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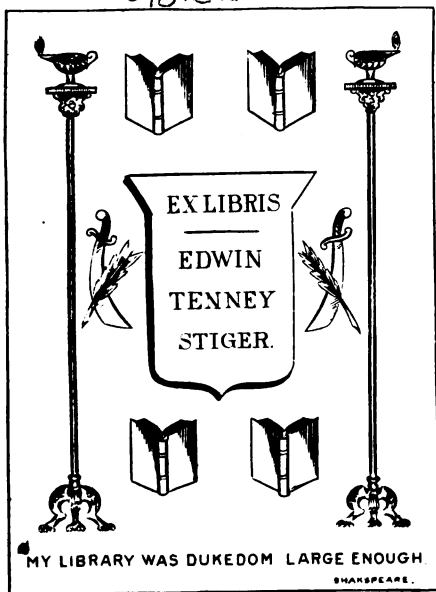
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Master William F. ...
From his ...
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LETTERS

TO A

YOUNG STUDENT,

IN THE

FIRST STAGE OF A LIBERAL EDUCATION.



BOSTON:
PUBLISHED BY PERKINS & MARVIN.
PHILADELPHIA:
FRENCH AND PERKINS.

1832.

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Education Department

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It gives me great pleasure to commend this little volume to that class of persons for whose benefit it is particularly intended. They will find it of great value, as embodying the results of recent experience, set forth in a spirit and manner at once inspiring respect and confidence, and awakening the best affections of the heart. It is the counsel of a friend and brother,

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coming with all the authority of truth and kindness, and adapting itself, with remarkable simplicity and propriety, to the circumstances of the young student. He who might possibly be jealous of the influence of more official admonition, may here find equal wisdom in the correspondence of one who is himself willing to be regarded as a pupil, and who is full of the thoughts and dispositions which elevate such a relation. It deserves the attentive perusal of every student; and whoever shall shape himself by its instructions, will find, at the period to which they lead him, that he has gained an object heretofore attained by few, a capacity for entering upon his profes-

sional studies, without the necessity of correcting the errors and mistakes of his preparatory education.

The increase of pious young men which, by the divine blessing upon the means of religious instruction in our country, is annually brought into our literary institutions, renders this volume particularly seasonable at the present time. The want, which parents and teachers have begun to feel deeply, but which no one has yet attempted to supply, is here met. The work is entirely unobtrusive in its character, constructed for the great purpose of utility ; and its benevolent and judicious author will, for that reason, subserve the interests of Christian educa-

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tion more effectually, than if he had written with larger pretensions and more ambitious aims.

N. LORD.

*Dartmouth College, }
Aug. 28, 1832. }*

LETTERS TO A YOUNG STUDENT.

LETTER I.

GENERAL REMARKS ON THE FORMATION OF CHARACTER.

Introductory remarks—Importance of a right course in the first stage of study—Importance of a high standard of attainment—Decision of character—Self-control—Fixed principles of action—Influence of habit in the formation of character—Self-knowledge.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,—I am glad to learn, that you have commenced a course of classical study, with the intention of acquiring a collegiate education. It would give me pleasure to know this, even if you had some secular profession in view. For, in every sphere of action, knowledge is power. I can think of no station in which a liberal education would not afford you the means of exerting an influence over

your fellow men which you could not otherwise acquire. And this influence you would delight, I trust, to employ in promoting the kingdom of Him to whom, in the morning of your days, you have gladly given yourself away. But I look with peculiar pleasure on the step you have taken, from the intimation you have given me, that it is your present purpose to become a preacher of the gospel. When I turn my eyes eastward, and westward, and northward, and southward, and behold the desolations which sin has made in the world ; when I hear the loud call for preachers of the gospel from the destitute portions of our own land, and the still louder call from the wide spread regions of Mohammedanism, popery, and paganism ; I cannot but rejoice to see one after another setting himself to the work of preparation for that blessed ministry which, under God, is to purify the whole world from its abominations, and cause joyful songs of praise to the Most High to ascend from "every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people."

You have done well, I think, to fix your eye thus early on a profession for life. I do not say that this is best in every case. But that it is in

yours, I have no doubt. To wake up the human mind to intense effort, we must place before it some definite and commanding object of pursuit. I have often seen young men in the academy and at college, who seemed to have no such object. They were there because their parents or guardians would have it so. And they went through the daily routine of study and recitation, because their instructors required it. If they could be said to have any definite object in view, it was only to make just such acquisitions as barely to escape the censure of those who were set over them. They made no higher attainments, because they had before them no great ultimate object of pursuit demanding large acquisitions. I do not say, that to place such an object before a youthful student, it is absolutely necessary that his future profession should be selected. Nor would I here undertake to say, at how early an age, or at what period in a course of study, a profession for life should be selected by one who has no disposition to enter the ministry. But I am convinced, that as soon, at least, as a pious student has passed through the period of mere boyhood, it is well for him, if he can, to decide the question whether he

ought to become a preacher of the gospel. If he is to enter the ministry, the sooner his eye is fixed on it the better. Should he select this profession at the very earliest stage of his classical studies, he will still be at liberty to change his purpose, should any subsequent developments of character, or any unforeseen dispensations of Providence, lead him or his friends to deem it best. And with this profession in view, he will have an object before his mind which can hardly fail to urge him onward in a course of intense and persevering effort. I recollect the substance of a remark made to me by a fellow student at the academy, who is now a minister of the gospel, in reference to certain severe intellectual efforts which he was called upon to make. "I should almost shrink from them," said he, "were it not for my ultimate object, the gospel ministry." And I have no doubt that many who would else have been utterly discouraged by ill health, pecuniary embarrassments, and other appalling obstacles, have been aroused, by the hope of ultimately preaching the blessed gospel, to a steadiness of purpose, and an energy of effort, before which every difficulty has given way. It is well then, I repeat it, that, at the

very outset of your course, your eye is fixed on the gospel ministry. When you are ready to faint under the toils of the way ; when obstacles which seem almost insurmountable, rise up before you ; it will cheer your heart, and nerve your arm, to think of the noble work in which you hope to engage. And when the syren sloth tempts you to self-indulgence, if ought can break her spell, it will be the delightful hope of being permitted to minister at the altar of God. This, at least, I can confidently say ; if such be not the effect of this hope upon you, your feelings in view of the ministry, are far from being such as you ought to possess.

But while I rejoice, my dear young friend, at the step you have taken, and at the purpose you have formed to become a minister of the gospel, allow me to say, that I rejoice with trembling. Many who commenced a course of study with fond hopes and fair promise of future usefulness, have sadly disappointed the expectations of their friends. Some have brought deep disgrace on themselves and on the Christian name. And others, though they have not been utterly ruined, have yet sadly declined from the ardor of pious feeling, and the consistency of Christian

deportment, which once gladdened the hearts of their friends ; and have fallen far short of those high intellectual attainments which they might have made. When I think of these things, and remember that you are yet young in years, and young in Christian experience,—and that many dangers lie before you of which as yet you know but little ; I cannot but regard you with deep solicitude. You look, yourself, I doubt not, with some degree of anxiety on the course before you. And yet I know you cannot fully realize the perils which will beset your path. Be assured, they are many,—they are fearful. I say not this to discourage you, but merely to excite you to that vigilance and effort, which, alone, with the blessing of God, will save you from ruin. Would that I could utter in the hearing of every student in the land, at every step in his course, what I now say to you :—**YOU ARE IN DANGER ;—LOOK WELL TO YOUR FOOTSTEPS, OR YOU FALL.**

Considerable acquaintance with young students, both while engaged in the prosecution of my own studies, and while employed in the business of instruction, has led me to believe that they are greatly in need of much definite, famil-

lar advice on a great variety of topics pertaining to their intellectual and moral improvement; and that their wants in this respect are, in general, far from being fully met. General principles on all such topics, do, indeed, in various ways, come before them. But comparatively inexperienced as they are in the application of general principles to the business of life, they need to have the practical use of these principles clearly and particularly explained to them. Unacquainted as they are with the ground over which they are to pass, they need not only to have the outlines of their path described, but to become possessed of those minute details in regard to it, without which they will for ever be liable to stumble, and perhaps to fall. I have no doubt that many might have been saved from ruin, and many others have been led to far higher attainments than they have made, had some judicious and faithful friend pointed out to them, from time to time, the dangers of the way, and given such minute advice as a student greatly needs. Instructors, I know, may do much—ought to do much—and much, indeed, is sometimes done by them, in the way of advice to their pupils on the various subjects concerned in the for-

mation of character. But their labors are usually numerous and severe. Many pupils are ordinarily committed to the care of an individual. And without imputing any default in point of wisdom or faithfulness, instructors in general cannot do for their pupils, in the way of advice, what perhaps they would gladly do under other circumstances. Books are often excellent substitutes for living instructors. But unhappily, so far as my knowledge extends, the young student will look in vain to this source for what he specially needs. We have some excellent works designed for the instruction of young Christians, which have no special relation to the case of a student. We have, indeed, some works written with special reference to students, which are filled with counsels worthy of their most serious regard. But these books deal too exclusively in general principles. They are not sufficiently minute and practical to meet some of the most pressing wants of the young student. He needs a book to which he can go for an answer to just such queries as he would put to an intimate and judicious friend, in regard to the every day matters of his course of study. But to such a book, my dear young friend, much as

you need it, I cannot refer you. I am not aware that such a book exists.—I know not how I can render you a more important service, at this stage in your course of study, than by attempting to supply, in some measure, the place of such a book, by a series of plain and familiar letters. It will be my object in these letters, to say, with great plainness and directness, those things which I suppose you specially to need. I shall not attempt to make out a complete system of counsels on any one general topic, but merely to give such hints under each as may seem to me peculiarly appropriate to your case. On some subjects I shall probably be very minute; as a want of particularity has seemed to me one of the greatest defects in much of the advice given to the young. And I shall not be careful to avoid the repetition of an idea which I have before advanced, when it shall seem desirable to place it in a new point of view. Many of the things which I shall say, will be essentially the same that I was wont to say in the most familiar manner, to my own pupils, when engaged in the business of instruction; and I shall say them to you in much the same way. In entering on this work, I have sought wisdom from on high; and

if, by what I write, I should be able essentially to aid you in pressing onward to the highest possible attainments in knowledge and virtue, I shall feel that my efforts have been richly rewarded.

It will be my object, in the present letter, to lay before you certain general considerations in regard to the formation of character. They will be such as you ought to understand well at the outset ; as they involve principles which lie at the foundation of all moral and intellectual excellence.

1. I would, as a preliminary step, call your attention to the **IMPORTANCE OF TAKING A RIGHT COURSE IN YOUR FIRST STAGE OF STUDY.** If you are not duly sensible of this, I shall have little hope of your making the attainments which are fairly within your reach. If you feel, as many seem to do, that it matters little what course you pursue, or what habits you form at the academy, if you do but succeed in obtaining admission to college ; I shall have little expectation of your accomplishing much in your subsequent course of study, or in professional life. Some students seem to feel, that the time they spend at the academy is almost lost. But the truth is, it is,

in some respects, the most important part of a classical course. There, in the most appropriate sense of the expression, the foundation of an education is laid. There habits mental and moral are formed, which will be likely to go with the student into his college course, and even into the scenes of subsequent life. Adopt right principles, from right habits, in the incipient stage of your course of study; and you give to your friends and instructors the best possible pledge, that you will go on successfully to the end of your course, and be well prepared for usefulness in the world. Pursue a different course in the first stage of study; and though it is not certain that no important change for the better will take place at a subsequent period, yet my own observation has confirmed what seems quite evident from the laws of the human mind, that we should have no good reason to be sanguine in our hopes of such a change. On glancing over the history of those men with whom I was acquainted at the academy, and of whose subsequent course of study I have known something, I find that, in most instances, both at college and in the theological seminary, they have been very much the same men they were at

the academy. Let me then deeply impress on your mind the importance of beginning aright.

2. **ADOPT A HIGH STANDARD OF ATTAINMENT IN EVERY RESPECT.** Aim at perfection in every thing you do. While all acknowledge the propriety of this maxim, very few reduce it to practice. Most students, if they have any definite object of pursuit, aim at a comparatively low one. At the academy, they have nothing higher in view than just to get into college. In college, they have no loftier aim than merely to perform the prescribed exercises, and to fill up most of their leisure time with something which may bear the name of reading. Through all their course of study, they are satisfied with doing about as much as others do. And when they go out from the scenes of academic life into the world, they pursue the same grovelling course. This is true in the case of some men, to whom God has given noble powers of mind. They seem either to be wholly unconscious of the treasure which their Maker has bestowed upon them, or else to be willing, like the slothful servant in the parable, to "lay it up in a napkin." They are quite contented to creep in the dust, when they might be soaring among the stars.—

The Bible censures those who, in regard to moral attainments, "compare themselves among themselves." And, as every lawful act should be a matter of Christian duty, I see not why those who pursue this course in respect to intellectual attainments, are exempt from this censure. Act, my dear young friend, in accordance with that precept of Holy Writ, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." Do not adopt as your standard either of intellectual or moral attainment, what others have attained. Aim at perfection in every thing. In religion, hold up before your mind that perfect model of excellence, the character of Jesus. In knowledge, aim at the highest possible attainments. Let your soul be fired with the noble purpose of making the most of yourself. Thus high have been the aims of those illustrious men, who, from age to age have been the wonder and the glory of our race. Thus high let your aims be; and though you may not, even then, accomplish all you could wish to do, you will surely accomplish far more, than if you were content to aim at nothing more than mere mediocrity. I love that young man whose eye brightens with the noble purpose of doing for his own soul, for

the world, and for his God, the very utmost that he can possibly accomplish.

It is one thing, however, to form a noble general purpose, and quite another to carry it in practice into all the details of life. I have been much pleased with a little maxim of a very practical cast, which embraces the general principle I have been endeavoring to enforce. It is this:—*Make the most of every thing in its place.* Let me urge you to govern yourself by this maxim. In whatever you engage,—whether it be conversation, reading, writing, study, recitation, or even needful bodily exercise,—make the most of it. See to it that you derive the greatest possible advantage from it.

3. Aim to ACQUIRE TRUE DECISION OF CHARACTER. Without this, whatever may be your attainments in other respects, you will probably accomplish but little in the world.—In true decision of character three things are implied:—

(1.) *A habit of thorough and independent investigation* in regard to the path of duty. You must learn to think for yourself. And you must train your mind to think efficiently on any doubtful question of duty which may come before it.—Men who have no decision of character,

usually keep close to respectable precedents. They do as others have done. And when precedents fail, they seem either unable or afraid to search out the path of duty for themselves. They diligently inquire after the opinions of others. Others, in fact, think for them. And they usually follow, without much examination, the opinions of those for whom, on the whole, they have the greatest reverence.—But you will say, perhaps, ‘I am young and inexperienced. Shall I have no regard to the opinions of others,—even of those who are older and wiser than myself? And even at a more advanced age, must I feel that no deference is due to the opinions of my fellow men?’ Such questions are very appropriate here; for on the points to which they relate, many mistakes have been made. I think it easy, however, to draw the line of distinction between a proper and a servile regard to the opinions of others. When you can command a view of the whole ground on which you are to act, or when you can command as fair a view of it as others; give little heed to what they may say, except so far as they can throw light on the field of action. Make the most of any *information* they can give. But their mere

opinions, though you ought to treat them courteously, should have very little influence over you. Your Maker did not intend, that the work which properly belongs to you as an intelligent, reasoning being, should be transferred to another. But when, in the nature of the case, you cannot survey the whole ground on which you are to act, you ought to give much deference to the mere opinions of those who, in this respect, occupy a much more favorable position than yourself.— To illustrate my meaning with reference to your own case. You have but just entered on a course of study. Of many things which lie before you, you are almost entirely ignorant. In regard to these things, of course, you are not competent to form opinions; and must be governed by the opinions of those who have gone before you. Cases similar in their general features, frequently occur in other walks of life; and to these the same rule will apply. With this explanation of what I mean, I would say to you most earnestly, you cannot learn too early to think for yourself.

(2.) It is essential to true decision of character, that when, by thorough investigation, you have ascertained the path of duty, you should

resolve, at once, to act, and put that resolution in practice. Many men of timid spirit, when they have decided that they ought to take a particular course, hesitate to act in accordance with this decision. There is many a "lion in the way." They tremble at the shaking of a leaf, and are ready to flee at the sight of their own shadows. The path is distinctly marked out before them; but they hesitate to set forward. They query whether there may not possibly be some mistake in the course of reasoning which has led to the decision they have made. They review that course; come to the same decision as before; and yet fear to act. Put far from you such a timid irresolute spirit.

(3.) To make up a truly decided character,—when you have resolved to act, and have really begun to act, in accordance with the convictions of your judgment, *persevere in this course, come what will.* The same pusillanimous spirit which men evince, when they hesitate to do at once what they have decided that they ought to do, often leads them, even when they have entered the path of duty, to turn back at the sight of difficulties or dangers. When once you have put your hand to a good work—a work in which

you are convinced that you ought to be engaged—never give it up, come what will. Come honor or dishonor, come life or death; still maintain, with unwavering purpose and fearless heart, the post of duty.

To bring together, now, the three main constituents of true decision of character, I would say, *ascertain, by thorough and independent examination, what the path of duty is; enter promptly on that path; and fearlessly persevere in it.*—To say nothing of subsequent life, you will have daily occasion for decision of character in your course of study. Without special pains to acquire it, you will be in great danger of falling into a kind of servile dependence on circumstances, and the opinions of those around you. Of a more insignificant character than one who is thus dependent, I can hardly conceive.—For a more extended discussion of this subject, I would refer you to Foster's Essay on Decision of Character,—a work which you cannot read too soon. I would that the great principles of that invaluable essay were engraven on the heart of every young man in Christendom.

4. In close connection with the preceding subject, I wish to call your attention distinctly to

the importance of entire *self-control*. This is, indeed, implied in *decisions of character*. But it is of such vast importance, that I deem it proper to give it a separate consideration. There are some men of sound judgment, and genuine feelings in many respects, who seem to have no control over themselves. They are just like the feather that floats listlessly on the capricious breeze. You can place no dependence on such men. They can place no dependence on themselves. Be not like them. If you would gain the confidence of your fellow men, or accomplish much in the world, strive to gain a perfect mastery over yourself. Well has the Scripture said, "He that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city." After all that has been said about greatness of moral character, it consists more in this single trait than in any other,—perhaps I might say, than in all others combined. Among heathen nations, there have been some illustrious exhibitions of this trait of character. In the Bible, it assumes the name of *self-denial*. And well might the burning words of shame come over the cheek of the Christian who, with the holier principles and higher motives of the gospel, comes short even of that

the academy. Let me then deeply impress on your mind the importance of beginning aright.

