

Lindsley, Philip

IMPROVEMENT OF TIME.

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TWO DISCOURSES,

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DISCOURSE I.



PSALM, XC. 12.

*So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts
unto wisdom.*

THE Psalm, from which these words are taken, is supposed to have been a prayer offered up by "Moses the man of God," in a season of peculiar trial and distress. The spies whom he had commissioned to explore the land of Canaan, on their return, represented the natives as exceedingly strong and formidable—as giants, with whom it would be rash and vain to contend. The Israelites were disheartened by the report; and, as usual, murmured against Moses, and denounced him as the author of all their calamities. Instead of confiding in Jehovah, the God of hosts, who had so often made bare his arm for their deliverance; they cry out in seditious threatening language—"would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness!" The Almighty, notwithstanding the earnest entreaty of the prophet, determines to punish them, yet not with that immediate and total destruction which their contumacy and unbelief so richly merited. For the intercession of Moses was not entirely disregarded. "And the Lord said I have pardoned according to thy word: But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord. Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles which I did in Egypt, and in the wilderness, have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice. Surely they shall not see the land which I swore unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it." Thus it was decreed that none of them should survive the term of forty years, except Joshua and Caleb, who maintained their integrity, amidst the general tumult and rebellion. Well therefore might Moses pray, both for himself and his guilty people,—"*So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.*"

But this petition is recorded, not merely because it suited Moses and the Israelites in their extraordinary circumstances. It is recorded because it suits the character and condition of every individual of every age and nation. It ought to be in the mouth, and to affect the heart and life, of every son and daughter of Adam. This is the prayer which true wisdom would lead us all to make—"So teach us, thou Infinite Fountain of truth and wisdom, to bear in mind the shortness and uncertainty of life, that we may, at any moment, be prepared for death, by spending all our days in the constant and faithful discharge of every duty."

In further illustrating and applying the text, we shall endeavour to place before you two distinct views of our existence here.

I. The first, as it regards the present world only.

II. The second, as it is a state of preparation for a future and a better world.

I. In the first place then, let us inquire what wisdom would recommend to us as the happiest and most suitable course of life even though we look not beyond the grave.

"To number our days," is a Hebrew idiom implying that they are so exceedingly few as to be easily counted. We see them rapidly hastening to a close. It is therefore our interest, no less than our duty, to improve them diligently as they pass. Three score years and ten are, in general, the longest period allotted to human life. Few however, comparatively speaking, reach that period, or even the half of it. This fact no body denies or disputes. By far the greater part of mankind die in infancy, in youth, in early manhood, before they arrive at the age of thirty or forty. Here and there one only is spared to fill up the measure of the years assigned to this mortal career. To realize most forcibly this truth, perhaps the best way is to ask any man, seventy years old, about the companions of his youth. Where are they? Let him look around, and bring in review all those with whom he delighted to associate in the days of health, and gaiety, and business, and ambition;—"alas," with a sigh he will exclaim, "they are gone—they have paid the debt of nature—they have left me alone in the world." Two or three, perhaps, he will point out, still standing like himself, the trembling mementoes of generations that are already forgotten,—and their places occupied by strangers who never knew them.

But suppose for a moment, that you, my hearers, will complete the period of three score and ten. Still, in order fairly to ascertain the sum of life, we must deduct the time lost or wasted in infancy, in sleep, in sickness, in various kinds of refreshment and recreation, in idleness and unprofitable conversation, and in all

those ways by which men contrive to kill or get rid of time, without enjoying or improving it. Let the calculation be made on the most liberal scale. Give to man all the virtue he is capable of possessing, and as long a life as can be expected. Grant that he mispends no time wilfully.—And then tell us what is the amount of active useful life. Probably, on a candid examination, and after a reasonable allowance on the score just mentioned, it will be found that the oldest and most industrious men on earth do not live much over twenty years. At least, the man of seventy is supposed not to be actively employed more than twenty years. Surely then, life is short. And the representations of it given in scripture have more point and pertinence than is generally perceived. There we are told that life is a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. That our days on earth are as a shadow, as an hand-breadth—that they are swifter than a weaver's shuttle—that they are as grass, as a flower of the field. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone, and the place thereof shall know it no more. "We spend our years as a tale that is told. The days of our years are three score years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be four score years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away." Considering then the present life as the only scene of action and enjoyment ever to be expected: considering that seventy years comprise the whole period which can be denominated life; and twenty years as about the whole that we can apply to all the purposes which we may be desirous or ambitious to accomplish; I mean on the supposition that we attain to a good old age: and considering also the fact that so few ever become old—does not wisdom dictate to us, as both natural and reasonable, that we should use all practicable means to prolong an existence which must, at furthest, terminate so very soon? For to those who have placed their affections exclusively on this world, death can proffer nothing but misery or annihilation; and neither of these, we suppose, can afford much consolation in prospect.

Men, who limit their views to this world, ought, in all conscience, to desire to live, and to strive to live as long as possible.

"A short life and a merry one," I know is the motto of some. But all such are regarded as fools by the wise men of this world, as well as by the candidates for a better. "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die"—may be said and sung by the sensualist in his cups, with great spirit and glee among his sottish companions: but this brutish sentiment has never yet obtained currency with the mass even of this world's votaries.

It has long since been discovered, that, in order to make the best of the world ; in order to enjoy the most of its pleasures and riches and honours, a long life of health and vigour and prosperity, is very important ; and, in general, quite essential. The poor hapless rake, whose career is cut short at the age of twenty or thirty, is commonly pitied or ridiculed even by those who indulge in the same vices, but who contrive to keep within safer limits. While he is denounced and condemned by all who aim at, what they conceive to be, nobler objects. A vicious young man (I use the term *vicious* in its worldly and worst acceptation,) finds no quarter any where, except among his youthful and vicious associates. And even they often contemplate, with a kind of malicious compassion, one and another of their number, whose emaciated form and haggard countenance testify that he is not long for this world. They daily behold him wasting away, but they hurry him along, and urge him into new and greater excesses ; until they literally kill him in the midst of pleasures which he has long felt to be his curse and his ruin. Such a course can have no serious advocates. It is as contemptible as it is horrible.

It is presumed, my hearers, that you all wish to live to a good old age. Nay it is probable that you would gladly escape death altogether. Now, from this love of life which is so natural to all men, and which is peculiarly strong in the carnally minded ; we would suggest the propriety of a regular temperate mode of living, as the surest means of prolonging your days to the utmost extent which mortals can attain.

It is very well known that every species of inordinate and licentious indulgence has a powerful and direct tendency to shorten life. The vices of intemperance daily send thousands of wretched victims to a premature grave. I need not attempt to unfold to you the structure of the body, and the manner in which the excessive gratification of any appetite or passion operates upon it and hastens its dissolution. It is not so much the mode, as the result, with which we are now concerned. We see the effect, and we know the cause—and this is enough for our present purpose. Diseases often originate in vice. And it is a very trite remark, that, a libertine youth sows the seeds of death which soon vegetate and overpower the debilitated constitution. Now a man who will thus barter a life of health and calm enjoyment, for a momentary excess, which is often painful even when indulged, does not surely act on wise principles. He does not consult his own welfare, in any respect or degree ; but madly sacrifices the only possibility of happiness within his

reach to blind headstrong passion. The brevity of life forbids his offering any apology in extenuation of his follies. And we cannot reconcile his self destroying conduct with his dread of death or his love of life. He often plunges into the gulf with open eyes. He knowingly, and yet against his wishes, curtails the span of his existence. He rushes into the arms of death ; and yet the thought of really dying fills him with unspeakable horror in the moment of cool reflection. But rather than desist, he ventures the irreparable loss both of his capacity and his opportunity of enjoyment. He virtually courts the shroud and the grave, while there is nothing he would more gladly avoid. He seems to say to the ghastly messenger—"come on,—but present the poisoned cup, with so many intoxicating sweets infused, that I shall not perceive its object or be conscious of its effects."

The single vice of drunkenness destroys more men in our country than sword or famine or pestilence, or than all combined. Savages are extremely prone to this vice. Barbarous and grossly ignorant people are every where prone to it. I was going to call it, by way of eminence, the peculiar and distinguishing vice of barbarians and savages—as well as of the baser part of most civilized communities. Certain it is, that our Indians and our slaves delight in the free and excessive use of inebriating liquors ; and they seldom miss an opportunity of indulging their propensity. The poor and the ignorant easily give themselves up to it ; and it serves to extend and to perpetuate poverty, ignorance, and wretchedness wherever it prevails. But this vice, odious, and debasing, and ruinous, and beastly as it is, is not confined exclusively to that portion of mankind who approach the brute in intellect and condition. There are those who prefer claims to refinement—to superior mental powers and mental furniture—who indulge in this vice. Some men of science and literature, and of honourable standing in society, occasionally—and a few, habitually, degrade themselves in this way to a level with the veriest refuse and dregs of human society.

Nay, we have heard that there are some colleges and universities in the world—some even in our own highly favoured land—where gallant young men ; high-minded, honourable young men, instead of adorning and enriching their minds with the precious stores of science and literature, give themselves almost wholly to sensual pleasure—get drunk every day—and indulge in all the variety of dissipation. Now such youths assuredly will not be thought by any competent judges, christian or heathen, to be act-

ing a very wise or profitable part. Their parents send them to college to acquire useful knowledge, that they may be qualified for all the honourable stations and distinctions which this world has to bestow. And they disregard parental authority, and blast parental hopes and wishes; and return home, after years of folly and expense, the bloated wrecks and monuments of disease and vice and shame—to meet the embraces of a sister, and a mother, and a father, who had been fondly anticipating the joy of beholding in a brother and a son all that is manly, and polished, and intelligent, and noble, and generous, and lovely. Ah, what mortification, what cruel disappointment—what tears of anguish—what ineffable misery do I witness in such a meeting! A youth who, a few years before, had departed from sacred home, followed by the blessings and the prayers of a beloved family—the hope and the pride of his relatives and friends—returning to them again from the fountain of science, a degraded, senseless, brutish, dying sot! Where is the parent who would not rather follow his only son to an untimely grave, than to receive him thus transformed into all that is disgusting, and repulsive, and pitiable in the human form and character?

Where shall we find an adequate, or even a specious apology for such madness? Why is it that the dictates and counsels of wisdom are so often contemned by youth when associated for the noblest purposes—when engaged in the most exalted and grateful pursuits—when professedly submitting to that course of discipline and culture which will prepare them to lead the way in honour's high career, and to ascend the loftiest steep of human greatness?—To say nothing of other and nobler ends to which well directed and sanctified learning is ever subservient. Surely, if there be any thing in human prospects alluring and encouraging—any thing in itself calculated to impart stability to character—any thing to deter from gross and destructive vice—any thing to prompt to enterprise and exertion;—the privileged student of a college is the individual, above all others, who should be the farthest removed from all that is grovelling and mean and licentious. It is he, if any one on earth, whom we should expect to see asserting the dignity of his nature, and manfully contending for the noblest prize within the grasp of mortality.

But the fact is otherwise. Most colleges and public seminaries for the education of youth have ever been, more or less, the haunts of folly and dissipation;—and, in some instances, the very sinks of iniquity and abomination. This fact, to be sure, argues not much in behalf of the native excellence and moral

purity of the human character. For here we behold some scores, or hundreds of innocent unsophisticated youth (innocent, I mean, in the world's opinion,) brought together from various and distant parts of the country ;—and directed to an exercise of their faculties and talents the best adapted to preserve them from the evil that is in the world—to keep them out of harm's way—and to raise them above every unhallowed desire and vicious indulgence. They are not seduced by hardened profligates, already hackneyed in the wiles and arts and vices of the world ;—for, by the supposition, there are none such among their number. On the contrary, they are usually placed under the guidance of virtue and wisdom and experience—under the wholesome control of reasonable authority—under the watchful care and restraining influence of affectionate solicitude and instructive example. But in spite of all these favourable circumstances—in spite of all these animating considerations and motives—in spite of all this painful vigilance, and parental counsel, and kindly discipline—they speedily find out the path that leads to the house of the destroyer : they taste the intoxicating draught, at first perhaps, with trembling lips—but anon, without disgust—presently, they seek it with eagerness, and revel in all the riot of forbidden and destructive pleasure with delight.

