

FAMILIAR
TALKS TO BOYS.

BY THE

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REV. JOHN HALL, D.D.,

NEW YORK.

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1876.

TO
THE REV. ELIE CHARLIER,
AND
THE GREAT CLASS OF INSTRUCTORS REPRESENTED BY HIM,
THIS LITTLE BOOK
IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED
BY ONE
WHO UNDERSTANDS THE TOILS AND DIFFICULTIES OF
TEACHERS, AND WHO APPRECIATES THEIR
PRICELESS SERVICES TO THE
COMMUNITY.

EXPLANATORY NOTE.

WHEN a gentleman announces that he is called upon to speak "on the spur of the moment," and forthwith produces a manuscript-speech, his attempt to disarm criticism deserves to be a failure. With becoming deference to the critics, the author feels bound to reconcile the extempore character of these "talks" with the existence of a manuscript for the printer. The explanation is brief and simple. The author did not produce the manuscript.

Then, how did it come into being?

The Rev. Elie Charlier engaged the author (for the second year) to speak to his pupils in the Charlier Institute, leaving to himself the time, the topics, and the style of treatment. The addresses—if anything so informal can be so called—were made with great pleasure to the

speaker, and with all pleasant indications of interest on the part of the inspiring and unsophisticated audience. But Mr. Charlier had placed a reporter in ambush, of whose presence and labor the speaker only knew when he received from Mr. Charlier a good-natured confession of the deed, a roll of manuscript, a declaration that it did not belong to him, and the expression of a hope that it might go to the printer.

The responsibility of making this one more book, therefore, belongs to Mr. Charlier. The reporter had not that place of honor and easy hearing due to his profession, and the looseness of style, which the critics will see in these "talks," may be credited about equally to fictive reporting, and to colloquial address to several hundred boys, some of them so young as to render repetition desirable.

Among the many advantages of the author's early life he counts it no mean blessing that he was, during most of his own career in college and seminary, a "tutor" and teacher in a public academy, in English and in classics, and in both male and female departments. Some

comprehension of the needs of the young, and some knowledge of the mode in which young minds work have been thus acquired, along with a practical understanding of the delicacy and difficulty of the work of those instructors who must reconcile the slowness with which a good education is acquired, with the impatience and the endlessly diversified ideas and expectations of parents. If these frank and familiar addresses should receive as cordial attention in their printed as in their spoken form, the highest ambition might well be satisfied. But the main thing is that they do good, moral and religious, and for this end they are humbly commended to the blessing of Him, who desires boys and girls to look up and say to Him, "My Father thou art the guide of my youth."

I.

IN the first place, Young Gentlemen, I may be allowed to congratulate you upon the beautiful building into which you have moved since I last had the pleasure of speaking to you. I do not know of any similar institution in this country, nor indeed in any other country, where purely private enterprise has secured such accommodations for the prosecution of your studies, as you have in this place. And as we are influenced in a very great measure by our surroundings, I hope that the influence upon you will be happy in the highest degree, and that you will feel, even from these associations, a stimulus to the prosecution of your preparatory work, through which, by the blessing of God, you are to be fitted for a future position in the world.

If one of you should present his writing-book to the Writing Master, with its pages shockingly defaced by the ink-bottle being poured over it, and assign as the reason for its condition, that the ink-bottle had spilled itself on the copy-book, he would tell you in a moment that that story could not be believed. Why could it not be believed? Because there is a law in the human mind, made by the Creator—that every effect must have a cause; and not only must have a cause, but the cause itself must be adequate to the producing of the effect; and everybody knows, who has the slightest observation, that it is not the way for ink-stands to get up and spill themselves over your copy-books. You will find all through life, an instinctive conviction in the human mind that effects must have sufficient and suitable causes. Now, men reason in that way in relation to the world itself. Here is a great effect—this universe,

and it must have had a cause adequate to the production of that effect ; and that cause which is adequate to the production of the effect is found in the Almighty God, the King Eternal, Immortal, Invisible, the Blessed and only Potentate, and Creator of all things. He it is of whom the Word says : “ He spake, and it was done. He commanded, and it stood fast.” The Book of Genesis gives an account of the manner in which this great effect was called into existence by this Almighty cause ; and it is in that Book of Genesis that you can trace the history of our race, from the very beginning, and where you learn some other valuable lessons, touching God, and the welfare of our race.

No doubt you know that when our Creator placed Adam in the garden of Eden, He made certain distinct arrangements for his benefit, which arrangements were intended to bear upon the whole race. I would like to speak to you about one or two of those

arrangements : and you will see for what practical purpose, before I come to the last.

In the first place, in the making of man, there was one man and one woman ; they were placed and united together as husband and wife. In that way our Creator laid the foundation for families, and so for all those relationships which spring up among us ; such as father, mother, brother, sister, child ; and these have their spring and fountain-head in that great act of the Creator, by which He took one man and one woman and made them husband and wife.

Perhaps you never reflected, Young Gentlemen, how large a part of your life is connected with the duties springing out of that relation—to be good sons of fathers and mothers, to be good brothers to your brothers, and manly brothers to your sisters. These are duties which spring necessarily out of that plan formed at the beginning,

when one man and one woman laid the foundations of the family. I would like to say to you, that the happiness you are to carry through your whole life will turn in a great degree upon the fidelity with which you do the duties that spring out of that relation ; and I will say further, what I feel the older pupils here will understand, that every one of those sins, which by their very nature and badness cannot be spoken about to one another, is an assault on that happy relation which the Creator established at the beginning ; and it is impossible for any boy to make such an assault without paying the penalty, some day or another. Let us try to feel that God is good when He gives us families, and we are to be good members of families, for our happiness, and for His glory.

There are many persons who think and feel, “ Oh ! that I could get away from law ” — that this would make them supremely happy.

They do not like authority. They are vexed and irritated by being under control; it seems to them that if they could only do what they pleased, their felicity would be perfect. Now we are in the habit of saying that there was perfect happiness in Paradise. But there was not freedom from Law in Paradise. When the Lord placed man there, He pointed out one tree, and said, "Of the fruit of this tree thou shalt not eat, for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Look into this yourselves, Young Gentlemen, and you will soon become conscious of certain faculties within you. There is that in your mind which makes you love, and that we call your Affections; there is that in your mind which weighs things and comes to conclusions, and that we call Judgment; there is that in your mind which recalls past events, Memory; that which enables you to think of objects away from your sight, Imagination; that which

enables you to pronounce whether anything is right or wrong, and that is Conscience. Now, Law is addressed to the conscience. We do not give Law to the lower creatures, because they have no conscience ; but it is given to you and to me, because you and I have consciences. From the very beginning the Creator said to man : “ Thou shalt not ! ” making an appeal to your conscience ; placing you under Law. Now, I should like you to think of that. There is no happiness in escaping from Law. Adam tried that, and he broke the law, but instead of making himself more happy, he made himself more miserable ; and so it is with you, and with your elders. As soon as we separate ourselves from the Law made by the Creator, and by those whom the Creator has put over us, we begin to be unhappy, and he who may escape the worst of the miseries for a time, cannot escape them long.

That conscience within us is a kind of

self-acting power. The moment a man feels "I have done wrong," that moment the conscience in the man must begin to take vengeance upon him. So, if you want a little Paradise in your home, try to remember, "Thou shalt not." Though one may say to you, "Thou canst sin, and not surely die," remember, that he goes against a truthful, all-wise Creator, and advises you to your injury, and that your safest course is to be guided by "Thou shalt not."