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3. Aim to ACQUIRE TRUE DECISION OF CHARACTER. Without this, whatever may be your attainments in other respects, you will probably accomplish but little in the world.—In true decision of character three things are implied:—

(1.) *A habit of thorough and independent investigation* in regard to the path of duty. You must learn to think for yourself. And you must train your mind to think efficiently on any doubtful question of duty which may come before it.—Men who have no decision of character,

usually keep close to respectable precedents. They do as others have done. And when precedents fail, they seem either unable or afraid to search out the path of duty for themselves. They diligently inquire after the opinions of others. Others, in fact, think for them. And they usually follow, without much examination, the opinions of those for whom, on the whole, they have the greatest reverence.—But you will say, perhaps, ‘I am young and inexperienced. Shall I have no regard to the opinions of others, —even of those who are older and wiser than myself? And even at a more advanced age, must I feel that no deference is due to the opinions of my fellow men?’ Such questions are very appropriate here; for on the points to which they relate, many mistakes have been made. I think it easy, however, to draw the line of distinction between a proper and a servile regard to the opinions of others. When you can command a view of the whole ground on which you are to act, or when you can command as fair a view of it as others; give little heed to what they may say, except so far as they can throw light on the field of action. Make the most of any *information* they can give. But their mere

opinions, though you ought to treat them courteously, should have very little influence over you. Your Maker did not intend, that the work which properly belongs to you as an intelligent, reasoning being, should be transferred to another. But when, in the nature of the case, you cannot survey the whole ground on which you are to act, you ought to give much deference to the mere opinions of those who, in this respect, occupy a much more favorable position than yourself.— To illustrate my meaning with reference to your own case. You have but just entered on a course of study. Of many things which lie before you, you are almost entirely ignorant. In regard to these things, of course, you are not competent to form opinions; and must be governed by the opinions of those who have gone before you. Cases similar in their general features, frequently occur in other walks of life; and to these the same rule will apply. With this explanation of what I mean, I would say to you most earnestly, you cannot learn too early to think for yourself.

(2.) It is essential to true decision of character, that when, by thorough investigation, you have ascertained the path of duty, you should

resolve, at once, to act, and put that resolution in practice. Many men of timid spirit, when they have decided that they ought to take a particular course, hesitate to act in accordance with this decision. There is many a "lion in the way." They tremble at the shaking of a leaf, and are ready to flee at the sight of their own shadows. The path is distinctly marked out before them; but they hesitate to set forward. They query whether there may not possibly be some mistake in the course of reasoning which has led to the decision they have made. They review that course; come to the same decision as before; and yet fear to act. Put far from you such a timid irresolute spirit.

(3.) To make up a truly decided character, —when you have resolved to act, and have really begun to act, in accordance with the convictions of your judgment, *persevere in this course, come what will.* The same pusillanimous spirit which men evince, when they hesitate to do at once what they have decided that they ought to do, often leads them, even when they have entered the path of duty, to turn back at the sight of difficulties or dangers. When once you have put your hand to a good work—a work in which

you are convinced that you ought to be engaged—never give it up, come what will. Come honor or dishonor, come life or death; still maintain, with unwavering purpose and fearless heart, the post of duty.

To bring together, now, the three main constituents of true decision of character, I would say, *ascertain, by thorough and independent examination, what the path of duty is; enter promptly on that path; and fearlessly persevere in it.*—To say nothing of subsequent life, you will have daily occasion for decision of character in your course of study. Without special pains to acquire it, you will be in great danger of falling into a kind of servile dependence on circumstances, and the opinions of those around you. Of a more insignificant character than one who is thus dependent, I can hardly conceive.—For a more extended discussion of this subject, I would refer you to Foster's Essay on Decision of Character,—a work which you cannot read too soon. I would that the great principles of that invaluable essay were engraven on the heart of every young man in Christendom.

4. In close connection with the preceding subject, I wish to call your attention distinctly to

the importance of entire **SELF-CONTROL**. This is, indeed, implied in decision of character. But it is of such vast importance, that I deem it proper to give it a separate consideration. There are some men of sound judgment, and amiable feelings in many respects, who seem to have no control over themselves. They are just like the feather that floats listlessly on the changeful breeze. You can place no dependence on such men. They can place no dependence on themselves. Be not like them, if you would gain the confidence of your fellow men, or accomplish much in the world. Strive to gain a perfect mastery over yourself. Well has the Scripture said, "He that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city." After all that has been said about greatness of moral character, it consists more in this simple trait than in any other,—perhaps I might say, than in all others combined. Among heathen nations, there have been some illustrious exhibitions of this trait of character. In the Bible, it assumes the name of *self-denial*. And well might the burning blush of shame come over the cheek of the Christian who, with the holier principles and higher motives of the gospel, comes short even of that

degree of self-control which the benighted pagan has sometimes exhibited.

5. Adopt, in all your affairs, **FIXED PRINCIPLES OF ACTION**. Some men seem to be mere creatures of feeling. They act, habitually, rather from feeling than from conviction. Indeed, they hardly seem to have any fixed principles. Let it be your care to adopt, in all your affairs, settled principles of action, by which you may be guided in that rigid self-control which I have recommended. And remember, while settling the principles on which you are to act in matters apparently of small moment, that a very great principle may be involved in a very little affair. To eat a single apple, is, in itself a very trifling thing. But in this was once involved a principle, which "brought death into the world and all our wo."

6. Let me briefly call your attention to the **INFLUENCE OF HABIT IN THE FORMATION OF CHARACTER**. Of the power of habit, you are not ignorant. Men are, in some sense, creatures of habit. You will see this more and more clearly, the longer you live. Look well to the influence of habit over yourself. While I would urge you to beware of a single wrong act,

I would say, look with peculiar dread on the *repetition* of any thing wrong. Be assured, that, with every such repetition, you are adding a new link to a chain in which your own soul may be bound forever. You have not forgotten the words of Him who knoweth what is in man;—“Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil.” Strive to turn the power of habit to good account. Persevere in what you deem right, till it has become habitual; and then it will cost you but little effort. As you build up the edifice of a good character, secure one stone after another by the fastenings of habit, and your work will go on rapidly and surely. I would say this with respect to the formation of your intellectual, as well as your moral character.

7. Finally; with a view to ascertain and correct what is wrong in yourself, endeavor thoroughly to **ANALYZE YOUR OWN CHARACTER**. Do this in view of the principles to which I have now called your attention, and of all the great principles of mental and moral excellence. “Know thyself,” was a precept even of pagan wisdom; and it is, in substance, sanctioned and

enforced by the word of God. Without a thorough examination of your own character, you will be likely to profit little by any thing I may suggest ; or, indeed, by any suggestions even of divine wisdom. Endeavor, then, to analyze your own character ; not only that you may think soberly of yourself, and as you ought to think, but that you may supply what is wanting, and rectify what is wrong.

LETTER II.

HEALTH.

Unhappy consequences of neglecting a due care of health—Practicability of preserving good health during a course of hard study—Food—Exercise—Mental relaxation—Sleep—Early rising—Eye-sight—Use of tobacco—Care of health a Christian duty.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,—Would you make the most of your course of study, and accomplish the greatest possible amount of good in subsequent life, let me say to you now, you must learn to take care of your health. Such is the sympathy between the mind and the body, that when the one is diseased, the other must, in a greater or less degree, suffer with it. The highest possible degree of mental vigor cannot be attained, without a healthful state of the physical system.

But important as a due care of health is to the student, how often is it almost entirely neglected. And how sad are the consequences of such neglect. How many students are almost constantly complaining of headache, or faintness, or dizziness, or unnatural lassitude, or some other bodily ailment, which quite unfits them for intense study, and which may be easily traced to an inexcusable neglect of the proper means of preserving health. How many are obliged by ill health, resulting unquestionably from their own neglect and imprudence, to be away from the scene of study during a considerable portion of nearly every year; thus, perhaps, virtually diminishing a course of seven years, to one of four or five. How many, from a similar cause, ere their course of study is ended, sink into an untimely grave. And of those who live through this course, how many find, after they have entered on professional life, that they have implanted in their own frames the seeds of disease and death; and after a few years of comparatively inefficient effort, lie down in the grave. How often has the church been called to weep over the premature loss, from the cause I have specified, of some of her most promising sons.

And how many who live a considerable number of years in the ministry, are, by early neglect of health, made invalids for life; and accomplish, perhaps, not half what they might have done with a vigorous physical system. Nor is the evil, in the cases I have mentioned, confined to the partial or entire prostration of the physical and mental powers. Those nervous diseases to which students are peculiarly liable, are, to say the least, far from being favorable to the growth of piety. Producing, as they often do, great mental and physical lassitude, morbid melancholy, and unnatural irritability, they cannot but be regarded as decidedly adverse to moral as well as intellectual improvement. Should you ever be so unhappy as to become a confirmed dyspeptic, you will feel more fully than you can now do, the truth of what I say.

Now I am, of course, far from supposing, that the most judicious care of health will infallibly secure the student from disease and death. But I am fully convinced that very many—perhaps I may say, most cases of disease in our literary and theological institutions, may be traced to neglect or imprudence. The notion that a man cannot be a hard student, and yet enjoy

good health, is altogether erroneous. Hard study has the reputation of killing many who die rather of their own sloth and imprudence. If you will take pains to inform yourself about the best means of preserving health; and have energy and perseverance enough to use them faithfully; you may hope to preserve your health unimpaired, even through a long course of hard study; and to enter on professional life with a sound constitution. I would not, however, conceal the fact, that your health will be exposed to some peculiar dangers, arising from your sedentary habits, your seclusion from the open air, and from certain pernicious practices in which you will be strongly tempted to indulge. But from all these dangers you may shield yourself, by a proper attention to the means of preserving health. This, however, will require much energy and self-denial; but not more, I hope, than you will be willing to exercise. For you ought to regard it as a religious duty, so far as in you lies, to preserve unimpaired all the faculties, both of body and mind, which God has given you. I deem it highly important that your attention should be directed to this subject now; and that, in the first stage of your studies, you should form

the habit of giving due attention to physical culture. It will be my object, in this letter, to give you some hints in respect to the means of preserving health. I shall not enter very extensively into any of the topics I may introduce. For a more full and minute view of them, I would refer you to an excellent work by professor Hitchcock—the best of the kind with which I am acquainted—entitled, “Dyspepsy forestalled and resisted: or Lectures on Diet, Regimen, and Employment.”

1. You cannot hope to preserve your health unimpaired, without subjecting yourself to a strict regimen in regard to the **QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF YOUR FOOD, AND THE MODE OF TAKING IT.** Upon these points a laboring man may be very careless, with comparative impunity. But with your sedentary habits, you cannot be so. You may, for a while, go on without any restraint in these respects, and seem to incur no evil. But you will be gradually undermining your health, and sooner or later will have occasion to repent your folly. I cannot enter extensively into the subject of dietetics. But I will give you a few simple precepts touching the

points I have mentioned, which, if faithfully observed, will, perhaps, be quite sufficient.

(1.) First, then, I would say, confine yourself to *plain food*. Of all men in the world, sedentary men are most tempted to indulge in luxurious eating; and yet of all men they are least able to bear it. With pies, and pastry of every kind, with rich gravies, and all sorts of rich and highly seasoned food, the less you have to do the better. Be assured, you cannot indulge in them without unfitting yourself for study, and injuring your health. And why should you wish to do so? Would you so degrade yourself to a level with the brutes, as to make your happiness consist in eating and drinking? Besides, you will really derive quite as much pleasure, to say the least, from a plain sort of diet, as from viands of a more luxurious kind.—As to the particular kinds of plain food which will be found most digestible, I need say but little. If you are properly temperate in other respects, you will probably be able to eat almost any sort of plain food without injury; and if there should be any particular articles which would be injurious to you, your own experience will best discover them. I cannot forbear, however, as bread

usually constitutes a considerable part of a student's food, to caution you against eating *hot bread*. The most eminent medical men have expressed the opinion, that newly baked bread is injurious to most persons, and especially to men of sedentary habits. You ought to eat no bread less than a day old. Especially should you avoid that which is warm from the oven.

(2.) I would advise you to eat, ordinarily, of *but one dish* at the same meal. I mean one dish with its usual accompaniments; for instance, if you dine on baked meat, you may take with it potatoes and bread,—not to say gravy—for gravies you would almost always do well to let alone. My reasons for this advice are two. In the first place, though a change of food from meal to meal is desirable, the stomach undoubtedly digests a single kind of food with more ease than a compound of various kinds. In the second place, you will be far less likely to eat to excess, if there be but one kind of food before you, than if there were many. One of the strongest temptations to gluttony is a great variety of dishes.

(3.) Let the *quantity of food taken at any one meal be moderate*. More injury is probably done

by excess in this respect than in almost any other. You need much less food than a laboring man. The precise quantity of food which you ought to take in the course of a day, I will not undertake to state,—for the plain reason, that I cannot. Probably most students ought not much, if at all, to exceed sixteen ounces of solid food. But this I can say, never eat till your food oppresses you. Stop when you first begin to feel satiety. Rise from the table—I do not say with as good an appetite as when you sat down—but with such an appetite that you could, with a good relish, eat still more than you have done.

(4.) *Eat slowly.* Almost all students eat much too rapidly. To eat slowly may seem to you of little consequence; but the universal testimony of physicians is, that it is very important, especially if the organs of digestion be at all debilitated. It is essential to the rapid and perfect digestion of food, that it be well masticated, and thoroughly saturated with saliva. You ought to be at least twenty minutes in taking each meal.

(5.) I have said nothing about the kind of *drink* to be taken with your food. With ardent

spirits of all kinds, I take it for granted you have nothing to do. And I would advise you to dispense with stimulating drinks of every description. *Cold water*, I am fully convinced, is the very best kind of liquid to be taken with food, or at any other time. If a faithful experiment, of six months' duration, does not convince you that it is better than tea, or coffee, or any other kind of drink, your experience will be far different from what mine has been.

A faithful adherence to the few simple rules I have given respecting food and drink, will conduce greatly, I doubt not, to the preservation of your health, and the promotion of your happiness. I am confident, that if you greatly disregard these rules, you will one day rue it. And yet I have but little hope that you will scrupulously conform to them, unless you make it a point of Christian duty, a matter of self-denial, to do so. Appetite will be clamorous for indulgence. And temptation inordinately to gratify it, will often occur. But be assured, my dear friend, if you would enjoy communion with God, or accomplish much in the world, you must have your appetite under strict control; you must rise far, very far above the level of the mere sensual-

ist. This is a subject on which you will be called upon to exercise what I strongly recommended in a former letter—rigid self-control.

2. As one of the most important means of preserving your health, I would urge you to pursue a regular course of VIGOROUS BODILY EXERCISE. Without this, every other means of promoting health will be likely to be ineffectual. The truth of this remark is confirmed by the testimony of all medical men, and the experience of every student,—by the bitter experience, I may add, of not a few who have attempted to study with but little exercise. You ought not to spend less than two hours a day in exercise. It should be taken at regular times, and ought not to be very violent. It should be such, however, “that motion be communicated to every part susceptible of it: that the breast be dilated beyond the usual bounds of rest; that all the muscles attain the utmost degree of their extension and contraction; that strength, of course, be exerted, and enjoy all its developments.”* Agricultural labor is, perhaps, on the whole, the best kind of exercise. Sawing and

* Journal of Health, No. 2.

splitting wood, and work at a carpenter's bench, I have found to have an excellent effect on my own health. Walking is a good kind of exercise; but I doubt whether it is sufficient of itself. Something is needed to cause greater action of the muscles of the chest than this will produce.—The open air is undoubtedly the best place for exercise; though a workshop is not a very objectionable place, provided it be well ventilated.—As to the time of taking exercise, let it be before rather than after a meal. But it ought not immediately to precede eating,—especially if it be somewhat violent. There ought, in this case, to be at least fifteen or twenty minutes between exercise and eating.

At some of the literary and theological seminaries in our country, provision is made for systematic exercise in a workshop or on a farm. If you have opportunity to take exercise in this way, avail yourself of it. But if not, be sure to get exercise in some way. Sometimes, doubtless, when hard pressed by your studies, you will be tempted to neglect exercise for the sake of gaining time. But, be assured, you will find this a losing business in the end. Indeed you will hardly derive any immediate advantage from

it. For, as I shall have occasion to say hereafter, more at length, your success in study depends not so much on the time you spend in it, as on the preparation of your mind for it. And your mind will be likely to be but poorly prepared for study, when you neglect your usual exercise. Be assured, you will gain no time by this neglect. And if you give no heed to the suggestions I have made under this head, I am confident that you will ultimately lament it, when it may be too late to repair the injury you have done yourself.

3. Do not forget that **THE MIND NEEDS FREQUENT RELAXATION**. Some young men of excellent spirit, make an unhappy mistake on this subject. Feeling deeply the value of time, and unwilling that a single moment should be lost, they keep the mind in a state of continual tension. Even during their hours of exercise, it is still unbent. A course like this, human nature cannot long endure. "Man," says Dr. Buchan, "is evidently not formed for continual thought more than for perpetual action, and would be as soon worn out by the one as the other." You cannot preserve a high degree of physical or mental vigor, without frequently unbending

your mind. Intense thinking on any subject ought not to be continued, without some intermission, more than three or four hours. A change of studies, from the languages to mathematics for instance, does in some measure relieve the mind. But there ought to be some seasons in which it is entirely unbent. Especially should this be the case when you exercise. Entirely forget your studies then. Pursue no trains of thought which will cost you any effort. It may seem to you sometimes a loss of time to do so; but, be assured, it will prove a great saving in the end.

4. Give yourself sufficient time for SLEEP; and let it be taken regularly, and in its proper season. Most students ought, I think, to spend as much as seven hours of the twenty-four in sleep; and probably few need more than this. Long protracted night studies, and consequent partial deprivation of needful rest, are, I am persuaded, more injurious to health than almost any thing else. And I would advise you not only to take sufficient time for sleep, but to be regular in respect to the hour of retiring to rest. Beware of sitting up very late at night. You

ought, I think, to be in bed soon after 9 o'clock in the summer, and 10 in the winter.

5. Let me earnestly advise you to form the habit of **EARLY RISING**. To say nothing of the important advantages of this habit in other respects—advantages which strongly recommend it—it is, without doubt, highly conducive to good health. The morning air, as your own experience has doubtless taught you, is peculiarly invigorating. Fail not to try daily its exhilarating influence. To form the habit of so doing, may cost you a little trouble at first. But when this habit is formed, you will find it easy and delightful.

6. I would call your attention distinctly to the importance of **TAKING CARE OF YOUR EYES**. Many young men, from imprudence in this respect, have been obliged either to suspend for a while, or entirely abandon their studies. As the best means of preserving your eyesight,—give yourself sufficient sleep; be careful not to study by twilight; use a green shade in the evening; and let not the light thrown on your book by a candle or lamp, be so feeble as to require too much effort of the visual organs, or so strong as to dazzle your eyes. If, at any

time, you find your eyes inclining to weakness, use them less by candle-light than you have been wont to do, till they have regained their former strength.

7. Let me seriously caution you, if you mean to preserve your health, against the habit of USING TOBACCO in any way. This may seem to you a caution of little consequence. But I think far otherwise. Students are, I believe, very much addicted to this habit. While engaged in the instruction of an academy, I had occasion to lament the prevalence of it among my own pupils; and felt it my duty to make efforts, which proved not altogether ineffectual, to convince them of its pernicious effects.—Says Dr. Delamater, one of the professors in the Medical School of Maine; “I regard it as a settled general truth, that tobacco always injures, when used in any way or quantity.” To this opinion Dr. Mussey, one of the most distinguished members of the medical profession in the country, has expressed his full assent. And with their opinion on this subject, that of medical men in general coincides. For the sake of your health then—to say nothing of the expensiveness and the disgusting appearance of the habit of using

tobacco—I seriously counsel you not to use it in any way.