Solomon has long since marked out their course, and painted their folly to the life. And he knew something of the matter from his own experience, and still more from observation. Study his excellent sayings and graphick descriptions—his pointed proverbs, and prudent counsels, and pathetic appeals. He will teach you to be wise—wise for this world—to say nothing of another.

Now I do not know how many, or how few, or whether any of my present hearers are in the predicament suggested ; or whether they are verging towards it. This I know, that all youth every where are exposed to the perils, and liable to the excesses at which we have hinted. They cannot therefore be unseasonably warned and counselled to take heed to their ways, lest they fall a prey to intemperance before they suspect their danger.

I am aware of the aversion which most men feel to religion. It is enough that any thing be presented under a religious aspect to ensure their disregard to it. Keep religion then, if you please, out of view. I am contemplating the world as it is. The world in itself is very good. There are a great many very good and very desirable things in it. The great mass of mankind seem to be very well satisfied with it. They make it their portion—and their regret usually is that they cannot get enough

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of it. The grand problem to be solved therefore is, how shall we number our days so as to apply our hearts unto wisdom? How shall we live so as most certainly and effectually to compass those ends, and to obtain those objects, which, in the estimation of wise worldly men, will confer the greatest happiness?

Riches, honours, power, knowledge, pleasure—these are the principal things which men covet, and struggle to acquire and to enjoy. But in order to attain these, and certainly to enjoy them when attained—life, I repeat, long life is indispensable.

Now all the writers and speculators on the subject of longevity (at least, since the philosopher's stone and the panacea of the alchemists have been despaired of,) agree in recommending temperance, early rising, and due exercise of body and mind, as necessary to long life. Here then you have the first lesson which wisdom inculcates. You cannot hope to live many years except you be temperate. Temperance in eating and drinking—in every pursuit—in every amusement—and in every indulgence is indispensable; at least, as a general rule. This is a truth of the very first importance. It is radical. It is grounded on the reason and nature of things. It is confirmed by the experience of ages. Every instance of a departure from strict temperance is followed by some portion of pain—And habitual intemperance becomes habitual misery, except in the paroxysms of maddening mirth and revelry, when reason and consciousness become torpid, and incapable of doing their office.

I urge this point with all possible earnestness, because it is so completely overlooked by the young, and because a failure here is blasting to all their hopes. It will be death to all their golden dreams and prospects of earthly bliss. It will make few their days—and will render those few a burthen and a curse to themselves, to their friends, and to the world. I urge it with affectionate importunity, because I have seen issue from colleges consecrated to science, to virtue and to piety, most melancholy and heart-rending examples of all the misery of which youthful intemperance, in its various forms, is capable. Ah, my young friends, did you know the grief—the torture, which you inflict in the bosoms of those who love you most, and who would esteem no sacrifice too great to save you from the snares which beset your path—you would dash from your lips the proffered cup, and spurn with indignation from your sight the wretch, who would seduce you from wisdom's ways.

I appeal to history—to biography—to the experience of ancient and of modern times—to the dead and the living—to instances innumerable all around you—to the sentiments of all

the sages, and of all the libertines, who have ever dogmatized, and speculated, and moralized on the subject, for the truth of the position, that intemperance is the bane of health and the destruction of all that the world calls good and great.

You may admire an Alexander while pursuing a career of unrivalled splendour and glory—but you pity his folly in losing the empire of the world, at the very moment, when he might have begun to enjoy it, and become the benefactor of the nations whom he had subdued. How different the character and conduct of the Persian Cyrus, as portrayed by the elegant pencil of the inimitable Xenophon? Temperance was his cardinal virtue; as it was of all his countrymen at that time. It was the temperate and hardy Macedonians who achieved the conquest of the then degenerated and effeminate Persians. But in turn, they too, with their master, fell a prey to the luxuries and the vices of the people whom they conquered. Such has been the usual order of events. Temperance, with its allied and kindred virtues, has ever given superiority to individuals and to nations, over all others addicted to the opposite vices.

The same order obtains still; and it obtains universally. Youthful intemperance ordinarily prevents the attainment of any excellence. Had Alexander been a drunkard at twenty, it is probable he would never have enterprised the conquest of Asia. His father's kingdom would have satisfied his ambition: and his father's palace would have been the scene of all his riotous and destructive pleasures. He might have been a Nero—but of heroic exploits, he would have been as guiltless as the Roman incendiary.

But at whatever period the vice of intemperance gains the mastery of the man, it commences the work of spoliation. His laurels begin to wither from his brow—his riches take to themselves wings—his health sinks beneath its insidious approaches—his honours are scattered to the winds—his intellect is enfeebled—his learning is no longer profitable.—He is contemplated with scorn by some; with compassion by others; while he is honoured and trusted by none. What does the world usually think and say of a drunken lawyer, or physician, or merchant, or planter, or statesman, or general?

Had Newton, or Locke, or Washington been a sot in early youth, we had of course never heard their names. They had perished like the brute—and the world had cared nothing about them. But suppose they had become habitually intemperate at any period of their lives—suppose, after all their labours and achievements, they had died drunkards: how would the beneve-

lent biographer and historian have laboured to draw the veil of charitable oblivion over the last years of human greatness and human frailty! I have made this revolting supposition that you may, at a glance, apprehend the lustre and the beauty of unblemished character; and realize how foul a blot this single vice would have impressed on their name. But Newton and Locke and Washington were temperate from the days of their youth to the day of their death. And so have been the most of those who have ever attained to honourable distinctions.

It is the sober man who becomes rich. It is he who becomes learned. It is he who acquires influence and reputation in society. It is he who succeeds in any honourable profession or calling. In a word, it is the temperate man, and only he, who enjoys even carnal pleasures of any kind to the best advantage and in the highest degree. This may appear a paradox. But the men of the world have learned wisdom by experience. While they ridicule the rigid precepts of religion, and affect to despise her restraints; they have discovered that moderation, even in sensual indulgences, is essential to real pleasure. They have ascertained that whatever is immoderate, extravagant, excessive—is injurious and painful. That it defeats the object aimed at, and brings its own punishment in its train. The wary voluptuary therefore is moderate and temperate. He shuns excess, that he may live the longer; and enjoy the more of those pleasures which constitute his chief good. Like the soldier who runs away, that he may live to fight again.—He is too wise to suffer pleasure to incapacitate him for all enjoyment or to kill him outright. He pities those who live too fast, and condemns them as fools. It is the order of nature that men be temperate in all their enjoyments, and in all their pursuits, if they would be happy. It is vain to contravene this order. It is impossible to reverse it.

We read of an Italian nobleman, who, in his youth, gave full scope to his inclinations, and tasted every cup of pleasure within his reach. He found however, when scarcely thirty years old, that he was on the verge of eternity; and this alarmed him. He bethought himself what was to be done. And finally resolved that life was preferable to rioting. He wisely embraced a uniformly temperate course of living, by which he gained at least three score years—for he survived a hundred—whereas it was morally certain, previously to his reformation, that he would never have seen forty.

“Most men (said he, for he tells his own story,) suffer themselves to be seduced by the charms of a voluptuous life. They

have not courage to deny their appetites; and being over persuaded by their inclinations so far, as to think they cannot give up the gratification of them, without abridging too much of their pleasures, they devise arguments to persuade themselves, that it is more eligible to live ten years less, than to be under any restraint. Alas! they know not the value of ten years of healthy life, in an age when a man may enjoy the full use of his reason, and turn all his wisdom and experience to his own and the world's advantage."

"O holy, happy, and thrice blessed temperance, (he continues,) how worthy art thou of our highest esteem!—and how infinitely art thou preferable to an irregular and disorderly life! Nay, would men but consider the effects and consequences of both, they would immediately see, that there is as wide a difference between them, as there is betwixt light and darkness, heaven and hell."

And at the age of ninety-five, he writes thus of himself. "All the faculties of my mind are in the highest perfection; my understanding clear and bright as ever; my judgment sound; my memory tenacious; my spirits good: and my voice, the first thing that fails others, still so strong and sonorous, that every morning and evening, with my dear grand children around me, I can address my prayers to the Almighty's gracious throne, and chant the praises of his redeeming love."

"O (exclaims the benevolent and happy old man,) how glorious this life of mine!—Replete with all the felicities which man can enjoy on this side the grave: and exempt from that sensual brutality which age has enabled my better reason to banish, and therewith all its bitter fruits, the extravagant passions, and distressful perturbations of mind. This is the happiness of those only, who grow old in the ways of temperance and virtue: a happiness which seldom attends the most flourishing youth who live in vice. Such are all subject to a thousand disorders, both of body and mind, from which I am entirely free: on the contrary, I enjoy a thousand pleasures, which are pure as they are calm." Cornaro.

To the voluptuary, I would say, go thou and do likewise. Thou art wretched in the midst of all thy mirth and revelling. Thou hast often wished thyself any thing but what thou art. Thou enviest a slave—a beast of burthen. Thou art oppressed—almost crushed—and yet borne along in folly's train by, what thou esteemest, an irresistible torrent. But where is thy resolution and thy courage? Hast thou advanced so far as to

dread the ridicule and the reproaches of thy besotted companions? Learn wisdom from the considerate Italian; and like him, leave thy companions in good earnest. Betake thyself to temperance and sobriety; and thou mayest outlive them all half a century. Thou shalt see them, one after another, laid under the cold clod of the valley, whilst thou art yet in the vigour of thy days. Will not this recompense thee for a momentary endurance of their witless sneers?

Arise then, ere it be too late, and assert that dignity which is in thy nature, and of which thou art so fond of boasting. Be no longer dragged downwards to infamy and death by thy pleasures, like an ox to the slaughter. Shake off the vile badges of thy servitude: they do not become thee. Live—and live like a man of reason; not worse than a brute which is guided by instinct only. Live—and live as becomes the aspiring candidate for the richest prizes in fortune's gift. Live—and live as a patriot who loves his country, and is resolved to devote himself to her service. Live—and live as ought the votary of science; the lover of truth; the dispenser of good; the advocate of virtue; the friend of man. Live, and do justice to thyself, to thy family, to the republic, and to the world. Live, and learn so to number thy days as to apply them all to wise, and generous, and noble purposes.

There is then encouragement to attempt a reform. The drunkard, and the sensualist of every description, may reform—and so reform as to be useful and happy, if he will set about the work before his constitution be utterly destroyed. And the life of the reformed Cornaro proves that it is worth the effort. Do I speak in the hearing of one individual abandoned to sensual pleasures, or strongly inclined to them? Escape for your life. It is not yet too late. Desist instantly; and your victory is sure—and it will be complete. The world, with all its stores and honours and emoluments, is still before you. You may yet possess all that your ambition prompts you to strive for.

But are you still on the safe side? You will do wisely to remain there. Few have ever been so fortunate or so wise as to enterprize the difficult task of reformation—as all past experience fully demonstrates. Of all the drunkards and rakes who have ever lived in the world, not one in a thousand has succeeded like Cornaro or Gardiner. It is rashness therefore to presume on such an issue.

I have thus far considered the world, and its good things, as they usually appear to the great mass of mankind, who do not extend their views and their hopes to futurity. I have dwelt

chiefly on the virtue of temperance—of temperance as opposed to every species of sensuality—as essential both to long life and to the attainment of the ordinary objects of human desire and pursuit.

But temperance, it is obvious, is not of itself sufficient for all these purposes. Temperance may be a mere negative quality.

Industry—persevering diligence—all the world acknowledge to be equally necessary to success in any great undertaking. It is the decree of worldly wisdom therefore that man must labour, if he would be eminent in any sphere or calling. This is true in regard to every employment or profession, however humble, or however respectable in itself. Men become rich by industry and prudence and skilful management. Is wealth then your object? You may be wealthy by pursuing the course which wisdom points out as the sure path to its attainment. And here let me add, that the world has adopted the maxim, that “honesty is the best policy.” You must be honest therefore if you would be rich and honourable at the same time.

