

BACCALAUREATE DISCOURSE

TO THE

GRADUATING CLASS

OF THE

Indiana State University,

DELIVERED

ON THE SABBATH PRECEDING THE COMMENCEMENT, JULY 10, 1859.

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BY T. A. WYLIE,

Acting President.

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INDIANAPOLIS:

INDIANAPOLIS JOURNAL COMPANY, PRINTERS.

1859.

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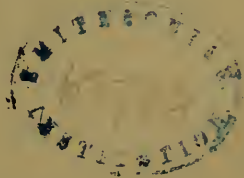
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## CORRESPONDENCE.

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INDIANA UNIVERSITY, }  
JULY 15TH, 1859. }

PROF. T. A. WYLIE:

DEAR SIR—We earnestly request for publication, a copy of the Baccalaureate Sermon, delivered by you to the Graduating Class, on last Sabbath.

Very truly,

CHAS. M. CAMPBELL, }  
THOS. DIGGS THARP, } Members of  
JOHN MULLANY, } the Class.

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INDIANA UNIVERSITY, }  
JULY 20TH, 1859. }

GENTLEMEN:—I have been urged by the solicitation of several highly respected friends and citizens to comply with the request you have made for the publication of the Baccalaureate Discourse, delivered the Sabbath before last. The manuscript is at your disposal.

Very truly yours,

T. A. WYLIE.

Messrs. Campbell, Tharp and Mullany.

## BACCALAUREATE DISCOURSE.



YOUNG GENTLEMEN:—I appear before you in a position, not of my own seeking, in a place which I had hoped would have been filled by one more used, and therefore more competent for the discharge of such duties as this than I am; but in this I have been disappointed. And though, doubtless, there are many who might have been prevailed upon to relieve me of this task, both more able and willing, I have long since come to the conclusion, without however always acting upon it, that it is always best for every one in the situation in which he is placed, to endeavor, to the best of his ability, to perform all the work belonging to it, unless some how or other providentially incapacitated. We think this, in the main, a good rule for young men entering upon life to follow, qualified, of course by circumstances. Cases often occur when it would be highly proper to entrust to others the performance of that work which has been, in the course of events, thrown in our path. Thus, a physician, in the course of his practice, may have a surgical case, the life of the patient may be at stake, he knows some brother physician, of more experience and greater manual dexterity, who can perform the operation more skilfully than he; he may regret his own want of skill, but if he is the right kind of a man, he will not suffer his pride to interfere with the best interests of the patient. But we have not here a matter of life and death, it is simply to present to you who are now about to leave these halls, a few words of advice and encouragement, in accordance with the duties of the office, and the custom of the institution.

With these preliminary remarks, let me direct your attention to an excellent piece of advice, given by the Apostle Paul in the fifteenth and sixteenth verses of the fifth chapter of his epistle to the Ephesians.

*“See that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.”*

These words suit our times as well as they did the times in which they were written by the inspired author of the epistle. We, as well as Paul, can say, we live in an evil world, our days are evil, we have to make our way through the world, in which difficulties and dangers meet us on every hand, we would need to have our eyes, those watchful sentinels, about us, and to walk (ἀκριβῶς) *with precision, in an orderly manner*, taking care as to where we step, and how we step, exercising all the sense we have, not carelessly or heedlessly, as the foolish child or blundering fool, but *redeeming the time*, making amends for any former delinquencies and follies, or perhaps, as the expression, (τὸν καιρὸν ἐξαγοραζόμενοι,) has been otherwise rendered, *forestalling the opportunity*, exercising prudence, anticipating the time, and thus, as forestallers do, making the most profit of it, and preparing ourselves for emergencies as they may arise.

We might consider here the duty enjoined, and the manner in which it should be done, viz.: *circumspectly, wisely, profitably*, and in the next place, to the reason given showing the necessity for this care, *because our days are evil*. But we prefer to direct your attention rather to that which is implied, than to that which is directly expressed. If our days are evil, it is because of the depravity of our natures, and the difficulties and dangers which are continually presenting themselves. We will, then, in the first place, mention *some of these hardships and perils of life in these evil days in which we live*; and, in the second place, speak of *the preparation necessary for meeting them, and the safeguards we may have at command*. Not only does the Bible, but the experience of men in all ages, and of all races, and of all conditions in life, teach that a life of ease and unalloyed happiness is not to be expected

in this world—a world that lieth in wickedness\*—a world that hateth the followers of Jesus†—a world whose wisdom is foolishness with God.‡ The inspired writer tells us that, man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards.|| These troubles, and trials, and vexations, in life are partly dependent on external circumstances, and partly on the individual; they depend on the object to be attained, and the mental constitution of him who strives to attain. Where one man finds a mountain, another finds only a mole-hill. Impossibilities to some, are trifles light as air to others.

There are dangers and hardships in the way, not only of him who aims to achieve great things, and of him who pursues the course for which nature seems specially to have designed him; but also in the way of him who tries to take the world easy, and attempts to let himself glide smoothly down the stream of time. Those who aim at great things, may expect, of course, to encounter the greatest difficulties. There are, it is true, some in the world, often indeed the objects of our envy, who blessed with affluence, and, one would think, all that their hearts could desire, who do not seem to be in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like other men,§ who to all appearance pass easily through life. Let us suppose that their enjoyment of the present life is a reality, and not a mere appearance; may it not be the case that, like Dives in the parable, they enjoy their good things in the present, while misery awaits them in the future.