8. To conclude this letter, I would urge you to make the use of the various means of preserving health which I have recommended, A MATTER OF CHRISTIAN DUTY. I have before made a similar remark. But I wish again to call your attention distinctly to the importance of making it a part of your religion to take care of your health. Many young men, very conscientious in regard to other things, seem hardly to have any sense of accountability in respect to this. But, my dear young friend, you cannot wilfully neglect a due care of your health, without sinning against God. Remember this; and ask help from on high to keep, in this matter, “a conscience void of offence.”

LETTER III.

INTELLECTUAL HABITS.

Diligence and perseverance essential to high mental culture—Mental symmetry—The habit of accurate and profound investigation—Due self-confidence—Attending to every thing in its proper season—Order in study—Neatness and regularity in the studying apartment—Success in study dependent more on the preparation of the mind for it, and the mode of study, than on the amount of time devoted to it—Fixed and intense thought—Caution against being in a hurry.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,—It may, with truth, be said, that many who pass through a course of classical study, seem to acquire little more than the mere name of an education. Such a result must, in most cases, be mainly ascribed to a want of industry and perseverance. I have no doubt, however, that it is sometimes owing, in a considerable degree, to a *misdirection* of well meant, and it may be, energetic

points I have mentioned, which, if faithfully observed, will, perhaps, be quite sufficient.

(1.) First, then, I would say, confine yourself to *plain food*. Of all men in the world, sedentary men are most tempted to indulge in luxurious eating; and yet of all men they are least able to bear it. With pies, and pastry of every kind, with rich gravies, and all sorts of rich and highly seasoned food, the less you have to do the better. Be assured, you cannot indulge in them without unfitting yourself for study, and injuring your health. And why should you wish to do so? Would you so degrade yourself to a level with the brutes, as to make your happiness consist in eating and drinking? Besides, you will really derive quite as much pleasure, to say the least, from a plain sort of diet, as from viands of a more luxurious kind.—As to the particular kinds of plain food which will be found most digestible, I need say but little. If you are properly temperate in other respects, you will probably be able to eat almost any sort of plain food without injury; and if there should be any particular articles which would be injurious to you, your own experience will best discover them. I cannot forbear, however, as bread

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(3.) Let the *quantity of food taken at any one meal be moderate*. More injury is probably done

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(4.) *Eat slowly.* Almost all students eat much too rapidly. To eat slowly may seem to you of little consequence; but the universal testimony of physicians is, that it is very important, especially if the organs of digestion be at all debilitated. It is essential to the rapid and perfect digestion of food, that it be well masticated, and thoroughly saturated with saliva. You ought to be at least twenty minutes in taking each meal.

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A faithful adherence to the few simple rules I have given respecting food and drink, will conduce greatly, I doubt not, to the preservation of your health, and the promotion of your happiness. I am confident, that if you greatly disregard these rules, you will one day rue it. And yet I have but little hope that you will scrupulously conform to them, unless you make it a point of Christian duty, a matter of self-denial, to do so. Appetite will be clamorous for indulgence. And temptation inordinately to gratify it, will often occur. But be assured, my dear friend, if you would enjoy communion with God, or accomplish much in the world, you must have your appetite under strict control; you must rise far, very far above the level of the mere sensual-

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it. For, as I shall have occasion to say hereafter, more at length, your success in study depends not so much on the time you spend in it, as on the preparation of your mind for it. And your mind will be likely to be but poorly prepared for study, when you neglect your usual exercise. Be assured, you will gain no time by this neglect. And if you give no heed to the suggestions I have made under this head, I am confident that you will ultimately lament it, when it may be too late to repair the injury you have done yourself.

3. Do not forget that **THE MIND NEEDS FREQUENT RELAXATION**. Some young men of excellent spirit, make an unhappy mistake on this subject. Feeling deeply the value of time, and unwilling that a single moment should be lost, they keep the mind in a state of continual tension. Even during their hours of exercise, it is still unbent. A course like this, human nature cannot long endure. "Man," says Dr. Buchan, "is evidently not formed for continual thought more than for perpetual action, and would be as soon worn out by the one as the other." You cannot preserve a high degree of physical or mental vigor, without frequently unbending

your mind. Intense thinking on any subject ought not to be continued, without some intermission, more than three or four hours. A change of studies, from the languages to mathematics for instance, does in some measure relieve the mind. But there ought to be some seasons in which it is entirely unbent. Especially should this be the case when you exercise. Entirely forget your studies then. Pursue no trains of thought which will cost you any effort. It may seem to you sometimes a loss of time to do so; but, be assured, it will prove a great saving in the end.

4. Give yourself sufficient time for SLEEP; and let it be taken regularly, and in its proper season. Most students ought, I think, to spend as much as seven hours of the twenty-four in sleep; and probably few need more than this. Long protracted night studies, and consequent partial deprivation of needful rest, are, I am persuaded, more injurious to health than almost any thing else. And I would advise you not only to take sufficient time for sleep, but to be regular in respect to the hour of retiring to rest. Beware of sitting up very late at night. You

ought, I think, to be in bed soon after 9 o'clock in the summer, and 10 in the winter.

5. Let me earnestly advise you to form the habit of **EARLY RISING**. To say nothing of the important advantages of this habit in other respects—advantages which strongly recommend it—it is, without doubt, highly conducive to good health. The morning air, as your own experience has doubtless taught you, is peculiarly invigorating. Fail not to try daily its exhilarating influence. To form the habit of so doing, may cost you a little trouble at first. But when this habit is formed, you will find it easy and delightful.

6. I would call your attention distinctly to the importance of **TAKING CARE OF YOUR EYES**. Many young men, from imprudence in this respect, have been obliged either to suspend for a while, or entirely abandon their studies. As the best means of preserving your eyesight,—give yourself sufficient sleep; be careful not to study by twilight; use a green shade in the evening; and let not the light thrown on your book by a candle or lamp, be so feeble as to require too much effort of the visual organs, or so strong as to dazzle your eyes. If, at any

time, you find your eyes inclining to weakness, use them less by candle-light than you have been wont to do, till they have regained their former strength.

7. Let me seriously caution you, if you mean to preserve your health, against the habit of USING TOBACCO in any way. This may seem to you a caution of little consequence. But I think far otherwise. Students are, I believe, very much addicted to this habit. While engaged in the instruction of an academy, I had occasion to lament the prevalence of it among my own pupils; and felt it my duty to make efforts, which proved not altogether ineffectual, to convince them of its pernicious effects.—Says Dr. Delamater, one of the professors in the Medical School of Maine; “I regard it as a settled general truth, that tobacco always injures, when used in any way or quantity.” To this opinion Dr. Mussey, one of the most distinguished members of the medical profession in the country, has expressed his full assent. And with their opinion on this subject, that of medical men in general coincides. For the sake of your health then—to say nothing of the expensiveness and the disgusting appearance of the habit of using

tobacco—I seriously counsel you not to use it in any way.

8. To conclude this letter, I would urge you to make the use of the various means of preserving health which I have recommended, A MATTER OF CHRISTIAN DUTY. I have before made a similar remark. But I wish again to call your attention distinctly to the importance of making it a part of your religion to take care of your health. Many young men, very conscientious in regard to other things, seem hardly to have any sense of accountability in respect to this. But, my dear young friend, you cannot wilfully neglect a due care of your health, without sinning against God. Remember this; and ask help from on high to keep, in this matter, “a conscience void of offence.”

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

CONFIDENTIAL

Diligence and perseverance—
tal symmet—
tie—Due self-confidence—
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studying apartment—
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Cautious against

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efforts. But for this, I am confident, a majority of students would make far higher attainments than they do. There is such a thing as laboriously doing nothing; and this is strikingly exemplified in the case of some students, who, it may be, in their own estimation, and in that of many others, have achieved wonders. You are exposed, then, in your course of mental culture, to a twofold danger—the danger both of a *deficiency* and of a *misdirection* of effort. In the hope both of exciting you to due exertion, and of doing something to give a right direction to your efforts, I would, in this letter, make some suggestions on a variety of topics which come under the general head of intellectual habits, using that expression in its broadest sense.

I. Be assured that you will never make high attainments, without **GREAT DILIGENCE AND PERSEVERANCE**. If you are not willing to be a hard student through your whole course, stop where you are. Go not forward to waste your time, abuse your privileges, and bring reproach on your own name, and the precious name of Christ. It were well if all *drones* were banished from academic halls. And *pious drones*, if I may use so paradoxical an expression, are

of all others, the most disgusting and reprehensible. Be not a drone. You cannot hope to unlock the rich treasures of science, and acquire the utmost possible intellectual power, without great and untiring effort. And why should it be otherwise? It seems to result from the very constitution of things, that nothing valuable can be attained without much exertion. You see this to be the case in regard to minor things; and why should it not be so in respect to the lofty objects at which you aim? Be willing, then, as you toil up the hill of science, to task your powers to the very utmost. And grow not weary of such efforts. But *persevere*, and success will at length crown your labors. I have chosen to make these remarks here—although they obviously involve some moral considerations—because if you do not adopt the principles which they recommend, I have no hope of your making high intellectual attainments.

2. Aim, in your course of study, at perfect **MENTAL SYMMETRY**. This, many students utterly fail of attaining. Not a few seem to regard the mere exercise of the memory as the chief business of a course of education. They aim to make the mind a sort of reservoir of facts—a

store-house of other men's ideas—rather than to give it the power of nice discrimination, of comprehensive thought, of convincing argumentation. They seem desirous rather to acquire knowledge from foreign sources, than to give their own minds the power of originating knowledge. Now mere acquisition, which is chiefly the business of memory, is far from being the most important part of a course of study. Indeed it is of comparatively little importance, unless the work of the memory be connected with the vigorous exercise of the other powers of the mind. Knowledge, like food, must be digested, or it will do us comparatively little good. To use another illustration, the mind should not be like the lumber-house, where every thing lies untouched in just the state in which it was introduced; but rather like the workshop of the artisan, where the raw material undergoes various mutations, and ultimately takes altogether new forms. Be not satisfied, then, with the mere discipline of the memory. Aim at a due development of all the mental powers. Keep this object distinctly before your mind, in all your severer studies, and all your lighter reading.

In connection with what I have just said, let me caution you against the habit of *undervaluing or neglecting particular branches of study*. The course of classical study marked out before you, has due reference to the culture of all the mental powers. Each branch of study has its peculiar use. None can be neglected without serious injury. And yet how often do students, from erroneous notions about education, almost entirely neglect particular studies. Sometimes a particular branch of study is neglected, because it furnishes no new facts, or seems to be of little practical utility. And yet it may be indispensably necessary to the proportionate development of some of the mental faculties. "I am weary," says one, "of these long demonstrations in conic sections. Of what possible practical use can they be? Surely I shall never wish to discourse from the pulpit about the properties of a cone." True, you will not. But in your preparation for the pulpit, you will greatly need that fixedness of thought, for which the study of conic sections and kindred branches of knowledge, tends, above almost every thing else, to fit you.—To every student who would have the powers of his mind developed in due propor-

tion, I would say most earnestly, neglect no study marked out in your course, because it may not happen to suit your taste so well as some others, or because it may not seem to you of much practical utility. It has its use nevertheless. And you cannot neglect it with impunity. Those who prescribe your course of study, are, indeed, liable to err in respect to the portion of time assigned to a particular branch of knowledge. But you have reason to rely on their judgment in this matter, rather than your own; as they have means of forming a correct opinion about it which you cannot possess.

3. Strive to acquire the HABIT OF ACCURATE AND PROFOUND INVESTIGATION. I can think of no mental habit of more importance than this. It will be of vast consequence to you in your course of study. It will prevent that superficial mode of study into which very many fall; and will conduce to extensive and valuable attainments, in every branch of knowledge to which you attend. And on this, more than on almost any other intellectual habit, will your influence in future life depend. Look around you on the various classes of men within the sphere of your observation. Who are they who exert the most

powerful influence on the community,—whose opinions are treated with the most respect, and are, indeed, really worthy of it? They are the men who have formed the habit of strict and thorough investigation; who are not satisfied with looking at the mere surface of things, but push their inquiries to the utmost limits of human knowledge. Strive, then, to become an accurate and profound thinker. And the more you exercise your mind in this way, the greater power of exact and deep investigation it will acquire. For the mental faculties, like those of the physical system, gain strength by exercise. In regard to the best means of acquiring that habit of thorough investigation which I have so strongly recommended, I would here offer a few definite counsels; and shall probably have occasion, in the course of these letters, to make some further remarks which will apply to this topic. Indeed it is closely connected with almost every thing which relates to mental culture.

(1.) *Pursue thoroughly every study* which you undertake. Leave nothing—not a single lesson—not even the smallest part of a lesson, till you fully understand it. Many students of

indolent habits, are prone to pass over the more difficult points in every study. Of this pernicious practice beware. For these are the very points which most severely task the mind in the work of investigation; and, of course, give it skill in this work. I know there are, in every science, certain limits to human knowledge. It is the part of wisdom to ascertain what these limits are; and, when they are once ascertained, not to waste time and strength in vain attempts to overpass them. But within these limits, you cannot push your inquiries too extensively. Let it be your fixed purpose, when you sit down to get a lesson, that you will get it *thoroughly*. And seize with avidity even on the more difficult points it presents. For independently of the immediate object of acquiring a more perfect understanding of the subject before you, you will be taking one of the most effectual measures to form the habit of strict and profound investigation.

(2.) Let it, so far as possible, be a maxim with you, to *take no opinion on mere trust*. This, so far as your studies are concerned, would seem to be implied in what I have just said. And I have said essentially the same

thing in relation to practical matters, in a former letter. But I wish, in this connection, again to present it distinctly before your mind. If you would form the habit of thorough investigation, do not accustom yourself to adopt the opinions of any one, without seeing good reasons for them. I say this with respect to your course of study, as well as to your treatment of what may come before your mind in other ways. Believe me, very much depends on the frequent and proper use of that little word—*why*?

(3.) Form the habit, in the study of every book to which you may attend, of *pushing your inquiries*, when circumstances and the nature of the case will admit of it, *farther than the author has gone*. This, in some cases, cannot well be done. An author sometimes seems either to exhaust his subject, or, at least, to reach the utmost limits of profitable investigation. But this is seldom the case. I would caution you against the feeling which so many students cherish, that all they have to do is to understand fully what is said in the authors they read. Let it be your care, in every study, not merely to acquire a thorough knowledge of the *books* you peruse, but of the *subjects* of which they treat.

To do this, you must often push your researches farther than these books will carry you. Be not afraid to do so. If you would form the habit of thorough investigation, you must not be content to be a servile plodder in the track of others. How unhappy is the practical error which many commit in respect to this subject. They seem quite contented to be mere children in leading-strings. Accustomed to give up their minds unreservedly to the control of every author they read, and never disposed to advance a step farther than he has gone, they seem almost entirely incapable of prosecuting any original course of investigation. Beware of the error of these men.

(4.) I would advise you to form the habit of engaging often, independently of the prescribed exercises in your course of study, in *fixed and profound thought on some interesting subject*, with the object of acquiring greater skill in the work of thorough investigation. It would be well if you should make this a daily business. Select some interesting subject; abstract your mind from every thing else; fasten your thoughts on this; survey it in all its aspects; trace out all its relations; analyze it thoroughly. To say

nothing of the more perfect knowledge you may thus acquire of many important subjects, you will be making rapid improvement in the power of accurate and profound investigation.

It may seem to you, that at the present stage in your course of study, it is too early to put in practice some of the suggestions I have made in respect to the habit of investigation. But be assured, you cannot too soon adopt correct principles, and enter on a right course of action, on this subject. Let me forewarn you, however, that you will not succeed in putting in practice what I have recommended, without much effort. Every man is, in a greater or less degree, naturally indolent. Your mind will often shrink from the intense thought which will be necessary in the course I have marked out. But put it to the task. And though the way may seem rough and forbidding at first, it will doubtless grow more smooth and delightful, at every step of your progress.

4. Let me advise you to cherish a DUE CONFIDENCE IN YOUR OWN POWERS. Students sometimes exhibit a distrust of their own abilities, which may well be termed pusillanimity. For some branches of knowledge to which their at-

tention is called, they say they have no talents ; and so they either neglect them wholly, or pass over them in the most superficial manner. And they treat in the same way the most difficult parts o' those studies, to which, in the main, they may feel themselves competent. Now I would not encourage vanity. Nor would I affirm, that all minds are equally well adapted to every intellectual pursuit. Minds doubtless differ in respect to the facility with which they acquire knowledge ; and, to the same mind, some departments of science may be more difficult than others. But I do believe, that every student, of ordinary powers of mind, may, with sufficient pains-taking, master every branch of knowledge which enters into his course of study. Some of the most distinguished votaries of science that the world has ever seen, have owed their eminence rather to patient and untiring industry, than to any great superiority of their native powers. Say not, then, of mathematical study, I have no talents for it ; or of the study of languages, my mind is not adapted to it. Beware, when you meet with difficulties in the study of any science, of pusillanimately shrinking from them, under the impression that you cannot sur-

mount them. Let your maxim be, "Labor omnia vincit." Feel that you can accomplish any thing you undertake. As you sit down to every lesson, say to yourself—whatever difficulties there may be in it, *I can get it, and I will.*

5. Give due attention to every thing which belongs to your prescribed course of study, **IN ITS PROPER SEASON.** Many students, from various causes, neglect, either wholly or partially, particular studies or portions of studies, at the proper time for attending to them, with the intention of making amends for this neglect at some future period. Now if ill health, or some other cause beyond your control, compel you to do so, you must submit to it. But a calamity you will surely find it to be. For every day of your course of study has its appropriate work. And if you neglect the work of but a single day, it will be difficult to find time for it afterwards. You will be reduced to the necessity of either omitting it wholly, or crowding the business of two days into one. Of these two courses, you will be strongly tempted to take the former; but if you choose the latter, something will be likely to be superficially done. Besides, there is such a connection between the various parts of a

course of study, that each one is a valuable, and, in many cases, a very important preparation for that which succeeds it. Neglect any study, then, or a part of a study, in its proper season, and you deprive yourself of important facilities for prosecuting subsequent studies.

6. Let me advise you carefully to observe **ORDER IN STUDY**. Have a fixed plan of study for every day. For every thing, mark out a particular time. And adhere to your plan as strictly as circumstances will permit. Sometimes, indeed, you will be compelled to deviate from it. But if you have proper decision of character, this will not be very frequently the case. The advantages of a plan of study are very great. Without one, you will be liable often to give a disproportionate attention to some studies, and wholly or partially to neglect others; you will frequently waste considerable time in perplexing deliberation about what you shall do next; and you will probably be sometimes harassed by unpleasant doubts whether you are actually making the most judicious appropriation of your time. As soon, then, as you ascertain what are to be the studies of a term, settle in your own mind your plan of study, and commit

it to writing. Mark out the time to be spent in study, and determine how every hour shall be filled up. And I very much mistake, if you do not find such a course highly conducive to intellectual improvement.