Would you be learned? Industry is indispensable here also. An idle man has never been distinguished for learning. The talents of a Solomon would not suffice without diligence. You may say what you will about genius; there is no royal road to science. The man of genius must labour, and labour long, or he will die unnoticed and unknown. The fact is that men of the strongest intellects have usually been the most indefatigable in their efforts to improve their minds by study. And when you see a person affecting to despise study and labour as beneath him—as degrading to his genius—as a kind of reflection on his talents—you may set him down for a weak, shallow-minded man: as utterly destitute of that commanding genius which he arrogates to himself, and which he fain would have others concede to him. Look at Pythagoras, and Socrates, and Plato, and Demosthenes, and Tully, and Newton, and Jones, and Burke, and Edwards, and all the bright ethereal spirits who have shed a lustre on the world by their superior wisdom and attainments. Did they content themselves with a complacent sluggish contemplation of their mighty genius—and expect the world to do them homage on that account?

I have often looked with infinite pity on deluded youth at college, who were ashamed to appear studious, lest they should be thought dull, by those who were too ignorant or too stupid to distinguish talent from the noisy ebullition of mere animal spirits. Thus it happens that many a youth at college takes special pains to avoid study altogether, that he may pass for a fellow of

marvellous genius. Men of real genius and rare learning however, all the world over, will concur in declaring that all such youth act foolishly and absurdly. Let them therefore learn so to number their days as to apply their hearts unto wisdom. Three or four years wasted in college will prove to them a loss irreparable. Such a loss may doom them to insignificance while they live. At any rate, whatever may be their future diligence, it will prevent their accomplishing much, which they might otherwise have easily achieved. "Whatsoever [therefore] thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might ; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." This is the legitimate dictate of human, no less than of divine, wisdom.

Nor ought the habit of industry ever to be intermitted or suddenly relaxed. It ought to be maintained through life. The best preservative of mental, or corporeal vigour, is constant mental or bodily exercise. It is a great mistake in any man to give up the business or employment to which he has been long accustomed, with a view to the enjoyment of peace and quiet in old age. It is peculiarly unwise in a student to do this. When he relaxes, or relinquishes study, his mental powers rapidly decline, and he soon sinks into second childhood. Whereas, should he persevere in his usual efforts, or explore new fields of science with a youthful ardour ; he would probably retain his faculties unimpaired to the last :—as has been frequently witnessed in fact.

It is related of the late learned Dr. Macknight, that, after he had published his elaborate work on the Apostolical Epistles, at the age of seventy four, he considered himself as having accomplished the greatest object of his life. And wishing to enjoy, at the close of his days, some relief from his labours, he resisted the repeated solicitations of his friends, who urged him to undertake the illustration of another portion of scripture on the same plan ; and abandoned study altogether. The consequence was, a sensible and immediate decay of his faculties. "This fact (says his biographer,) is a striking instance of the analogy between the powers of the body and those of the mind ; both of which suffer by inaction ; and it furnishes a useful caution to those who have been long habituated to any regular exertion of mind, against at once desisting entirely from its usual efforts ; since the effect, in the course of nature, is not only to create languor, but to hasten the progress of debility and failure."

Thousands of similar and much more melancholy instances might be adduced. It is important for youth to know the fact.

It would be well for the aged to learn wisdom from its frequent occurrence. Let no man—let no student especially, look forward to an old age of ease and indolence as desirable. Let him rather resolve, at the outset, to labour, according to his strength, to the very last moment of his existence : and never to amuse his fancy with the illusive prospect of retirement and indulgence, when he shall reach the age of fifty, or sixty, or seventy. The mere cherishing of such an idea will greatly contribute to the end anticipated. The safest plan therefore is to determine before hand never to give over : and then there will be no temptation to so hazardous a course.

Long life, I have said, is an object of primary importance, and ought, above all other things, to be aimed at by a wise man of the world. I have shown that excessive carnal indulgences tend directly and most certainly to shorten life. I might just add, in passing, that an intemperate pursuit of any earthly good has the same tendency. We see men every day hazarding life, and losing life, to acquire or to preserve honour, and wealth, and power, and fame. Thus the duellist murders his friend, and is himself murdered in the field of honour. Thus the avaricious man often falls an early sacrifice to his toils, and cares, and self-denial. Thus too, thousands are daily perishing the victims of an inordinate ambition. Such men do not act wisely or consistently. Had they grasped at less, they would have obtained the more, and enjoyed it longer. They ought first to have counted the cost—to have ascertained the value of the object in view, and the safest road to it—and not to have blindly jeopardized their all at a single venture, and that too with the chances decidedly against them. I might illustrate my general position by descending to a great variety of particulars : by touching on all the pursuits, and plans, and objects which engross the attention of busy mortals—but I forbear. It is manifest that the idle, the imprudent, the dishonest, and the intemperate of every sort, do not consult their own true interest in any respect or degree. They do not take the road that leads to a good old age—to wealth—to honour—to real pleasure—or to any one object which the world itself pronounces worthy of their chief regard.

In pursuing somewhat further the train of our thoughts, we might notice other modes and features of human conduct, which would appear equally inconsistent with the principles of sound wisdom, seeing that life, at best, is so exceedingly short and uncertain. Thus far we have given the world full scope and fair play, and allowed all its claims to our regard to be valid.

But have we not gone too far and conceded too much ? Here will I hold, cries the worldling, while life, or breath, or being lasts ! But what a pity ; exclaimed an old miser as he hugged his treasure to his bosom, and felt that his final hour was at hand—“ Oh, what a pity that a man must die ! ” Behold the gall and the wormwood which embitter every cup of human bliss. Man must die !

The longest life is far too short to reach the height to which ambition aspires ; or to gain the wealth which avarice covets. Alexander was yet a youth when the world obeyed his mandate ; and had he conquered a dozen worlds, he would have sighed for more. Ambition and avarice, the two master passions of the soul, were never satisfied. They cannot be satisfied. But men may have enough of all that this world can give, to answer every purpose of comfort or enjoyment. Such a sufficiency is easily acquired. “ Man wants but little here below, nor wants that little long.” This is indisputably the fact. It is no poetic fiction. Neither the wealth of Croesus, nor the power of Cæsar, would add one iota to the happiness of their possessor, beyond what millions may enjoy with a fair competency of this world’s goods.

What sentence then does wisdom pronounce on all those who are hoarding up riches as if they expected to live forever to enjoy them ; and as if the life of soul and body depended on their acquisition ?—On all those turbulent ambitious spirits who are, or who fain would be, turning the world upside-down for power and fame ?—On all those restless discontented beings who are ever in search of, they know not what ; who are wandering, they know not whither ; who are never satisfied with what they are, or with what they have, but are perpetually coveting and seeking something which lies beyond their reach ?

If peace of mind be the standard and the source of happiness : and if this depend not chiefly or essentially on our external condition in the world ;—why need we be so extremely anxious about it ? Does not reason teach us that the wisest and the happiest life is that which occasions the least pain or uneasiness to ourselves and others—which is uniformly tranquil, calm, and cheerful—spent in acts of kindness and beneficence—aiding and enlivening our fellow travellers along this vale of tears—leading on the even tenor of our days, loving and being beloved—with the smile of benevolence on our countenance and the joy of contentment in our hearts ?

The brevity of life is a constant satire upon most human pursuits ; at least, when carried to the extreme which is usual-

ly witnessed. Why, in the name of earthly wisdom and plain common sense, do we pervert the end of our existence, in thus courting danger, pain and vexation, when the present moment is all we can call our own :—In thus creating to ourselves so many sources of misery as well as avenues to death, when no adequate remuneration can, on our own principles, be expected :—in thus rivetting our affections to objects which we must leave soon, and we know not how soon ?

We must die ! This single consideration, which no sophistry can banish or conceal from our minds at all times, is enough to cause our hearts to faint within us, and to blast all our worldly hopes forever. For disguise this unwelcome truth as we will—put off the evil day as far as we dare—still the king of terrors will invade our sanctuary—will steal across our path, and stare us full in the face, when we fain would shun him most ; and perhaps when we profess or affect to fear him least. When alone and thoughtful—how often do the glooms of despair gather upon the countenance, and the sigh of anguish rend the bosom ? “Vanity of vanities ; all is vanity and vexation of spirit,” do we often exclaim from bitter experience, with as much emphasis and meaning, as did the wise man of old, after a thorough trial of this world’s enjoyments in all their abundance and variety.

The conclusion then to which we arrive, after this hasty survey of human life, and maxims, and pursuits, and enjoyments, is briefly this. That, as we are dying creatures and cannot acquire a permanent possession here ; wisdom bids us so to number our days as to take the good of them while they are going. For we shall soon find to our sorrow that they have passed away like a dream when one awaketh. The utmost that we can reasonably hope for from this fleeting world is to travel on quietly and serenely through it. Wisdom therefore, with a loud voice, cries out to all the children of men, saying—away with moroseness, austerity, ill-nature, pride, envy, jealousy, malice, revenge, avarice, ambition—with every inordinate lust and appetite and passion. Seek the good that is in the world, but seek it temperately. Be contented with your condition : at least, do not make yourselves wretched because you cannot change or improve it. Use the world, but abuse it not. Be honest, sober, diligent, generous, benevolent. Live peaceably with all men, if possible. Deserve their esteem and confidence by your virtues. Court not their favour by flattery or base compliances. Improve all your faculties to their utmost extent of capacity : and become the lights and benefactors of mankind.

" Know, all the good that individuals find,
 Or God and nature meant to mere mankind,
 Reason's whole pleasure, all the joys of sense,
 Lie in three words, Health, Peace, and Competence.
 But Health consists with temperance alone,
 And Peace, Oh virtue ! Peace is all thy own.
 The good or bad the gifts of Fortune gain ;
 But these less taste them, as they worse obtain.
 Say, in pursuit of profit or delight,
 Who risk the most, that take wrong means, or right ?
 Of vice or virtue, whether blest or curst,
 Which meets contempt, or which compassion first ?
 Count all th' advantage prosperous vice attains,
 'Tis but what virtue flies from and disdains :
 And grant the bad what happiness they would,
 One they must want, which is, to pass for good."

Hitherto we may be thought to have been pursuing a heathenish track ; and yet we have arrived at results, in some respects, very similar, though in others very dissimilar, to those which religion recognises.

Genuine heavenly wisdom—or the religion of the Bible, prescribes to mortals a course of life, of all others, the happiest, wisest, best : even though there were no hereafter. It directs to a course of life, which reason cannot but approve as most eligible and desirable, all things considered.

The christian religion enjoins no self-denial—no sacrifice—which a wise man of the world would not, or ought not, to impose on himself. It inculcates all the virtues which can adorn and dignify human nature. It condemns all the vices and practices which have any tendency to injure or degrade it. Would you then live wisely and happily ? Live as christians are commanded to live. There is not one moral or practical precept in the Bible but would, if regarded, contribute to your welfare even in this world.

Now it is the beauty and the perfection of the christian religion that it contemplates, and provides for both worlds at the same time. It tells men how to be happy on earth—and how to be happy in heaven. And it so unites the future with the present, that, while we are seeking the one, we necessarily secure the other. By seeking first the kingdom of God, we make sure of as much happiness on earth as we are capable of enjoy-

ing. Here then you perceive, at a single glance, the immense advantage which the christian system has over all others. "The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it."

II. We told you in the beginning of this discourse, that we intended, in the second place, to consider this life as a state of preparation for another and a better : and to inquire what true wisdom or true religion requires of us—or how we ought to number our days so as to apply our hearts unto wisdom. A few general remarks under this head must suffice.

Revelation informs us, and our reason cordially assents to the truth when revealed, that we are candidates for an eternal world. That this span of mortal existence—this inch or two of time—is not the whole of man's duration. That he is born an heir of immortality—and, if he please, an heir of immortal glory. An heir of immortal glory ? What heart is large enough to grasp the full force and import of this precious cheering truth ?

Admitting the fact, it follows, that, our chief, nay our only concern on earth ought to be so to live as to ensure our eternal salvation. That our whole life ought to be made subservient to this grand end. This position will not be controverted ; however much men may differ about the ways and means of succeeding in the enterprise. Nor will there be any material difference, on these points, in the opinions of those who submit to the guidance of the divine word—which tells us what true wisdom is. "Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding."