Suppose a laudable desire to excel excites a youth; that he covets earnestly the best gifts the world has to give. He makes his arrangements to possess himself of the glittering prize, and determines to fight his way manfully through. Every eminent politician, every distinguished general, can tell of the troubles and vexations their high positions have cost them. But there may, after all, be a failure, and the prize may not be won. It may not be from want of talents, or energy, or zeal, but from—we know not what. David tells

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\* 1 John v. 19. † John xv. 18. ‡ 1 Cor. iii. 19. || Job v. 5. § Ps. lxxiii. 5.

us that, "Promotion cometh neither from the east nor the west, nor from the south; but God is Judge, He putteth down one and setteth up another."\* And further, suppose that this prize sought after, merely for the sake of worldly fame and glory, has been attained, does it pay for the labor and trouble? Those who are best able, from their own personal experience, to answer, have answered—no! This is very much like spending one's money for that which satisfieth not. And with respect to those who have failed, they, perhaps, can, in their old age, look back on their past toils, with some complacency, and rejoice perhaps that they have come safely through them, but if this is all their reward, it is something, it is true, but not much. We have always thought, that the stork who extracted the bone from the wolf's throat, without being injured, was very poorly paid in the happiness it felt in having made so narrow an escape. Here is an interesting fact that we may mention in this connection, many of the greatest men, the truly great men, the world has ever seen, seemed to have never thought of their greatness. Shakspeare appears never to have thought that he was writing for posterity and the world. So with Newton; his friends seem to have taken a great deal more trouble than he did himself to present to the world his great and important discoveries. So with Washington; the great name that he has was not sought for by him, but it was the consequence of faithfulness, and the ability with which he acted in all the responsible positions in which he had been placed, by the importunity of his countrymen. The same may be said of Paul. Self and glory, glory among men, were never thought of by him; and of the prophet Jeremiah, when God informed him that he was ordained to be a prophet, he excused himself, saying: "Ah, LORD God! behold, I cannot speak, for I am a child."† So also with Moses, who refused, when grown up, to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, but chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasure of sin for a

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\* Psalm lxxv. 6. † Jer. i. 6.

season. With what reluctance, not that he despised the great honor that was placed before him, did he accept the commission; "And Moses said unto God, who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt."\* "O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore nor since then hast spoken to thy servant: But I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue."† Preëminence among men, was never thought of by these worthies; nor does ambition appear to have been any stimulus to their exertions. When, on the other hand, we are told that, "Once on a time the trees went forth to anoint a king over them, and they said to the olive tree, Reign thou over us; But the olive tree said to them, Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honor God and man, and go and be promoted over the trees? And the trees said to the fig tree, Come thou, and reign over us. But the fig tree said unto them, Should I forsake my sweetness and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees? Then said the trees to the vine, Come thou and reign over us, And the vine said to them, Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees? Then said all the trees to the bramble, Come thou, and reign over us, And the bramble said unto the trees, If in truth ye anoint me king, then come and put your trust in my shadow: and if not let fire come out of the bramble and devour the cedars of Lebanon."‡ We find no hesitation, no diffidence on the part of the worthless bramble or thistle as to undertaking this high honor, and there was no suspicion, on its part, of the utter worthlessness of its shadow. We may learn from all this that mere greatness and preëminence should not be the great object of our lives. As in making a journey, so in life. The traveler sets out, for some distant place, he may have a perilous journey before him, he may have, too, some business to transact by the way. If he is wise, he will not neglect his business for the sake of pleasure, he will not let the dangers of the road deter him, he must

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\* Exod. iii. 18. † Exod. iv. 10. ‡ Judges ix. 8.



go onward; but if he falls in with agreeable company which does not interfere with his duties, if he is commended by some, to whom he has been of service, if he finds some of the difficulties of the road less than he anticipated, he views these things as so much gain, as incidental blessings, while he looks for rest and the reward of his toil at his journey's end. Let us suppose then that it is your aim not to aspire after this worldly greatness, that you are not fired with that zeal which makes you desire "*monstrari digito et dicier hic est,*" to be pointed at as you are passing along, as a distinguished character, but wish simply to act your part well in that sphere in which God has placed you, you must still in these evil days meet with difficulties.

To act well one's part, is to do one's duty to himself, his family, his country, and his God, and this must always be a hard undertaking in a world that lieth in wickedness. The notoriously wicked, for Satan is a hard master, have many troubles and often suffer for their misdeeds, sometimes through their own excesses, and sometimes they are punished as criminals by their fellow men. We are generally inclined to think that this is all as it ought to be; they gather where they have strewed, they reap as they have sowed. But when one is made to suffer when conscious of doing no wrong, and conscious of endeavoring to benefit his fellow men, he will often be discouraged, and feel that he is undergoing toil and vexation to no purpose.

We will mention now, a little more particularly, some of these sources of trouble, and anxiety, which render it necessary for us to walk circumspectly.

*Many difficulties arise from the constitution of society.* There is a diversity among men, in natural endowments and in accidental circumstances, differences in pursuits, differences in tastes, in family connections, in language, and in religion, which have existed among men from the remotest antiquity, and which are the cause of the grouping together of men in different classes, forming, as it were, different circles more or less distinct, some larger and some smaller, intersecting each

other, resembling somewhat the intersecting circles formed on a still surface of water when the falling drops of rain first disturb it. In the days of Job there were the high and the low, the rich and the poor, the bond and the free; there were also then the same feelings of pride, and disposition to oppress, the same feelings of hatred and envy, and the same spirit of discontent, as we find in our own day. We find the same feelings and the same differences in rank, not only in those lands where kings rule, but also in republics, where all are born free and equal, and where the words liberty, fraternity, and equality, are in every mouth. There is a general feeling prevailing, particularly among those of the so called lower ranks, that such distinctions should not exist; but this is an error, they must exist, and will exist as long as the nature of man remains as it is. Society is a complicated machine, all parts are not equally conspicuous or important, but each part, in its proper place, is the very thing for the harmonious action of the whole. Sometimes, however, on an emergency, a wooden pin may be substituted for an iron bolt, but it does not answer as well. A fence rail has been made to take the place in a carriage of a disabled wheel, and the vehicle has reached its destination with this awkward substitute, but four fence rails could hardly take the place of the four wheels. Just so is it in society. We find that the Creator has endowed men with different talents, and has fitted them for filling different positions with advantage to themselves and benefit of the community. He bestows his gifts on no particular class, the fool is born in the palace, and the genius in the hovel, and where conventional law prevails, where a system of caste is established, the fool must reign, and manage the affairs of state, and the genius beg his bread. Thus the machinery of society is deranged, and the easy movement of the whole prevented. Christianity presents to us the proper constitution of society. A time is coming when it will unite all ranks and conditions in one brotherhood. "For," says Paul, "By one Spirit we are all baptised into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been all