There is that curious arrangement of the time made by the Creator in periods of weeks, by the intervention of one day—the Day of Rest. Men were taught on one particular day—the seventh—to rest. Now, it is not worth while for us to ask why He did this; it is enough to settle it in our minds that it was His will when He divided it into periods, that one-seventh part of the time was to be taken from common uses and put

to holy uses. That law is standing, still, and it is a very important matter that you and I should keep it. Our bodies need the rest of that seventh day ; even the lower animals need it ; and a more important element in the rest is that we require the time for thinking about our Creator, and heaven, and our life there. I do not suppose that the majority of you work so excessively hard at your studies as to lie down at night with wearied bodies and jaded minds ; but I am sure you do need the rest of each returning night for each returning day's duties. Precisely so the body and mind together need the rest of the seventh day. But it is to be the rest, not of an animal, but of a rational, intelligent being. Most students find that rest comes not from absolute inactivity, but by change of occupation. If you have been studying geography at home until you are wearied, it will relieve the mind to turn to history, and after poring over history, to

turn to grammar, and from grammar to mathematics. A change of employment relieves the mind and body. If you could apply the word to the mind, you could say that a new set of muscles came into operation, just as with the body. Now, on the same principle, there is real rest to the human mind when we apply the seventh part of the time to the consideration of things which belong to the life to come. Here is a man with whom money and trade have occupied his thoughts all the week ; here is another who has been writing for the newspapers all the week, and has no time to think about the future life, and to read the Word of God ; here is a man going to and fro, making bargains : the seventh day stops all of them and says, “ Here is the unsearchable riches ”—and he gets real rest, the rest that makes him better ; and when he goes back again on Monday morning to his work, it is to feel : “ I have been in the presence of

the Master yesterday. I was with God, my Creator ; I spoke to Him, and He spoke to me ; I told Him what I wished to be ; what I wanted at His hand." So that man's heart is made purer and truer, and if there comes an occasion to him to do something wrong on the Monday, he will say : " It cannot be right ; I cannot do this base thing ; it will not be pleasing to Him with whom I spent yesterday, who lost His life in dying for me." So, if men kept that rule which was from the beginning, when time was divided into periods, and gave one-seventh part of their time to the Lord, they would be wiser, happier, and truer.

I think there is a time in the experience of every one, when he gets impatient of work. " Oh ! I wish that I could get rid of this toil, and be perfectly idle ; how happy I would be ! " Now, my friends, I want you to feel that that is a mistake ; it does

not make any one better to be free from the necessity of work. The best proof of that is that after the Creator put man into Paradise, one of the first things that He arranged for the race was regular, steady, continuous work. Man was put into the Garden, as we are told, to dress and keep it. It was not only useful work, and pleasant work, but it was necessary work. The Creator intended it should be done ; that it was necessary for the comfort and welfare of the creature Adam, and that he should do it. If you want to make a Paradise of your lives, to be truly and happily established, act on that plan, and arrange for steady work.

Now look at the four relations that have been alluded to. The family made for man ; the law made for man's conscience ; the Sabbath made for man's soul ; and work suitable for man's body ; and complying with these arrangements, we may feel that we

regain something of Paradise. If you want a little Paradise back again, you must act on these arrangements : the Family, the Law, the Day of Rest, and proper Work from day to day. This point I wish to fix upon your minds. You have to do work for a little time here. It is now the work of study, the work of learning, the work of getting the right kind of preparatory training, so as to be fitted for the sober duties of life when they come to you. So, Young Gentlemen, hold on to honest, steady, hard work. Even the small boys must do this. When I was at school and college, I recollect we said to ourselves at times, " Let the lesson slide to-day ;" and when we let it slide one day, we very likely let it slide next day, and excused ourselves on this plea, that we were sure to make a spurt just before the examination came, and by the spurt pull up all those idle days, when we let the duties slide. I am old enough now to know that

that was a most vicious way. The wisest plan is to do the duties of the day, the duties of each week, in the day and the week when they come to us. Then we can do without the spurt at the end. To do well what we are to do, we must be methodical, and because we are bound to do it, we ought to do it well. One element of the mighty power which a boy acquires in his character, is to learn at school to do the duties of each day in that day. Put him in an office ; and suppose he did not answer the letters of the day until the morrow ? Make a physician of him, and suppose he postponed the visiting of a patient, seriously ill, till the morrow ? Or a clergyman, who put off the preparation of his sermon till the end of the week—to Saturday night, and then hurried it over, so that the people next Sunday in the church closed their eyes to go to sleep ? That is the way all through. Then, if you are to do well in your life, you

must learn to do thoroughly whatever comes to you in your school time, and in this way you will make the best and most thorough preparation for the performance of the great things you have to do for the glory of our Father in Heaven.

It is the ordinance of our Creator that we should live by our work. "Oh," says some boy, "if I were only a millionaire, and had many hundreds of thousands of dollars to call my own, I would escape the necessity of work, and would be very happy."

Many of you know that one of the richest men in this city was Mr. Astor, who died the other day. This man's property was probably as large as any man's on this continent, and he was an old man. Many of you know, perhaps, that there was not probably a man in this city who for the last few years worked more regularly, more diligently and constantly, than did that richest

man in the community. And I presume if you talked to him about it, he would have said something like this : “ Why should I not work ? I am better employed so than if I were idle. The Creator has been pleased to give me property. My duty is to make the best use of it, and not to let it go to wreck or loss ; my nature is happier and more complete for doing it.” There is a vulgar, stupid prejudice in the minds of many persons, against those who are rich, as if it was some fault to be charged upon them. The fault which is to be charged is the love of riches for the riches’ sake. God judges ; you and I are not to be judges. I want you to feel as this man felt, that in order to be happy in life you must be working men, and it does not matter in what department of labor you are to do the work ; it may be with your pen, your hand, your brain, your influence, your counsel. If you are to be truly useful in the world, you are to be working men.

The rule of the Deity is, that "He that will not work, shall not eat." A great many of the troubles that afflict us this very moment, arise from the efforts of men to let other people work that they shall eat. It can't be done. If we are to be useful, you and I must work, and in working we must have true and rightful objects before us.

Who fixes these objects? It is hardly necessary for me to tell you. He who made us has the right to fix them, and He only. What can we know of the purposes for which we were formed? But the Former knows, and all our object should be to find out and to do His will and to sanctify His glorious name.

There are many of you that have splendid advantages;—parents who love you, friends who are fond of you, and homes in which you are cared for. You have teachers to direct your education and to form your minds. You can have the best books

and the best advantages. You live in a free nation and under good institutions; you have this broad continent laid before you. Let me urge upon you to be diligent, steady, pious, hard-working students. A student is one who works at his studies. Students work for a proper object—not merely to make money, to get fame, to secure a position, but to be able to do good to others, and thereby to glorify their Father who is in heaven. And the boy who works with that aim before his mind acquires a certain kind of greatness by doing it. He is a stronger boy, he is a braver boy; because in his secret heart (he may not talk with his fellow creatures around about it) there is this noble, great, and dignifying purpose, “I am not living for myself, but I am living for Him who made me.” He who made the rules in Paradise at the beginning, laid down rules for you and me, which, if we only follow and take as our way, because

His way, will bring us to another Paradise in the world to come, where we shall constantly be in His presence glorifying Him forever.

But, alas! Young Gentlemen, up to this time we have not acted in His way, so we need forgiveness of sin ; so you need to say, "Father, I have done wrong, I have offended against thee ; I have forgotten the way ; I have been bad, selfish, passionate, and peevish ; I have been disobedient ; Father, forgive me." That is what we call confession of sin, and there is no real religion without it. We must confess our sins against Him whom we offend. He has told us to do it, and He will forgive us, and when He forgives us, we shall love Him back again and so seek to do His holy will.

The other day I heard of a young gentleman at college for the first year, who was home at Thanksgiving, and was going back to college the day after. He said to his

mother, "Won't you start earlier from the house than the time for the cars, so that I can have a ride with you for an hour?" The mother said "Yes." The mother was fond of her boy, as mothers usually are very fond of the boys. On the ride he said to her: "Mother, I don't understand this; some boys at college seem to be very glad to spend their vacation at other boys' houses, instead of at home. I don't understand that, for there is no place I want to go, to so much as to my home. There is nothing so pleasant to me as to be home with you, mother." The mother kept that word in her heart and told it with tears in her eyes. "It makes me so glad that my boy finds his home the happiest place in the world." The point I make to you is this. That boy is away at college, hundreds of miles from his mother; the love in his heart is just the same. Some one comes and asks him to do something of which he knows his mother would not approve.