We came into the world to glorify God our Creator, and to enjoy him forever. So revelation teaches—and our reason again assents. In the beginning, God gave us a law, holy, just, and good. This law we have violated ; and thus have become criminal and guilty. That we are so in fact, our reason and conscience, our observation and experience, our hopes and our fears, conspire to prove. It is therefore reasonable that we should repent and reform. But since repentance, even human reason being judge, is no atonement for past transgressions—since we cannot by any sacrifices, or penances, or good deeds, satisfy divine justice—since we have incurred the penalty of a law whose demands cannot be dispensed with—it becomes us to inquire how the threatened punishment may be avoided, and how we may be restored to the divine favour and to all our forfeited privileges. Here is a mystery which has hitherto baffled ; and which ever will baffle, the most profound researches of un-

enlightened human reason. But in the gospel this mystery vanishes. And reason ought not to refuse to accept from revelation what it could never of itself have achieved. In the gospel we learn in what way the law can be magnified and made honourable in the pardon and justification of the sinner. Here "mercy and truth are met together ; righteousness and peace have kissed each other."

For though by nature we are at enmity with God, with that God who alone can make us happy—with hearts full of evil and ever inclined to evil—with our understandings darkened and our affections perverted—with the wrath of God abiding on us, and the love of sin constraining us to continued disobedience : still there is hope. Help has been laid on one who is mighty to save. And we may yet be happy—and happy forever. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned : but he that believeth not is condemned already ; because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."

This is enough for ruined sinners to know. Would you be happy and wise, my hearers ? Fear God and keep his commandments : for this is the whole duty of man. And the great command which embraces all others, is, *believe in the Lord Jesus Christ*. If you comply with this ; obedience to all the rest will follow as a natural and necessary effect. If you do not comply with this ; you will strive in vain to be conformed to the spirit of any one of the divine precepts. You will labour in the dark and against the grain. You will have mountains to oppose at every turn. And after a few painful unavailing struggles, you will renounce the conflict in despair. You must begin with Christ, and end with Christ—live by faith in Christ—rejoice in Christ—hope in Christ—die in Christ. This is the only rock upon which to build your hopes of heaven.—Here you may build with safety. Your edifice shall stand strong. Neither storms nor flames, nor earth nor hell, shall ever pre-

vail against it. It will endure when time shall be no longer, and when the heavens shall have passed away.

Behold the wisdom of God in the redemption of a guilty world. Behold the wisdom, which, if you obey her heavenly voice, will make you wise unto salvation. Behold the wisdom which is from above, it "is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy." "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding: For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace." This is the wisdom which "is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom; and with all thy getting, get understanding." On earth it will yield a contented mind—in heaven, joy unspeakable and full of glory.

It will assure to you all the real good which this poor world can bestow. It will arm you against its sorrows and adversities. It will guard you against its ruinous seductions—preserve you from all its evils—allow you to taste its purest pleasures—give you riches and honours, without pride or covetousness—or else make you contented with poverty, and with whatever portion, infinite wisdom may assign to you. It will conduct you, with consciences void of offence towards God and towards man, through this world's checkered scenery and varied fortune, to the pilgrim's peaceful and eternal home. It will lead you up to Immanuel's throne—to mansions in the skies—where you shall grow in knowledge and wisdom till you pass the boundaries which Gabriel has reached—in happiness and holiness, while an infinite God exists to expand your faculties, and to supply their continually increasing capacities and desires. What a prospect for guilty, wretched, dying sinners! What a life of purity, and peace, and philanthropy, does wisdom promise! What a death of victory, and triumph, and cheering hope, does it ensure! What a heaven of felicity and glory does it open full to the enraptured view of the departing saint!

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*What follows was added in consequence of the sudden death of Mr. William G. Krebs, a student of the Theological Seminary, and a graduate of Nassau-Hall.

Little did I dream when we were last assembled in this sanctuary, that heaven was so soon to teach us the necessity of applying our hearts unto wisdom, by a call the most solemn and the most impressive that can be addressed to mortals.

A voice from the world of spirits has sounded in our ears, saying, "be ye also ready." Have you not heard it? Did it not pierce your hearts, and alarm your consciences, and constrain you to tremble, and to be sore afraid?

Death has again invaded our ranks, and snatched away another blooming victim from our embrace. Our friend, our companion, our brother, has been suddenly cut down, like a morning flower, before its opening beauties were half unfolded to our admiring gaze. He has been transplanted, we trust, into the paradise of God—there to flourish in immortal youth—a monument and a trophy of rich redeeming grace.

He is gone. Our eyes shall no more behold him. The places that knew him here on the earth shall know him no more forever. His parents and brothers and sisters—his friends and associates and teachers mourn their loss. But they mourn not as those who have no hope. Our loss has proved his unspeakable gain. We fain would have detained him with us. We prayed that his life might be spared. We had hoped to see him soon a faithful, zealous, enlightened, successful labourer in the vineyard of his Lord. How bitter the cup which we have been compelled to drink! But "the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight. What thou doest we know not now; but we shall know hereafter!

On the Tuesday [Nov. 26,] preceding the delivery of this discourse, the students of the college united with the students of the Seminary in paying their last tribute of affectionate regard to the memory of this lamented and highly respected youth, in the Oratory of the Seminary, where a sermon was preached by the Rev. Dr. Alexander:—the corpse lying in a coffin, in view of the whole audience. After which, it was conveyed to Philadelphia, the native city of the deceased, where the last sad offices were performed by his afflicted family and friends.

In the preceding February, the Seminary had been called to mourn the departure of a beloved brother (Mr. James B. Turner, of Lexington, Ky.) under circumstances nearly similar.

These are the only instances of mortality among the students of the Theological Seminary since its establishment in this place:—while none have occurred in the College since its foundation.

The other cases referred to in the discourse took place after the parties had left these institutions.

It may not be improper to inform the reader that the Professors and Students of the Theological Seminary attend public worship on the Sabbath in the chapel of the College.

The eulogy of our departed brother it becomes not me to attempt. It has been pronounced by one at whose feet I would willingly sit, and learn the ways of heavenly wisdom—as well might you all. And the lesson of wisdom, which this mysterious dispensation of divine Providence teaches, has been affectionately inculcated in your hearing.

Ah ! as you contemplated the pallid corpse of your dear companion lying in the narrow house appointed for all living ; and listened to the soft accents of redeeming mercy, or the loud threatenings of eternal justice—did you not in heart exclaim, each of you for himself, “ let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his ?”

But yesterday, and he was full of health and spirits—with as fair a prospect of many days to come—as likely to live—as likely to be useful and honourable as any individual in this assembly. To-day he is singing hallelujahs of joy and triumph before the throne of God and the Lamb in yonder heavens. Wonderful transition—happy change—glorious exaltation !

To his companions in study, this warning will not be in vain. It cannot pass unheeded, or unimproved. They must feel, and feel deeply—while they bow down humbled and submissive to the will of their heavenly Father. They are taught that ministers of the gospel, and candidates for this holy office, must die, as well as others. They have had many solemn admonitions from the Lord of life, to quicken them in duty ; and to urge them on to diligence, and watchfulness, and prayer, and penitence, and faith, and zeal. Once, and again, they have encompassed the death-bed, and followed to the tomb the remains, of a beloved brother. They have seen for themselves how a christian could die—as well as live. Within four or five years past, no less than thirteen young men, perhaps more, once students in yonder favoured Seminary, have been released from their labours, or summoned away ere they had entered upon them. The names of Wilbur, M’Farlane, Cruikshanks, Huntington, Newbold, Vinal, Larned, Searle, King, Turner, Blatchford, Covert, Krebs, will recur to many of my hearers, “ like the memory of joys that are past, pleasant and mournful to the soul.” Though dead, they still speak ; and speak loudly to the living—especially to their surviving brethren of that school of the prophets to which they lately belonged ; and which, we may be permitted to hope, is still dear to them in heaven. Lord, teach us so to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. Help us to be faithful even unto death !

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But has death never entered these walls, my young friends? Are we exempt from his shafts, or securely armed against them? Blessed be God!—we have been distinguished, probably, above all the colleges in the world, by heaven's kindly forbearance and protecting care. For more than thirty years past certainly, not a single death has occurred among the students of this institution. Nor have I been able to ascertain that such an event has ever been witnessed in Nassau-Hall. Amazing distinction—wonderful goodness—unparalleled mercy! What shall we render unto the Lord for all his benefits?

Are you safe then? Do you flatter yourselves that the king of terrors will never find his way hither? Be not deceived, beloved youth. You too may die. Should you be spared to go hence in health—how soon and how suddenly you may encounter the last enemy—none can tell. You see that the young and vigorous may die—that students may die—that the rich, the gay, the honourable may die—that the wicked as well as the good may die. Our land has recently been filled with lamentation. Death has this season been no respecter of persons. Do I not behold the badges of sorrow—the tokens of bereavement—the weeds of mourning, in every part of this house? For whom do you wear them? Is it for an aged parent or relative whose departure was anticipated as an ordinary event in the course of nature? No, it is for one and another who lately listened, as you do now, to the friendly warning of the messenger of peace in this Hall. It is for Garritson, for Massey, for M'Dowell; for Krebs—* all of whom, but a few short weeks ago, held or seemed to hold, as firm a lease on life and the world, as any who now hear me.

They, like you, only two or three years since, were students in this college. Little did they then anticipate a course so short—a death so sudden. Had they foreseen that a few fleeting months would close their eyes forever on all the goodly scenes and prospects of this ensnaring delusive world; would they not have girded up the loins of their minds and vigorously applied their hearts unto wisdom? Could they have given sleep to their eyes, or slumber to their eyelids, till they had made sure of the true riches—of the pearl of great price—of an interest in the great atonement which alone can cleanse from sin, and prepare a guilty soul for glory? We trust they did not neglect the *great salvation*. We trust they are, at this moment, rejoicing in the presence of the Eternal King, where is fulness

* Alumni of the College, lately deceased, for whom a badge of mourning was worn by the members of the literary societies to which they had respectively belonged.

of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore. The dead we judge not. But our message is to the living.

Could you then, my brother, repose in peace for one moment, were it announced to you by a voice from heaven, that within one, two or three years,—you must die? Ah, what bitterness—what anguish of spirit—what terror—what dismay would seize upon you, and drive you to your closet, to your knees, to your bible, to your Saviour!

Go then, weep and mourn, and repent, and be wise—for assuredly thou shalt die. Yes, one and another of my youthful hearers, however thoughtless, however secure, however playful, however hardened, however scornful; thou shalt die! Soon, very soon, thou shalt be followed by thy weeping friends to the silent tomb. Give them the joy of believing, in the midst of sorrow, that thou art gone to the home of the saint—to the mansions of the blessed. This is all—this is the only consolation which can ever gladden the heart of a surviving relative or friend when he contemplates the mouldering clay, or thinks of the decease of a beloved son, or brother, or companion.

Who of all my hearers will be wise? May God of his infinite mercy and goodness through Jesus Christ, teach us all so to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom! And to his name be the praise. AMEN.

DISCOURSE II.

EPHESIANS, V. 16.

Redeeming the time,—

IT has ever been a subject of wonder and of grief, to pious reflecting men, that the true value of time is so little understood. Mankind continually complain that life is short : and yet they seem never prepared to improve the present time as they ought. No man, however hardened, or senseless, or inconsiderate, can flatter himself with the certain prospect of many years to come, because his own daily observation proves to him beyond the possibility of a doubt, or of a hope, that the longest life ever allotted to mortals is but “a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.”

But, although this great truth would be readily acknowledged by all men, were the question directly put to them : yet, might one judge from their actions, he would certainly conclude that they expected to live always ; or, at least, so long, that nothing could appear of less value to them than time. This is one of those strange unaccountable inconsistencies between knowledge and practice to which poor depraved human nature is so exceedingly liable. It is so common indeed that we scarcely notice it, either to our own shame, or to the condemnation of others. I mean practically and beneficially—For, as a speculative truth, it is sufficiently hackneyed.

The shortness and uncertainty of human life—the folly, absurdity and inconsistency of most human pursuits—the unsatisfying nature of the objects which engage men’s attention and engross their affections, have been the constant themes of the essayist, the poet, the declaimer, the satirist, the philosopher, the infidel and the believer—ever since the world began.

The Bible is full of precept, and warning, and example, on this score.—The books of pagan antiquity abound with instructive lessons on these points.—The christian preacher is ever exhibiting to us the same facts and follies.—So that our eyes and our ears become sated and wearied with their ceaseless

recurrence. How then shall we venture on topics so familiar to every individual, young and old :—On a track so beaten, that its whole course and end are descried before we fairly enter upon it ?