made to drink into one Spirit.”\* Here is the unity. But he tells us immediately afterward that, “the body to which he compares this brotherhood, is not one member, but many, and that if they were all one member, he asks very pertinently, “where were the body?” The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee, nor again, the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body which seem to be more feeble are necessary. . . . . If one member suffers, all the members suffer with it, and if one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it.” Here we have presented to us, the diversity, here the sympathy, here the mutual coöperation, and the harmonious and healthful action of the whole, and all its parts. We have been thus particular in referring to the constitution of society, as we regard it, as, at present, organized, as a source of many difficulties and dangers.

We merely mention here, that there are difficulties which depend on the course of life you may pursue. Some pursuits have inherently in them much more difficulties than others. Thus the life of the soldier is generally a life of hardship. The life of a mariner is full of toil and trouble. Of still greater toil and trial is the life of the statesman. So, too, the lawyer, the physician, and the divine, each one could make a volume of the vexations incident to his profession. So, also, the farmer, and the tradesman, and the laborer, and the lounging. But as these hardships depend not only on the absolute difficulty of the labor to be performed, but also on the mental constitution of the agent, and sometimes the whole trouble is in this. We may pass on to the consideration of the *difficulties depending on the person.*

Before undertaking to carry a heavy burden, we ought to consider “*quid valeant humeri,*” what our shoulders are able to bear. Samson carried off the gates of Gaza, we presume with no great difficulty. It was one of the labors of Hercules to cleanse the Augean stables, which he did by turning the

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\* 1 Cor. xii. 13.

river Alpheus into them. It was a labor. It was done with hard work. It was however successfully accomplished. For another to have attempted it, it would have proved to have been an impossibility. Just so we may sometimes aim to perform a work far beyond our strength, and of course there will be difficulty in the way. It was an easy thing for the eagle to carry off the sheep, and for the sheep to carry off the crow attempting to rival the eagle; it was impossible for the crow to do the work of the eagle, though easy to make himself ridiculous by attempting it. So sometimes a youth, stimulated by the saying, that what one man can do another can; and, captivated by the glare that is thrown around those who have become famous, will aim to do that which belongs to the one who has prepared himself for the work by long years of patient labor, and has been blessed by his maker with talents of a high order, and will thus by leaving a sphere in which he might have excelled, place himself in a situation where he will find the barriers insurmountable. It is hard to show the truth of this by examples, for, as a general thing, those who have thus aspired, have left no trace and made no mark. The aërial castles, which still remain castles in the air, that some in the decline of life could tell us about, would illustrate this point, and the unread epics and the ponderous tomes in all departments of literature and science, which are sometimes exhumed in old libraries, are a more tangible evidence of labor expended in vain.

*Difficulties often arise, not from any want of talent, but from some peculiarity of disposition.*

Sometimes a disposition to be too censorious throws obstacles in the way of success and usefulness. Every one has his faults, "*nemo vitii sine nascitur.*" It is no hard matter for me or you to take up the character of any person with whom we are well acquainted, or who has been long before the public, and find and present prominently to view a great many faults, real faults, and often too, with little trouble we can so rub them up, and burnish them, that when presented to the view of others, they will be called glaring. Perhaps this may

be the reason why, in the political world, it often happens that one comparatively unknown to fame is preferred to another, who has been long before the public, and upon the whole has done well, but who has a biography, and whose faults and failings it is easy to bring to light and exaggerate. The finest work of art will not bear examination with a lens, nor will the best men we know, stand an examination under the microscope of censoriousness. The purest water from the fountain presents innumerable motes in it, when viewed in the sunbeam. This spirit of censoriousness will never gain the affections, it chills the warm emotions of the heart, and represses the kindlier feelings. It invites indeed all with whom we have anything to do to oppose us, and throw all the obstacles they can in our way. He must be a rare genius indeed who is able to surmount them, and a strange genius who would desire to encounter such difficulties as these. We must remember too, that with what measure we mete it will be measured to us again, and the operation of removing the beam from our eye, will be performed for us, with rather more roughness than scientific skill. We must not infer from what has just been said that our doctrine is, that sin should not be reprov'd, or that we must wait for our own perfection, before we raise up our voices against, or try to repress evil. What we condemn is, that disposition to search after the faults of others, bring to light their peccadilloes, and thus, by forgetting our own faults, to exalt ourselves by this unfair comparison with others. We find none of this censorious spirit in that perfect specimen of human nature, the man JESUS. He, it is true, did denounce with extreme severity the hypocritical Scribes and Pharisees, he had authority to do so, and he condemned them for their wicked acts, and the injury they were doing to the community; exposing and condemning at the same time their vain glorious spirit. But with respect to the poor and degraded, the publicans and sinners, in whom his omniscient eye could see so many blemishes, and faults and sins, with what kindness and consideration does he always address them, and do for them the favors that they sought.