He stops and thinks : “ Shall I do this ? How would mother like it if she knew it ? It would grieve her to know it ; no, I won't do it ; I love my mother and I will not do it.” And you know that everything in that boy's life will become purer from that love and from the influence of her life. Now, I want you so to live, in the sight of the unseen God, that everything will become purer and better in your life ; and that when tempted to do something against your conscience you will say : “ No, I will not do it ; I will not offend a holy God. He would not have me to do it, and because He does not wish it I will turn my back against it.”

What I have said to-day, Young Gentlemen, is merely introductory. Try to keep it in your mind, as next week there will be something more to be said, and the week after, in connection with it. Now, I want to express my earnest hope, that every one of you, in every form, will be truly upright.

Then you will be brave and courageous boys, loving Him whom you cannot see, and turning your back upon everything that is bad, because in your hearts you have a true love for Him. Then you will be happy, truly happy, and successful workers in your work in school ; which will make you truly successful, happy workers in life, if God is pleased to spare your lives.

II.

It is very hard, Young Gentlemen, to say when summer passes into autumn, or autumn into winter. You can tell, indeed, by the almanac, but the weather does not always respect the almanac.

And so it is a very hard thing to say where one ceases to be a child, and where one begins to be a man ; but I think we should all agree that the boys here on my left hand, for the most part, are still children, and will be considered so, until they are grown-up boys and young men, by and by. We will agree, for the present, that they are children. Now, if what I say is true of the younger children, it will be still more true, and have more meaning, of the older boys, that "even the child is to be known by his

doings." Now, I want to talk with the children first, so that they will understand me.

Yesterday was a rainy, disagreeable day, and the mud covered the streets and the sidewalks. Suppose, as you came to school, yesterday, you set your foot on the end of a plank, supposing it to be all right, when, in a most treacherous and unexpected way, it splashes the mud over you. Now, it would be a very childish thing for you to stop and punish the plank. A very little child might lose his temper and throw a stone at it; but you know quite well that it was not caused by the plank. Why? Because the plank has not any thought; did not intend anything; did not know what it was doing. But suppose a boy, eight years of age, came out of one of the houses and splashed the mud, purposely, upon you. Then you could blame the boy, and it would be a proper thing to have the boy punished. Why? Because the boy is not like the plank; he

has a mind, and he intended it; he has will, he has the right of choice; he, in his own mind, decided to do that thing. Well, now, one of the differences between the boy and the plank, among others, is that the plank has no moral character, and the boy has.

I wonder if you can remember these two words—moral character. The plank has no moral character; the boy has. Now, moral character is of two kinds—good and bad. A boy that has a malicious mood, and who capriciously and wantonly injures another, has a bad moral character. I remember, once, a good many years ago, going to see a family which was quite poor. It so happened that a boy nine or ten years of age, was with me, at the same time when the message was brought to me. So we went and saw this poor family in quite an humble home. They told their story to me, and it was a very sad one; in fact, they had not enough to eat, and were hungry. I did

what was proper to do, and the boy came away with me. He did not make any observation, but I found out, incidentally, two or three days after, that the next day that boy made his way to this house by himself, and gave all his pocket-money to the children of the family, and made them promise that they would not tell that he had been there and given them money. Now, you would all agree that that was a sign of a good moral character—one not selfish ; thinking of others ; willing to deny himself in order to do good works.

Now, in boys, and even in children, there is moral character, good or bad ; and this character we show, whether good or bad, by the doing of the deeds which belong to either the former or latter.

Now, if this is understood on the left hand, I am sure it will be on my right hand. What are the qualities, you may ask, in a good moral character ? for, I take it for

granted that you, in your hearts, wish to have a good moral character. I want to put it before you very simply.

First of all, if we are to have a good moral character, there must be Justness. Justice is that which a good man does. Justness is the quality in a man that makes him do it. If you want to have a right character, you must be just. "Of course," some one says, "if a man is a judge, he should be just, but there is no use of his talking about us boys being just." Yes, there is! Can't you understand a boy that does not "play fair?" Well, he is lacking in justness. The boy who does not tell a story straight, but gives it a little twist to put himself in a good light and somebody else in a bad light, well, he is not just; he has not justness. Now, boys, if you want to have a good moral character, you must begin "right there" and cultivate justness. The boy that plays fair and tells his story straight, is one who will grow up

up in that way, and he will be a just pupil, a just teacher, a just magistrate, if the people make him such, a just lawyer, a just judge.

Even a child is known by his doings, whether poor or whether rich. If you want to have your character and your life good, morally, see that you have justness in your mind ; no going aside from the right, no want of candor, no selfish contortion of a thing to suit yourself, but, a straightforward, and manly, upright, loving, saying, and doing "the truth."

In the next place, to have a good moral character, there must be along with justness, Goodness. Now, goodness is of two kinds. There is a goodness we have in ourselves, and there is a goodness that shows itself toward those around about us ; but usually they go together. Suppose I told you that I had a candle at home,

which, when I strike a match and light it, will throw its rays to the north and south; but it will not show any light to the east and west. "That is a remarkable candle!" you would say, "and no one ever saw anything like it; for all the candles I ever saw burn threw the rays of light around in every direction." Well, it is so with every candle I have seen, and I tell you I could not believe in the existence of a candle which sent its rays to one side, and never sent them to the other. Just so is it with goodness. If a man really has goodness in himself, he is like a candle giving light, and his goodness, like the light around the candle, shines all around him. It takes various forms. For example, he has kindness toward those with whom he is mingling day after day. He has kind words, and does good as he has opportunity. He has gentleness,—gentleness in manner, in language, and in all things that he may do. Small acts of gentleness go

to make character. I want to tell you that if we wish to have a real power over others to do good, why, we can have it by gentleness. It makes us great. It is written in the Best of Books that in the temple of Solomon all the nails were of gold. Now, you know, gold is comparatively soft, and if they were nails, how could they be driven? They must have been screws, it is concluded. A nail has a sharp point and flat head, and you come down upon it with a hammer and drive it in; and if any of you try to do any carpentering, and do not hit the nail straight, you break the head off, or the point, or it goes the wrong way; and sometime, if you are not skillful, it splits the wood, instead of passing through it straight. But the screw is different. You take it in your fingers, and turn it around, and it sinuates itself into the right place. No noise is heard; it splits nothing, and it holds fast. Now, that is the fashion in which

true gentleness works: but a violent man expects to do his work by blows; the gentle man goes gently, and though he does not make so much noise, he does not make so many mistakes, and his work holds fast. So, if you have this goodness in yourselves, and have goodness to others, in kindness and gentleness, it is an element in a good moral character.

In the third place, you must have Purity. There is a package of sugar; it looks very attractive to the eye. Put your hand over it, and it feels in every way like good sugar. Is it pure? No! Examine it; analyze it, and a certain proportion of it is proved to be sand. It looks beautiful, but it is not pure. You are buying a piece of cloth. You say to the man who shows you it: "Is that all wool?" "Yes; that is all pure wool." You buy it, and take it to one who is a judge of cloth, and he tells

you there is a great deal of wool in it, but also a great deal of cotton. Cotton is cheaper, and not so warm as wool. There is a mixture of a something else in it. Now, take a boy; he may be a smart boy, a manly boy, even a just boy; but in his thoughts there are many things he would not like you nor me to know. And sometimes he uses words that he would not wish his sisters or his mother to hear; sometimes he does a thing that he would be very sorry to have his friends know about. He is not pure; there is a mixture of evil in the boy; in his thoughts, in his words, perhaps, even, in his deeds. His moral character is bad. Therefore, if you want to have a good moral character, you must be in yourself pure. There must be this freedom in thought, word, and deed from everything that is impure. The older boys will understand me when I tell them how pure that Joseph was of whom we read in Genesis.