7. **KEEP EVERY THING IN YOUR ROOM IN A STATE OF NEATNESS AND REGULARITY.** This may seem to you a small matter. But it is far from being so. External objects, you well know, have much influence on the mind. And I can hardly doubt that most persons, when every thing around them is in a state of neatness and order, will study to greater advantage, than when every thing is in an unseemly and confused state. But not to insist on this, if you keep your books, and papers, and furniture, in a state of disorder, much loss of time will inevitably be occasioned. You will spend, in looking after articles which you want, and know not where to find, far more time than it would take to keep every thing as it should be. Let your rule, then, be, *a place for every thing, and every thing in its place.*

8. I would remind you, that your **SUCCESS IN STUDY DEPENDS FAR LESS ON THE AMOUNT OF TIME YOU DEVOTE TO IT, THAN ON THE PREPAR-**

ATION OF YOUR MIND FOR IT, AND THE MANNER IN WHICH YOU STUDY. Many students seem either not to know this, or else to be habitually forgetful of it. It appears to be their object to spend as many hours as possible over their books ; while they manifest little solicitude about a preparation for study, or the manner in which they apply their minds to it. In some instances, too large a portion of the day is spent in study. Six or eight hours are, probably, quite as many as most students can spend to advantage in the most intense kind of study. Observe, I speak now of the severest kind of application. To the amount of time I have specified, some addition may be made in the way of reading, or a lighter kind of study. When I hear students tell of studying fourteen, fifteen, or sixteen hours a day, I either suppose that they know not what study is, or expect that they will speedily bring themselves to the grave. The truth is, six hours spent as they ought to be, are worth more to the student than twice that amount of time spent in the way in which many are wont—sometimes with great self-complacency—to spend their study hours.

9. Of a due preparation for study, I need not

speak at large here. I would refer you to what I have said in my second letter. The best preparation for mental effort is, by exercise and otherwise, to keep the physical system in a vigorous state. But in regard to the mode of study, I would say, aim to acquire the habit of applying yourself to the subject before you, with **FIXED AND INTENSE THOUGHT**. Remember that sitting with a book before you and gazing round the room, is not study. Dozing over a book is not study. Those oft intermitted efforts which some make, hardly merit the name of study. Would you deserve to be called a student, learn to abstract your mind from every thing else, and fasten it on the subject before you. If it wander, bring it back, and chain it to the subject again. "If there be any thing that can be called genius," says Dr. Reid, "in matters of mere judgment and reasoning, it seems to consist chiefly in being able to give that attention to the subject, which keeps it steady in the mind, till we can survey it accurately on all sides." Your intellectual attainments will certainly depend very much on this. I should rejoice to see in you something like the habit of the celebrated mathematician, Archimedes, who was intent on

the solution of a mathematical problem, while a hostile army were taking possession of the city of his residence. Acquire the habit of becoming wholly absorbed in study, of concentrating upon it the whole strength of your intellect; and you will accomplish more in one hour, than you could otherwise do in two.

10. One other suggestion in regard to your habits of study, will close this letter. NEVER ALLOW YOURSELF TO BE IN A HURRY. Endeavor to do every thing in its proper season, so that you may never be troubled with deferred labors. And take no more into your plan of study, than you may hope, with due effort, to perform. You may thus avoid some of the strongest temptations to the evil of which I speak. But how great soever the pressure of study, be not in a hurry. Students sometimes allow themselves to be well-nigh distracted by a multiplicity of engagements, or by the claims of some one severe and formidable task. They apply themselves to study, with an agitation of spirit, and a kind of hurried effort, which are by no means favorable to rapid acquisition. Always sit down to study with a determination to do your utmost, but with a calm, collected state of mind. And

be assured, you will accomplish far more than you could do in the hurrying way in which students sometimes set themselves to work.

LETTER IV.

INTELLECTUAL HABITS.

Study of Latin and Greek—Habits in the recitation room—Reading—
Composition—Extemporaneous speaking.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,—I propose, in this letter, to make some further suggestions on the same general topic to which I directed your attention in my last. You are not, I presume, weary of this topic. For you are aware, that you are now laying the foundation of your intellectual character. And you will ponder seriously, I doubt not, the suggestions I have yet to offer.

1. I have some things to say in regard to the STUDY OF LATIN AND GREEK ; as this will be your principal business while at the academy, and will constitute no small part of your course of study at college.

(1.) Cherish a deep sense of its *importance*. The utility of classical studies some have doubted. But a very large majority of educated men have no such doubts. Such studies are valuable on account of the discipline they give to the mind. Translation from any foreign language into our vernacular tongue, affords a most excellent mental discipline. And few languages task the mind so severely in this respect, as the Latin and Greek. "I have sometimes," says Professor Stuart, in speaking of translating from a foreign language, "spent whole hours, on even a preposition or an adverb; but I am very certain, that few of my hours have been spent to better purpose, in their influence over the habits of the mind." The same distinguished philologist remarks, "I must say from the fullest conviction, that the modicum of improvement which I have made, is to be principally attributed to the study of sacred classics; and in connection with these, the classics of Greece and Rome."* The study of the Latin and Greek classics is important, also, because it is very conducive to precision, facility, and elegance of expression, in our

* Quarterly Journal of the American Education Society, No. 5.

own language. A very large number of words in that language, are, you know, of Latin and Greek origin. How, then, can it be fully understood, and the greatest possible skill in the use of it acquired, without a knowledge of Latin and Greek? Besides, were no words in our language of Latin or Greek derivation, the exercise of expressing in English the thoughts which we find in classical authors, would infallibly improve our knowledge of that language. An additional reason for the study of the ancient classics, is found in the fact that they present before us some of the best models of fine writing which the world has ever seen. To one who has his eye fixed on the ministry, it is peculiarly important to become acquainted with the Latin and Greek languages. In Greek, the New Testament is written; and in Latin, there are rich treasures of theological knowledge, which are not now, and perhaps never will be, accessible to the mere English reader. I have thus glanced at the principal reasons for studying the ancient classics, because some even of those who study them, seem to have no just sense of their value; and because I wish to have you prepared to engage heartily in the work of thorough classical study.

(2.) Determine to be *thorough* in the study of Latin and Greek. This precept is implied in what I have before said about thorough study. But I wish to repeat it here, because I am convinced, that without the strict observance of it, comparatively little advantage will be derived from the study of the ancient classics. To prove this, I hardly need to use a single argument. But obvious as it is, many study Latin and Greek very superficially. I cannot forbear here to make one or two extracts from an article recently published by Professor Stuart, on the "Study of the Greek Language." They will confirm what I have just said about the superficial study of the ancient languages, so far, at least, as the Greek is concerned; and will show you, in respect to that language, some of the sad consequences of such a mode of study.

Says Professor Stuart, in allusion to those who enter the Theological Seminary with which he is connected; "To speak plainly, then, and without reserve, I must say, that there are some of the young men that come here, who, if *fully* and *duly* examined in the Greek Testament in order to enter, must inevitably be rejected. All this, too, when they come with a *diploma* in

their hand. There are not a few who come here, that could not decline a verb, or noun, or adjective, in the Greek language, with any tolerable degree of certainty that they were in the right throughout. And this is true not only of all the contracted and more difficult forms, but even of *ἡ μουσα* and *ἡ φιλία*, which belong to the first rudiments of the first declension. Every year I am obliged to put my pupils on the first elements of Greek Grammar, before I can advance them to the study of the New Testament. It is impossible for me to proceed a step in my proper business, without so doing. All of them, indeed, do not equally need this discipline. A few might dispense with it. But as a class, the necessity of their going through with this exercise, is past all question.—Of course there is a great loss of time to the student, as to the appropriate business of our Seminary. I regret this deeply; but I cannot help it. One cannot advance to higher acquisitions, before he understands elementary principles; and if he has not learned these, then he must learn them.”

Again, he says, “For myself, if I may be permitted to say it, I would say, my heart has often ached for not a few of the excellent young

men assembled in my lecture room. They come here after going *through* the academy and *through* college; and with a diploma in their hand, and some of them, also, having even been adorned with other college laurels; they expect to find no difficulty in entering directly upon the course of study here, and reaping all the advantages from exegetical lectures which these lectures can be adapted to bestow. Alas, for their gregious disappointment! They are called on to decline ἡ μοῦσα; which they do with a faltering tongue. They are not certain whether the genitive is μούσης or μούσας, much less can they give the reason why it is the former rather than the latter. When put to decline contracted and peculiar forms, they are at an absolute stand, and they can proceed with scarcely any more certainty that they are in the right, than if they were put to declining Sanscrit. What now can be done? I am obliged to say, 'Gentlemen, I regret that you find yourselves in such circumstances. It is not my business to inquire how this has been brought about, whether by your own fault, or by that of your instructors, or by both unitedly. Be this as it may, you cannot translate and comment on New Testament

Greek, while you are unable to distinguish the elementary forms of its declensions. I am truly sorry for your disappointment; and I also regret, that you are obliged as it were to lose your time, for the present, in merely elementary and preparatory studies. But what can be done? Advance you cannot, without a knowledge of the elements. It is utterly impossible. There is no way left but to begin *de novo*; to study your grammar as you would at the outset; and in this manner to make what little progress you can.”*

Some of the allusions to the Greek language, in these remarks of Professor Stuart, you may not fully understand, as you have not commenced the study of that language. But the general scope of all I have quoted, you doubtless find quite intelligible. Now the young men who enter the theological seminary at Andover, come, as Professor Stuart states, from “all the colleges in New England,” and “a considerable number out of it.” And there is no reason to believe, that they are, in general, more deficient in Greek, than those who go to other theological institu-

* Biblical Repository, No. 6, pp. 299, 304.

tions; or, I may add, than the most of those who enter secular professions. Is there not evidence, then, that, so far as Greek is concerned, many study the ancient languages very superficially. Of Latin, students, in general, know somewhat more than of Greek. But even in Latin, most of them are very deficient.—In the quotations I have made from Professor Stuart, you have a striking picture of the embarrassments which the want of a thorough knowledge of Greek, throws in the way of the theological student. Deficiency in the knowledge of Latin, if not an equal evil, is certainly a serious one, in a course of theological study.—As your eye is fixed on the gospel ministry, I have directed your attention particularly to the unhappy consequences, in respect to theological study, of a superficial mode of studying Latin and Greek. But whatever view you take of its effects, such a mode of study is liable to the strongest objections. Let it be your fixed purpose, then, to be thorough in the study of the ancient languages. Adhere to this purpose through your whole classical course.

(3.) In the study both of Latin and Greek, endeavor to *become perfectly acquainted with*

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I have, with me
 the best of all
 your former
 friends. When I
 consider that you
 are now in
 the hands of
 the enemy, I
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 a very dangerous
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 preserved, and
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 be able to
 return to your
 dear friends
 in safety. I
 am, my dear
 friend, ever
 your affectionate
 friend,
 and ever
 your faithful
 servant,
 J. B.

the grammar. It has been well said, that, “if the grammar be the first book put into the learner’s hands, it should also be the last to leave them.” I know not how a thorough knowledge of any dead language can be acquired, except by thorough grammatical study. Many students, as I have had occasion to observe, fail here. They do, indeed, at the outset, go *through* the grammar—that is, they go through those portions which are printed in “large type.” And they repeat this process, perhaps, two or three times in their subsequent course of study. But those very important matters printed in “small type”—that is, the minutiae of grammar, the exceptions to general rules—they neglect at first, and almost entirely neglect forever afterwards. They do, indeed, sometimes recur to them in reading the classics, but so seldom, that they never become familiar with them. Is it strange that such students should make but a sorry figure in the lecture room of the theological professor, or that they should almost entirely fail of accomplishing the great objects for which a course of classical study is pursued? Let it be your purpose, as you commence the study both of Latin and Greek, to become perfectly

familiar with the grammar—the *whole* grammar. Be not satisfied till you have it “at your tongue’s end.” I would by no means advise you to commit the whole to memory at first. This should be done gradually. I have thought it best for students to learn, at the outset, only a small part of the grammar—the mere elementary principles and forms of the language they are acquiring. As they advance, they should aim gradually to increase their grammatical knowledge. I would advise you, however, within a few months after you begin to read a language, to read over attentively—I would not say commit to memory—the whole grammar. In so doing, you will not only fix more securely in the memory what you have already learned, and learn some new things, but you will greatly increase the facility with which you can turn to any rule or illustration which you may need to resolve a grammatical difficulty. “It is a great part of learning,” as has been well remarked, “to know where learning may be found.”—I would strongly recommend it to you to learn the grammar very much in a practical way. You will, in this way, acquire a knowledge of grammatical minutiae much more rapidly, and with far greater ease,

than by merely committing to memory abstract rules. In translating Latin and Greek, pass over no word without acquiring a perfect knowledge of all its forms, and of every grammatical principle which relates to it. I would advise you, however, gradually to commit to memory all the definitions, and rules, and exceptions in your grammar, in the order in which they stand there. They are probably well classified there; and it is desirable that all our knowledge should be laid up in the memory in a classified state. You ought to have the whole grammar thus committed to memory before you enter college. You will have enough to do there in the application of grammatical principles, and in making those higher attainments in classical study, at which you ought to aim. I know you may tell me, that few students accomplish what I here enjoin on you. But I know, also, that few students accomplish so much as they might do. And let me again remind you, that your standard of attainment is not what others have done, but the very utmost that you can possibly do.

(4.) The secret of learning a language rapidly and well, consists very much in *reviewing*. You ought not, at the present stage of your

studies, to enter the recitation room without having read over your lesson at least three times. I would suggest a course in preparing your lesson for recitation, somewhat like the following; with no intention, however, of confining you to it, should you find any other better. Let it be your object in looking over your lesson for the first time, to ascertain the literal meaning of every word, and to understand perfectly its etymology and syntax. In the second reading, aim to fix more firmly in your mind what you acquired in the first; correcting, of course, any mistakes you may have made. And let the object of the third reading be to give the utmost possible elegance to your translation. I would advise you, also, to review your lesson after you leave the recitation room, with the view of fixing in your mind any new ideas in regard to it, which you may have received from your instructor or class-mates. And you will find it of incalculable advantage to make very frequent reviews of your classical studies—at the end of the week, the month, the term, and at other times. You need not be afraid of reviewing too much. Some of the most eminent linguists have ascribed their

own success very much to this practice, and have earnestly recommended it to others.

(5.) Aim at the utmost possible *elegance in your style of translation*. I have already enjoined this incidentally; but I wish still farther to insist upon it. Many students, in translating from Latin and Greek, adhere most awkwardly to the idiom of the language they are construing. Aim, in translating, to give the sense of your author in the English idiom. In employing this idiom, however, and in aiming at elegance, be careful not to be verbose. The two main points in a good translation are, that it be literal and elegant. That is, it should express the exact sense of the author's words, and nothing more, in the most elegant way. A due attention to your style of translation is important, because it will conduce greatly to your improvement in the use of your native tongue.

(6.) Beware, if you would be a thorough student, of making it your main object, to *pass over much ground*. There is no danger of reading too much, if you read it as you ought. But there is danger of making the amount of ground gone over the main object. How often have students put to me such questions as these;

“How long will it take us to go through the Latin Reader?” “How soon can we finish Cicero?” “How long shall we be in going through the *Æneid*?”—all uttered in a way which clearly showed, that the mind was intent rather on passing rapidly over the ground, than on making very thorough work of study. Remember, that your real progress depends not so much on the number of pages you go over, as on the manner in which you study. Be willing to study long on a few pages, if you cannot otherwise acquire a perfect knowledge of them.

(7.) Be not in too great *haste to go into the more difficult authors in your course of preparation for college*. Most students, I believe, go into Virgil and Cicero with far too little previous study. They sometimes hardly feel that they are accomplishing any thing, till they begin to lay Vandal hands on those noble authors. Instructors sometimes sit in pain to hear barbarous recitations from the *Æneid*, or the orations of Cicero, by one who ought rather to be conning the pages of *Liber Primus*. Now the consequence in such cases is, not only that the student will fail thoroughly to understand what he reads, but that he will be likely to acquire the habit

of reading in that way. Be not, then, in too great haste to go into Virgil, or Cicero, or Sallust. Perform cheerfully whatever previous study your instructors may deem necessary.

(8.) *Have nothing to do with translations*, in reading Latin and Greek. That it is possible for a student to make some use of them without injury to himself, I will not deny. But that more than one out of a thousand would probably do so, I cannot believe. When a student has a translation on his table, or in his book-case, or even where, for the sake of concealment, it is sometimes put—*in his trunk*,—he is strongly tempted to recur to it in all cases of difficulty, rather than to task severely his own mind. He is thus led to form the habit of relying on foreign aid in such cases, rather than on his own resources; a habit which not only unfits him for vigorous and efficient effort in classical study, but for every other kind of intense intellectual effort. That such is, in a greater or less degree, the result, in the case of most students who have any thing to do with translations, I have no doubt. Away with them, then. Throw yourself on your own resources. And you will, in the end, I am sure, see no cause to regret it.

(9.) Frequently exercise yourself in *writing and speaking Latin and Greek*. In translating from Latin and Greek into English, we associate the idea with the word. In writing and speaking those languages, we associate the word with the idea. Both these modes of association are necessary to give us the most perfect familiarity with the meaning of Latin and Greek words. Besides, in writing and speaking these languages, we are obliged to make a constant application of the rules of etymology and syntax, and of some rules to which we are liable to give little attention. This is, indeed, the most practical mode of studying these languages; and one which conduces more, perhaps, than any other to the rapid and thorough acquisition of them. It is, I am persuaded, far too much neglected. Exercises in writing Latin and Greek will doubtless be prescribed by your instructors. But it would be well, if you can find time for it, to do more in this way than will be required of you. You will probably have no prescribed exercises in speaking Latin and Greek. But I would strongly recommend it as a voluntary thing. You may begin this, as well as the exercise in writing these languages, soon after you commence the

study of them. Often employ yourself, at first, in naming the objects around you, and framing easy sentences about them. And you may, at length, proceed to more extended efforts.

2. I have one or two suggestions to make in regard to your HABITS IN THE RECITATION ROOM.

(1.) While I would caution you against making it your main object to appear well in the recitation room, I would say, *aim to recite promptly and fluently*. Such a mode of recitation is important, not only because it saves time, and is more pleasant to all concerned, but because it does much in preparing you to utter your thoughts in public on any occasion. The man who expresses himself promptly and fluently in the recitation room, will be very likely to do so, whenever he is called upon to speak before others. But the mode of recitation which I recommend, will probably require some effort. You ought to have special reference to it in preparing your lesson. It is very possible to understand a lesson well, and yet to recite it wretchedly. If you are preparing a demonstration in mathematics, after you have mastered it, go through with it once or twice in your room,

before recitation. If you are getting a lesson in Latin or Greek, after you have become perfectly familiar with it, read it over in an audible voice, just as you would read it before your class. And whatever your lesson may be, after you have prepared it in other respects, repeat it aloud in just the way in which you mean to recite it. And when you rise in the recitation room, fasten your mind on the lesson, and endeavor to preserve the most perfect self-command. These suggestions would seem comparatively trifling, if they were designed merely to affect your appearance before your instructors and class-mates. But they will not seem so, I trust, when you remember the influence of your habits in the recitation room, on your success in public speaking.

