the orderly distribution of their time, a certain part of every day as sacred to the exercises of devotion. Without prayer there can be no true religion. To speak of a prayerless Christian, would be to utter a perfect solecism. It is by prayer that all intercourse with heaven is carried on, and all its blessings secured. And without the blessing of God, diligence itself will render no man truly prosperous, even in this world. "The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it." (*Prov. x. 22.*) The frowns of providence may blast the wisest and the best conducted plans and efforts. Of this the author of our text elsewhere reminds us. "I returned, (says he,) and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all." Be sensible, then, of your entire dependence on the God of providence and grace, to succeed and bless your literary

diligence; cultivate an habitual sense of that dependence; and by daily prayer, implore a favourable issue to all that you undertake. Numerous instances, I admit there are, of men who rise to wealth, station, and influence, and yet live and die without piety. But in every such instance, remember that prosperity is granted not with the smiles, but in the displeasure of Heaven. "The prosperity of fools shall destroy them. The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked." They are neither to be envied nor imitated. Consider, I beseech you, how dreadful it will be, if all your distinctions and influence among men, shall only serve to increase an awful account with God, and to aggravate your final condemnation: And this they will assuredly do, if you remain unreconciled to God through Jesus Christ, and live in the neglect of prayer, and the other duties of genuine piety. Be assured that nothing will have so happy an influence, to direct and animate you in all duty, as daily and fervent prayer, both in the closet and in the family. It will bring you comfort and support under all disappointments, trials, and afflictions. It will be your best recourse in all difficulties, straits, and embarrassments. It will also make you regard as matters of duty, what the prayerless regard as matters merely of choice or prudence. It will render you conscientious and careful in avoiding all the errors, and in overcoming all the difficulties, relative to a life of industry, which have been pointed out in this address: And best of all, it will often fill your minds with those sweet and divine consolations, which at once lighten the bur-

dens of life, sanctify the soul, and anticipate the bliss and the rest of heaven. Whether, therefore, you consult your present, or your future destiny, your temporal or your eternal interests, the exercises of devotion are all important. Insure their performance, by setting apart the specific hour and place, at which, in ordinary circumstances, they shall receive your daily and undivided attention. With devout exercises in private, connect a reverential regard to all the other demands and institutions of religion. Never let the engagements of secular business violate the sacred rest of the Sabbath. Make no plea of necessity on this account, beyond what is fairly warranted by the allowance of the great Lord of the Sabbath. Be regular and exemplary in your attendance on public worship; and never, if you love religion, be ashamed to make an open profession of it before the world; remembering the solemn and impressive declaration of the Saviour himself, "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the son of man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels."

And now, if in the minds of any of you there still lurk a suspicion, that so high and exact a regard to the demands of religion as I recommend, must necessarily interfere with that diligence in business, which it is the main object of my discourse to explain and inculcate, I would, in conclusion, beg of such to lay aside all speculation, and to attend, for a moment, to the facts of the case. Facts, numerous and unequivocal, demonstrate, that strict

piety may be united, because it often has been united, with exemplary and successful industry. There have been, taken collectively, a host of such men as Selden, and Boyle, and Boorhaave, and Pascal, and Hale, and Gardiner, and Thornton—scholars, lawyers, physicians, soldiers, and merchants—who have been distinguished, in the highest degree, for profound erudition, or for professional activity and eminence, or for both, and at the same time for devoutness of spirit and sanctity of life. Let nothing, therefore, induce you to yield to an unhal- lowed suspicion and prejudice which such examples as these should counteract. Never attempt to separate the duties which a divine precept has joined together! But be “diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.”

Candidates for the honours of the College, in the en- suing week!

This subject, chosen and treated with reference to the circumstances in which you now stand, has, throughout, been particularly addressed to you. No- thing materially occurs to me, to add to what you have already heard, except a few words, in anticipation of the remaining part of my subject, on the necessity and happy consequences of diligence in business, and then to bid you all farewell.