Now, a very little boy might say: "But if there was only a little fault in one's character, that would not amount to a great deal." Now, I should like to tell you a little story. A long time ago, there was a church tower being built in which I was interested. I wanted to go very near the top of it, and see it. One of the workmen said to me that it was a very long climb by the ladder, "but if you choose, you can go up by the windlass." The windlass had a long chain running up a tube-like vessel in which they sent up the mortar and bricks for the workmen on the top. The man said: "If you are afraid, don't go." "No; I am not afraid, if you are sure it is all safe," I said. Suppose the man had told me: "That chain is a strong one, for there is only one rotten link in the whole of it." I should have climbed the ladder, rather than go up by the chain, because that single defective link would be sufficient to

destroy the whole chain, by its breaking and letting us down to the bottom.

Now, boys, one bad piece in your character, one bit of impurity in your thoughts, words, or acts, will be like the bad link in the iron chain. It destroys the whole chain. You know how often safety turns in the case of a ship on her being able to hold by her anchors. People who have gone over the sea in a ship, see an enormous iron chain, of double links, which is intended to hold the sheet-anchor. When the captain throws out his sheet-anchor, and the ship "rides at anchor," as it is called, there is a great strain on every link of that chain; and if one bad link breaks, off goes the anchor, and the ship is driven before the winds, and may be destroyed. Now, our character is very much like the chain: one bad piece in it vitiates and spoils it. So we must have a pure character.

There is one thing more that must needs enter into a good moral character. The three I have named already you can, perhaps, remember — justness, goodness, pureness. Now, the fourth quality is Devoutness. This is, perhaps, the most important word I have named yet, and so it is last, as there is a little more to be said about it than about the rest. I beg you to give me close attention. Devoutness is the kind of feeling with which the creature looks up to his Creator. Suppose you bought a farm of land out in Pennsylvania, for which you paid ten thousand dollars. Suppose it to be a hundred acres of ground, for which you paid a hundred dollars an acre. You have paid your money for it, and have a written document which shows this; after a little while, the land being yours, it is found that there are oil wells on the farm. You did not know about them when you bought the farm; but you bought the farm,

and the oil wells go with it. Or suppose a coal mine to have been on this farm. It is yours now. And why is it yours? You did not think of oil or of coal. Why, because you bought that farm, and everything in it is yours. Now, dear boys, that is the way with us and the Lord. We belong to him. He owns us, and, therefore, he owns everything in us. Our life, our confidence, our faith, our trust, our devoutness,—everything in us belongs to him, because he owns us. And whatever we can do, if it were twenty years from this, belongs to him. There are powers you will have by-and-by, that you have not now. But when you come to have these powers, they belong to the Lord, because you belong to him. All you can do until you are a hundred years old belongs to him.

Now, devoutness is the right feeling toward God to whom we belong,—a right

feeling of love, reverence, homage, trust, obedience, and if you want to have a good moral character, you must have that devoutness.

Have you never heard this proverb? "The boy is father to the man." That is to say, what the boy is, the man will be. It is another way of saying this thing, that "the child is known by his doing." You know there are two kinds of wood, two ways in which the trees grow. It is a good while since I learned my botany, but I remember there is a kind of tree described in the books as endogenous, and another kind as exogenous. The endogens have their fibres grow straight upward, but the other class have pith, and then the layers grow round about that pith. The former kind the boys of another generation used to know in the "rattan." That is a good specimen of the endogenous. Most of the trees about us are the exogenous.

When the tree is not thicker than my finger, that which is to make the substance of the tree is found in the heart of the tree. When it becomes as thick as my body, the little bit of narrow, slender stem, not greater than the rods upon which we put a whip, is found in the heart of the tree. The tree grows around about it.

In that sense you have to grow. There you are now, as boys; and what you are now, you always will be until you are gray-haired men. You have to try as boys to make yourselves what you shall be as gray-haired men. You are now, particularly some of you here, like the tree which is not much thicker than my finger. There will be a layer of French, English, History, Geography, Grammar, Metaphysics, added here; a layer of Law, Medicine, Theology, and something else, afterward, until you be like the thick trees. But what you are now, you will be unto the end all through.

Now, I want you to be, as boys, boys of the right kind, so that when you are men, you will be men of the right kind,—good men, pure men, just men, fearless men, brave men, devout men, looking up to God, and trying to do his will.

“Well! but,” some conscientious boy says, “there is the trouble; I have not always been doing God’s will. A great many times I did my own will, and offended God; displeased Him, and my conscience reproaches me for it. I am afraid to meet with God. I don’t know what I shall say to Him, when I stand before him as the judge.” Shall I tell you what you are to say? When one goes into a court of law to be tried, and is placed in the presence of the judge, the judge will commonly put this question: “Who appears for this man?” That is the way in which he calls for his advocate, for his defender, the lawyer who is to plead his case: and then, if the poor prisoner has

made the proper arrangements, the lawyer stands up before the judge and says : “ Your Honor, I appear for the prisoner at the bar.” It must be a terrible thing to appear before a judge without an advocate to plead for one, to hear the judge say, “ Who appears for this man ? ” and not be able to say, “ I have an advocate.” That must be terrible. But most terrible of all if it were the judgment seat of the Lord, and you and I were standing there, with no one to appear for us. But we need not be so. The Bible says there is an advocate, the Saviour, and we are to do with him as the prisoners, when they are charged, do with the lawyer ; we are to go to Him and tell Him that we trust Him ; tell Him all our case ; put our case in His hands ; and He will undertake the case. He promises to appear for us and make the best defense that can be made for us. He is the Saviour ; your Saviour and mine. Now, when

we remember all our faults and sins as the judge sees them, let us be sure that we have an advocate to appear for us. Let us put our case in His hands ; and we do put our case in His hands when we go to Him and tell Him all our errors and sins and ask Him to forgive us, and put them away. Plead this in the presence of the Judge, the Father whom we have offended. That is the way to be saved from the faults and sins of the past. When we have securely put our case into the Advocate's hand, and trusted and believed Him, and given ourselves to Him —when we have done that, it keeps us on our guard from doing wrong in the future. We say to ourselves, " My God has been so good to me ; my Saviour has been so good to me ; it is so merciful in Him to forgive my faults and sins, that I do not want to offend against him any more."

I knew a captain of a ship, a very brave

and noble man. He lost his life in saving his fellow creatures from being drowned— Captain Boyd, of the ship “Ajax,” a British ship of war. His sailors were not the regular rough lot that sailors, unfortunately, are, but remarkable for the goodness of their conduct and the steady way in which they carried themselves. They would not be seen in drunken brawls in the cities. When some one asked them about it, they answered: “We would not do it; we would not disgrace Captain Boyd.” That is the way that a noble man inspires others with the love of being noble. That is the way, Boys, in which we love and trust the blessed Redeemer when we have committed ourselves to Him. We have a motive then to do right. We would not dishonor Him whom we call our Master and our Lord, and whom we expect to “appear” for us, not by defending us, but by pleading that we are guilty, but that He has paid the penalty. We

would not dishonor Him by the doing of that which is wrong in His holy sight.

Now, I shall mention these things again before I close, and, if you please, I shall be as glad if you will never mind this present clapping until the very last day ; then you can do it. But rather, instead, give this kind of applause. Keep very quietly in your mind what is said, and do nothing to put it out of your thoughts.

Now, to make a good moral character, these things are essential : justness, goodness, pureness, and devoutness—devoutness being the habit of mind which leads us to look up to the Lord always. We do not need always to talk about Him. We do not always need to show to others that we are thinking about Him. But the deeds are the great things. “Even the child is known by his deeds.” So, I hope God will bless you, and help you to grow up into a pure, good, noble, moral character.