(2.) While in the recitation room, *give close and unremitting attention to the business before you*. If not a single remark should be made by your instructor, nor a single ray of light thrown on the lesson by your class-mates; still a close attention to the recitation will amount to a review of the lesson; and this surely will be a profitable exercise. But valuable remarks will often be made by your instructor, and new light

will be thrown on the lesson by your fellow students. By a habit of inattention, then, you will certainly lose much. Some students frequently spend the whole time of recitation, except the few minutes which they occupy in reciting, in some kind of reading or writing utterly disconnected with the business before them, or in listlessly looking around the room, or in whispering to a class-mate, or perhaps in sleep. Beware of all such habits. Let your mind be awake in the recitation room. Determine to hear all that is said ; and give attention to nothing foreign from the subject before you. Act, in this case, on the simple precept which I have before mentioned—make the most of every thing in its place.

3. In addition to your prescribed course of study, you will be able to spend considerable time in **READING**, especially after you enter college. The course you take in this respect, will essentially affect your intellectual character. On a subject so important, I cannot forbear to make a few suggestions.

(1.) Be careful to make a *good selection of books*. The world is full of books, many of which it would, to say the least, be a waste of time to read. And of those that are really valuable, you ought, as you cannot read them all,

to select the best. Be not then in the habit of reading any thing which happens to come in your way. Never peruse a book without being satisfied, not only that it possesses intrinsic merit, but that it is well adapted to your present wants. You may satisfy yourself on these points, by asking the advice of some judicious friend, or by reading the criticisms of competent judges. Ask your instructors, from time to time, to give you a list of such books as they would advise you to read.

(2.) While at the academy, *spend but a small portion of your time in reading*, and let it be your main object, in the choice of books, *to facilitate your progress in classical study*. I advise you to confine yourself chiefly to Latin and Greek, while at the academy, because I deem them of vast importance in your course of study, and because it seems to me exceedingly desirable, that you should lay a broad and deep foundation for classical attainments, before you enter college. The books, which will aid you most in classical study, are works on the geography and history of the ancient nations, especially of the Greeks and Romans. Every thing, in fine, which will transport you back to the age

and country of a classical writer, and make you familiar with the circle of objects in view of which he thought and wrote, will aid you much in acquiring a full view of his meaning. Without helps of this description, you will labor in vain fully to understand a Latin or Greek writer. Of such helps you ought to avail yourself, early in your course of study ; and to make far more use of them, at every stage of it, than most students do. I might have made remarks on this point in connection with what I said about the study of Latin and Greek. But I chose to make them here, because the acquisitions to which I allude, are to be made, not so much in the way of prescribed exercises, as in a course of collateral reading, which ought to be commenced at the academy. Your reading, however, need not be confined to works of the kind I have just mentioned. Indeed, I deem it very desirable that it should not be. Some attention you may give to modern history, biographical works, books of travels, and some of the best poetical works. There are a few books which relate especially to the formation of moral and intellectual character, which you cannot read too soon. One of the very best of this class, Foster on Decision

of Character, I have already recommended. I hardly know how to speak of this book in terms adequate to my sense of its merit. I advise you to read it attentively, without delay. Watts on the Improvement of the Mind, is a very valuable book, and one well adapted to your present stage of study. You would do well, I think, to read Burder on Mental Discipline, and Dr. Miller's Letters on Clerical Manners and Habits. These two works are especially designed for theological students; but they contain many hints well adapted to students of every class. It was rather my intention, however, to give some general directions in regard to the selection of books, than to make out a list of those I would recommend. I have mentioned a few only, of a particular class, which happened to occur to me.

(3.) *Thoroughly digest what you read.* Be not content with hastily glancing over a book, or with simply apprehending an author's meaning, and treasuring up his thoughts in your memory. Think much, think independently, pursue original trains of thoughts, on what you read. Thus will your reading conduce, in a high degree, to thorough mental discipline. The thoughts of

others, being in this way amalgamated with your own thoughts, and receiving new modifications from the peculiar habits of your own mind, do themselves properly become your own. They are thus more firmly fixed in your mind, more perfectly subject to your control, and better fitted for any use to which you may wish to apply them.

(4.) There is a foolish *ambition to read a great number* of books, which I would caution you to avoid as long as you live. The advantage to be derived from a course of reading, does not depend mainly on the number of volumes read. It matters not, indeed, how many books you read, if you fully understand and thoroughly digest them. But it is far better to read a few books as you ought, than to go through whole libraries in the manner of some.

(5.) Be much in the habit of *reading by subjects*, especially when somewhat more advanced in your course of study. Take up some subject to which you wish to attend. Read books and parts of books which treat of it. When you have acquired a complete knowledge of this subject, then pass to some other. This should not be your only mode of reading. But it may,

with great advantage, be pursued to considerable extent. Knowledge acquired thus is well classified, and laid away in a good state for use.

(6.) Make it an object to *read such books as will throw light on the particular studies in which you are engaged*. Of the propriety of this suggestion, I need not employ a single argument to convince you. You will, I trust, bear it in mind, as you mark out, from time to time, your plan of reading.

(7.) In regard to *taking notes of your reading*, I have a few suggestions to make. I would advise you sometimes to make an abstract of a whole book. This will give you a more perfect view of the author's plan, and promote comprehensiveness of thought, and the power of arranging ideas in a logical way. It is inexpedient to transcribe much from any book, unless it is one to which you cannot afterwards have access. A better way, in ordinary cases, is to keep on your table a blank book, in which, as you read, you may enter references to any passages of peculiar value, at which you will probably wish to look again.

(8.) Beware of *spending too much time in reading periodicals*, especially those of the light-

er kind. You may not be in danger of this now ; but you probably will be, during a part of your subsequent course of study. To spend a little time in reading newspapers, and magazines of the lighter sort, will be of service, as a relaxation from severe study, and for other purposes. But when you come, as you probably will, to have easy access to many such works, you will be in great danger of wasting time, and of mental dissipation.

4. Make it, from the beginning of your course, a prominent object to acquire the power of WRITING well. Of how little worth, comparatively, would be the richest treasures of science, and the greatest acuteness and vigor of intellect, without the power of communicating knowledge. How much will the ability to write well, increase your influence in any sphere of action, and especially in the gospel ministry. But you cannot become an able writer, without taking much pains, with direct reference to this object. I advise you to engage often in the exercise of composition. Never, if you can possibly avoid it, neglect a prescribed exercise of this kind. Some do this, habitually, through a large part of their academiæ course. They usually, how-

ever, see cause, at length, to lament their folly. As they enter on the duties of college life, they find themselves in a very unpleasant predicament, when required to perform an exercise to which they have been so little accustomed.— This exercise, however, may be so performed as to be of little use to you. In view of this fact, and of the difficulty which students find, at first, in writing composition, I propose to give you a few hints, on the best mode of conducting this exercise. These hints will have reference not only to your incipient attempts at writing, but to your efforts in this way at a more advanced stage of study.

(1.) *Select a subject which you can understand.* Some students are fond of taking subjects quite too difficult for them, for the purpose, perhaps, of seeming to be profound. But the consequence is, they either fail altogether, or write utter nonsense. I make these suggestions with special reference to your present stage of study. The time will come, I trust, when you may grapple with the most difficult subjects in every department of science, without fear of failure. But, at present, there are some topics which you cannot be expected to understand,

and on which, of course, you will attempt in vain to write well. Such, for example, are difficult questions in political economy, or metaphysics.

(2.) Aim to *select a subject in which you feel a peculiar interest*. You will not be likely to write well without excitement. The best way to produce this, is to take a subject which has a strong hold on your feelings.

(3.) Endeavor, before you write, to *get clear, definite, and comprehensive views of your subject*. Select it, if possible, some time before your composition will be required. Think much upon it. Survey it on every side. Analyze it thoroughly. When your subject is selected for a considerable time before you write, your mind will often spontaneously recur to it; and the mind usually acts with greatest energy, when it thus, without constraint, fastens itself on a subject. Your very best thoughts will probably come in this way. When, in attempting to express yourself on a particular point, you meet with difficulty, just pause, and ask yourself, what is the precise idea in my mind? Having ascertained this, your simple business will be to clothe that idea in words.

(4.) I would advise you to *have a definite plan of remark before you begin to write*. It would be well, especially if your composition is to be of considerable length, to put the outlines of that plan on paper. To have these outlines before your eye, will help you to write systematically.

(5.) Endeavor, before you begin to write, *deeply to interest your feelings in your subject*. This may be done by fixed thought upon it. I would advise you, for the sake of emotion, to spend a little time in this way, just before you take up your pen, whatever previous preparation for writing you may have made. When you feel deeply, your mind will act with energy. And you will have ready command of language. Apt words will come unbidden; and the work of composition will be easy and delightful.

(6.) When you write, *beware of pausing too long to consider mere forms of expression*. If you happen not to be perfectly satisfied with an expression which occurs to you, stop not long to correct it, lest the ardor of your feelings should abate. Go on, and perform the work of correction when you have finished the piece.

(7.) Let what you write *be properly your own*.



While engaged in the business of instruction, compositions were frequently submitted to me for correction, in which I could point out the grossest instances of plagiarism. Young students often seem to be hardly sensible, that it is an improper and pernicious practice to make up their compositions by pilfering from others. By all means avoid this practice. Aim at originality, both in thought and style. I would advise you, when you intend to write on a particular subject, not to read what an author of sentiments like your own, has written upon it, unless it be to obtain facts which you wish to use. Such, I know, is not the course of most students. When they have selected a subject for composition, instead of applying their own minds to it, and, by fixed and patient thought, devising trains of remark, they set themselves to ransacking libraries, in search of authors who have written upon it. And after diligently conning every such author that can be found, they sit down to make a kind of *omnium gatherum*, a collection from perhaps twenty different sources. How many such pieces of literary patchwork is every instructor doomed to read! When you have selected a subject for composition, depend mainly

for ideas on the efforts of your own mind. The more you have read on this subject at some former period, the better. But if, just before you write, you read what those authors have said on your subject, whose opinions accord with your own, you will be in danger either of making your composition a mere compilation from various books, or of following servilely in the track of some one favorite writer.

(8.) *Commit to writing, when you can, striking thoughts*, which may be suggested by what you read, or in other ways. Thoughts are evanescent things. And if not made fast on paper, the most valuable ones may pass from us, never to be recalled. At least, they may never be recalled in precisely the same striking shape in which they first occurred to our minds. When you have new and interesting thoughts, if you have time, write them out at length. This, however, you cannot always do. I would recommend, therefore, the practice of keeping a sort of *waste book*, in which you may enter brief and hasty notes of such striking thoughts as may occur to you in the hurry of business, when you have not time to write them out in a more full and elaborate way. A very few words entered

in such a book, will suffice to recall to your mind a whole train of thought. In such a book, you could enter also such subjects for composition, as should occur to you when you had no occasion to make immediate use of them. The habit of writing down your own thoughts, which I have thus recommended, will not only furnish you matter for composition, and give you facility and correctness of expression, but will greatly conduce to accuracy of thought. "Reading," says Lord Bacon, "makes a learned man, *writing, a correct man.*"

(9.) I would recommend a very pleasant means of improvement in writing, *correspondence with your relatives and friends*. To say nothing of the claims of friendship and consanguinity, you will find letter writing a useful exercise in composition. It may not be necessary to recommend this exercise to you. But some students, I am persuaded, are too much inclined to neglect it, especially in the earlier stage of their studies. Let me not be understood, however, to intimate, that letters should be written in the stiff and formal style of an elaborate essay. Nor would I advise you to engage in an extensive correspondence. But I would say, have a few

regular correspondents, and while you adopt the easy style which epistolary writing requires, let not your letters be entirely filled with mere common-place remarks, on common-place topics.

5. With one other topic I shall close this letter. I allude to the subject of **EXTEMPORANEOUS SPEAKING**. The ability to speak extemporaneously with ease and effect, is a desirable attainment, whatever walk in life the student has in view. But to one who intends to enter the ministry, it is peculiarly important. Extemporaneous preaching is becoming more generally popular. In many parts of our country, the demand for it is imperative. And in itself considered, it is, I believe, the most efficient mode of preaching. Aim then, through your whole course of study, to make the greatest possible improvement in extemporaneous speaking. That some have greater natural talents for this art than others, I have no doubt. But that almost every man may, by proper pains, become a good extemporaneous speaker, is to me equally clear. This attainment, however, cannot be made, in any case, without much effort. Whatever be the natural aptitude for extemporaneous speaking, a high degree of excellence in it cannot be expected, without the aid of ed-

ucation. But this part of education, is, by most students, I am persuaded, far too much neglected. You cannot too early begin a proper attention to it. The most effectual means of improvement in this, as in every other art, is practice. Your first efforts in this way, will doubtless be attended with some difficulty, and may seem to you not very successful. But be not discouraged. The object at which you aim in such efforts, is too valuable to be very easily attained, or to be deemed unworthy of great and long continued exertion.

I have said that practice is the most effectual means of improvement in extemporaneous speaking. But it should be practice of the right kind. It is quite possible for a man to speak much extemporaneously, and yet do it in such a way, that his mode of speaking will be rather changing for the worse, than for the better. With the view, then, of giving a right direction to your efforts in extemporaneous speaking, I have a few suggestions to offer.

(1.) In respect to mere *delivery*, I would say, become minutely acquainted, as soon as possible, with the best work on this subject, which you can obtain, and make a very frequent and thorough

application of its rules in practice. I know no better work on Elocution than Porter's Rhetorical Reader, or his Analysis of Rhetorical Delivery. The former of these two books is specially designed for your present stage of study. Make yourself familiar with it. But remember, that no attention to rules will avail much without practice. You ought, if possible, to exercise yourself in elocution, a short time every day. Sometimes read aloud, with attention to pauses, tones, emphasis, inflections, and every thing which pertains to the business of reading. And sometimes, declaim from memory, with due regard not only to all the points of good reading, but to attitude and gesture. You ought to attain a good delivery before you enter college. From the Professor of Rhetoric there, you cannot expect to receive much instruction in mere elocution. Something, indeed, he will do for you in this respect. But his time must be chiefly occupied in higher matters. And if you go to college with bad habits of delivery, the probability is, they will never be broken up. At least, they will not be without more effort than the prescribed college exercises would lead you to make, and more than most students would have the perseverance to make

in a private way. So far as my own observation has extended, students, in general, have made but little improvement in elocution at college. Indeed, this part of oratory belongs rather to an academial, than a collegiate course of study. I would advise you to unite with a few of your fellow students in a little club for the purpose of mutual instruction in elocution. From the free and minute criticisms of your associates in such a club, you would derive great advantage. A student ought, at first, to be *drilled* as thoroughly in elocution, as a military officer drills a recruit. Every impropriety in enunciation, attitude, and gesture, should be minutely pointed out, and untiring efforts should be made to correct it. I have seen, with admiration, the very great improvement which mere boys have made, during a few hours spent in such a kind of drilling. And I am fully convinced, that it is perfectly feasible for any student of ordinary talents, to attain a good delivery before he enters college. I have deemed it proper to make these remarks on the subject of elocution, because no one, without a good delivery, can hope to become a very impressive extemporaneous speaker.

(2.) In regard to a *subject* for an exercise in

extemporaneous speaking, I would make essentially the same remarks that I made in respect to a subject for composition. Select one that you can understand, and one in which you feel a deep interest.

(3.) Do not speak, if you can avoid it, without *thorough preparation*. No matter if, without previous thought, you could talk an hour on any given subject, with the utmost volubility. Your talk might, after all, be merely a voluble utterance of nonsense. At best, it would probably be a collection of crude ideas, expressed in a very immethodical way. Endeavor, before you speak, to get clear, definite, and comprehensive views of the subject. Fix on the train of thought you mean to pursue, and make yourself familiar with it. And I would advise you, at least till you become somewhat experienced in extemporizing, to give utterance once or twice, in your room, to the whole train of thought you mean to pursue, just as if your audience were before you. This will have a tendency to prevent your being frightened at the sound of your own voice, and to give you greater facility of expression, when you actually appear in public. It will be highly conducive also to clearness of thought.

“Thoughts disentangle passing o’er the lip.”

(4.) Endeavor *deeply to feel your subject*. You cannot move the hearts of those who hear you, unless your own heart be moved. A Latin poet has well said,

—“ si vis me flere, dolendum est
Primum ipsi tibi.”—

—“ If you wish me to weep, you must first manifest emotion yourself.” Besides, deep feeling does more than any thing else to give a man a ready command of language. I cannot forbear to quote the beautiful and oft repeated remarks of Milton on this point. “ True eloquence,” says he, “ I find to be none but the serious and hearty love of truth; and that whose mind soever is fully possessed with a fervent desire to know good things, and with the dearest charity to infuse the knowledge of them into others,—when such a man would speak, his words, like so many nimble and airy servitors, trip about him at command, and in well ordered files, as he would wish, fall aptly into their own places.”

(5.) When you speak, *fasten your mind on your subject, and be not solicitous about language*. The less you think about language, the better. If your mind be intent on culling fine expressions, you may lose your train of thought, and will cer-

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tainly be far less likely to use appropriate and elegant language, than if you were wholly unconcerned about your style. I have advised you to speak extemporaneously on your subject, beforehand. But I would have you make no effort, when you come to speak in public, to recall the expressions you used in that previous exercise. Many of them will probably come unbidden. If not, let them go; and take such others as may occur to you. Fasten your mind on your subject, and that alone. And you will be likely so deeply to feel what you have to say, that words will come unsought.

(6.) Often *exercise yourself privately in extemporaneous speaking*. Take some subject which you fully understand, and in which you feel some interest, and speak upon it extempore in your room. To spend a few minutes in this way daily, would aid you greatly in acquiring fluency of thought and language.

(7.) I would advise you, through your whole course of study, to be a member of some *society for extemporaneous speaking*. And when you have joined such a society, determine to be an efficient member of it. Be punctual. Make due preparation for every exercise. Never pre-

face what you have to say with the hackneyed apology, "I have not thought of the subject." Act in accordance with the spirit of that quaint, but excellent precept, "Never speak unless you have something to say; and always stop when you have done."

(8.) It will conduce to your improvement in extemporaneous speaking, to aim at *propriety of expression in your conversation*. If you allow yourself to be in the daily use of inaccurate, awkward, or vulgar phraseology, you will be very likely to use it in the excitement of extemporaneous speaking. Discard every thing of this kind from your conversation; as you may do without stiffness or affectation.

I might say much more on the subject of extemporaneous speaking. But all I designed to do was merely to give you a few hints in regard to it. I would recommend to your attentive perusal, Ware's "Hints on Extemporaneous Preaching," a work, which, though it has reference to a particular profession, you may read with profit now, not only because you have that profession in view, but because it contains suggestions which are calculated greatly to facilitate improvement in any kind of extemporaneous speaking.

LETTER V.

MORAL HABITS.

Caution against deferring high Christian attainments to a more convenient season—Daily duties of the closet—Stated and occasional seasons of fasting and prayer—Observance of the Sabbath—Cultivation of expansive Christian benevolence—Making study a religious duty—Efforts to promote a revival of religion.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,—Important as intellectual improvement is, moral culture is far more so. “With the talents of an angel,” says Young, “a man may be a fool.” And, to borrow the striking language of another, “a giant in intellect, without moral culture, is but a giant madman.” All this, I doubt not, you deeply feel. You have taken the Christian name upon you; and have resolved, I trust, to aim at high moral attainments. I design, in this letter, to

give you some counsels in respect to the formation of your moral habits. There are some dangers and duties peculiar to a course of study. Many of my remarks will have special reference to these. I shall not forbear, however, to touch on some topics of common interest to Christians of every class. I shall aim, in fine, to make just such suggestions as experience and observation have led me to think a young Christian student peculiarly needs.