We might mention also, bodily and mental indolence as putting imaginary mountains of difficulty in the way, which are often as hard to surmount as if they were real. "The slothful man saith, there is a lion without, I will be slain in the streets."\* "The way of the slothful man—the same wise man tells us—is as a hedge of thorns," that is, as there is no getting through a hedge of thorns without great pain and trouble, so the indolent find the way they have to walk difficult in the extreme.

We have been hitherto speaking of the hardships you may be called upon to encounter in life; these often imply and involve danger, but not always; a person may try to walk on a narrow edge, he may find it hard to do, but not dangerous. Let us then say a word on the dangers which frequently present themselves on the way that lies before us. We need hardly here refer to physical dangers, if we may so call them, serious enough indeed, by which life is put in jeopardy at every step, and against which no foresight can always guard. The pious and the impious, the wise man and the fool, are indiscriminately sunk to the bottom of the ocean with the foundering ship. The desolating pestilence spares neither sex nor age, neither high or low, or rich or poor. "All things come alike to all; there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked; to the good and to the clean and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not; as is the good, so is the sinner, and he that sweareth as he that feareth an oath."† But there are evils against which we may guard, and against which it is worth while, particularly for those about to enter into active life, to put themselves on their guard, as the ruined hopes and blasted prospects of thousands show, whose future was to them once as hopeful and cheering as yours is to you. Not more plainly do the bleaching bones of camels and of men, which the traveler through the desert sands meets with, tell him of the perils of his journey, than the ruined condition of many whose life was once full of hope,

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\* Prov. xxii. 13. † Eccl. ix. 2.

point out to us the perils of life's journey. Look at the myriads whom intemperance has ruined, who were once as able to resist the temptation as any of you. Look, too, at the ruin that the spirit of covetousness has brought on many a one, who seem to have thought that life consisted in the abundance of the things that they possessed. Look at the numberless temptations presented to men in power, to betray the confidence reposed in them, who through a spirit of extravagance or covetousness, appropriate to themselves the treasure with which they may be entrusted, or by false pretences make public funds their own. Well would it be for the community if the evil consisted only in the pecuniary loss it sustains, or if the evil consisted only in the loss of self-respect or character, or the utter ruin of the individual! But those who are set on high places are examples, their conduct is authority, and if the system of speculation can only be carried on successfully, that is, so as to have the appearance of being done according to law, a host of imitators will arise in every inferior grade of life. Even the robber will find an argument to justify himself, and will say, if these great men may with impunity rob a rich public treasury, why may not I appropriate to myself the contents of some rich man's purse. If, too, those who are set up to make laws, break them, or make the administration of justice a farce in the higher courts, what may we not expect in the lower.

Human nature is much alike wherever we find it. All men have their failings, their appetites and desires. The world is full of temptations to excessive indulgence--full of inducements to gratify ourselves altogether irrespective of the rights of others. The great tempter himself is always busy, operating on the weakness and depravity of human nature, seeking the ruin of all. There are dangers on every side against which we must guard, and for which we must prepare.

*Danger attends lofty aspirations.* Even those who are best prepared to scale the rugged mount of fame, are in continual peril. A brave heart, energy, and self-reliance are necessary for one who would scale these steep ascents. But more is

necessary than confidence and assurance. Of these two qualities the aspiring Phaëton had a superabundance. His young and inexperienced heart beat high, at the thought of the glory he would derive from driving the chariot of the sun for a single day. His father presented to him the great difficulty and danger of the undertaking, but all in vain. He held his parent to his rashly made promise. He made the attempt, and brought ruin on himself, and disaster to the world. He had the consolation, perhaps, in his dying hour arising from the reflection that he had failed in a mighty undertaking. Icarus, too, raising himself on wings, which his skilfull father Dædalus had made for him, by flying too high, soaring too near the sun, his wax-united pinions felt its influence, and he lost his life, and had the honor of giving his name to the Icarian sea. These are dangers to which the ambitious, who undertake tasks for which they are not competent, are continually exposed.

We now turn to the *Preparations for, and safeguards against difficulties and dangers.*

If a journey must be made through a dangerous country; if the company of travelers is large; if they are well armed; if they are vigilant and courageous; we will not feel very apprehensive as to their safety. We will speak of them as being a strong band. Their strength, which consists in their courage and their preparation, is their safeguard. If an enemy makes an attack on a well built and well garrisoned fortress, the safety of those within depends on its strength, and their remaining within the enclosure. Those that are weak are thus virtually made strong by the situation in which they are placed. If the large vessel lying at anchor is exposed to the sudden gale of wind, should its cable part, ruin awaits it. Its safety depends on the fibre of the well twisted hemp, or on the tenacity of the noble metal iron. So, my young friends, in the journey of life, in the great battle of life, there is need constantly of *strength*. Of strength to resist, strength to attack, strength to hold on to what we have attained, strength to reach forward and grasp more, strength



to stand and maintain our standing, strength to go, to walk, to mount up, and fly, strength in our individual capacity, and strength in our connections with others. We will sometimes speak of a person, as a strong man, who has the ability to control men, manage and direct affairs, present important truths either with the mouth or pen, in such a way as to convince the doubting or counteract the efforts of the designing. We never, in this connection, think of the brawny sinews, or the strength of arm. Paul the great Apostle to the Gentiles, was a strong man, judging by the power he exerted when living, and has exerted and still exerts by his writings. Yet, according to all tradition, he was small in stature, and no doubt his enemies were not far wrong when they said of him, "his bodily presence is weak."\* He speaks of himself, indeed, "as being mean in outward appearance,"† and of the kindness of the Galatians for not scorning or loathing him on account of his bodily infirmity.‡ We might refer to the emaciated Calvin, and call him a strong man, when we reflect on the power he wielded in his own day, and the influence of his writings at the present time. Compared with these men, Samson and Hercules and Milo were weak. *The wise man is strong.* So says Solomon. *Knowledge is power.* So says Lord Bacon. The same sentiment is expressed by both, by the former concretely and the latter abstractly. Wisdom, true wisdom, is the great desideratum in making what may be called a prosperous voyage on the ocean of life. The experienced navigator who knows of the hidden rocks, and has prepared his vessel for the storm, and for the prosperous gale, rides safely into port. So he who has that wisdom which is profitable to direct, can avoid the dangers and grapple successfully with the difficulties and dangers he may meet with in life.