Now, if all be well this day week, this will be followed up by something else which comes in the same natural connection, and which, I hope, the older boys will be able to understand.

III.

I HAD the opportunity last week, Young Gentlemen, to speak a little to you with regard to those qualities in our character that are usually attended with success in life; and which you ought to cultivate in yourselves, if you are to be strong, and thoroughly good men.

Now, to-day, I wish to raise the question in your mind: Why do so many men fail in life? And when I say "fail" I do not mean—stop in business, or suspend payments, or compromise with their creditors, or break down, as we are accustomed to describe the misfortunes of men in business. Of course you know very well that a man may stop, or fail, or have to compound with his creditors, who is thoroughly and truly honest. He is

not to be blamed for failing, but greatly to be pitied. Many persons who have been impelled to take that step, have afterwards acted in such an honorable way as to stand better after than they did before, and by-and-by have been able to achieve great success for themselves. I am not speaking about failure of that kind at all, but about the failure that many persons make who start out apparently intended and adapted to do something great and good in life, but who entirely miss the mark, and barely obtain for themselves subsistence, and never effect anything of that which they hoped to attain. It has been stated publicly, but I have no means of verifying the statement, yet I suppose it is likely to be true, that of a hundred young men who go into Boston, and enter upon business life, ninety-five fail of marked success, and only five per cent. thoroughly attain their way to great commercial success in such a city as Boston.

Now you are looking forward to your life. Some of you are to be lawyers, some doctors, some merchants, some clergymen, and surely it will be a very good thing for you to have this thought in your mind; "I want to inquire how I am to attain real success, and so I want to avoid the rocks on which others have made shipwreck." And the sooner you begin to know these rocks, Young Gentlemen, the better it is for you.

Now I shall mention four causes to day which seem to account for many persons not attaining real success, and I think you can very easily remember them. I hope you will give me your best attention, while I try to put them simply before you.

In the first place, there are many who never inspire confidence at the beginning; something about them prevents them from being trusted; sometimes they have a very unfortunate manner. You ought to strive against that, and try to reform it. Sometimes

they have naturally a tortuous way and instead of going straight to the point, it seems to be better for them to go round about it. They are lacking in frankness and honesty of manner, and nobody expects anything good to come from them, and they do not get a chance. Now you can understand, in the case of boys and young men that unfortunately have something about them that can't be overcome, that you are to show great pity and tenderness and compassion for them. I don't know anything in which real religion shows itself more than in a tender, considerate regard shown toward some one of these unfortunate peculiarities never to be overcome; and I hope you will never be wanting in that real gentlemanly considerate manner. But I am speaking now of those things that we can overcome, if we would only take a little pains. And you cannot understand, boys, as long as you are boys, how much turns upon the impres-

sions we make upon persons in the beginning, so as to inspire confidence, and get the chance to make our way in life. Sometimes there is that in one's very manner, that leads persons to believe and trust. There is a very pretty story told—I cannot vouch for its truth, but it ought to be true—of a poor little boy, who found that his mother could not support him, so he determined to support himself, and applied for the position of cabin-boy, on a ship. He presented himself to the officer on board, and said, “If you please sir, I want you to take and make me a cabin-boy, and I intend to be an honest boy. “Who recommends you?” “Nobody.” “Where are your parents?” “I have only a mother, and she does not live here.” “How am I to know about you? Have you anything to show who you are?” “Nothing.” “Not a single thing to show what your name is, boy?” He unbuttoned his jacket and took a little book out of his

pocket, and said, "If you please, sir, my name is written here!" It was in the front part of a little pocket Bible, given to him in the Sunday-school. The captain said to him, "My boy, that is all I want; a boy that has his Bible like this, from the Sunday-school, is likely to be a good boy, and I will give you a place."

Of course, it is not once in ten thousand times, that that way of inspiring confidence in the beginning would occur. I have noticed this, that a boy of whom people will say, "Nobody expects anything from him," will not usually have anything for him. On the other hand, if his looks inspire confidence, they are stimulated to do something for him. Now most of you do not think of how you are to inspire confidence. Your parents have only to speak for you to their friends, and you will be put in the way, "because his parents are," so and so. There is a good old Latin word, *stirps*; it is a great

thing to be of a good *stirps*. "I knew his grandfather and his father, I knew their good qualities, and I trust that the boy will be a good boy and not be unworthy of his stock." One cause of failure is that persons do not inspire confidence.

In the second place, some never succeed from want of Industry. A boy is taken into an office; a young man is studying law; a young man has completed his education as a medical man, and is now a full-fledged doctor; but they are all wanting in industry. Industry is a very good thing, they think, for the poor people, the working people, for the workmen in the shop, and the hands in a mill; but industry does not apply to professional men, and men of good standing in life. That is a mistake. Everybody who wants to be successful in life must have industry. Keeping to the duties you are bound to do, is to lay patiently the basis of success.

There is a certain class of men who break down in life more than any other, viz., men of genius. I do hope that there is no "man of genius" among you. The poor men of genius have a hard lot in this world. They trust to their genius, disregarding industrious effort, and so go to the bottom. Do not let your aunts and sisters make you believe that you are a man of genius; but try you to make them believe that you are a man of diligence and steady effort,—a man able to hold on; for it is those who hold on that are able to effect something in the end. Last year, when the boating was going on, certain crews depended upon a spurt at the end. I need not say how that will work. Two-thirds of the way the crews take it easy, and at the last—at the end—put their strength into it. The boys, according to my recollection of college, were often betrayed into that uncertain course. "Take it easy, and put on steam,—a spurt at the

end." It is a bad plan. Do the duties of the day, every day; of every week, in the week; and of every month, in the month. You will come out best, and more speedily, you may be sure, in the end.

I like these hymns that you sing. I don't think I have ever had more pleasure in hearing this hymn, "Nearer my God to thee," than in hearing these fresh voices raise the notes of that melody. You remember that still simpler melody,

"How doth the little busy bee
Improve each shining hour."

If there is one lazy boy here, I wish that "little busy bee" would sting him, so that he would not be lazy any more, but be diligent and industrious, doing every day's duties on that day; and he will come to success in the end. By lack of that, many persons come to failure, and go down to their graves having effected nothing.

Now, I go one step further. A great many persons fail in life from lack of Honor. Honor! Many persons suppose that honor is a worldly word. I do not believe it! Honor is really a Christian word, a real religious word, and one ought to use it in a real religious sense. A man of honor is one who can do nothing base or mean. He will not break his word, tell a lie, wear a false appearance; not flatter nor fawn on anybody; not backbite his neighbor. He is a *man of honor*. He is a person to get a chance in life. Such men inspire confidence at once. If they have a certain kind of diligence and energy, it will not be long before they come into public life. There men see their virtues and faults, and everything they do. Suppose they are found to be lacking in honor? Perhaps a medical man; his brethren know they cannot depend upon him; he is a man to take a mean advantage. Perhaps a clergyman;

the "brethren" come to feel he is not the highest-toned sort of man. Perhaps a commercial man, and commercial men begin to find that he will take a base advantage. Perhaps a politician, and men come to find out that he manages his points by a little dexterous turn of language; not exactly telling a lie, but managing to deceive, and so they cease to trust him any more, and let him go. High-minded men do not want to associate with that man. Letters, written privately and confidentially, are treated as public; conversation held with him in frankness, he may use to my disadvantage. He is a mean, base, sneaking man. Many persons quietly drop out of the ranks because of that lack of honor. I have heard this statement made, and I think it to be true in the main: That a man usually will not achieve great success in life if he does not stand well with his own class. Now, I would like you to understand this, that a

boy whom everybody dislikes and despises at school would need to show very good qualities to become a good man. A clergyman whom all his brethren dislike, is likely to have something very doubtful about him. A doctor with whom the doctors will not associate, is put in a doubtful position. A merchant with whom persons will not do business, if they can help it, is not likely to be a successful merchant. Those who look at us, doing the same work with us, and who stand shoulder to shoulder with us, are not slow to judge us, as we do them. The human race will always be ready to conclude that if men of his own class, who know him through and through, do not believe in him, he cannot be believed in. So, Young Gentlemen, if you would like to be successful public men when your whiskers come out, never forget that you must be men of honor; men trusted not to lie, not to cheat, not to deceive, not to

steal; men who would suffer their right hands to be cut off, before they would stoop to be dishonest men; men who may not be rich, but will be men of honor.