I feel all the difficulty and the hazard of the undertaking. But there are many reasons which impel me to the almost hopeless task ;—besides the laudable usage, which obtains in most christian churches, of dwelling, at particular seasons, on such a theme.

When a year has just gone by, and gone forever from our reach—with all its joys, and sorrows, and cares, and crimes, and follies—it seems rational and proper that we should pause, for a few moments, to look back on the past and forward to the future. There is a propriety in such a procedure, which recommends it to the understanding, independently of the imperative duty which binds it on the heart and the conscience of every serious, thoughtful, immortal, accountable creature.

An hour of the last sabbath in the year which has just retired, as it were, behind the scene, never more to re-appear, is surely not too much to bestow on its memory. Another year has fled. It has perished. Shall we regard it as a departed friend, and celebrate its funeral obsequies with tears of grateful sorrow, and mournful recollections of the many endearing ties which it has rent in sunder ? Or, as an enemy, which has ceased to annoy and to torment us—and therefore be disposed to congratulate ourselves upon our happy escape from it ? But who would tread lightly or gaily upon the ashes of a fallen or vanquished foe ? Has the last been to any of us a year of misery, and anguish, and disappointment—and are we ready to hail the approach of another, as the harbinger of brighter scenes and more substantial pleasures ? Let us not triumph at the knel of departed years—though years of sadness and discontent. They too have a claim on our sympathy : and they may have been more our friends than, at first, we imagine.

When it was last my lot to address you from this place,* the subject of meditation, you will recollect, was nearly allied to the one now under consideration. Several topics were then adverted to which might naturally present themselves to our view on this occasion. Much was then said on the brevity of life—on some of the ways in which it is usually mispent—and especially

* A reference is here made to the preceding Discourse, which was delivered on the first, as the present was on the last, sabbath of December.

on certain vices and follies to which youth are most exposed, and which have a direct tendency to destroy life—to blast all their hopes—and to defeat the end for which men generally think life desirable. It is not my purpose to travel over the same ground again. Though the strain of some of my remarks will, probably, be suggested by the same leading principles exhibited under a somewhat different aspect.

The original word, translated in our text “redeeming,” has a peculiar force, and implies *gaining* time or recovering what was lost. “Literally, *buying* time, as debtors do, who by giving some valuable consideration to their creditors, obtain further time for paying their debts.” The apostle probably alluded to the enormities of the lives of the Ephesian christians previously to their conversion, in which so much time had been lost and grossly abused. And the sense may be ; endeavouring to recover and purchase back, as fast as possible, the time which they had wantonly thrown away, by making a diligent use of what remained, and by striving to improve it to the best and most valuable purposes.

The exhortation given to the Ephesian converts was doubtless seasonable and appropriate. It well became *them* to redeem time, or to buy it off from other avocations, at the expense of much self-denial and watchfulness, who had devoted so much to vice and idolatry. It might with truth be said of them that they had but just begun to live in good earnest, when they embraced the gospel of Jesus Christ. They awoke, as it were, from a profound sleep ; and beheld with grief and remorse, the folly and wickedness of the past. They looked forward, and saw but a moment left them to fulfil the grand purpose of existence. They felt the necessity therefore of unceasing diligence in discharging the duties which were incumbent on them ; and with which they had been made acquainted at so late an hour. Under such circumstances, and with such convictions, the passing moments must have been seized with eagerness, and devoted with trembling joy, to the service of the living God, and of Christ the Saviour, whom they had but just begun to fear, to honour and to love.

Our situation, my friends, is materially different from that of the heathen world, when the gospel was first preached to them. We cannot urge an excuse, like theirs, for the time past of our lives which we have mispent. We have not even the poor consolation of reflecting that we have sinned from ignorance. We can fashion no apology which would satisfy even our own consciences, in a cool and serious hour, for the trifling, idle, unprofitable, criminal manner in which we have lived.

Is it necessary to inform you, or to prove to you, that you have wasted time? What species of demonstration can render a self-evident truth more evident? But conviction, unhappily, does not always accompany the clearest evidence and the most palpable truth. A proposition may be admitted as a mere truism, and yet its import may not be apprehended or regarded.

Come then, let us reason together a little on this point. Let us endeavour to bring our minds fairly and fully to the investigation. Have you the courage to inspect your past lives—and the candour to pass an impartial sentence upon yourselves? You shall be your own censors and your own judges. I put the question—What have you been doing all your life long; or during the past year? Or rather, let every man put this question to his own heart. For none of you, not even the most confident and self-sufficient, would be willing to submit your whole conduct to the public eye. Do you then dread the scrutiny of fellow sinners who are no better than yourselves? What do you think of having your most secret thoughts, purposes, desires, as well as actions, fairly revealed and exhibited to the assembled universe—to the angelic hosts of heaven—to a holy, just, and sin-avenging God?

But the fact, lightly as it may be regarded, and seldom as you may advert to it, proves, that, at least, so much of your time as has been consumed in devising or executing any scheme, or in the unlawful gratification of any propensity, which you are either ashamed or afraid to disclose, has been worse than wasted. For this, past all doubt, you stand condemned before the tribunal of your own consciences; as well as before the heart-searching Judge, who cannot be deceived, and who will not be mocked.

I pass all enormous, flagitious, abominable crimes; all disgraceful, licentious extravagances and indulgences; and especially the degrading, ruinous practices of the gambler:—These can find no apologist in the light of day. They are fit only for those dark retreats into which they always skulk; and for those demons of darkness who always preside over them.

I say nothing of dishonesty and lying, which are so common in one shape or another, as that it has almost become a received maxim, that “an honest man is the noblest work of God.” And to have constrained our Saviour himself to exclaim in regard to one individual, as a great rarity, “behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile.” On this subject, however, I merely remark, at present, that scarcely any body will plead guilty to the

charge, though he offend every day, under some specious disguise or self-deceiving pretext or other. It is so dishonourable to be deemed a liar or a knave, that a man would rather be a murderer, under the softening appellation of duellist, than to have his word or his integrity ever called in question.

But, what has been the general tenor of your lives—openly and above-board—in face of the world? What have you done that was positively good? How much have you neglected to do that your acknowledged duty required? How much have you done that you knew to be positively wicked? What have been the motives and springs of action even in reference to those things which you esteem indifferent or praise worthy? What ideas do you entertain of the design and object of life? Have you ever seriously tasked yourselves to contemplate its shortness, its uncertainty, its unspeakable value? Have you ever retired from the world to look into your own hearts, with a view to ascertain your real character; the end of your creation; the nature of your condition in this world; the relation which you sustain to the great Creator and Judge; the destiny which awaits you as immortal beings; the glorious reward, the eternal heaven of blessedness which is promised to the faithful, and the interminable sufferings threatened to the disobedient hereafter? Unless you have made a *business*—a deliberate, solemn, prayerful business of this matter, you have done nothing. You have not yet even made a beginning, or an approach towards a right improvement of time. You have not yet taken the first step in the path of duty.

The glory of God—the will of God—the law of God—these have hitherto had no bearing on your conduct. If so, then every moment has been lost—lost forever. You cannot redeem it, except by drawing largely on the future. Not one year only, but all the years that you have lived are lost, wasted, abused, and registered in the court of heaven against you. For all this period you are debtors. When or how will you cancel the account? This is the question which ought now to press home on your consciences with all the weight and interest of eternity.

Thus far then the matter is settled. Whatever time has passed in a way that you would blush to have known by your fellow men: whatever has passed in a way inconsistent with, or independent of, the divine will, has assuredly been mispent.

But again—were I addressing an ordinary audience—an audience, I mean, consisting of persons engaged in the ordinary pursuits of the world; I might ask, which has appeared most

important in your eyes, *time* or *money*? Of which have you been most tenacious; of which the most liberal? Have you been as free and ready to assist the needy and the suffering—to patronise charitable institutions—to support the gospel—to contribute to objects of public utility—as you have been to dissipate time? Do you not think more of a shilling than of an hour? Would you not be more backward to give the former to any benevolent object than to waste the latter in whatever way you might be solicited? How seldom is it that you refuse your time to any who may choose to give you an idle call—while you would be grieved and vexed were half as many calls made upon your purse, even for the noblest purposes?—and you would disregard them too.

Is it not true that the loss of a day or a week occasions less pain to most men than the loss of a little property? Is it not true also that they frequently calculate the value of lost time merely by the sum which they might have made during that time? And, if nothing could have been gained, then do they esteem it any loss at all? Is it reasonable that this should be the case? Is the worth of time to be measured by gold and silver? Was it to amass these that man was endued with angelic faculties—planted on this earth for a day—and when the day is ended, to be ushered into another world to exist forever—without the privilege of carrying with him a particle of his hard-earned and beloved treasures? God must have placed men in this world for some purpose—and, would it not be a mockery of the divine wisdom and goodness to suppose that the acquisition of property were the grand purpose of his being?

Have you not witnessed---and are you not fully convinced that wealth, honour, power, pleasure, are enjoyed and held by a precarious tenure? That to-day, men may walk forth arrayed in purple and fine linen—the objects of envy to some---of admiration and servile flattery to others—while to-morrow, they may appear in sackcloth and ashes—outcasts in the streets, and none so poor as to do them reverence—derided and scorned by the very crowd, which now gaze and applaud, as though existence depended on their smile? And what do you infer from this caprice of fortune (as it is usually styled,) to which men are so generally enslaved, and of which they so frequently fall the heedless and unpitied victims? What---but that all sublunary things are vain, mutable, transitory—incapable of gratifying rational, immortal natures—and therefore unworthy of your affection and your pursuit? Yet these are precisely the objects of human desire and ambition; and have been so in every age.

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and country, since first the gates of Eden were closed against the guilty pair who led the way in this career of sin and ruin ; and who have entailed the same blindness and infatuation on all their posterity.

Renouncing then these airy illusive goods, which never imparted a ray of solid comfort to the anxious seeker, or to the proud possessor of them, and which all must leave so soon at best—what remains to occupy our minds, and to call forth the active energies of our nature ? Time—precious time is ours—and of this, none but God can deprive us. Time is our estate. This is our inheritance. It is our all. And on its right improvement depends our eternal welfare. Time is given us to lay up treasures in heaven—to prepare ourselves by submission, by patience, by humility and self-denial, by penitence, faith and prayer, during our pilgrimage through this wilderness of sorrow and temptation ; for the full, the perfect, and the perpetual fruition of that Canaan of peace, and plenty, and rest, and joy, and glory, to which the faithful shall, at last, be welcomed.

Were this sublime, this glorious object constantly in view—Were heaven steadily in our eye, could time ever hang heavily upon our hands ? Could it seem tedious, dull, burthensome ? Could we consent to lose so much in idleness ; so much in unnecessary sleep ; so much in trifling or profane conversation and amusement ; so much in puerile or hazardous sports and games ; so much in sensual indulgences ; so much in a thousand frivolous and criminal modes, which the evil genius of this world has artfully devised to cheat men out of their most valuable possessions ?

We have all erred in this matter. There is not an individual in this house ;—there is not a child of Adam on earth who has not abused time. Nay more, there is not a day in which the best of men, when they review, at evening, their conduct during the day, do not find abundant cause of humiliation and repentance before God for their unfruitfulness, their sloth, or their forgetfulness of Him who has solemnly charged them to occupy till he come.

Who would ever conjecture from appearances that men were placed in the world merely as stewards—as tenants at will—as sojourners for a day—as pilgrims who are travelling to another and a better country ; and to whom therefore the accommodations and the entertainment, which they might chance to meet on their way, could be a matter of no very serious concernment ? Who could ever suspect this when looking abroad

among mankind, he beholds them every where pursuing a course directly contrary to such a destiny? Is man born for eternity, and is time given him for no other purpose than to prepare him for its enjoyment? Then, what does he mean by his conduct?