The wise man readily perceives the relations of things. "Wisdom indeed consists in the choice of proper ends and proper means." Ingenuity, skill, design, are terms which

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\* 2 Cor. x. 10. † 2 Cor. x. 1. ‡ Gal. iv. 14.

imply the perception of these relations, the adaptation of means to ends, and are certainly implied in the term wisdom. But there may be evidences of ingenuity, skill, and design, and still the person who presents these evidences could hardly be regarded as wise. If a person should spend his time and labor in contriving a machine for accomplishing some object which could be done better by more simple means, we would hardly call him wise, though we might praise him for his ingenuity. The counterfeiter, the gambler, knaves of various kinds, often display more skill and exercise more prudence in their nefarious occupations, than the honest man does in the successful pursuit of his business. We may call these knaves shrewd, long-headed, skilfull and ingenious, but we would hardly call them wise. Still the world calls him intelligent, who manages his affairs well, who by his sagacity remunerates himself well, and who elevates himself among his fellow men; while perhaps the only object he had in view, was his own personal aggrandizement. So that we find the term wisdom sometimes used when there is a choice of means for improper ends: and we must determine the character or the quality of the wisdom—whether it is praiseworthy or desirable, or whether to be condemned and rejected—by the object to which it has reference. Thus we are told that the children of this world are, in their generation, *wiser* than the children of light.\* And we are also told that, “the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.”†

The term knowledge is sometimes confounded with wisdom, but they are easily distinguished. In the words of Dr. Dick: “Knowledge is the simple apprehension of things as they are, as the eye perceives the objects presented to it; wisdom is the arrangement of our ideas in proper order, and in such a train as to produce some useful practical result. The instrument of acquiring knowledge is the understanding alone; but wisdom implies volition, or a purpose to effect an end, and the choice of the means by which it will be accomplished. In

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\* Luke xvi. 8. † 1 Cor. iii. 19.

creatures they are often separated. Wisdom cannot exist without knowledge, but knowledge may exist without wisdom, and accordingly there are men possessing very extensive information, who in their conduct give many proofs of thoughtlessness and folly.’’\*

The merely learned man, who has much knowledge, but little wisdom, is like a man who keeps his library in a box, the books thrown in without any arrangement. The wise man, on the other hand, keeps his well arranged on shelves; the former has the same knowledge, or perhaps a great deal more knowledge than the latter, but he seldom has it at command, and were it not for the gratification it gives himself, he might as well have no knowledge at all. The other can use what he has to the advantage both of himself and others. Learning or knowledge is like the stock of goods, and wisdom the ability to arrange and display it, and dispose of it. In education it is of importance to acquire the stock of ideas, but of more importance to acquire skill in the arrangement and use of them. And as the prudent business man is continually adding to his stock and extending his business, so will the professional man be always a learner, and will thus be adding to his strength and usefulness, and will prepare himself for the difficulties he may have to encounter. We may also see from this, the propriety of the Apostle’s exhortation, not to act as fools, but to walk with precision, with accuracy, as wise men do.

In the different professions there is a stock of knowledge which is peculiar to each, which should be laid up in preparing for that particular walk in life. The Physician has to direct his attention to subjects very different from those that the Lawyer studies; while, at the same time, there is a certain sort of knowledge common to and necessary for all, which every one should have in order to enable him to maintain a high standing in the community. In whatever pursuit, then, you may engage, your success in life, your ability to meet its

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\* Dick, Vol. 1, Sec. xxii.

hardships and encounter its dangers, depends on this God-given wisdom, and the ability that it gives you, to use to advantage the talents entrusted to your care. It is true, that in some of the walks of life, it requires, at least as far as this world is concerned, but little wisdom in directing one's course. Take, for example, the life of him who, born to affluence, has nothing to do, and who does it faithfully, and lives to eat, and to furnish the tailor with a walking advertisement; even this fop will find some wisdom necessary for him, not much indeed, but a little—a very little. He knows how to put on his clothes with taste; he knows how to walk with grace, not circumspectly however, for his eyes are in the ends of the earth; he knows, too, when he is hungry, and how and what to eat; he needs some wisdom to direct and control this knowledge. The small stock of knowledge he has proves sufficient for his purpose; his chief end being to glide smoothly through life, and so he often does, until in old age he may come to the rapids, the existence of which he did not know, and at last the cataract receives him, and there we leave him.

If the great and only object of your life is popularity among men, or to get in some office of honor and profit, it will require a much greater amount of wisdom, both in preparing yourselves for the place, and in overcoming the obstacles in your path. As to the *quality* of this wisdom, as things are now-a-days, we have not much to say; nor have we anything to say against the desire to be popular—to be held in esteem by those with whom we associate—nor do we say anything against the desire to hold a responsible office, but we do find fault with the overweening desire sometimes manifested to become popular by those who care nothing for the reality, if they only have the appearance of being meritorious, who desire this distinction among men, so that their own inordinate vanity may be gratified by the incense that is offered to it. As it is our design to show how we may prepare for, and avoid, and overcome, and resist, the hardships of life, in this present world, it may not be amiss to give a word of