1. Beware of the delusive notion, that **SOME FUTURE TIME WILL BE MORE CONVENIENT FOR ENTIRE DEVOTION TO GOD.** The pernicious influence of such a notion on Christian character, is seen in every walk of life. All Christians will acknowledge, that they ought now to live for God alone. But how to do this they find not. There are, at present, great difficulties in the way of entire devotion to God. Their circumstances are unfavorable to the cultivation of ardent devotional feeling. But they hope their situation will be better soon. They are looking forward to a future period, when they confidently expect to find it much more easy to be eminently devoted Christians. They hope to have more leisure, or to be free from some strong temptations

which now harass them, or to enjoy better religious privileges, or, in some other respect, to possess greater facilities for the cultivation of piety. Well, the anticipated time arrives. And, it may be, the anticipated change of circumstances takes place. They have more leisure. They are delivered from some temptations to which they had been exposed. They possess better religious privileges. But leisure hours may steal away the heart from God, as well as busy ones. And when one temptation passes away, some other usually takes its place. And the best religious privileges will not make it easy to "crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts." They find it difficult still to give up the whole heart to God. But still they cling to their old delusion. They again look forward to some future time, as the happy period when difficulties will all vanish away, and they shall become what the word of God requires them to be. Alas, how many go through life in this way,—always

———"about to live,

"Forever on the brink of being born."

And yet they "die the same." If saved at all, they are saved "as by fire." Perhaps a student is in peculiar danger of falling into such a course.

His circumstances undergo some change at every transition from one stage of study to another. And as he is constantly looking forward to some such transition, it is not strange, that a deceitful heart should lead him to neglect present effort, in the hope that a change of circumstances will soon render high Christian attainments more easy.

Such, I doubt not, is the course of many a Christian student—if *Christian* he may be called, who is so unlike his divine Master. At the academy, he is pressed with study. He wishes to fit himself for college in as short a time as possible. His classical exercises seem to him to demand all his time, and all his strength. He can find but little leisure for the peculiar duties of religion,—but little time to read his Bible—to search his heart—to pray—to labor for the conversion of sinners around him. He acknowledges his worldliness. He even affects to lament it. But he hardly knows how he can do better just now. He lives, however, in hopes of better times. When he enters college, he doubts not he shall be a more devoted Christian. He will then, he hopes, have more leisure. He will not be required to accomplish the most he can

possibly do in the studies of his class ; but his daily task will be assigned. And he confidently expects to find ample time for the culture of his own heart, and for offices of Christian faithfulness to those around him. He soothes his conscience with many a bright picture of the excellent life he then will lead.—Well, the years of his academical course pass by. He enters college. But, alas! though circumstances have changed, his heart remains the same. He loves the world still. And even here, the way of Christian virtue is difficult. Business presses upon him. Temptations cluster around him. Ambition woos and wins his heart. And he is now still more inclined than ever, to defer the work of entire self-denial to a more convenient season. But that convenient season, he thinks, is surely not far distant. He designs to become a minister of the gospel. And in the theological seminary, he confidently expects to find a happy retreat from temptation, and such facilities for the culture of pious feeling, that even his cold heart will be warmed, and his sluggish spirit roused. His companions will all be pious men—his studies sacred—his object holy. How can he fail there to make high Christian attain-

ments?—At length his college days are ended. Crowned with those academic laurels which fired his vain heart with ambition, and stole his affections from God, he goes to the theological seminary. But even there he finds, that worldliness still cleaves to his spirit. The chains of sinful habit have become too strong to be easily broken. He finds it quite possible to be surrounded by pious men, and yet live far estranged from God—to study the “letter” of the divine word, and yet fail to catch the “spirit,” which “maketh alive.” He is, perhaps, a close student. He becomes skilled in all the minutiae of sacred philology, and in every department of theological science. And he maintains the form of godliness; but he has very little of its power.—And can he still quiet his conscience in present worldliness, with the vain hope, that some future change of circumstances will bring him near to God? It is even so. “I am busied now,” he says to himself, “with abstruse philological matters, and the subtleties of polemic theology. My companions are all pious men. There are no impenitent sinners in close connection with me, to excite feelings of holy compassion in my soul—to present their awaken-

ing claims to my prayers and my efforts. When I enter the ministry, the sense of its high responsibilities, and the sympathies of the pastoral relation, cannot fail to raise high the tone of pious feeling in my heart." Deluded man! He takes upon him the holy office of the ministry. And he maintains, perhaps, a fair reputation. But he is still a "half-way Christian." The habit of shrinking from present self-denial, in the hope of finding entire devotion to God more convenient hereafter, has become so confirmed, that it seems almost impossible to break it. It goes with him to the grave: And if he sink not at last to the final abode of the hypocrite, he is, indeed, "scarcely saved."

Let me now say to you, my dear young friend, "now is the accepted time" for entire devotion to God. You may be tempted now; but so it will always be. Your present temptations may pass away, but others will come in their stead. It may be difficult now to keep near to God. But difficult it will always be, till the "flesh" ceaseth to "lust against the spirit," and the world, and the "god of this world," to tempt you. Beware, then, of saying I cannot be a devoted Christian now, but I hope to become

one hereafter. Would you know what will be your character at college, or in the theological seminary, or in the Christian ministry, just ask yourself, what am I now?—what habits am I now forming? These habits will abide with you, it may be, till your dying day. Give, then, your whole soul to the Saviour now. And form such habits as you would be willing to carry with you into college—the theological seminary—the Christian ministry—aye, and even to the judgment seat.

2. BE FAITHFUL IN THE DAILY DUTIES OF THE CLOSET. If you fail here, you will fail in every part of Christian duty. If you should depart from God, and bring reproach upon the Saviour's name, the decline of piety will probably begin here. And under the pressure of study, you will often be tempted wholly to neglect, or hastily and carelessly to perform your private devotions. Yield not to such temptations. Neglect any thing rather than the duties of the closet. You ought to have regular times for secret devotion. How frequent they should be, I will not undertake to say. But you will feel it, I trust, both a privilege and a duty, to pray in secret, at least three times a day. You should

mark out those hours for retirement which you find most favorable to devotional feeling. Of your evening devotions, I would say, let them not be delayed till so late an hour, that fatigue and drowsiness render you unfit to perform them. But whatever hours you assign to secret prayer, fail not to observe them—no, not in a single instance, unless something beyond your control, compels you to do so. You will sometimes be placed in circumstances in which it will be difficult to find opportunity for retirement. This is often the case in travelling, especially in the stage. When you have occasion to travel in this way, as you probably sometimes will, during your vacations, watch for opportunities to spend, at least, a little time in secret devotion. Watch for them as a hungry man would for food. And make the most of them, when they occur. Pursue this course whenever you are away from your ordinary place of residence, under circumstances unfavorable to the regular performance of closet duties. Be assured, if you fail to do this, darkness will come over your soul. When Christians visit their pious friends, they are often too neglectful in respect to affording facilities for secret devotion. This is often the case in

the visits which pious students interchange. Be careful that you do not err in this respect. When a Christian brother spends a night with you, fail not to afford him facilities, both at evening and morning, for secret devotion. If he love to commune with God, he will deem this an act of kindness. And even if he is a man of a worldly spirit, it will convey a reproof, which cannot offend, and may greatly profit him.

3. In addition to your daily exercises of private devotion, observe both **STATED AND OCCASIONAL SEASONS OF FASTING AND PRAYER**. The observance of such seasons is sanctioned by the word of God, and by the example of holy men in every age of the church. Our spiritual wants require it. The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. The world may be stealing its affections away from God, while we hardly suspect that aught is wrong. The daily round of devotional duty, may, in form at least, be kept up—and that too, with some self-complacency—while the Saviour has somewhat against us, because we have forsaken our first love. It is important, then, to turn aside, sometimes, from our ordinary pursuits, for a longer time than we can spend in our daily de-

votions, to search our deceitful hearts, to look over memory's record of the past, and lift up the eye of penitence and faith to Him from whom all our help cometh. No one, I think, who has any just sense of the deceitfulness and depravity of his heart, can fail to prize such seasons. Then the soul, weary, and faint, and desponding, perhaps, in the conflict with its numerous foes, gathers strength for a more vigorous onset. Fail not to make frequent use of this important means of grace. I have said, that seasons of fasting and prayer should be both stated and occasional. I would advise you statedly to set apart a day for this purpose, as often, at least, as once a month. And as to occasional seasons of this kind, observe them when your circumstances seem to render them peculiarly necessary. When you find it difficult, in some very important matter, to ascertain the path of duty; when you are about to make some great change in your circumstances and relations in life; and on other occasions, when you feel yourself to be in peculiar need of communion with your own heart, your Bible, and your God; you will find a day of fasting and prayer of incalculable value. You need not fear, that to spend a few seasons of this

kind, in the course of every term, would take away too much time from your studies. To preserve a holy frame of mind, will conduce, I doubt not, to your success in study. It will keep you from indolence, and give you a tranquillity of spirit which is favorable to intense mental effort. Besides, by due economy in the use of time, and a judicious management of your affairs, you will be able to appropriate sufficient time to the duty I have been recommending, without any serious interference with your course of study.

4. I have a few hints to offer on the **DUE OBSERVANCE OF THE SABBATH**. Your growth in grace depends very much on the manner in which you keep holy time. And, during your course of study, you will be exposed to some peculiar dangers in this respect. Let me, then, advise you:—

(1.) *To make Saturday evening a season of preparation for the Sabbath.* I make this remark on the supposition, that, as many do, you begin Sabbath at midnight. If, with you, Saturday evening forms a part of holy time, you will, of course, devote it wholly to religious duties. But if that be not the case, I would advise

you to suspend your studies at the close of Saturday afternoon, and spend the evening chiefly in such meditation, reading, conversation, and other employments, as are calculated to fit the mind for holy time. A prayer meeting, or religious conference, on Saturday evening, I have found to be an excellent means of preparing my own heart for the Sabbath. I would advise you to avail yourself of such a privilege whenever you can. I have deemed it important to lay before you the subject of this paragraph, because I have reason to believe, that many pious students who do not regard Saturday evening as a part of the Sabbath, are in the habit of devoting it to study. They lose much, I am persuaded, by this practice. The man, whose mind is engrossed with secular concerns of any kind, till the close of Saturday evening, will not be very likely to find himself, on Sabbath morning, in such a frame of mind as befits holy time.

(2.) Let your *preparation for public worship, in respect to dress and personal appearance*, occupy as little of holy time as possible. Lay your Sabbath-day garments by the side of your bed, on Saturday evening, ready to be put on when you rise in the morning. You will have no

occasion, then, to change your dress during the Sabbath; and will thus save much time, which is usually spent in that way.

(3.) Endeavor to *get exercise* of some kind on the Sabbath. If you fail to do this, you will be likely to feel a dullness, and perhaps drowsiness, which will quite unfit you for the efficient discharge of the duties of the day. You cannot take your ordinary exercise. But you can devise some substitute for it. Walking, I would not recommend, at least in most cases. It would seem to countenance the practice, in which many are so prone to indulge, of strolling about on the Sabbath for mere amusement. You may take various kinds of exercise in your room, which will answer your purpose tolerably well, such as walking, swinging a chair, &c. After all, you will be likely to get less exercise on the Sabbath, than on other days. The best remedy for this, is to *eat somewhat less than usual*.

(4.) Do not make a practice of *visiting* on the Sabbath, not even for religious purposes. You can find time enough for this during the week. And the time that is not occupied with public religious services, will not be too much to be spent in your room. Even during a time of

religious excitement, when many of your impenitent fellow students would be glad to see you at their rooms, I would advise you not to make a practice of visiting them on the Sabbath. You ought carefully to avoid giving any countenance to the practice of Sabbath-day visiting, as this is one of the most pernicious habits that can prevail in a community of students, especially among the irreligious part.

(5.) I would advise you *not to read religious newspapers on the Sabbath*. Many excellent men do this. But it is liable, I think, to several objections. Most religious newspapers contain some secular intelligence. This will sometimes catch the eye, when we read such papers on the Sabbath, and, ere we are aware of it, engross the attention. Moreover, Sabbath-day reading ought to be of a devotional cast. And many, even of the religious pieces, in such papers, are not of this description. Besides, to read religious papers on the Sabbath, might, in some cases, seem to countenance the reading of secular papers during holy time. On the whole, as you can find time enough to read religious newspapers on other days, and have better work for the Sabbath, I advise you to let them alone on that day.

(6.) *Write no letters on the Sabbath, not even religious letters.* Letters of this description, some very good men do not hesitate to write during holy time. But if you allow yourself to write any letters on the Sabbath, you will be very likely sometimes to write, in part at least, on secular subjects. Besides, you have other things which properly belong to holy time, quite sufficient to occupy all its hours.

(7.) Beware of falling into *worldly conversation* on the Sabbath. You are in peculiar danger of being led into literary conversation. The transition from profitable remarks on the subject of a religious book to a discussion of the literary merits of the author, is, to a student, exceedingly easy. Guard against this, and every thing of a similar kind. Let your conversation on the Lord's day, be in a high degree spiritual.

(8.) *Never criticise the preacher* on the Sabbath. To this fault students are peculiarly liable. Go not to the house of God to be gratified with profound argumentation, a beautiful style, or an impressive delivery. Sit not as a critic on the messenger of the Most High. But let it be your chief desire to hear "as 'tis, the essential truth"—to learn the will of your Maker. And

when, during holy time, you talk about what you have heard from the pulpit, speak rather of the subjects which have been presented, than of the manner of the speaker. All I have now said is, indeed, implied in advice given in the last paragraph. But the habit of criticising the public exercises of the Sabbath, is so common among students, that I wished you to give it a distinct consideration.

(9.) Aim to make the Sabbath eminently *a day of devotion*. Spend much more time in secret prayer, than you do on other days. Let your reading be chiefly of a devotional kind. The Bible should, of course, be the principal book. Next to this, I would recommend such works as the *Saint's Rest*, the *Imitation of Christ*, and *Doddridge's Rise and Progress*. Strive to be "in the spirit on the Lord's day"—to break the chain of worldliness which has bound your soul—to rise above the trifles of earth, and breathe awhile a purer atmosphere.

5. Begin early to CULTIVATE THE SPIRIT OF EXPANSIVE CHRISTIAN BENEVOLENCE. The present is peculiarly an age of benevolent effort. The church has waked up to the noble enterprise of converting the world. She is attempt-

ing great things, and expecting great things. All her sons should be men of liberal soul, especially those, whose province it is to lead her onward in the glorious work to which God has called her. You aspire to be one of those. Let your soul, then, be early fired with the spirit of Christian benevolence. Become familiar with the subject of missions, and with all the great benevolent enterprizes of the day. Read, regularly, those periodicals which will give you information about them. And do all you can to disseminate such information in the community, and multiply friends to the cause of Christian benevolence. You may do much in this way among your fellow students; and much in your intercourse with your friends and others, during your vacations.

I would advise you, also, to turn your thoughts early to the question, Is it not my duty to become a missionary? There are important reasons for deciding this question, at an early period in your course of study. For a full exhibition of these reasons, I would refer you to an excellent article in the Quarterly Register and Journal of the American Education Society, for May, 1831. I cannot forbear, however; to pre-

sent a single consideration in favor of examining early the claims of the missionary service—the happy influence of such an examination on the preparation of the heart for the work of the ministry. With the better motives which lead a pious student to fix his eye on the ministry, there may be mingled, in far greater proportions than his partial friends suspect, or than he himself is willing to believe, the mere love of influence, and of the honor which cometh from men, with many other motives of a worldly nature. If he present distinctly before his mind the question of personal duty in respect to a missionary life, it will furnish an excellent test of his motives. It will present the office of the ministry before him divested of many attractions which it wears in a Christian land, and attended with many circumstances of privation and danger. It will lead him to ask, Do I wish to enter the ministry from a regard to my own glory, or the glory of my Redeemer? Do I wish to make it an easy service, a mere instrument of self-gratification; or a work of severe and unremitted toil, of rigid and uncompromising self-denial? Am I willing to go any where at the bidding of my Master, even to “the farthest verge of the green

earth?" Can I submit to the most painful privations, and face the most appalling dangers, to rescue souls from perdition, and glorify the name of Jesus? In a word, he will be led to inquire whether he aspires to the sacred office for its own sake, or the sake of any worldly good. And if there be any alloy in the composition of his motives—as, indeed, in a greater or less degree, is always the case—such an examination will operate as the refiner's fire to purge it away. Now it is very important, that one who has the ministry in view, should early divest himself of any wrong motives he may have in wishing to engage in this holy work. For when once such motives have gained a strong hold on the heart, it is exceedingly difficult, and becomes more and more so every day, to tear them away from it. Should you early bring before your mind the question of personal duty in regard to the missionary work, and make the strict self-examination to which that question naturally leads, I should confidently expect, that you would enter the ministry with a better spirit, and a higher standard of ministerial excellence, than you would otherwise possess. And this would probably be the result, in whatever way you might

decide the question of duty, provided that decision were conscientiously made.

6. MAKE YOUR STUDIES A PART OF YOUR RELIGION. Some students are sadly deficient in this respect. Their views of Christian duty are quite too narrow. They hardly seem to feel that religion has any concern with their ordinary employments. Now it should be as much an act of Christian duty to get the lesson of every day, as to perform the devotional services which belong to it. Form the habit of acknowledging God "in all your ways"—of doing every thing "as unto the Lord." When you sit down to get a lesson, feel that you are engaging in a duty which you owe to your Redeemer. Study for Christ; and your studies will be far less likely to draw your heart away from him.

7. MAKE STRONG AND CONSTANT EFFORTS TO PROMOTE A REVIVAL OF RELIGION in the institution to which you belong. Many students, who bear the Christian name, hardly seem to know, that souls are perishing around them. They are guilty, it is true, of no gross immorality. They are regular in their attendance on public worship, and are seen among their brethren at the communion table. But they make no

efforts to save the souls of their impenitent fellow students. Nay, they do much, by the worldly spirit they exhibit, and the levity of their deportment, to urge sinners onward in their course to perdition. Others seem to have a kind of intermittent zeal in the cause of Christ. Sometimes they appear to be very sober and spiritually minded, and to feel a solicitude for the salvation of souls. They frequent religious meetings. They warn the impenitent. They are unwearyed in their efforts to promote a revival of religion. They "run well;" but alas! it is only "for a season." The fitful flame of devotion in their bosoms soon dies away. The world engrosses their affections. They cease to labor for the conversion of souls. And well might their friends ask them, "where is the blessedness ye spake of?" Be not like either of the characters I have described. Strive not to quiet your conscience in the neglect of present efforts to promote the cause of Christ, with the idea that you are preparing yourself for future usefulness. You will be likely to do but little for Christ in future life, if you form the habit now of living in a state of indifference to the spiritual interests of those around you. And it

is very possible, that you may never again be placed in circumstances where you can do so much good as in your present situation. Think, as you look at the impenitent young men around you, of the spiritual wants of the world. And remember, that should their souls be converted, not a few of them would probably bear the privileges of the gospel to destitute portions of our own land, or to the dreary regions of heathen darkness. And let such thoughts call forth earnest and constant efforts to lead them to the Saviour. In regard to the means you may use to promote a revival of religion among your fellow students, allow me to make a few suggestions.