I seek in vain, says the observer, for a solution of this difficult problem. I see before me a vast multitude of intelligent beings, amounting in number, according to the best calculations, to, at least, nine hundred and fifty millions. All busy, gay, and thoughtless—while one would think there was nothing on earth capable of exciting a smile upon the countenance. Miserable, shortsighted creatures, he would exclaim, can you grasp at a shadow; and neglect that small pittance of time which is gone forever before you realize that you have begun to exist? See the dreadful havoc which the king of terrors is constantly making among you. Every hour, even in the ordinary course of events, he cuts down three thousand six hundred of your race. Every day witnesses his triumphs over more than eighty six thousand. Every year he consigns to the grave above thirty one millions of your giddy heedless brethren. And in a period of little more than thirty years, a number equal to the whole population of the earth fall victims to the great destroyer. That is, in the course of thirty years, nearly nine hundred and fifty millions of mortals submit to the awful sentence which will inevitably be executed on all the descendants of apostate Adam—"dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

Add to this, the sudden and amazing ravages which are frequently committed by fire and sword—by pestilence and famine—by hurricanes and tempests upon sea and land—by earthquakes and volcanoes—by revolutions in governments, and by the vibrations of power from one tyrant, or set of tyrants, to another—by the ambition and cruelty of military despots and sanguinary aspiring demagogues.—See, men are the sport of death in an endless variety of ways! And yet, they alone seem insensible to their doom! Oh, if our observer have one tender cord in his soul—if his bosom be capable of one sympathetic emotion—if he be indeed a good angel—the tear of compassion will drop from his eye, as he contemplates the picture of human misery, and of human folly, thus exhibited to his view!

Were there any aged hearers present, I would appeal to them, and respectfully ask:—what think you, venerable fathers, of this representation? Come, tell us your opinion of the theme in question. Let the voice of experience be heard with-

in these walls. Let the warning of wisdom and of years be given to the young and rising generation. Say, fathers, do your three score years and ten seem long now that they are past? Look back, and recount to us the joys of life. What are they?—for we fain would know them. Where are they?—for you doubtless, in your day, have been merry, and active, and successful. You have been subject, perhaps, to fewer accidents and calamities than most of your fellow men. You have had an opportunity, it may be, of viewing the brightest side of human life, of trying it, in its most advantageous form, and for the longest period. What are its pleasures? Alas, you search in vain the mighty waste of years never to be recalled. You sigh as you remember the visions of earthly bliss which delighted the fancy, and absorbed the mind of youth and manhood; but which have, long since, vanished away like a dream of the morning; or yielded only pain, and sadness, and disappointment. “Few and evil, you exclaim, have been the days of the years of our pilgrimage.” Few and evil, do *you* acknowledge them to have been? *You* who have seen so many, and those too, apparently, so fair and joyous? Who then will deny that life is short? Who will affirm that evil does not mark its flight? Could you redeem the years that are gone—could you live life over again, would you spend it as you have done?

But are your eyes, at length, opened upon the truth? Have you learned the worth of time? Can you impart sage and seasonable counsel to the youthful followers of your footsteps? Can you point out to them the rocks and shoals on which your frail bark had well nigh foundered? Or, are you still wedded to the same idols which you have hitherto worshipped to so little purpose?—Still wandering in the same path which promised so many delights when you first entered it, but over which clouds and darkness have continued to rest? Why pursue a course, every step of which hurries you forward towards that deep gulf which is already half disclosed to your view, and which will presently swallow you up forever? Why not desist—why not stop short instantly? Why not seize the single moment that remains, and search out a new way—a way to peace, and purity, and heaven? Already have you arrived at the threshold of that narrow house which is appointed for all living. You are on the confines, and in sight of that world of spirits which must be your eternal home. What are fancy’s fairy visions now?

Experience has taught you many serious lessons, and unfolded to you much of the real character of all human schemes,

and hopes, and possessions. You have marked changes and alterations in every thing around you. You have witnessed the most extraordinary revolutions, at home, and abroad. Empires, and kingdoms, and republics have risen and fallen; have flourished and been crushed, as it were, beneath your eye. Every year has borne testimony to the instability and emptiness of earthly pomp, and power, and grandeur. Look over the map of the world:—what havoc, devastation, and misery have attended the march of human society through the last fifty years? Where is the favoured spot on the face of our globe, which, during that short space, has remained tranquil, peaceful, and happy? What has been the lot of your own immediate neighbourhood—of your own little circle of friends and acquaintances? Where are the companions of your early days? Do you not begin to feel yourselves strangers in the land of your birth? One generation has sprung up after another around you. The ties which once endeared you to life—which bound you to the world—which enchained your fond hearts to earthly joys, have burst in sunder. You stand almost alone—like the solitary traveller in a mighty desert. Your children, it may be, on whom you once so much doted, and whom you regarded as the props of your declining years, have followed the dear partner of your cares and your affections to the mansions of silence.

What then is left to render existence desirable? Why, after all these bitter trials and bereavements, are you not thoroughly weaned from the world? Why is not your heart, at last, fully set on heaven? Why do you not long for admission into that happy country, where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary be at rest? Why this reluctance to depart—whence this hesitation—this lingering in a land of so many woes? Why do you still cling to a world which has afforded you so little enjoyment; and which promises nothing but pain and mockery while you remain its votaries? Ah, it is because you tremble at the future! Conscience is now busy in summoning before her bar the actions of a long and thoughtless life. The ghosts of murdered hours, and days, and years haunt your imagination; and cause you to startle, and to shrink back with horror from the awful reckoning which awaits you, when the brittle thread of life shall break, and usher you into the presence of the righteous and terrible Judge.

What spectacle in creation is more pitiable than that of a venerable old man, just tottering on the brink of the grave, whose past life gives no pleasing anticipations for the future? What more horrible than that of a notoriously wicked old man—

a hoary-headed miser, or knave, or drunkard, for instance ? Suppose him utterly insensible to his own fate—do we not instinctively shudder at the prospect before him, and regard him as the most perfect example of hardened depravity, and stupid infatuation, which can be found upon earth ? Suppose him not indifferent—suppose him awakened, at last, to all the dangers of his situation—but in despair ! See him on his bed of languishing and death ; sensible that the hand of God is upon him ; groaning under a weight of bodily pains and infirmities, sufficient of themselves to exclude every other concern, but which to him are nothing to the fiercer torments, the unspeakable agonies of the mind ; discerning no ray of hope or mercy through the utter darkness which surrounds him ; no kind angel near to uphold his sinking spirit, or to guide him through the dismal valley which is opening fast upon his view.—What would he not give for one day, for one hour, to seek an interest in that Saviour whom he has hitherto neglected or despised, and to fit him for his flight into the world unknown ? The gold of the Indies would be lighter than vanity if balanced against a moment. “ Time, time,” exclaimed queen Elizabeth, when on her death-bed, “ a world of wealth for an inch of time !”

No, brethren, time cannot be purchased with thrones or empires—else had kings been beggars to redeem an hour.

A death-bed shows us what time is good for : and the monarch then can command no more of it than the slave. “ Oh, the universe for an inch of time,” might the proudest despot that ever swayed a sceptre well exclaim in the article of death : but no, vain mortal, the hand writing of the eternal Judge hath appeared on the wall against thee—“ Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.”

A death-bed too, teaches us the real value of all earthly distinctions and possessions.

You are doubtless familiar with the very interesting and instructive account, given by Herodotus, of an interview between Croesus and Solon. The Lydian monarch had directed his servants to conduct Solon to the different repositories of his immense wealth, and to show him all their splendid and valuable contents. After which, he demanded of the sage, what man of all whom he had ever seen, seemed to him the most happy ? The expectation of being himself esteemed the happiest of mankind prompted his inquiry. You know the reply. It was not Croesus. It was Tellus. To a second inquiry by the astonished and disappointed prince, the honest Athenian named

Cleobis and Biton. He then explains the principles on which he grounds his apparently strange and uncourtly estimate; and the reasons for giving the preference to men of comparatively private and mean condition, over the proudest, the richest, and most luxurious potentate of Asia. And, in the conclusion, he adds,—“call no man happy, O king, till you know the nature of his death. It is the part of wisdom to look to the event of things; for the Deity often overwhelms with misery, those who have formerly been placed at the summit of felicity.”*

Such was the judgment of Solon. But had Solon heard of that immortality which the gospel reveals; he would have judged more wisely still. His views reached not beyond the three score years and ten, upon which he so beautifully (I had almost said so christianly,) expatiates; and yet he refuses to pronounce any man happy, till death shall have set his seal to his whole career. And who will not accord with Solon in the same judgment? In reading the story of human greatness, do we not always make up our opinion of its value according to its termination? Does not Croesus himself afford an example of the correctness of Solon's criterion? Who does not regard him as an unhappy man, notwithstanding all the magnificence with which he was once surrounded? Who does not pity his lot? And the same sentiment invariably and involuntarily arises in our minds in regard to every distinguished individual whose end has been wretched. I mean in reference to this world only. Where is the exception in all the records of human grandeur, “from Macedonia's madman to the Swede?” Who would covet the power of Cæsar to die by the hand of an assassin? Who would live the life of a Cromwell, to be ever in dread at the shadow of friend or foe—and to expire in despair at last? Who would be a Buonaparte, to rule the world for a few years: then to live the by-word and scorn of the nations who once trembled at his name; to perish, at length, like a malefactor; an exile, an outcast from human society?

Solon would have pronounced these, and a thousand such, unhappy. He would have preferred the life of an obscure inglorious peasant—the even tenor of whose days had never been interrupted by one ambitious sigh, or enlivened by one courtly smile. And so do we. But these are extreme cases. True, they are so. They are instructive however as far as they go.

*The whole passage, which is too long to be quoted, is a beautiful specimen of heathen morality and wisdom. It might put to the blush many a christian philosopher, and many a christian courtier and counsellor.

Suppose, then, we could remove the veil which conceals the future from the present ; and contemplate the death-scene of those kings, and nobles, and heroes, and worthies ; those rich men, and great men of every name and character whom we most admire ; whose condition in the world appears most enviable—whom we fain would be like if we could:—Suppose we could follow their spirits into the eternal world, and witness their character and destiny there : I ask, is there a man in the universe, who would not decide on their happiness by what should then be disclosed, rather than by what they were, or by what they possessed in this life ? Suppose you should behold them sinking down from their thrones and palaces into the pit of darkness and horror, “where their worm dieth not, and where the fire is not quenched”—would you envy them any more ? Would you then call them happy—would they any longer be the objects of blind admiration and eulogy ? No—not one of them. No—not if he had possessed ten thousand times the wealth, and wisdom, and power of Croesus, and Solomon, and Napoleon combined. Not a mortal has ever yet existed so great and honourable as would tempt you to exchange your humble lot for his, if you knew that misery were his doom after life's poor play had ended. You had rather live a slave and die an heir of glory ; than live a monarch and lose your soul at last.

Now, Christ has taught us that it is hard for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God—“hard for them that trust in riches”—implying also, that it is extremely difficult for a rich man not to trust in riches. The same may be affirmed of all the objects of human desire and ambition. When inordinately pursued, they become a snare ; and prove the destruction of their idolatrous votaries. Facts universally corroborate this statement. Very few of the great men of this world have ever yet been truly humble pious men. Go to the palaces of kings—to the castles of noblemen—to the mansions of the wealthy—and let charity speak her kindest sentiments in regard to their inmates. Will she not be constrained to respond in the language of inspiration?—“Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called.”—“It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.”

I know how offensive this representation usually is to this world's favourites ; and I know too how adroitly some preachers contrive to serve it up in a palatable form, so as to leave men in the quiet pursuit and possession of their idols. But we have not so learned Christ. His kingdom is not of this world.

It is a spiritual kingdom. And any man of common sense, who will reflect on the subject, may easily perceive, that, to devote one's life to the eager pursuit of earthly objects of any kind, is not cultivating a spirit of self-denial and mortification—is not becoming more and more weaned from the world—is not avoiding temptation, but courting it in its most dangerous forms—and taking the most direct course to the very opposite of all that the gospel recommends and enjoins.

The gospel gains nothing by any compromise with the world. Nor does the world gain any thing by such a compromise. It is as absurd as it is wicked to deceive ourselves, or to suffer others to deceive us in this concern. We cannot serve God and Mammon. We cannot cultivate that temper and cherish those affections which are congenial with heaven; while we are intent on a fortune—while we are intriguing for office—while the soul is all anxiety about some, no matter what, mere temporal good.