advice to the mere popularity seeker. Let him feel the importance of assurance, and act accordingly. Aided by this, let him become all things to all men, of course with a much greater power of adaptation than the Apostle, who among the Jews became a Jew, among the weak became weak, and among the Athenian Philosophers, he was a Philosopher; but there was a limit to his power of adaption, when at Lystra he could not become a heathen God, though he might have, by so doing, increased his popularity almost indefinitely among the idolatrous people. No! there should be no limits of adapting oneself, to him who aspires after universal popularity. Among the pious, he is pious; among infidels, he scoffs at all revealed religion; among the profane, he is profane. He is a gentleman among gentlemen; a rowdy among rowdies; he laughs with those that laugh, and *seems* to weep with those who weep; and he drinks with those that drink. So that, by thus becoming all things to all men, he may, peradventure, gain some applause, and save some—votes. We hope better things of you, young gentlemen, than that you should be satisfied with these low things; you, I trust, will always aspire after something that is truly ennobling, and are resolved to seek for that, let the consequences, as to the present life, be what they may.

There is nothing, in my judgment, that fits a man so well for meeting the difficulties of life, and surmounting them, as *the having a conscience void of offense*. That inward monitor not only warns, but strengthens and inspires with confidence, if its possessor will only pay attention to its friendly suggestions. It is not to him like the rattlesnake, which warns and then inflicts a deadly wound, but like the trusty watch dog, whose bark gives notice of the presence of the enemy, and who stands ready to defend his master with his teeth. Its admonitions, we are aware, are often unheeded, and they who do so, only store up for themselves wrath, against the day of wrath, and this now friendly monitor will inflict the painful wounds of remorse, and become itself the worm that never dies. We know that the temptation is often strong to stifle

and disregard the voice of conscience, particularly in those cases where its suggestions should be most scrupulously attended to. Cases of this kind frequently occur to men in public life, who too often think but little of the world to come, when by yielding to their convictions of right, they will lose caste, and put in jeopardy their fortunes and their future prospects. What are such men to do? they have not lived for the eternal world, but only for the present; if, then, they lose their present advantage, they lose all. Hence, we find if sacrifices must be made in order that conscience may be satisfied, so few that are ready to make the sacrifice, so few who are ready to leave all and follow the Saviour. Suppose a person has toiled and struggled and labored hard for years to attain those things which he esteems good, and has thought of nothing more than present advantage; why should he lose all these things, when a lie would save them? When, by injuring some poor obscure and friendless individual, or community, which the world could easily spare, why hesitate to do it, when a great advantage would accrue to ourselves? why hesitate to do the wrong? Why should the statesman care for an evil which may result from his action, when posterity perhaps, will be the only sufferers? But why regard posterity? Posterity never did anything for him—Posterity has no existence. Perhaps he will console himself with the reflection that God will bring good out of the evil he is doing. Why should Pontius Pilate hesitate to scourge Jesus, the humble and friendless Nazarene, and deliver him into the hands of wicked men to be put to death? though he knew him to be innocent, and had the power to release him, though doubtless, it would have been at the risk of his comfort, and popularity among the Jews. We all, somehow or other, feel that we ought always to act according to our sense of right, and we feel too that, in the long run, it is best for the community, that right and justice should always prevail, but it is hard for us to give any reason to one who lives only for the present life, why *he* should forego so many advantages and suffer so much evil, merely for the sake of doing what

conscience approves of. The truly, upright, honest, conscientious Christian man is often compelled in this life to spend his days most wretchedly, and that too on account of his integrity. Paul says: "If in this life only we have hope, we are of all men most miserable;"\* and in the same chapter he refers to the folly of encountering difficulties in maintaining the truth, if we live only for the present life; our wisdom, if there is no hereafter, is to follow the epicurean direction, "to eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die." In fact, young gentlemen, this innate feeling that we have, that we find existing in all races of men, and in all ages, of the obligation we are under to do right, and to acknowledge the supremacy of conscience, taken in connection with the fact, that virtue is not only not rewarded, but is often actually punished as a crime, is almost a perfect demonstration of the doctrine that there is a future state of rewards and punishments. From what we have now stated, we think we have the key to the explanation of the actions of two different classes of eminent men the world has presented. The one comprehends those who are guided in their actions by expediency and self interest, who are often pests to society, and unhappy in their lives; the other, those of whom the world was not worthy; whose aim in life was to live uprightly, and to promote the best interests of mankind, and to resist the evil and tyranny of the former class, in their selfish efforts to elevate themselves among their fellow men. We need not ask which of these two classes is more worthy of our commendation and imitation. Let then conscience, conscience enlightened by God's truth, reign supreme; it will often enable to avoid evils and troubles, if it do not, it will prepare for encountering and conquering them; and it always, in whatever situation its possessor may be placed, produces an enviable state of mind.

Often it requires great zeal, and energy, and activity in order to meet successfully the troubles and vexations that

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\* 1 Cor. xv. 19.

present themselves; but there are cases which occur when one who has a good conscience, in the midst of commotion and confusion, raised by evil doers, may find that his best course is to do nothing—is to remain at rest, like one in an impregnable fortress when savages are yelling around it.