(1.) *Live a holy life.* In vain will you tell your impenitent fellow students of the excellence of religion, while your life contradicts what you say. If you warn them, your warnings will be unheeded. Your prayers will seem to them an empty sound. And be assured, you cannot easily play the hypocrite with them. If you are not really devoted to God, they will be very likely, in their frequent and familiar intercourse with you, to find it out.

(2.) Resolve that you will, if possible, *make*

some direct efforts every day, to promote a revival of religion. Oh, how happy would be the results, should every pious student in the land, make it a rule to ask, with the rising of every sun, What can I do for the salvation of souls to-day? what impenitent sinner can I warn? what can I do to raise the tone of piety among my brethren?—and to feel, with every setting sun, that the day has been in a measure lost, if some such efforts have not been made. Let such be your course.

(3.) *Converse often with the impenitent about the concerns of their souls.* Be not afraid to do this. They will expect it; and if you do it in the right way, you will not offend them. Take pains in your daily intercourse with them, to gain their confidence, that your conversation may do them more good. Watch for opportunities to converse with them—such opportunities will not always come unsought. When you converse, *be in earnest.* How can you be otherwise, when you are striving to save a soul from eternal death? Let them see, that you feel what you say—that you have an intense desire for their salvation—that the feeling of your heart is, “how can I give thee up?” Endeavor plainly to show

them their guilt and danger. They will seldom be displeased with this, if your manner be affectionate. And when circumstances permit, pray with them. The effect of this is often very happy.

(4.) Endeavor to be always present at those *religious meetings* which it may be thought best to hold, and be always ready to take any part in them which may properly belong to you. Never grieve your brethren, and give the impenitent occasion to think that you feel but little interest in the cause of Christ, by being unnecessarily absent from the religious conference or prayer meeting, or by being improperly reluctant, when there, to make remarks, or to lead in prayer. Pious students are sometimes strangely remiss in these respects, especially when religion is in a low state. But at such a time, you ought to take peculiar pains to be present at stated religious meetings, and to perform any duty in them which may properly devolve on you.

(5.) Pious students are sometimes in doubt about the path of duty in respect to the *prosecution of study during a season of peculiar religious excitement*. I advise you not to abandon your studies at such a time. Some at-

tention to study during a revival of religion, so far from exerting an injurious influence, will tend to keep your mind in a well balanced state. It will be likely to prevent that excess of animal feeling, which is usually followed by an unhappy reaction ; and which, while it lasts, is unfavorable both to your own growth in grace, and to the due preparation of your mind for efforts in behalf of others. I have no doubt that it may sometimes be proper, during a revival, to spend an unusually large amount of time in efforts to promote the salvation of souls. But I cannot think it your duty, even then, except in some very peculiar case, to give your whole time to this work. Determine, in the fear of God, how much time you ought to spend in this way, and how many hours should be given to study. When you are laboring directly for the salvation of your fellow students, throw your whole soul into the work. And when you study, aim to abstract your thoughts from every thing else, even from the spiritual condition of those around you, and to study with all your might. If your mind wanders away to some scene of deep religious interest, bring it back, and fix it again on your lesson. You will thus render it less inconve-

nient, if the cause of Christ demand it, to make a temporary abridgment of the period of time allotted to study. To withdraw your mind from the scenes of a religious revival, even during your hours of study, will sometimes cost you a severe and unpleasant effort. But it is one which you ought to make ; and which, if it proceed from right motives, will be an act of self-denial, as truly acceptable to God, as any other.

(6.) Be *bold and frank* in your efforts for the salvation of souls. I would not countenance rash and injudicious measures. But there is a kind of prudence, falsely so called, which exerts a pernicious influence on the cause of Christ. Those who possess it, never dare to act without a precedent. They are very fearful of making too much ado about religion, or of giving sinners reason to suspect that Christians have some design upon them. Religious conversation with the impenitent must always be introduced, they think, in a sort of accidental way ; as if religion were a mere by-concern, which ought, by no means to be made very prominent ; or as if a desire to save souls were too ignoble to be openly avowed. Now you ought to be governed by true Christian prudence, in your efforts to promote a

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revival of religion. But this consists, I apprehend, mainly in these two things—love to souls, and common sense. If you possess these, and call them duly into exercise, you will not be likely to fall into any ill-advised courses. Impelled by love to souls, and guided by common sense, you need not fear frankly to tell your impenitent fellow students, that you mean, if possible, to save their souls. Nor need you fear to adopt bold and energetic measures. “I have often had occasion to observe,” says Cecil, “that a warm blundering man, does more for the world, than a frigid wise man. A man, who gets into the habit of inquiring about proprieties, and expediencies, and occasions, often spends his life without doing any thing to purpose. The state of the world is such, and so much depends on action, that every thing seems to say loudly to every man, ‘Do something’—‘do it’—‘do it.’”

LETTER VI.

MORAL HABITS.

Levity of deportment—Value of time—Absence during term-time—Neglect of prescribed exercises—Punctuality—Economy—Religious reading—Caution against being proud of intellectual attainments—Courtesy—Cautions against losing the respect of associates—Visiting—Deportment at boarding-houses—Room-mate—Bosom friends—Obedience to laws—Deportment towards instructors—Doing good to younger students—Attending religious meetings, and making other efforts to do good abroad.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,—I have not yet quite done with the general subject of my last letter. It will be my object in this, to make some further suggestions in regard to your moral habits—using this term in a liberal sense. And you will allow me here to repeat, with particular reference to the class of topics I have now in view, what I have before said in a general way,—that it is not my purpose to touch on all the

bearings of any subject which I may introduce in these letters, but merely to say such things as seem to me specially important to you.

1. Let me earnestly urge you to **GUARD AGAINST LEVITY IN YOUR DEPARTMENT.** Of this you will be in peculiar danger. When many young persons, of any description, are thrown together, and have much familiar intercourse with each other, they are exceedingly liable to fall into unbecoming levity of deportment. Perhaps there is a peculiar liability to this in the case of students, from the nature of their employments. When the mind has been, for a considerable time, intensely applied to study, it naturally seeks relaxation; and in this, it often goes too far—giving a license to the languid spirits, which, though it may impart to them new buoyancy, leads, nevertheless, to an unhappy lightness of demeanor. As your dangers in this respect are great, guard against them with peculiar vigilance. Think much of that passage of God's word, "Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded." This precept does not forbid cheerfulness. Cheerfulness is even a Christian duty. But it does forbid that frivolity of which pious students are often guilty. You will doubtless be

in far greater danger of this, than of the opposite extreme. It is a very good rule to engage in no such conversation, to exhibit no such deportment of any kind, that to engage in prayer immediately after it, would, to a sensible observer, seem incongruous with what you had just been doing. And if you are in doubt whether, in any particular practice, you pass the line which separates cheerfulness from levity, just ask yourself, Does it unfit me for prayer? Let me advise you to guard against levity at all times. If you allow yourself to indulge in it when but few are present, or even in familiar intercourse with your room-mate only, you will be likely to do the same, on other and more public occasions.

2. **CHERISH A DEEP SENSE OF THE VALUE OF TIME.** Regard it as a talent committed to you by God, for which you must render a solemn account. And be assured you have not a moment to lose. I am fully persuaded, that many pious students have far too little tenderness of conscience in regard to the waste of time. Do not, however, mistake on this subject. To take sufficient sleep is not waste of time. To spend some portion of every day in mental relaxation and bodily exercise, is not waste of time. To

neglect the necessary means of preserving health, though some excellent young men have done it, with the expectation of gaining time, proves an actual loss in the end. The rule of duty which you ought to adopt, and to which you should rigidly adhere, is, simply, to spend every moment of time in the way best calculated to promote the great object you have in view.

3. Let me enjoin it upon you as a religious duty, NEVER TO BE UNNECESSARILY ABSENT FROM THE INSTITUTION TO WHICH YOU BELONG, DURING TERM-TIME. Some students, both at the Academy and in College, are almost always absent a few days after the commencement of a term; and go away, when they can obtain permission, a little while before its close. They are often absent, also, for a longer or shorter period, at other times in the course of the term, to visit their friends, or for other purposes. They seem to feel, that every day they can contrive to be absent during term-time, is just so much clear gain. They cannot fail, however, to lose much, by the course they pursue. Let it be your fixed purpose, always, if possible, to be present at the commencement of a term, and never, if you can avoid it, be absent a single day, till its close.

4. Let me advise you, also, to make it a point of religious duty, NEVER, IF YOU CAN AVOID IT, TO NEGLECT A SINGLE PRESCRIBED EXERCISE. Many students are willing to avail themselves of the slightest pretext for evading an appointed exercise. Be not guilty of such folly—to use the mildest term that can be applied to it. Especially would I urge you never to be absent, without some unavoidable necessity, from the morning and evening devotions of the Academy or College. Some students, who call themselves pious men, ought to be ashamed of their remissness in this respect.

5. Be PUNCTUAL IN ALL YOUR ENGAGEMENTS. This is unquestionably a moral duty. To fail in punctuality, may not be so bad as utterly to disregard an engagement. But it is as really wrong in a moral sense. How can it be otherwise? You engage, either directly or by implication, to be in a certain place at a particular time. The time comes, and, through your own negligence, you are not present. You have thus violated a direct or implied promise. I see not how any one can do this habitually, who has any just sense of the sacredness of a promise. I know a want of punctuality is often accounted



a mere trifle. You will see it, in a greater or less degree, in a majority of your associates. Some men, notorious for it, are appropriately styled, in common parlance, "afternoon-men." You will find many such at the Academy and in College. At prayers, at religious meetings, at church, at meetings for business, they are almost always a little too late. Business, secular or religious, in which they are concerned, must either be delayed, and thus the time of others be wasted; or else it must be interrupted, when in progress, by their coming in at a late hour. Be not an "afternoon-man." Let all who know you, feel that they can rely on any engagement which you make. You will thus ensure their confidence, prevent the waste of time, and accomplish far more than you could otherwise do. Whatever you have to do at a particular hour—whether it be to attend a recitation, a devotional exercise, a religious meeting, or to perform a duty of any other kind, be in the appointed place at the appointed time. In a literary institution, where there are many exercises, all arranged in a systematic way, and one often following another in close succession, you cannot fail, by a habitual want of punctuality, often to put your-

self and others to great inconvenience. And on the habit of strict punctuality, your future usefulness will very much depend. To a minister of the gospel, whose time is very precious, and in whom all should be able to repose the most entire confidence—whose example, moreover, has a powerful influence on the character of those around him—this habit is exceedingly important. Again, then, I say, let it be your daily care, to be punctual in all your engagements.

6. Be **ECONOMICAL IN ALL YOUR EXPENDITURES.** You ought always to regard this as a duty, whatever your pecuniary circumstances may be. If you have more money than you need, there are innumerable objects of charity. "Ye have the poor always with you;" and the cause of Christ, at the present day, makes peculiarly large and pressing demands on the benevolence of his followers. When you are tempted to unnecessary expenditures, think how much good your money might do, if thrown into the treasury of the Lord. Never, perhaps, was money worth so much, as a means of promoting the cause of Christ, as at the present day. For the sake of economy, as well as for other reasons,

avoid every thing which could justly be called extravagance in dress. Your apparel should be decent, such as becomes your circumstances in life ; but neither finical, nor immoderately expensive. Let it be such, that a stranger whom you should meet, would not be very likely to remember what it was ; that is, let it neither be so strikingly mean, nor so obviously extravagant, as to make a strong impression on his mind. A more definite rule than this familiar one, can hardly be given. Good sense and Christian feeling must guide you in this matter.

But while you aim at economy in all your expenditures, go not to the extreme of a niggardly spirit, in your dealings with others. Be always ready to bear your part of every expense, which may properly devolve on you in your connection with your fellow students. And I advise you never to deprive yourself of any important facilities for the prosecution of your studies, to save expense. If you really need a particular book, for instance, get it, if you can, whatever it may cost. You are now laying the foundation of your future usefulness. What your influence shall be for nearly half a century, should you live to the common age of man, depends very

much on your success in your course of study. It would be a miserable kind of economy, then, which, for the sake of saving a few dollars, should deprive you of any important means of intellectual improvement. "I paint for immortality," said an ancient artist. How unwise would he have been, if, to save a little expense, he had used so wretched a pencil, as to make an ill-looking daub instead of a master-piece.

7. I have already made remarks at considerable length, on the subject of reading. Most of those remarks had respect to intellectual improvement, though some of them are applicable to any kind of reading. I wish, in this connection, to make a few suggestions with special reference to RELIGIOUS READING.

(1.) Endeavor to be constantly increasing in *religious knowledge*. Say not, I expect to study theology by and by, and need not meddle with religious doctrines now. Religious knowledge is not a merely professional thing. The practice of religion is not, like the practice of law or of medicine, confined to a few. It is the proper business of all. And, of course, the great principles by which that practice should be regulated, all ought, in some measure, to under-

stand. These principles are contained in the doctrines of the Bible. Its precepts do but give the fundamental principles of religion, which the doctrines present, a practical form. Without some knowledge of the doctrines of religion, its precepts will neither be well understood, nor deeply felt. Now as the practice of religion belongs to every stage of life, and to all possible circumstances, the doctrines of the Bible cannot be too early or too thoroughly studied, in just the way in which they are presented in the Bible—in connection with the precepts, which are founded upon them. In other words, you wish, now and always, to know what God requires of you. To know this, you must understand, in some measure, his character, and the relations you sustain to his government. To understand these things, you must understand the doctrines of the Bible. Further, if you become familiar with all the fundamental doctrines of religion before you enter a theological seminary, you will be much better prepared for your course of study there, than if you should commence it in almost utter ignorance of every thing beyond the mere rudiments of religious truth. I would by no means advise you to enter very ex-

tensively into the study of theology. For this you have not time. But you may do, you ought to do something at this, even during your course of academical study. I would advise you to make it a prominent object in your course of religious reading, to increase your knowledge of the doctrines of the Bible. The Bible is, of course, the best of all books for this purpose, and judicious commentaries are next in value. Doddridge, Scott, and Henry, will render you important aid in ascertaining the meaning of the Scriptures. It would be well, if circumstances permit, to have one of these authors in your possession. But remember in reading commentaries, as well as all other uninspired books, to *think for yourself*.

(2.) Read a little, every day, in some *book of a highly devotional cast*. I refer now to uninspired books. The Bible, that best of all devotional books, I take it for granted, you daily read. And I would advise you to read a little daily in some such book as the *Saints' Rest*, *Doddridge's Rise and Progress*, *Flavel on Keeping the Heart*, and the *Imitation of Christ*, by Thomas à Kempis. I would that the last mentioned work were in the library of every

pious student in Christendom. It is an admirable thing. I can think of hardly any uninspired book so well calculated to promote devotional feeling as this. The translation by Payne is recommended no less by the elegant dress he has given to the thoughts of the author, than by the spirit of exalted piety which they breathe.— Let me remind you, in this connection, that your usefulness in your course of study, and in the gospel ministry, will depend more on the possession of a highly devotional spirit, than on any thing else. Fail not, then, to employ that very efficient means of promoting such a spirit, a judicious course of devotional reading.

(3.) Include in your course of religious reading, some of the best *biographical works*. Read, as you can find leisure for it, the lives of Brainerd, Martyn, Mills, Buchanan, Parsons, Fiske, Payson, and other eminent servants of Christ. As you fix your eye on their bright example, you will be likely to catch their heavenly spirit; your soul, if indeed there be spiritual life in it, will burn with intense desire to walk in their footsteps—aye, to be like the Blessed One, of whom they were the humble followers.

8. Be not PUFFED UP WITH YOUR ATTAIN-

MENTS. How disgusting is that vain-glorious spirit which young students frequently exhibit. They have read a little Latin, or have fairly mastered the Greek alphabet, or have seen their names, for the first time, in a college catalogue ; and they seem to fancy themselves the foremost men in the world. What airs will a young man sometimes assume, when he first becomes a collegian. And when he reaches the dignified rank of a sophomore, how does his whole carriage denote the still higher estimate he forms of himself. You look on such things with utter disgust, when you see them in others. Be it your care, that others never behold them in you. You ought to regard yourself as a mere child in knowledge now. And whatever attainments you may make, you will still have reason to feel, that you know but little. Said Sir Isaac Newton, not long before his death, " I do not know what I may appear to the world ; but to myself I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the sea shore, diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or prettier shell than ordinary, while the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me." If you are ever inclined to be proud of your attainments, cast

your eye over the vast field of knowledge, on the very borders of which you have but just gained a footing. Think over how small a portion of that field you will ever be able to pass; and learn not to think of yourself more highly than you ought. Remember, also, that you have nothing which you have not received of God; and that pride is hateful in his sight. Think, too, of the example of him, who, though he possessed "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," was yet "meek and lowly in heart."

9. Aim to BE COURTEOUS in all your social intercourse. To be a gentleman, in the best sense of the term, is far from being inconsistent with Christian character. Indeed, it is your duty, as a Christian, to aim at this. True politeness has been well said to be a delicate perception of the feelings of those around us, and a habitual regard for those feelings. It is, then, little more than a practical development, in social intercourse, of that spirit of kindness which the Bible enjoins. Nor is the Bible wanting in examples of true politeness. What an exquisite specimen of this, did the patriarch Abraham give, as he bowed himself before the children of Heth, and communed with them about the pur-

chase of the cave of Machpelah. It should be recollected, however, that many of the forms of social intercourse are merely conventional matters, and must be learned by intercourse with society. To these forms, it must be acknowledged, many good men are too much inclined to be inattentive. This might be justly deemed a small matter, if it had no connection with personal influence. But such a connection it unquestionably has. Boorish habits in social intercourse, will greatly diminish the influence of any man. Determine to divest yourself of all such habits—to be, in the best sense of the word, a gentleman. Let it be really the desire of your heart, to make all around you happy. And be observant of the customs of society, and of the habits of those men, who are distinguished for suavity of manners. Be not a servile imitator; but be always ready to learn from any model of excellence in manners, which may meet your eye, how to correct your own faults, and supply your own deficiencies.

10. In close connection with what I have just said, let me caution you against allowing yourself in any such habits of social intercourse, as **TO LOSE THE RESPECT OF YOUR ASSOCIATES.** If

they do not respect, they will hardly love you, and you will have little influence over them. You may lose their respect by being too much in their company ; and, especially, by too great *familiarity* with them. I would, by no means, encourage a cold repulsive reserve, in your intercourse with your acquaintances. To a certain extent, you ought to be familiar with them. But you cannot carry this beyond a certain point, without losing their respect. How far you may safely carry it, your own good sense must determine.—There is one practice quite prevalent among students, which, though it may seem to you a trivial thing, is, I think, altogether inconsistent with that degree of respect for each other which they ought carefully to cherish. I allude to the use of nicknames—not, as the original sense of the word implies, in an opprobrious, but rather in a familiar way—and to the abbreviation of proper names. In my own class in college, several were often called by the first syllable of their surnames ; and the name of one, I well recollect, was, by one of his intimates at least, translated into Latin, by a novel and ludicrous composition of two simple words. Avoid every thing of this kind. It is perfectly proper for

mere boys—and not improper for young men, when in the habit of intimate and friendly intercourse—to call each other by their Christian names. But further than this, even intimate friends ought not, I think, to go.