Now I come to the greatest thing. I like to put the greatest last. Many persons remember the last thing spoken, if they do not remember what has gone before. Many persons fail in life for the want of the Blessing of Almighty God.

Now, many persons talk and think as if the Almighty God gave His blessings wantonly and capriciously. That is not the case. Before the laws of the weather were understood, people usually supposed the hail and the snow came down without any law of regularity, and spoke of the changes as if the weather were a person, and referred them jocularly to the clerk of the weather. We know that is not the case; that there are certain definite laws according

to which the changes of the weather take place. In Washington and in other places, wise and skillful men watch these laws, and predict what kind of weather we shall have.

Now, I want you to feel and think that the Almighty God does not give his blessings wantonly and arbitrarily, as when a man puts pieces of paper in a bag, and puts his hand in and takes up the first paper he finds and draws it out. That is not the way. God gives His blessing in accordance with certain laws and certain things in us which make us fit to receive it.

For example, knowledge is a blessing. God gives knowledge to those who use their minds. Money is a blessing. He gives money to those who are diligent, prudent, and industrious. Success is a blessing. God gives it to those who are straightforward, high-minded, and capable of diligence ; and just so of all other blessings. Now, we cannot get forward unless we have the blessing

of Almighty God. Suppose a man says to himself, "I am depending upon the blessing of Almighty God. My business is to make guns." And he intends to succeed and to get richer by making flint-lock guns. Men used these years ago. He has a factory up in New England, filled with flint guns, and hundreds of people all the time engaged in making flint guns. Somehow he does not succeed. Now, it is very disheartening for that man; "God does not give me his blessing," he says; but he is behind the times; he does not use intelligence; he is not complying with the laws according to which God gives his blessing! Flint guns are out of date, and only guns with percussion caps are used now, and the man cannot expect a blessing.

Suppose a man who is a manufacturer of clothing should make great coats out of fine cloth? Men do not want great coats of that kind; they want rough "Ulsters," and not

smooth cloth. Of course, the coats lie on his hands, and he thinks it very curious, and says, "I am not having God's blessing." He does not use common sense to see what is wanted, so as to obtain the blessing which he has not got. You must put yourselves in the way in which that blessing comes. I think a boy, with very great propriety, can go down upon his knees and say to that God to whom you were singing: "Oh, my father, I need help from Thee. I have difficult lessons which I wish to learn, and to be a good scholar. Quicken my mind and give me strength, and help me to learn these lessons, so that I can make progress." I think a good boy might do that. I think that a tender, loving Father would give grace and help to the boy. Now, the boy in that action puts himself in the way of getting the blessing. There are certain fixed rules and laws that the Creator has put in the constitution of things; and if we

drive ourselves against these laws, we cannot have his blessing.

I think even the smallest boys here can understand that, as they look at me and listen. Suppose you had to do a multiplication sum in your mind : you have to make this multiplication, " 9 times 7 are 49," and you go on and finish the sum, and it is brought before the master who has the class in charge. He says there is something wrong in that sum. You go over that again, and still the same thing is there— $9 \times 7 = 49$; and that spoils the whole thing. Now, suppose the boy has that mistake pointed out to him, and he says : " Look here ; why should not 9×7 be 49? I think 9×7 must be 49," and suppose he gets all the boys to agree and vote that 9×7 is 49. The chairman says, "The resolution is, 9×7 is 49. Are you ready for the question? As many as are in favor of that say aye." And all the

scholars but one say "aye;" and that one is a little fellow—one of these small boys; he cries out, "No." That little boy is right, and the whole school is wrong. That one boy who voted no, is in the right. Why? Because the Creator has fixed it in the constitution of things, and if the whole body of men agree to dash against the fixed constitution of things, the fixed constitution of things stands, and of necessity they go down. I hope you can understand it. There are laws all over just as regular and uniform as the laws of multiplication, and although a large majority of the human race vote against these laws, the laws stand the same; and if we disregard the laws, we shall not have the blessing we expect. One of these laws is obedience to parents and teachers. Listen to this text, from the Best of Books: "The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young

eagles shall eat it." Just think of the force of that. It is taken from the striking features of Eastern life, where a man is killed in the open air, and his dead body flung away on the sands, and the vultures from afar smell it and flock to the spot, and the ravens pick out the eyes, and the vultures devour the flesh. Well, if there be any boy now who does this thing, he may not be flung out on the sands, according to the vivid Oriental representation, but sorrows and evils and calamities will fall upon him, and his conscience will not be at ease ; and perhaps, fifty years from this, when he is an old man, and his hair is white, his own sons or his own grandsons will shoot arrows of grief and sorrow into his heart, and he will say, "What better could I expect? When I was a boy I disregarded and despised my parents, and broke their hearts. Now these are taking revenge upon me. That is what I was to them." That is one of the fixed

laws—obedience to parents and to those whom God has placed over us ; and if we force ourselves against these fixtures in the constitution of things, we cannot have the blessing of Almighty God.

Now, we all want to have that blessing. We all want to succeed. The principal of this school, I feel very sure, has, next to the glory of God, no higher wish than that he should turn out from this school good boys, who, by-and-by, will be good young men at college and elsewhere ; or by-and-by to be practical men in this city, or any other city where your lot shall be cast. We want you to succeed in life, and would be sorry to have you fail. Now keep these rules in your mind, and if you wish to inspire confidence in the future, continue to deserve that confidence by industry and diligence ; continue to be worthy of high honor ; and, to crown all, evermore seek for the blessing of Almighty God. And

that you may have that you must put yourself in the way of it. He does not give his blessing without respect to the laws in accordance with which He carries on the work of his providence and the work of his grace.

And that word "grace" reminds me that I must say another word. Some of you may, perhaps, say, "That is all very good, and if I had to start over again, from the very beginning, I would note what you say to me, and try to act on that plan; but now, ten, fifteen, or sixteen years of my life have passed away, and I have committed a great many faults and sins, and I cannot go back all that long period. What am I to do with all these faults and sins?" Well, my dear Boys, just there grace comes as forgiveness, a free gift from Him who died on the cross that we might have eternal life. All you have to do is to go and tell that Dear Father to whom you sung

“Nearer my God.” Tell Him all your faults and sins. It is called confession in the Bible. Go and confess to Him without any reserve or fear, and ask Him for the sake of the Gracious Redeemer, to blot out your sins, and put in you His grace. Oh, He will do it, for He is long suffering and abundant in goodness and truth. And then He will take care of your young lives, and will guide you and keep you from temptation, and make you diligent, successful, industrious, honorable, gentle, pious, and eminently good, and give His blessing. He will give you success in this life, and after this life ends, in the world to come, He will give you life everlasting. Now let us join in a few words of simple prayer, that for you God may do these things.

I V .

I DARE say it has come into the minds of some of the boys that we are living, all of us, in two worlds at one and the same time. Here to-day, you and I are living really in two worlds. There is this present world that we see, whose sounds we hear, and whose experiences we pass through, that we call the world of sense. And there is, at the same time, that other world, of which you have been singing just now, which is not the world of sense, but just as real as this world. God is in that world; Jesus, of whom you have been singing, is in that world; the angels are in it; the departed spirits of men are in it; and that world is just as truly actual as this present world,

through which we walk and in which we live.