When the Israelites were threatened with an invasion of the Assyrians, the inhabitants of Jerusalem were in a terrible perplexity, they were for sending immediately to Pharaoh for help. The prophet Isaiah condemned their policy, he told them, speaking in the name of Jehovah, that, “their strength was to sit still.”\*

Many years ago there was a society, formed in the city of Philadelphia, of infidels, enthusiastic admirers of Paine, whose object was to put down the upholders of revealed religion, and defame and abuse all that the Christian regards as most holy. The clergy of the city were somewhat alarmed; how were these infidels to be met? in what way restrained and prevented from doing injury to the cause of religion? were the anxious questions proposed. After various suggestions had been made, it was finally agreed to let them alone. And the result showed the wisdom of this course. Thus, often fanatics arise, possessed, as it were, by some crotchet, some new religion perhaps, or some scheme by which all evils may be, in a very short time, removed from the world; many are misled, and quite a commotion is produced in the community. What ought to be done? Of course a general rule cannot be laid down, but this we think may be safely said, as long as they write and talk, and rant and rave, and attempt to carry all before them by getting up an excitement, and strive to provoke retaliation, it is far better to present nothing for them to work upon, but to let them run their course, keeping, as far as is possible, all the children out of their way. It is in vain to reason with such, they care not for reason; it is useless to present the truth to their followers, who, honest though they may be, are blinded by their prejudices; it would

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\* Isaiah xxx. 7.



hardly be worth while, if there were power to fine and imprison such, for this would give them something of the aspect of persecuted sufferers, and give them some of that notoriety which they covet so much. The counsel given to the Sanhedrim by Rabbi Gamaliel, when the Apostles were brought before it, was sensible: "Now I say unto you, refrain from these men and let them alone, for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought."\* Yes! let them alone, for in the cases to which we have referred the work and counsel is of men, let them, and those whom they have deceived have full swing—let them shout, and hoot, and rave, and bellow, to their heart's content, let them strain their arms in beating the air, and their lungs with their vociferations, and when they are tired, they will quit, and, like the infatuated herd of swine we have read of, before long, they will rush down some steep place into the sea of oblivion.

We would be neglecting our duty if we would not, in speaking of these various safeguards, present to you religion prominently and preëminently, as we have aimed to do, implicitly in what we have already said, as the great safeguard. We mean by religion, the religion of Jesus, as presented to us in the Bible—"that acknowledgment," as the word implies, "of our bond or obligation, as created beings to God our Creator, . . . and a strict and conscientious discharge or observance of our duties or obligations to each other as fellow creatures, or creatures of the same God."

Religion has not, it is true, always preserved its professors against the tribulations of life, indeed it has been the occasion of great calamities, and of the severest sufferings, but it may be asked, has the neglect of religion been more fortunate in this respect; we think if we would look at the matter aright, not referring to individual instances, but to the general influence of religion, and of irreligion or infidelity, we would find that for the one *evil* that religion, in a worldly point of view, has occasioned, the want of religion has occasioned ten: and

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\* Acts v. 38.

for the thousands of blessings, real sweeteners of life, that religion has produced, infidelity, perhaps—we will try to do it justice—has been the cause of one. The plain proof of this is, the elevation of Christian nations over all others; and if that small leaven of pure Christianity which is working in the so called Christian nations of the world, can effect so much, what would be the case when they are, as they certainly will be, completely pervaded by its influence. This benign influence on the community is of course produced by its action on the individual. While he who seeks the “bubble reputation e’en in the cannon’s mouth,” and wades through blood for crowns and greatness, often committing excesses, and doing deeds of high handed villainy, which can be imperfectly palliated only by the terrible necessity of the occasion, is filled with anxiety and fear, and is dissatisfied and unhappy, even if successful in the object of his pursuit; he whose heart is filled with the religion of the Son of God, has none of these peace-destroying and heart-corroding cares and fears. He may be a sufferer. His religion may not enable him to escape the evils, but it enables him to endure. It gives its possessor a noble and elevated character, which even the infidel cannot but admire. About eighteen hundred years ago, the Emperor Nero sat upon the throne of the Roman Empire. He was the representative of the most powerful monarchy the world has ever seen. He was however detested and loathed even by the corrupt Romans. They despised him for his want of dignity, for his insatiable desire of applause. Before him stood Paul the prisoner, in fetters, accused of sedition, one of a despised and persecuted sect. The one had all that an ambitious man could desire, the other had none of those things that the world calls good. Which character would any one in his senses envy most? Who would prefer the Nero to the Apostle—the Emperor to the Christian prisoner.\*

It is unnecessary for me to dwell on the excellence of that book of books, which contains the revealed will of God, and

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\* See Howson & Conybeare’s Life of St. Paul, Vol. II., p. 632, &c.

should be our rule of faith and manners; and to which, as supreme authority, we refer you for the principles of the Christian Religion. We cannot commend this sacred volume to you in too high terms. Look at its treasures of wisdom, its sublime and its heart-touching poetry, its deep philosophy, its simplicity of style, its adaptation to all ages, to all ranks and races and conditions; it is a book for the king—for all in authority—for the deep-thinking metaphysician, and for those in the very humblest walks of life; presenting precepts and principles invaluable to all, even as regards the present life. It is true, it records some things hard to be believed, but it seems to us that there could be no miracle greater than this, that we should find persons living in ages so remote from each other as the sacred writers lived, speaking different languages, as many of them did, of pursuits and conditions in life so different, as we know many of them to have been, all with one united voice testifying to the great truths of the Christian Religion. They all declare the unity of God; they all teach us his absolute sovereignty; they all teach man's depravity; and that there is but one way of salvation, viz.: that by the atoning blood of the Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world. If in the days of the author of the CXIXth Psalm, the reply to the question: "By what means shall a young man cleanse his way?" could be given in this language, "by taking heed thereto according to thy word," with how much more force, when we have the complete canon, when we have the utterances of Him who spake as never man spake, can we commend to you, and all young men, this sacred volume as their moral law, as the book of books, as the fountain of wisdom for the living and the dying!

Would 'st live? The path of life  
 This book prescribes pursue.  
 Is death at hand? It telleth thee  
 How death thou may 'st subdue.

What noble examples have we in the sacred volume of great and good men. Men, it is true, with imperfections and infirm-

ities like ourselves. They gained favor with God, we need not therefore be discouraged. But we want a perfect model, and that the sacred volume furnishes.