11. On the subject of VISITING, I have a few suggestions to make.

(1.) Guard against *spending too much time in visiting the rooms of your fellow students*. To this, young men who love society, are very liable. Your business is chiefly at your own room. By diligence in study, and communion with God, make this a happy place. Let your maxim be,

“Wisdom and pleasure dwell at home.”

Students who spend a large portion of their time in gadding about from room to room, cannot make much progress in study.

(2.) Do not visit your fellow students at *improper hours*. It is improper to visit them, unless it is indispensably necessary, during study hours, or when you know them to be specially engaged. If you happen to call at the room of a fellow student, and have reason to believe that he would prefer not to receive company then, always retire.

(3.) Be careful never to protract a visit at a student's room so as to *interfere with any of his engagements*. Indeed, visits among students, should almost always be short. It is seldom consistent with their various engagements, either to give or receive long visits.

(4.) *Spend but little time in visiting the people of the neighborhood*. The little time you can spend in visiting, during term-time, ought to be chiefly devoted to your fellow students. Let visits of other kinds be, in general, reserved for your vacations. The student who is in the habit of making frequent calls on families in the neighborhood of the institution to which he belongs, and often going out to evening parties, cannot fail to be a loser in respect to intellectual improvement.

12. Be careful to maintain a **STRICT PROPRIETY OF DEPARTMENT AT YOUR BOARDING-HOUSE**. The reputation of a student is affected more by the testimony of the family in which he boards, than some thoughtless young men are willing to believe. Those who have intimate intercourse with him every day, will be very likely, men in general think with good reason, to know what he is; and if they speak well of him, their tes-

timony has much weight. Besides, your boarding-house is one of those places where you will be peculiarly liable to be off your guard, especially if you feel yourself very much at home there. Look well, then, to all your intercourse with the family in which you board. Be punctual at your meals. Give them no unnecessary trouble in any respect. Be exceedingly cautious about finding fault with your food. Students are very apt to do this, when they might be much better employed. If your food is really not of a wholesome and comfortable kind, say as little about it as possible. And if you cannot obtain redress by mildly stating your grievances to the master or mistress of the family, take the first opportunity quietly to change your boarding-place. And be careful to do it in the way least calculated to wound the feelings, or injure the reputation of the family you leave. But I advise you to take no such step, unless there are strong reasons for it. You cannot expect, in any boarding-house, always to find every thing just as you would like to have it. Some little inconveniences and vexations you must expect occasionally to meet, in every situation. It is really inconsistent with that manliness of char-

acter at which every student ought to aim—to say nothing of Christian principle—to be always fretting at every trifling inconvenience, and acting as if the main concern of life were to gratify the palate. I would make it as a general remark, in regard to your boarding-house, be not given to change. There are some advantages in continuing long in one place. It becomes at length a kind of home. And mutual attachments are thus formed, which are very pleasant, not to say profitable.—Allow me to add a word of advice in regard to your deportment at meals. Avoid every thing like coarseness of manners there. Be a gentleman at table as well as in every other situation.

13. I would make a few suggestions in regard to your ROOM-MATE. You ought to room with a Christian. In no case should I be willing to make an exception to this rule, save that of a student younger than yourself, who would be, in a great measure, under your influence. In your intercourse with your room-mate, be always ready in every way to promote his comfort and improvement; and careful to avoid every thing which would wound his feelings, or injure him in any respect. You may sometimes have occa-

sion to exercise patience, and forbearance, and forgiveness, in your intercourse with him. See to it, if need be, that in all these virtues you abound. You know enough of human nature to understand, that whenever two or more persons are in the habit of intimate intercourse, they need to watch very carefully over their feelings towards each other. You will, I trust, esteem it a privilege, to unite with your roommate in prayer, morning and evening. I would recommend it as an excellent expedient to diversify your devotional exercises, and render them more intensely interesting to you, to assign to each day in the week, some special subject of social prayer. On Monday, for example, you might pray particularly for the benevolent enterprises of the day; on Tuesday, for your absent friends; on Wednesday, for your fellow students; on Thursday, for the officers of the institution to which you belong; on Friday, for the churches of the land; on Saturday, for ministers of the gospel; on Sabbath day, for Sabbath schools; or you might adopt any other plan which should seem best to you.—It would be highly advantageous to yourself and your roommate, to enter into a mutual agreement, to point

out, in a friendly way, each other's faults. This agreement should extend to faults of every kind, those which pertain both to intellectual and moral character.

14. MAKE CHRISTIANS ONLY YOUR BOSOM FRIENDS. You will, I think, be very willing to comply with this advice, if your mind is thoroughly imbued with the spirit which led the Psalmist to say, "I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts." If your bosom friends are irreligious, they will be very likely to prove a snare to you. You can have little sympathy with them, except on worldly subjects; and strong sympathy with worldly men, in regard to their favorite objects of pursuit, is very likely to seduce the heart from God.

15. SCRUPULOUSLY REGARD ALL THE LAWS OF THE INSTITUTION TO WHICH YOU BELONG. Do not allow yourself even in what may seem trifling deviations from them. It is your duty to obey them all. In becoming a member of the institution, you virtually promised so to do. And God will not hold you guiltless, if you disregard that promise.

16. MAINTAIN THE UTMOST PROPRIETY OF DEPARTMENT TOWARDS YOUR INSTRUCTORS.

Render a prompt and cheerful obedience to all their requisitions. Treat them in an affectionate and respectful manner. You know not how heavy is the burden of care, and toil, and responsibility which rests upon them. Do what you can to alleviate that burden. Let them see, that the solicitude they feel, and the efforts they make in your behalf, are repaid by feelings of filial regard, and a corresponding deportment. No matter if you are unable to see sufficient reasons for some of their measures and requisitions. Such reasons they may nevertheless have. And be that as it may, the path of your duty is, promptly and fully to submit to their authority. There is, in some students, a disposition to find fault with their instructors, which deserves the severest reprehension. If some young men who profess to be Christians, would spend half the time in prayer for their instructors, which they occupy with bitter complainings about them, it is probable that both instructors and pupils would become better men. Do not understand me to say, however, that you ought so to give up the direction of your mind to your instructors as not to think for yourself. This you ought not to do. But I would urge you,

while you think for yourself, to cherish an affectionate and obedient spirit towards your instructors.

17. Take special pains, through your whole course of study, to DO GOOD TO THE YOUNGER MEMBERS OF THE INSTITUTION TO WHICH YOU BELONG. You have, doubtless, some fellow students at the academy, and will probably have some class-mates at college, who are very young, considerably younger than yourself. Students of this description, are peculiarly liable to be led into improper courses. They are in danger from the thoughtlessness and inexperience of mere boyhood, combined with the native depravity of the heart. And in almost every literary institution, there are some students—men of talents, it may be, and of fascinating manners, but, in moral character, “fellows of the baser sort”—who seem, with a kind of fiendish spirit, to delight in leading others into their own unhallowed ways. To a man of such a character, a mere boy, unskilled in the ways of the world, and unsuspecting of danger, is an easy prey. O how many promising lads—the hope of their parents and instructors—have been ruined by the wiles of such men! Now, pious students

may do much—far more than they usually do—to save young students from the dangers which cluster around them, and to lead them to the formation of good moral and intellectual habits. Take pains to gain the confidence of those younger members of the institution to which you belong, to whom, in the providence of God, you may have peculiarly favorable opportunities of access. The best way to do this, is to feel and manifest affection for them. Seize every opportunity to evince your regard for them by offices of kindness. Sometimes invite them to your room; sometimes visit them. Occasionally ask them to walk with you. Interest yourself in their studies. And, in other ways, such as good sense will suggest to you, endeavor to gain their confidence. When this object is attained, make the most of your influence over them. The course I have marked out, will cost you some effort. But if God should, in any measure, bless your labors of love—if you should succeed in saving but one fellow student from ruin, and leading him, in the bloom of boyhood, to the foot of the cross, and thus, perhaps, raising up a herald of salvation—surely your heart would rejoice, and you would feel that your labors

had been richly rewarded. And though efforts of the kind I have recommended, should fail to accomplish all you desire, be assured, they will not be lost.—At the academy, there are peculiar facilities for doing good in this way. The mere circumstance of seniority in age, is much more regarded than at college. But even at college, you may hope, by judicious and persevering efforts, to be the instrument of great good to some, at least, of the younger class of your fellow students.

18. With one other topic I shall close this letter. Students sometimes feel in doubt about their duty in respect to **ATTENDING RELIGIOUS MEETINGS, AND MAKING OTHER EFFORTS TO PROMOTE THE CAUSE OF CHRIST, IN THE VICINITY** of the institution to which they belong. In relation to this subject, I hesitate not to say, that most of your direct efforts to promote the salvation of souls, should be confined to the institution of which you are a member. There such efforts are greatly needed. There Providence has cast your lot, and opened before you an important and promising field of usefulness—a field in which you can surely find enough to do—more, indeed, than you can possibly accom-

plish. Still, you will probably not do the less to save the souls of your fellow students, for making some exertion to promote the spiritual good of the people around you. There could be no objection, I think, should circumstances seem to favor it, to your attending a weekly religious meeting in some neighborhood not far from your boarding-house. Indeed, I deem it very desirable, that you should early accustom yourself to speak and pray in religious meetings. To speak often in such meetings, if you do it, *as you always should*, with thorough preparation, is, in my view, not only an efficient way of doing good at present, but an important means of fitting you for future usefulness. It is idle to think of excelling in any kind of public speaking, without a long course of training for it. And as speaking in public on religious subjects, is to be the main business of your life, you can hardly begin too early to exercise yourself in this way. In respect to religious visiting among the people around you, my advice is, that you do but little of it in term-time. My reasons for this advice you will easily gather from what I have already said.

LETTER VII.

COLLEGE LIFE.

Caution against too great haste to enter college—Day of fasting and prayer before entering college—Ambition—Seeking popularity—Discountenancing insubordination and immorality—College dissensions—Prejudice against hard students—Teaching school during the college course—Vacations.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,—The lapse of time will soon bring you to the scenes of college life. Most of the counsels I have already given you, are applicable as well to those scenes, as to your present stage of study. But I am unwilling to close this series of letters, without making a few suggestions with special reference to your college course.

1. BE NOT IN TOO GREAT HASTE TO ENTER COLLEGE. Adopt not the erroneous notion, that your academial course is of little consequence,

and the sooner you finish it the better. Such a notion many students seem to entertain. They hurry onward as if their only object was just to get into college. They seem to regard an academial course, as a kind of ceremonial, necessary, indeed, as an arbitrary prerequisite to college membership, but of little use in any other respect. And, of course, they feel that the sooner it is despatched, the better. Now such views are altogether wrong. Let it be your object, in your present stage of study, to lay a deep and broad foundation for an education. And be unwilling to enter college, till you have done this. You ought not to leave the academy, till you can readily construe every sentence, and promptly and accurately parse every word, in all the books which come within the prescribed course of preparation for college. And even more than this, it is desirable that you should do. To read two or three volumes of Latin and Greek at the academy, besides those which are required, would prepare you to prosecute your college studies to far greater advantage than you otherwise could. These volumes, however, should not be the same that are studied in college. Deem it not a waste of time to spend a year more at the academy than would be absolutely

necessary to ensure your admission to college, if you cannot else make thorough work of your preparatory studies. If you look forward to professional life—your usefulness in the ministry will depend far more on your preparation for it, than on the number of years you spend in it. Be not in too great haste, then, to complete your academi- cal course, so as to enter the sooner on the duties of professional life.

2. I would advise you to **SPEND A DAY, BEFORE YOU ENTER COLLEGE, IN FASTING AND PRAYER, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO COLLEGE LIFE.** Enter into a strict examination of your academi- cal course. Inquire wherein you have gone astray from the path of duty, and how you may in future amend your ways.

“’Tis greatly wise to talk with our past hours,
And ask them what report they bore to heaven,
And how they might have borne more welcome news.”

And this is never more proper, than when you are making a transition from one stage of study to another. In view of the duties and dangers of college life, look up for help to Him, who alone can make you strong for every duty, and shield you from every danger.

3. Guard against the temptations to **AMBITION**

which college life presents. Temptations of this kind you have to encounter in your present stage of study; but in college they will greatly multiply, and assume more attractive forms. They will steal upon your heart at every step of your college course. In intercourse with your fellow students, and even with your instructors; in study, in recitation, in public declamation, in exhibitions, and commencement performances; they will cast a spell over your spirit, which nothing but the grace of God can enable you to resist. I hardly need undertake to prove, that emulation is an unholy passion. Your own experience may have taught you already—and if not, it probably will ere long—that the spirit of literary ambition, and the benevolence of the gospel, are at war with each other. I use the terms emulation and ambition synonymously—meaning by both the spirit of rivalry—the simple desire to outstrip others. Whenever you desire to bear away the palm of literary distinction from a fellow student, you do so prefer your own interest to his, as to violate the second great precept of the law, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” In the train of emulation follow pride, envy, hatred, and other unhallowed pas-

sions, which often break out in evil speaking and strife. My own impression is, that hardly any thing has had so pernicious an influence on the religious character of pious members of college, as the spirit of ambition. Nothing, perhaps, has done so much to prevent the influence of divine truth on the impenitent in college, and to produce every kind of moral evil there. Let me say to you, then,

——“ I charge thee, fling away ambition.”

If you give it a place in your heart, it will gnaw, like a worm, at the root of your piety. It will wither every holy affection. It will make your closet a gloomy place. It will make every religious duty a burden. And if it be allowed to prevail in your heart during your college course, it will be very likely to go with you to the theological seminary, and even into the holy ministry. Guard, then, against it, as you would enjoy peace of mind yourself, and do good to others. Whenever you detect it in your heart, strive to eradicate it. And look up to God for help. I would advise you to make any fellow student towards whom you are in peculiar danger of feeling a spirit of rivalry, a subject of prayer. Such

a spirit will be very likely to die away, as you endeavor to pour out your heart in his behalf at the throne of grace. And you will do well to say but little about college distinctions, and the comparative scholarship of students. The more you converse about these things, the greater is the danger, that your mind will be inflamed with ambition.

4. There is, in some students, a foolish and pernicious propensity to SEEK POPULARITY IN COLLEGE, which I would caution you to avoid. Many a young man has been willing to make great sacrifices—to sacrifice even his conscience—for the sake of being called a “fine fellow,” by his college companions. Now what is commonly called popularity in college, is a very worthless thing. It is often a “mushroom popularity,”—“gained without merit, and lost without a crime.” No where, perhaps, is popular favor more mutable than in college. Go not out of your way, then, to seek it. If you should not thus defeat your own object, you would, at least, be likely to fall into a criminal worldliness of spirit. Go directly forward in the path of duty. Adhere to the strictest principles of integrity, and treat all your fellow students in

a kind and courteous way. By pursuing this course, you will "keep a conscience void of offence," and will be likely, at length, to gain the esteem of all whose good opinion is of much value.

5. SET YOUR FACE DECIDEDLY AGAINST EVERY KIND OF INSUBORDINATION AND IMMORALITY IN COLLEGE. Many professors of religion fail to do this. Said a friend of mine, who became a Christian during the latter part of his college course—"Christians in college do not set their faces decidedly against immorality—they rather wink at it. In a thousand ways do the profligate receive indirect encouragement, even from Christians. I know, that during the two first years of my college life, I and my associates used frequently to remark, that we could discern no difference between ourselves and 'theologians,' except that they went to meetings now and then. And, at that time, I would as willingly relate to a Christian my participation in a scene of dissipation, as to any other one; for I never met reproof, and never was liable to exposure."—Let no fear of losing your popularity, or of being called a "faculty-man," or subjected to any other kind of reproach, prevent you from dis-

countenancing every kind of insubordination and immorality. Sustain the Faculty in all their efforts to enforce the college laws. Let the profligate understand, that vice cannot stalk fearlessly abroad beneath your eye. If you fail to pursue this course, the vicious may smile on you, but they will not really respect you. How can you take any other course, without disregarding the best interests of your fellow students, the welfare of the institution to which you belong, your obligation to your instructors, and what is of still greater moment, your duty to your God?

6. Let me give you a few hints in regard to CLASS DISPUTES, AND OTHER COLLEGE FEUDS. In all such affairs, endeavor to be a peacemaker. Strive to bring about a reconciliation between contending parties. In respect to your own concern in college quarrels, I would say, bear in mind the excellent maxim, "leave off contention before it be meddled with." I would not advise you, however, to shrink from taking a decided stand, so far, at least, as to give your vote, on any question which may come before your class, or the body of the students; especially if it be a question involving any impor-

tant principles. But let me urge you to watch carefully over your own spirit, in all college discussions in which you have any concern. Avoid, as far as possible, every thing calculated to exasperate those who differ from you. Aim not to carry a point, but to do what is right. See to it, that you neither do nor say any thing in the least degree inconsistent with Christian character. Take no step, in any party matter, on which you cannot ask the blessing of God. And when you are engaged in any such matter, to keep your heart right, be much in secret prayer.

7. Utterly disregard the PREJUDICE AGAINST HARD STUDENTS, which prevails among a certain class in college. "He is always digging," or "he is altogether a made man," or "he is ignorant of every thing but Greek roots," or "he is inordinately ambitious," or something else by way of disparagement, is often said of some very diligent student, by those who love not to study hard themselves, and who cannot endure such as do. Heed not such remarks. Resolve to be a hard student, and leave carping idlers to vent their spleen as they can.

8. Many students spend some time during their college course in TEACHING SCHOOL. I

advise you not to spend much time in this way. To teach school a few months, during your college course, will, I doubt not, be an advantage to you. It will increase your knowledge of human nature, and promote manliness and decision of character. But more than two or three months, you ought not, I think, to spend in this way, while a member of college, unless your pecuniary circumstances should render it indispensably necessary. And when you engage in teaching, let it be, if circumstances permit, for a vacation only. At all events, encroach as little as possible on term-time.

9. As your COLLEGE VACATIONS will be of considerable length—longer than those in your present stage of study—it will be to you an important inquiry, How can I spend them in the most profitable manner? Make it a main object to spend them in such a way as to relax your mind, and reinvigorate your physical system. Do not pursue your ordinary studies during your vacations. This would not be consistent with the preservation of your health. You would, in the end, be every way a loser by it. You may, without detriment to your health, and with great intellectual profit, spend a part of each vacation

in reading. Finally, I would advise you to keep in view, during every vacation, the great object of doing good. You may, without imposing severe labors on yourself, do much, during each recess from study, to promote the cause of Christ. Keep this object distinctly in view, during your vacations; and you will be likely to avoid the error of those who seem to feel, that a season of mental relaxation, is a time for mere self-indulgence.

In coming, now, to the close of this series of letters, I would commend what I have written to your attentive consideration, and to the blessing of Almighty God. Remember, my dear young friend, that the suggestions I have made will be of little service to you, unless you make a practical use of them. That you may do this, so far as they are really judicious, is my earnest prayer. And God grant, that your path may be that of the just, which is "as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."