I do not say that it is impossible for a man to acquire riches, or to be elevated to honourable stations, and to be faithful as a steward of God at the same time. But it is very hard—very difficult—very rare. A wise man would not be willing to run the hazard. He would see that the chances are greatly against him. He would discern the dangers which beset the path of the numerous candidates for worldly distinctions;—and he would carefully avoid this path. His prayer to God would be—"Remove far from me vanity and lies; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain."

A death-bed is a fair touchstone by which to try the character of earthly things. Let wealth, rank, power, office, fame, philosophy, pleasure, be brought to this test—and you shall read "vanity of vanities" inscribed on them all, as objects of our chief desire or main pursuit.

These then are not the objects which demand our time and our hearts. Had we nothing else to live for—to hope for—life would not be worth a thought. That there is an object of infinite and eternal moment to engage our mind; and yet that these should principally, or rather supremely, engross it, is a moral phenomenon which will excite the astonishment of all intelligent creation while the universe exists. It will astonish the inhabitants of hell, no less than the hosts of heaven, so long as one monument of this folly can be found in all the dominions

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of the Almighty. Shall we blindly walk in the steps of the millions who have already perished; and of the millions who are still perishing, the voluntary slaves of this world's cruel, implacable master? Shall any of us go from the healthful fountain of science and religion—of enlightening, ennobling science—of purifying, exalting, heavenly religion—to degrade ourselves to a level with the meanest, most ignorant, most grovelling of Mammon's deluded victims? God forbid!

The little assembly, which usually meets in this Hall, is an apt epitome of the great world of which we read: which, for six thousand years past, has been uniform in nothing but in changes. Every year—every month effects some change among us. Friends and companions; esteemed pupils; venerable fathers and teachers leave us:—Strangers come and occupy their seats, and find a place in our affections. Now an individual goes—and an individual arrives. Now a multitude depart together; bid farewell to their *Alma Mater*; disperse to the four winds of heaven, and are lost from our view in the mighty throng of busy mortals who keep the world in motion. Anon, a multitude join us from the same great mass, and fill up the vacant places of their predecessors. So that, at the close of every year, the preacher's audience is nearly one half renewed. At least, a hundred persons are now present, to whose faces we were strangers but a few months ago.

These changes, it is true, are a matter of course in institutions like ours. They occasion no surprise, and often but little emotion. We witness the constant fluctuation, like the ebb and flow of Ocean's tide—and we mark it not. We bid adieu to one, and salute another, with almost equal indifference. No—not always. There are moments when the kindlier sympathies of our nature dissolve the icy barriers of habit and of business, and constrain us to yield the tribute of a melting heart, as we press the hand of an ingenuous and respected brother, whom we expect to behold no more on this side the judgment seat of Christ.

There are moments too, when memory recalls the loved idea of one and another, who once frequented these academick groves, which will cause the unconscious tear to start from the eye which shall see him no more forever. These tender recollections, which bring fresh to our view the "soft green of the soul" on which affection delights to repose, become more and more exquisite and sadly grateful, as we travel on through this unfeeling world; and daily experience more of the ingratitude, dishonesty, duplicity, treachery, and cruelty of our fellow men.

There is a soothing melancholy in thus reverting to past scenes of friendly intercourse where the *heart* participated, which half obliterates the impressions continually made on the sensitive mind, by the cold insidious smile of selfish veteran hypocrisy, which fain would pass for sincerity and kindness. Are we forgotten by our youthful friends when dispersed the wide world over? Perhaps we are—still, let the fond delusion be cherished. The aching bosom still finds a solace in fancy's magic creations; when most that is real in public life appears odious and repulsive.

A few of us have witnessed more than one entire revolution in our little assembly. Within ten short years, hundreds have come to us, and hundreds have left us. How many, who now hear me, were here ten years ago? Of those with whom it was my happy lot first to associate within these hallowed walls,* not an individual now frequents them. Pupils, teachers, companions,—all are gone. The voices, which, when a student, I was accustomed to hear addressing mercy's throne, and proclaiming heaven's kind messages of love, are hushed forever! No, they are tuned to purer strains; to more seraphick lays, in yonder blessed mansions. Spirits of the sainted dead! Where now are all the affectionate youth, who once listened with delight, if not with corresponding profit, to the accents of your glowing, persuasive, commanding eloquence? How many of them are already uniting with you, in singing the praises of redeeming love in that peaceful happy country, towards which you delighted here to point them? And who, of all those that yet remain behind, can ever forget the paternal counsels and warnings—the seasonable reproofs and exhortations—the pathetic appeals and entreaties of their beloved, venerated Smith and Kollock?

Such are the changes and inroads which a few years occasion even in a circle so limited as ours. What individual in this assembly shall, twenty years hence, tell his listening auditors, that he alone of all their number was, at this period, a member of either of these institutions: and that the lips of all those who spoke of heavenly wisdom, when he first entered this Hall, as a pupil or a worshipper, are silent forever? Melancholy, awful, alarming thought! Who can tell what a day may bring forth? What a call for diligence, and zeal, and watchfulness, and prayer! Can we suffer one moment more of precious time to pass unheeded or unimproved?

Brethren, it has pleased the Lord, in his great goodness, to spare our lives to behold the close of another year. It becomes us to take a solemn, and an honest retrospect of our conduct

* In 1802—4

during that period. Let us call to mind the many mercies received—the many privileges enjoyed—the multiplied favours of a gracious protecting providence—the many calls, and warnings, and judgments, from the word, and Spirit, and ministers of God:—the return which we have rendered to our heavenly Preserver and Benefactor—and the improvement which we have made of all his kindly dealings and fatherly chastisements.

Have we been prospered in all our ways—have our health and reason, our property and friends, and all our temporal comforts and privileges been continued to us? What has been the temper of our hearts during all this year of uninterrupted enjoyment of so many precious benefits? Have they overflowed with gratitude, and love, and praise to the Giver of every good and perfect gift? Has the morning and the evening sacrifice borne witness daily to the sincerity of our deep convictions of obligation to our heavenly Father for his unmerited kindness and rich beneficence? If not—then, what a debt of gratitude has accumulated against us? When or how shall we repay it? What a motive to strive to redeem lost time by all possible diligence and thankfulness in future?

Have we been in danger, in trouble, in sorrow, in sickness, in affliction—and did we not secretly promise, that, if God would deliver us, we would sin no more against him? Our presence in this place to-day is proof that God did deliver us: Have we remembered his mercy and performed our vows?

How often, within the current year, have we been almost persuaded to become the disciples of the blessed Jesus—and again have hardened our hearts, and turned aside after vanity? Remember, God has said; “my Spirit shall not always strive with man.” “He, that being often reprovèd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.”

Has not the hand of the Lord been stretched forth in judgment among us? How many souls has he taken from the number of our acquaintances? Has not the voice of mourning been heard in our streets? Who among us has not been called to shed a tear over some deceased relative or friend since the commencement of the present year? What were our emotions and our resolutions when we contemplated the cold remains of a beloved parent, or brother, or sister, or companion? Did not, in that awful hour of heart-rending anguish, the voice of the dead pierce our souls and bring home the warning—“be ye also ready; watch and pray for ye know not what hour your Lord

cloth come?" And did we not solemnly bind our hearts to an immediate and faithful compliance?

But where now are all our resolves, and purposes, and convictions? Whither has fled that tender conscience—that susceptible heart—that kindly relenting—that heavenly aspiring—that pensive, thoughtful, sorrowing spirit, which seemed just about to soar above earth's delusive dreams, and to wing its joyful flight to kindred spirits in the skies? Has death then so suddenly lost his terrors? Has the grave concealed from our view affection's idol, only to dry up the fountains of sympathy, and to check the flow of penitential feeling, which, for a few sad moments, we suffered to take its course? How many calls like these shall we disregard? How soon may we be constrained in bitterness to exclaim, behold, "the harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved?"

"Quench not the Spirit. Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God. To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart. Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." Boast not thyself of to-morrow;—This night thy soul may be required of thee; then, whose shall those things be which now engross thy thoughts and affections?

"By nature's law, what may be, may be now;
There's no prerogative in human hours.
In human hearts what bolder thought can rise,
Than man's presumption on to-morrow's dawn?
Where is to-morrow? In another world.
For numbers this is certain; the reverse
Is sure to none; and yet on this *perhaps*,
This *peradventure*, infamous for lies,
As on a rock of adamant we build
Our mountain hopes; spin out eternal schemes,
And big with life's futurities expire.
Be wise to-day; 'tis madness to defer;
Next day the fatal precedent will plead;
Thus on, till wisdom is pushed out of life.
Procrastination is the thief of time;
Year after year it steals, till all are fled,
And to the mercies of a moment leaves
The vast concerns of an eternal scene.
If not so frequent, would not this be strange?
That 'tis so frequent, this is stranger still."

A suggestion or two, adapted to the peculiar character and condition of the great mass of my hearers, shall conclude this discourse.

How ought we to improve our time?

I. It is evident, from what has been said—as well as from the very nature and end of our existence, as unfolded to us in scripture, and confirmed by reason and experience, that RELIGION ought to be our first, and last, and chief concern.

Man was made to be religious. Religion constitutes his true dignity and glory. All the peace, and comfort, and virtue, and felicity in the world—or which have ever been in the world; flow, and have flowed, from religion. Banish religion utterly from our world, and our world would be a hell. Give religion (the pure religion of Christ) the entire dominion—let it prevail universally—let it reign supremely in every heart, and prompt and regulate every action: and our world would be a heaven. But this world is neither a heaven nor a hell; because religion is neither totally excluded nor generally regarded. In proportion, however, as it does prevail, in the same proportion do we behold human nature approximating that purity and happiness which angels possess. And in proportion as it is any where neglected, opposed, despised—in the same degree do vice, and ignorance, and misery gain the ascendancy. This is a fact obvious to every man's observation.

Look where you will—upon nations, or neighbourhoods, or families, or individuals—among the ancients or the moderns—whether Heathen or Jewish, Mohammedan or Christian—still, where religion has most influence, there is most excellence and most enjoyment. Not that all religions are equally good: but the worst is better than none. And the beneficial influence, which they respectively exert on human character and conduct, will, other things being equal, invariably be according to the purity and truth of the several systems embraced. Much evil is restrained or prevented by the worst religion on earth—much more by the better—and most of all by the best.

The christian religion, imperfectly as it has hitherto been known, and limited as has been the sphere of its direct control, has already effected such a revolution in human feelings, principles, habits, and institutions, in all countries upon which its light has shone; that could an ancient Persian, or Greek, or Roman, from their respective nations when most religious, moral and prosperous, be suddenly introduced into a christian community, he would scarcely recognise his species. It would be all a fairy land to him.

Strange, passing strange, that a historian should be an enemy to christianity : strange that a historian and a philosopher, in the midst of a christian land, should be an infidel—that he should talk of “ the cheerful devotion ;” “ the elegant mythology” of the pagans—of “ the mild, social, tolerant spirit of polytheism”—and have the effrontery to degrade the religion of Christ below the licentious, cruel, abominable idolatries and superstitions of heathenism. And this too while surrounded by the ten thousand witnesses to the heavenly benevolence and purity of the christian faith. One scarcely knows which most to admire, the cold-blooded cruelty, the depraved hardihood—or the stupid credulity and ignorance, which such an exhibition betrays. We trust that no youthful readers of a Hume or a Gibbon—with the bible in their hands, inculcating principles as pure and benign as the Deity from whom they emanated ; and with the monuments of their meliorating tendency and transforming power every where in view, will ever recur to pagan Memphis, or Athens, or Rome, for better society, and laws, and usages, and morals, only to pour contempt upon the faith of their fathers, and the institutions of the gospel.

This is the religion which has wrought miracles of philanthropy and mercy in our wretched world. Which is still marching onward, conquering and to conquer. Glorious are the triumphs and the trophies already won. Empires and kingdoms have done homage to the cross ; and rich and multiplied have been the blessings received in return.

But this blessed religion, while it diffuses its cheering beams over nations and empires, directs its healing, life-giving energies to individuals also. And every individual has a personal and an everlasting interest in her charities. She is the arbiter of our peace and happiness in time and through eternity. She is here present this day, soliciting each one of us to enlist under her banners : assuring us that her ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths peace. She invites us to living fountains of unmingled sweetness—to imperishable mansions in the New Jerusalem—to crowns of rejoicing in the Paradise of God. But her smiles are not to be courted, at particular seasons, and on special occasions, only. She demands the whole heart—and she demands it constantly. Every moment of our lives must be consecrated to her service. She admits of no rival—of no divided dominion.