It is no objection to that world that the senses do not take note of it. You take a horse-shoe magnet, and you can measure it, and see so many inches; you can weigh it, and have so many ounces' weight; you look at it, and handle it, and, if you put it up to your nose, there is a certain smell of iron about it; but there is nothing that your sight or touch will enable you to discover of the magnetism in it. There is magnetism in it, over and above anything which your senses can perceive; and so it is with this other world, into which we are going, and with which we have to do. Always mingling with it, we do not discover it with our senses. We know it by our faith. We believe it partly by something the Creator has put in our hearts, and still more by what He has declared in His Blessed Word.

Now, I want you to understand, dear boys, that every now and then God is opening the door of that other world. Some of you have had a little sister die. I saw one yesterday, three and a half years old, with the loveliest face; more beautiful than the flowers round about her in the coffin. That is the kind of door God opens to the other world. We see a little body lying in the coffin, but we know that the soul is not there; it has stepped into the other world. God opens the door every day, and makes us know that there is a real other world. Now, you and I will be in a great degree what we are in relation to that world. If we disregard it, and do not get to thinking rightly about it, we shall be offending God, for God is in that other world, and it is with God that you and I have mainly to do.

It is a very common thing to hear that we should live for the glory of God. I shall not wonder if that word "glory" deceives some

persons, so that they do not see the real meaning of things. Suppose, instead of "glory," we say "credit." When you graduate from this school-room, some will go to college and some to business. If you are intelligent and educated, every one will say it is to the credit of this school. Many of you, when grown, I hope, will have this said of them: "This boy is a credit to the school." When you come here from your homes, and you are good, quiet, gentle and true, people will look at you and say: "You are a credit to your home." You reflect credit upon it. In other words, you give it glory. You and I have to be a credit to the Almighty God. We have to live so as to be a credit to Him. He has made us, and He has given us one whom we call our Lord and Master; and it is about that I want to talk to you this morning.

We are to be His servants, actively doing His will, and so serving Him that we shall be

a credit to Him. Perhaps some one says, "There are some who cannot actively do anything. How can they be a credit to Him?" Perhaps some of you think of a little brother who has some bodily disease, and so is unable to walk; some of you perhaps see poor cripples who seem not able to do anything. Some of you know of aunts or uncles or cousins who are always confined to their beds, who are constant invalids. When you suppose that they cannot glorify God and do Him credit, ah! that is the gravest kind of mistake, and one to be got out of your minds. There are two ways in which credit is shown forth. One, actively doing; the other, patient suffering; and there are many persons who do Him credit and give Him glory by the patience with which they suffer, no less than others who give Him credit by the activity in which they work.

When you were a little child you were

taught to say that prayer, "Thy will be done upon earth as in heaven;" and if, by God's appointment, I were laid on my back, helpless with spinal disease, lying there patiently, and feeling "God has done this, and I am satisfied," I should be glorifying Him perhaps as much as by preaching sermons in the pulpit.

There is one thing about that which even the little boys can understand, if they take the trouble to think about it. There are some kinds of goodness and some kinds of virtue that we shall not have the chance to show in heaven, but can have the opportunity to show here upon earth. There will be no need, boys, for patience in heaven; there will be nothing to bear there, but everything to enjoy. If ever we are to show patience, it is here we are to do it, when we are suffering under God's providential hand. So that if you must stop in your homes, and have to suffer and lie

up, and continue to be in your bed for weeks and months, do not suppose you can do no credit to the Lord. You can, if you will only have in your minds the right spirit of submission to Him, and say of Him, "God has done this, and let him do with me whatever he pleases. I am content. His will be done."

I want to tell you quite briefly three or four things which you ought to seek to have in yourselves. Suppose, for example, that Mr. A. T. Stewart engages a young man for his employment at his great store on Broadway, and says to him, "You are to come and begin work on the first day of January." The young man walks down, at the beginning of the year, to the store and turns in. Stepping up to one of the desks or counters, he begins to tumble things about quite generally, putting them in a new arrangement altogether, without speaking to anybody. You would say, What a strange young man that

is! And the gentleman in charge of the department into which he has stumbled would come and take him to task, and say, "What business have you there?" "Why, Mr. Stewart engaged me in his service." "Did you ask him what to do?" No; I never thought of that; he engaged me to go to work for him, and I am working for him." The foreman of the department would say, "You want common sense. If you had common sense you would have asked him, in the first instance, what he wanted you to do in his service, and not tumble things about in this way."

Every one can understand that part. Now, dear boys, if we would be His servants we should find out what His will is: what it is that He wants us to do. How shall we know it?

Here are great facts in nature: men call thunder and lightning the voice of God. But a boy cannot find God's will from the

thunder and the lightning. God has revealed His will in some other way which you can understand. It is contained in His Blessed Word. Go to that Book and ask what His will is, if you want to be His servants. That tells us His will very plainly. For instance, the Ten Commandments tell us what He wants us to do ; and other portions of His will tell us how to honor Him. Find out this from His Book. Then, if you really mean to be His servants, set to work.

I live in Fifty-sixth street. Immediately behind my house the masons have been building a very beautiful mansion at the corner of the street looking on Fifth avenue. They are putting up, in the grounds around it, neat little brick walls. When I am dressing in the morning I see how they go to work. Whenever they lay one row of bricks they take the plumb-line and stretch it so as to see if the bricks are perfectly straight, and every one in its place. Two things are

needed : First of all is the eye ; a blind man could not do it ; in the next place, the plumb-line. This is the standard by which he judges if the bricks are straight. And so it is with us in our work. We have Reason, to use the builder's line. We have His Word, which is like the plumb-line which we should lay to all we do, and judge our actions by it, according to which, whether good or bad, we are to proceed in them or reform them. That is the reason we want you to study this Book. We want you to know what His will is. It is said in the Book of Psalms, " The law of the Lord is perfect." So, if you will know what your Master, who owns you, wishes you to do, you are to learn what He requires.

There were two men of the same name, one in the Old Testament, the other in the New. Thinking of the lives of these two, you get a knowledge of those who ask and those who do not. One was Saul, the first King of the Hebrews, in the Old Testament,

—a fine, handsome man. At first the people thought nothing could stand against him. By-and-by, God told him to go and smite the nation of the Amalekites, and put them to death. But he let his people spare the best of their possessions, and he spared the king, so as to have a magnificent triumph, and, like the Roman generals, to show the king as his captive. He did not ask what the Lord's will was, and did not do it. And the Lord put him aside and took the throne away from him. In the New Testament there is another man, who was called Saul of Tarsus. He was turned from his great hatred of the Christian cause and became a believer. He was made an apostle. Then he became Paul, and became great as a true, honest and earnest man; and what he believed he ought to do, he did heartily. You may be sure of this, that if a man is honest and earnest for the Lord, though on the wrong road, if he wants to do God's

will, God will show him that he is on the wrong line, and bring him into the right one. When the Saviour showed himself to Saul, and spoke to him, Saul instantly changed his mind regarding Him, and his question was, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" So, looking straight to the Lord, we should say, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do? Here I am, ready to go to work, to do anything." That is the first real element in the character of a true servant of God.

Now I want to show you the second, and, to do that, I had better tell you some things in the life of a very remarkable man, I think one of the greatest men the world ever had in it. It was Moses. He was remarkable for meekness. That was his spirit. The world rather admires men like the great conqueror. Men admire a man who has great power, and goes through the world like a locomotive, and sweeps aside everything that stands in his way. Moses was

the greatest in his meekness. He was brought up as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and, until he was forty years of age, he was treated as a Prince of Egypt. But he always felt that he was a Jew ; and one day he went out into the field and saw an Egyptian striking a Jew, and his blood was so warmed that he raised his hand and delivered his countryman by killing the Egyptian. The next day, when he went out, he saw two Jews quarreling, and supposing that these men would know that he loved them, because he delivered the Hebrew the previous day, and would heed whatever he would say to them, he said to the man that was striking the other, " Why do you your neighbor wrong ? " And the man, instead of submitting to him and saying to himself, " This is Moses, who is our natural leader, " turned upon him and said : " Who made you a ruler in this matter ? What right have you to speak to me about it ? Do you mean to

kill me as you did the Egyptian yesterday?" At that time Moses was forty years old, and, when he heard the man say he had killed the Egyptian, he saw that it was known, and he fled away, and for forty years he was living in the desert to be schooled into the knowledge of himself.