Unhappily a notion has gained currency among us, that diligence is not necessary to youth of genius and talents; that regular and laborious study is rather the indication of a dull and plodding mind; and that it is

of course the prerogative and the tendency of powerful intellect, to neglect, and even to disdain, all close and systematic application. A more senseless and pernicious notion than this, could not easily be conceived. It is so unqualifiedly false, that I confidently affirm, with my venerable predecessor Dr. Witherspoon, whose words I quote—"that there is not an instance to be found, of a man's arriving at great reputation or usefulness, be his capacity what it might, without industry and application." Grotius, and Newton, and Milton, and Locke, were they without genius? Yet they were among the most laborious students and thinkers that ever lived. Besides, there is a very arrogant assumption here. A young man first takes it for granted that he has superior powers, and then, from this self-flattering postulate, concludes that he may neglect study. Does he who reasons and acts in this manner, give evidence of mental energy or of mental weakness? I leave the answer with yourselves.

Receive it, my young friends, as incontrovertible truth, that diligence in business, all the diligence of which you have heard, is necessary, indispensably necessary, to you all. No matter what are your talents—without diligence, you can neither be useful, nor truly respectable. We allow to talents all their just claims. Doubtless he who is richly gifted with them, may go forward in knowledge and improvement, with an ease, a rapidity, and to an extent, not to be equalled by those of more moderate endowments. Still, no endowments from nature can ever supercede the necessity of exertion, order and industry. And often, very often, it is seen,

that a man of ordinary powers, by application and attention to business, comes, in the language of the text, to "stand before kings;" and not unfrequently leaves him who vaunted of his genius, and indulged in idleness and eccentricity, to "stand before mean men," or to sink into utter insignificance.

In looking forward into life, therefore, make your calculations that all your success is to depend, under the divine blessing, on your own efforts and industry; and to be in a great measure proportioned to them. Friends may put you in the way of business and reputation, but nothing can keep you there, but your own merit and exertions. Adopt and adhere, then, to the whole system which has been delineated to you in this address. Doing this, you will have reason to hope that, in a few years, if your lives shall be prolonged, you will occupy some of the first stations of usefulness, influence, and honour, in our country. But I must renewedly counsel you, that in contemplating all your prospects and in forming all your purposes, you do it in an humble reliance on God to preserve, succeed, and bless you. I would wish to avoid saying any thing needlessly to damp your youthful ardour. But in this parting address, I must remind you distinctly, that all you have heard, relative to a life of diligence and its happy consequences, has been predicated of a contingency, which as I have passingly hinted, may never take place. Your life is uncertain—You may not live to be diligent and successful in business. You know that the stroke of death has brought to the dust, and hurried to his final

destiny, one of your friends, who only a year ago was standing, as you do now, to hear my last monitory words. Any one of you may follow him, in the year that is to come: and instead of each individual flattering himself that he will certainly escape, it will be more wisely done, if each individual shall resolve to act as insensible, that he may be marked as another victim.

Yes, my young friends, the first and indispensable concern of you all, is to see that your peace be made with God through Jesus Christ. "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," and trust the assurance, that other "things shall be added unto you." It is my parting earnest request, that you make no delay in this great concern. It will neither prevent nor interfere with any other duty. You will never be so well prepared to live as when you are prepared to die. My fervent prayer for you all is, that you may be prepared for both. While you live, may you live to the glory of God and to the good of mankind; and living thus, may you—if such be the divine will—live long and happily! May you be the joy of your parents, the delight of your friends, a treasure to your country, and a blessing to the world! May you at last die in peace, and may we meet in Heaven! These, dear pupils, are not formal wishes—they are cordial, earnest, paternal desires and petitions, which, in parting from you, I offer up in your behalf to our common God and Father. Nor shall I, while I live, cease to follow you with my prayers. The God of our fathers bless you! Farewell.