Are these terms too hard ? What—to be religious every day—every hour—from youth to old age ?—To be ever exercising

self-denial, patience, submission, humility—to be unceasingly watchful, circumspect, devotional, prayerful, penitent? Yes, assuredly. Ah, how much need have we then to redeem the time!

Religion, I repeat, is an every-day work. Without religion, we are the enemies of God: and his curse abideth on every step we take, and on every action we perform. Now, there is probably much error prevalent on this subject. Religion is not a kind of holiday garb, to be put on and off at pleasure—to be worn at one time and laid aside at another. It is to be worn at all times—in all places—under all circumstances. The mechanic in his workshop—the farmer in his field—the merchant in his counting-house—the sailor before the mast—the magistrate upon the bench—the student at his books—may all be as religious in any of these employments, as the preacher in the pulpit, or the penitent on his knees in the closet. Religion regulates the temper—reigns in the heart—and keeps alive the spirit of devotion and love wherever we go, or whatever may be our worldly vocation.

Industry—diligence in lawful business of some kind, is a *duty* incumbent on all men, and is therefore a part of religion. An idle man cannot be a religious man: nor can he be a happy man, even were it possible for any man to be happy without being religious. Religion has a large demand on human labour and enterprise. Human wealth and human learning are the instruments which she liberally employs to accomplish her benevolent plans and purposes in the world. And whenever these are sought for such an application, they are sought religiously. The blessing of God will accompany the labours of the hand and of the mind: and rich shall be the labourer's reward, both in this life, and in that which is to come.

II. My young friends, it has pleased God, in his gracious providence, to bring you hither to acquire knowledge. This therefore is your present business. This is your worldly vocation. And, like every other, it may be blessed or cursed to yourselves and others, according to the spirit with which it is prosecuted.

Time is the talent committed to you to improve to the very utmost of your ability, according to the opportunities and advantages enjoyed. To discipline, to strengthen, to enlighten, to enlarge the mind; that you may be qualified to appear and to shine among your ignorant uncultivated fellow men, like stars in the firmament, where, but for them, all would be cheer-

less midnight darkness.—This is your object. It is a noble object, if rightly understood and appreciated.

Knowledge is power—is wealth—is honour. It raises the savage above the brute ; and the peasant, in civilized society, much above the savage. While it exalts the few, who possess its richest stores, as far above the mass of the unlearned as they transcend the brute creation.

Knowledge opens the surest path to usefulness and eminence. It confers a nobility which no hereditary rank can equal : and which kings and princes cannot bestow. Knowledge, consecrated to its legitimate end, constitutes the brightest ornament of human nature. It is, and must be, the main pillar of our republican institutions—of all civil and religious liberty—of all that the patriot and the christian hold most dear upon earth. It is a treasure of which no adverse fortune, no persecuting power, no malignant fiend, can deprive its possessor. In poverty—in exile—at home—abroad—in the wilderness—on the ocean—in prison—in bonds—it is his companion and his solace : and like Cicero, and Luther, and Knox, and Milton, and Locke, and a thousand others, more unfortunate and more oppressed than they, he can, even then, turn it to a profitable account. So far as this world merely is in question, it is more desirable than any, or all other possessions. With what invincible persevering ardour then, ought its acquisition to be prosecuted by every ingenious youth, who aspires to the perfection of his nature, and to the most commanding sphere of human action ?

Now is your time to lay up treasures of knowledge—*now*, perhaps, or never. Now you commence your labours in that exhaustless mine, which will afford you employment and delight through the longest life : or you set the seal to your own voluntary degradation and insignificance while you live. Here you will carefully and diligently lay that solid and broad foundation, upon which, the loftiest superstructure may be raised by future industry : or you will trifle away the precious moments till you despair of being able to redeem them ; and then mingle with the common herd of the idle, the abandoned, and the worthless—the objects of the pity, the contempt, and the scorn of mankind.

“ *Facilis descensus Averni.* ”

Have any of you begun to slide—begun to relax—to grow indolent—to be discouraged—to be seduced by pleasure ? Let the new year be a new era in your academical career, and in your life. Redeem the time : and have the courage to be wise ; let

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fools and witlings say what they will. A month, honestly and assiduously devoted to duty, will teach you to commiserate or to despise them all. It will teach you to despise and to abhor the course which you have hitherto pursued. Make the trial then in the name and strength of the Lord ; and victory is yours.

Do any of you ask, what species of knowledge is worthy of cultivation ? I answer, every kind. Youth often err greatly on this point. They sometimes undertake to pronounce, with perfect assurance, on the utility or inutility of a particular branch of science which happens to form a part of their prescribed course. They persuade themselves, or suffer themselves to be persuaded by others not more competent than they are to decide, that this or that difficult study will be of no use to them, and therefore they neglect it : or that they have no talent for it, and hence refuse to make the trial. This they do, not only in opposition to the opinion of those who are older and wiser ; but while they themselves are totally ignorant of the subject on which they sit in judgment. They compliment their own superior sagacity, perhaps, in thus getting rid of a piece of drudgery ; while, in truth, they are only indulging a spirit of idleness and presumption, which is equally hostile to all improvement.

But independently of all such juvenile prejudices—and of all the pedantry, and of all the ill-timed and ill-digested systems of education in the world ; I maintain the proposition, in all its length and breadth, that every species of liberal knowledge, every department of science and literature is worthy of attention, whenever and wherever it can be consistently cultivated. No man ever denounces as useless any science or language with which he is himself acquainted. The ignorant only, condemn : and they condemn what they do not understand ; and because they do not understand it.

No youth can foresee what will be useful to him, or what will not, in all the possible situations and circumstances of future life. The very thing that he least values may be the means of gaining an honest livelihood, in a place and at a time, when no other branch of knowledge would answer the same purpose. A modest deference therefore to the judgment of those whose province it is to direct his studies, ought to lead him to master all that they are able or willing to impart : and his own interest should prompt him to the attainment of as much more as time and means will permit.

Apart however from the specific consideration just hinted at ; there is a positive benefit to be derived from every attainment which can be made, (if we are disposed to employ our knowledge for any good end,) whatever may be our profession or station in life. Of all the learned men who have ever adorned

and blessed our world by their labours ; who, let me ask, have been most distinguished, most successful, most useful ? Precisely those who have put under contribution, to the greatest extent, every corner and recess of the grand temple of science, which it was possible for them to explore. There is such an intimate connexion between the sciences ; such a perfect harmony of parts in the great whole of human knowledge ; that all may frequently, like the rays of the Sun, be brought to bear intensely on a single point ; or, at pleasure, be spread over an immense surface, diffusing light, and heat, and joy, to the utmost verge of civilized society.

But, in an academical course, one important, and the most important object aimed at, besides the future advantage to be expected from any particular acquisition, is the discipline of the youthful mind. To render it vigorous, and liberal, and active—to quicken and sharpen its faculties—to unfold its latent energies—to inspire it with the love of knowledge—to imbue it with so much of its elementary principles, as will serve to enlarge its field of vision, and discover its peculiar bias and appropriate sphere—to give it the habit of thorough investigation—and thus prepare it to pursue its march to professional eminence, when cast upon its own resources, and left without a guide to its own efforts.

Here, then, you are to learn *how* to study ; and to acquire enough of mental furniture to set out in life for yourselves.

I have not intended to affirm, that, any man can learn every thing that is knowable. The age of a Methuselah would not suffice for this. Nor is it necessary, in order to become possessed of all the *science* in the world, to read a hundredth part of the books which have been written and published. The reading of books, and the acquisition of real knowledge, are frequently two very different things. But youth can learn at college all that they are required to learn there—and a great deal more. Afterwards, when one great object or vocation shall mainly engage their attention, they can gather many beautiful flowers and much precious fruit from the adjacent fields, if they have a taste for them, and know how to make the best use of their time and opportunities. And this they will do, and continue to do while they live, provided they be early put upon the right track.

Much—every thing will depend on the intellectual training to which you now submit. Study then to improve all your time in the most profitable manner. Let your amusements be rational, virtuous, seasonable, manly, and invigorating to body and mind.

Let knowledge be sought wherever it can be found. Let order, and method, and system be adopted and rigorously maintained. Study hard while you profess to study. Relax at suitable intervals, only to return with redoubled ardour to your books. Thus health, serenity of mind, elasticity of spirits, present enjoyment, and future usefulness and honour will all be promoted and secured.

Finally. There is one species of knowledge about the importance of which we hear a great deal, and read a great deal:—A knowledge of the world. And this knowledge, it is taken for granted, can be acquired only by mingling with the world, and contemplating men and manners as they are.

“The proper study of mankind is man.” Here again, human philosophy and poetry lead us astray.

It is in the Bible, and no where else, that we learn the genuine character and the true history of man. We may travel the world over; visit every clime and every city; mix with every society and circle; converse with the savage and the philosopher, the prince and the beggar; and still be ignorant of human nature. The heathen sages, who travelled most, and studied most, and thought and speculated most on this subject, have told us nothing of the matter. They never could comprehend the mystery—**MAN**.

The Bible, and the Bible only, tells us all about him. And the hermit of the wilderness, with the Bible in his hands, may, if he please, know more of himself and of his species, than Socrates, or Plato, or Tully ever knew. More than any modern philosopher or politician, however learned or however travelled, who neglects the Bible, will ever discover.

In the Bible we behold man as he is—stripped of all his trappings and disguises. His heart is there laid open to our inspection. We see all the hidden springs and motives of his actions. We follow him through all the windings of his course—into all the dark coverts, and corners, and recesses to which guilt and crime retreat from human eyes. We fairly estimate his character. Such a view of human nature is presented no where else. No uninspired historian, or biographer, or moralist has ever given us an exact—perfect representation of a single individual. Nor can we ascertain the true character of any one of our most intimate companions, or even of ourselves, except through the medium and by the aid of that light which is reflected from the Bible upon all who faithfully study its illuminating pages.

For this single end therefore, were there no other, or were not this paramount to all others, or did it not fairly embrace every thing else; the Bible is infinitely important to a student, desirous of every liberal accomplishment. Here he may acquire a just and adequate knowledge of the world, as it ever has been—is now—and ever will be. Let the Bible then be your constant companion.*

The BIBLE—in naming this precious book, I name the richest treasure ever bestowed by heaven on man. The Bible—inestimable, inexhaustible fountain of truth, and wisdom, and purity, and consolation! But time will not permit even a glance at a thousandth part of the advantages and blessings which it proffers and promises to all who diligently and prayerfully study it. It will be a lamp to your feet, and a light to your path, and a joy to your hearts, in all your wanderings through life's checkered scenery, and through death's dark valley. It will teach you how to value, and how to improve time—how to be learned—how to be honest—how to be religious—how to be useful—how to be happy—how to live—and how to die.

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” Search the Holy Scriptures therefore, which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

And, as you are about to commence a new year, my friends; commence a new life also. And may God in mercy enable you to do so—and to devote the remainder of your lives entirely to his service and glory! Then, indeed, we shall have solid grounds to greet you, and to wish you a happy new-year. For, such you will find it in reality, and as such you will remember it through eternity. AMEN!

* The Bible has, for ten years past, been a class-book in the college. It is studied and recited on the Sabbath. It was introduced by the late venerable President. Whose constant practice it was, after questioning the students upon the portion prepared, to explain the difficult passages, to unfold the import and spirit of the whole in the most catholic manner, and to enforce upon the heart and conscience such practical truths and lessons as were likely to prove most beneficial to his pupils. The good effects of this system have been abundantly visible. Much precious fruit has already been the result. But the half will not be known to him, who here delighted in this work of love, till long after he shall be gathered to his fathers. In heaven, we trust, he will hereafter see welcomed to the mansions of peace, many, of whom he had little hope while patiently and prayerfully engaged in sowing the gospel seed, who will tell him that the study of the Bible at Nassau-Hall had been the means, under God, of leading them to the Saviour and to glory.

It is hoped that this laudable usage will be maintained by all who may yet succeed to the Presidential chair: and that the Bible will never cease to form an essential part of the classical studies of the College of New-Jersey.