Usually it is good for a man to go into the desert for awhile. It is a good thing for a boy to go to college, and into his lonely room there. Then he says: "I did not know the value of my home half as well as I do now."

In the desert, Moses stayed forty years before the Lord came to him. You remember that beautiful story about the bush burning with fire, but which was not consumed. The Lord spoke to him out of the bush, "Come now and deliver my people out of Egypt." Did he jump at the proposal? No indeed. Why not? Forty years before he thought he was the very man to do it. Now

he said, "I am a poor creature; I cannot speak well; I have a stammering tongue; I am not a fit man for the work; some one else must do it." The Lord began to get angry with him and constrained him to do it. When he thought he was fit to do God's work, God thought he was not: and, when he thought he was not fit, God thought he was. The reason for this thing is that a man, in order to be fitted for God's service, is to be made meek—made to feel that he must depend upon another, and that grace must be given from above. When this is the case, I tell you, Young Gentlemen, you will not suppose that you can take care of yourselves. You will never feel yourselves to be so wise, so strong, so good, that you can do it. You need help from above, and, when you ask for it, then the help will come. That is the second point—to know that we have need of strength and that God is near us for our strength.

The third thing that must be found in real service to Him is, that it be from the heart, and not from the hand or eye. We shall only be acceptable servants of the Lord when we work from the heart, because you see His eye is on your heart. It is an insult to appear to be doing things in His service when we are not doing them from the heart. There was Joshua, in the Old Testament, the successor of Moses. Whatever he did, he did it with his whole heart. That is his greatness. He was not a very able man; he was not a man of shining prominence, but a man who did his duty, and so was qualified to bear rule over the men of his time. Joshua said, "Let others do as they will, I will serve the Lord." That is the kind of service He requires—what goes from the heart.

One other qualification for service, if the life is to be for God, must be named. It is called by various words in the Bible, sometimes

looking unto the Lord, or "trusting to the Lord." You remember these words, "The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble, and He knoweth them that trust in Him." More frequently it is called "Faith." "Have faith in God," "Trust Him." Now, He reveals Himself to us in that glorious Person to whom you were singing, "I need Thee every hour." If we are to be true followers of Him, it must be by trusting Him who gave His life that we might be saved, whom we call Him our Redeemer and our Lord.

Sometimes persons seem to and talk and think about this trust, and represent it in such a way as to mislead and deceive. They represent it as something to be done, and completed, like signing one's name, whereas, according to the pictures given us in the best of books, it is something that goes on from day to day and hour to hour. I do not trust the Lord on

Monday, so as not to trust Him on Tuesday ; in January, so as not to trust Him the rest of the year ; on Sunday, so as not to trust Him during the week. If we have faith in our hearts in God, it will go on from day to day and hour to hour, in all our feelings and duties.

Have you ever seen a young girl learn to fire a pistol? I will not say imagine a boy, for he would naturally be brave about it. I have seen young ladies acquiring this accomplishment, and it is a very curious thing. It may illustrate to you the false notion that many persons have about faith. The pistol is loaded, and handed to the young lady. She takes hold of it very "gingerly," as if afraid it may shoot from the handle. Now, she means to go through with it,—there is the mark, so she takes the pistol in her hand, and holds it out a long way, and appears to take aim with the greatest exactness, but does not shoot. She

is a little afraid, trembles, and holds back. At last she screws up her courage to the sticking-point, and, as you suppose, taking the most exact aim, shuts her eyes firmly and fires. The thing is done and done with.

Well, now, many intelligent persons are led to believe that faith is something like that—something you end in an instant. You screw up your courage for it; then shut your eyes, and just believe once for all, and, when you have believed once for all, then the thing is done, and you are saved. Now, that is a mistaken idea about faith itself. That real faith which is honest goes on from time to eternity. We are always believing God; always trusting Him; always looking for the teaching of His Holy Spirit. You can see how in such a case, if you have reason for believing and trusting God to-day, it is good for to-morrow, and so on through life. I believe, I always believe,

a true man says ; and because I always believe, I always do trust Him ; and because I trust Him, I always obey ; I always fear God, and because I fear, I respect His commandments ; I always have confidence, and because I have confidence, I seek to glorify His name. Always believing God, I always trust His Beloved Son, who gave his life that we might live eternally ; and always try to do what is right, because I have some constant affection, by faith in Him who gave His life that we might come out of the sorrows and perils of this uncertain life, and enjoy peace and glory in the life beyond.

Now, dear boys, most of you are young : some of you very young, and very many of these things that I have been saying to you, you do not now understand. But I wish you may carry them in your minds, and by and by you will carry them out in your lives. We are coming very near the

end of another year. You are about to have a happy Christmas time, and I hope it will be very joyous to every one of you, and that you will have all the satisfaction you are promising yourselves. I hope you will remember, in the joys and in the sorrows of your lives, in the duties and in the pleasures, that all the real solid happiness that we can have must come from serving God and trying to do His will. I have seen rich men that were very miserable. I have seen great men that were very unhappy. I have seen men of genius who made themselves and every-body about them wretched. I have seen poor, lowly, humble creatures, that had hardly anything but their hope in Christ yonder, and their fear of the Lord, that had a quiet, purifying peace — that which the Bible calls “The peace that passeth all understanding.” It may be God’s will to spare you to become men, and, if so, I hope you will be true, brave, good men; it may

be God's will that you never shall grow up to be men ; it may be God's will that some of these little boys will some day grow sick, and mother will be anxious, and the doctor will be sent for, and you will be put to bed, and bitter medicines will have to be taken day after day, while the head is burning with fever, and the medicines do no good, and you grow worse, until, perhaps, the doctor says : "There is no hope for him, not the slightest ;" and all gather about in the room, and look at that face soon to be still in death. By-and-by, death will come, and the doctor will lay his hand upon the wrist, and say : "I cannot perceive any beating of the heart. Dissolution has just taken place." When the last breath has been drawn, then the question will be, dear boys : Now that the body is dead, and the spirit takes its departure from it, whither does it go ? Into that other world, of course. But there are two

sections in that other world. There is that place where the loving servants of God are, and there is that place where the rebels against God are. And the great question is : Into which place? Among the good and holy, with the angels, and the Son, and the saints who serve the Lord, or, among the angels that were bad and unholy, and the men that rebelled against him?

Now, I want you to think about that at present. I want you to have faith in God *now*, and to have trust in Him to whom you have just been singing, *now*; to get it and have it *now*; to go on from *now*, a constant now, a perpetual now, always trusting, always believing, always looking to Him, always grateful to him, always committing yourself to Him, always doing the thing that is right before Him, because you love Him, and are grateful to him for the blessings he gives you now.

That is real, thorough religion : and that

is real manliness. You know what a noble thing manliness is : well that is the way to be manly. Begin by being godly, and the godly man is eminently a manly man, who will not lie, cheat, swindle, nor deceive, nor do a base, mean, or rough thing ; that will not bully the weak ones, nor shirk his duty, nor impose upon others, nor wear two faces, one on this side and another on that side, but stand right up, because he fears God, and wants to do what is right in the sight of Him who says : The very thoughts of our hearts are open before Him. Oh, may you be such godly men. Then you will be a blessing in your homes, and a credit to this institution ; and most of all, your lives and your death will be to the glory, that is, to the credit of Him who has made us, and who has redeemed us by the blood of His Son.