The sculptor, who has a desire to excel, and feels within himself the stirring of genius, will not content himself with inferior models, he will leave his native land and go to Italy, where the art has almost reached perfection. His beau ideal of the human form is not found in any single individual, but the perfections of many are grouped together into his one faultless image. Let me then commend to you who desire to form as nearly as possible a perfect character, JESUS, the son of Mary, the brightness of His Father's glory, and the express image of his person, as the model man. In Him, in whom is united both the divine and human natures, we have a character of sinless perfection; in whom and by whom human nature is exalted, and the sinful children of Adam may be prepared for an elevation, and for a condition high and holy beyond anything we can imagine.

While thus having endeavored to show the necessity of walking circumspectly, by presenting some few of the dangers and hardships which we are most likely to encounter, and also the preparation necessary for meeting them, and of some of the safeguards which we may have at command, let us now, in closing, direct your attention to the expression, contained in the text, "redeeming the time."

There is no one, we may safely say, who has thought at all on the subject, who has not at some period or other of his life, regretted opportunities lost, time wasted, or badly used. Time past can never be recalled, it is one of the absolute impossibilities, impossible even for Deity himself, to undo what has been done, to roll back the wheels of time, so that we may gather up some of the precious moments we have lost. Hence the unavailing regrets of many in their old age, If they only could live their lives over again, how differently they would have acted, they will blame themselves for their folly in not taking advice of the experienced; of their stupidity in not seeing the evil consequences of many of their own vain

notions; and in despising the means once within their power of guarding against the evil day. Their opportunity is forever gone. The harvest is past, the summer is ended and they are not saved! While to these and to you the past is irremediably gone, to you, however, there is this difference: they are ending their days, to them the night is coming in which no man can work; for you, we trust, there is a bright future, and we have not much reason to believe that any of you have much misspent time to regret, but whatever it may be, it may be redeemed, though it cannot be recalled. He who has trifled away his time, may sometimes avoid the evil consequences of his folly, he may run and reach the train just as it is starting. He redeems his time, but far better would it be to improve the precious moments as they pass, and save one's self the trouble and the vexation and risk of this extra exertion. By doing the right thing in the right way, at the right time and in the right place, much trouble will be avoided, and there will be none of that remorse which so embitters the years of those who look back on a life of wasted, or worse than wasted time.

It will be unnecessary for me to detain you by endeavoring to enforce what has already been said by referring to the profit resulting from pursuing such a course as we have suggested. As far as the enjoyment of the blessings of this world is concerned, the honest and honorable course required by Christianity, is in no wise inconsistent with the accumulation and enjoyment of wealth. In fact it gives a peculiar zest to the luxuries of the wealthy, and makes the little that a just man hath more and far better than the wealth of those who are lewd and wicked. Neither is a religious profession inconsistent with being in high esteem in the community. The truly conscientious Christian man scorns to court the favor of any class by cringing sycophancy. He commands respect, and even should he, by his opposition to evil, incur the ill will of a majority, the esteem that he retains and commands, small as it may be, is worth far more than that which is purchased by the popularity seeker, who so anxiously hunts

after it, and who flatters in order to gain it, and is often despised by those who profess to praise him and support him. Further, can we value sufficiently an approving conscience? Certainly that man is not to be envied who dreads nothing so much as communion with himself, who plunges into all excesses in order that he may escape the uneasiness his conscience would give him. And suppose that the battle of life has been fought, and you can say, as was said by a hero of old, that you had fought a good fight, that you had kept the faith, and that you were ready to receive that crown which God the righteous Judge had laid up for you. Is not this worth something? Certainly he is much to be pitied who does not think that a happy eternity is worth his seeking and his winning, and to be preferred to all that the world can give, yes, to the whole world itself!

It will do no harm to you, young gentlemen, not to be too sanguine in your expectations, as to the ease and success you may have in the future. If God in his good providence gives you peace and prosperity, regard it as it really is, a gift—as so much clear gain. If hardships and dangers present themselves, meet them and overcome them; and remember, for no one likes to make a bad bargain, not to spend your labor for that which profiteth not, not to wear away your life for that which, at the close of it, you yourselves will pronounce vain and altogether worthless, at the same time sacrificing an eternity of happiness. Should a life of ease and pleasure and worldly honor, and a life of hardship and suffering, be presented to your choice, on the supposition that these conditions should be reversed in the eternal world, choose, by all means, the evil that will end in good, not the good that will end in misery. This thought is prettily expressed in a Latin epigram I have met with, on a crown of gold and a crown of thorns:

“Behold two crowns! the one, a crown of thorns,  
The other crown, of gold.  
That one with jagging prickles, rough, while this  
Full many a gem adorns.

Thou see'st, O! man, the thorns, those piercing thorns  
 Do heaven call to mind;  
 Proofs are they of high heaven's boundless love—  
 Of Christ's love for mankind.

If thou art wise, and when the chance is given,  
 The thorns choose for thy head.  
 The crown now bearing thorns, in after time  
 Will rays of glory shed.

Beware of that which shines with dazzling light  
 Of gold, deceitful gold!  
 Now sending forth its rays, in after time  
 Death's stings it will unfold.

Come then! who e'er thou art, or young or old,  
 Desiring to pursue  
 The thorny path of right, attend these words,  
 And thou will find them true.

Within the crown of gold a crown of thorns lies hid,  
 Within the thorns is gold.  
 Choose not that good which ends in ill; but choose  
 Those ills which good enfold."

With this good counsel we close, and I now, in my own name, and that of my colleagues, express our best wishes for the prosperity of you, with whom we have spent many pleasant hours, and have had so little to mar the comfort of that interesting relation in which we have been placed for a few years past, and our prayer is that God the Saviour would have you constantly in His holy keeping, and would guard you against the evils of life, and would prepare you for a life of activity in His service, in His own heavenly kingdom.