G HAPPENED

AND OTHER SHORT TALKS

HINCKLEY

"Something Happened"

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BY G. W. HINCKLEY.

GOOD WILL PUBLISHING CO.,
EAST FAIRFIELD, MAINE,
1903.

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PREFACE.

The following pages are reprinted from the columns of the Good Will Record. The talks which appear here in abbreviated form were delivered on various occasions—in the Moody Memorial Chapel at Good Will Farm, at boys' conferences, at college Y. M. C. A. meetings, and by summer camp fires. The many testimonials to the helpfulness of a former volume—Good Will Short Talks—were an encouragement to put these in permanent form in the hope that they, too, might be of service to a larger number of boys than my voice will ever reach.

G. W. HINCKLEY.

East Fairfield, Me., Nov. 1, '03.

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SOMETHING HAPPENED.

"As though some strange thing happened unto you." I Peter 4; 12.

There are only a few certainties in this world. One of them is that the unexpected will happen. There is a saying, "Man proposes; God disposes." It is not scripture; but it is founded on scriptural teaching.

Man plans his work; he cannot always work his plan. Just when it looks as though one were about to secure a coveted prize, something happens.

There are some lives we call successes; others we count failures. If you study the life that seems to be a success, you will find the secret of it wrapped up in those words, "something happened." If you look into the life that failed you will find the secret of the failure in the same words, "something happened." Whether you succeed in life or fail depends upon how you meet the unexpected, and what use you make of the happenings in life. No boy can tell just what he will do in life. He may plan and hope.

He ought to hope and plan, and push forward; but the unexpected may happen. If it does, then to see what it means, and take advantage of it, is the thing to do.

When I was a boy, I had only one thought of the future for myself, until I was fourteen years old. Previous to that time I wanted to be an artist. I loved pictures and statuary. I wanted to draw and paint. If I could get together a few pennies, I bought a pencil and some paper. If I was fortunate enough to get a few more pennies, they were exchanged for more pencils or water colors. Some folks said my taste ought to be cultivated, and I wanted my parents to believe it. The other boys knew that I planned to be an artist because I used to tell them. I think I could go to the very length of the rail fence that Johnny Landon and I were sitting on one summer afternoon. It was beside the corn field where I was supposed to be hoeing; but I was more interested in future plans, and day dreams, than in the corn crop. I told Johnny how I had read that Rembrandt Peele had painted a picture which he called the "Court of Death," and how he had sold the painting for twenty-five thousand dollars. That seemed to us an enormous sum of

money. Then I told Johnny that when I got to be a man I was going to be an artist—a great artist—and I was going to paint a picture and sell it for twenty-five thousand dollars. It's a marvel to me that Johnny didn't fall off the fence; but he seemed to be deeply impressed with the revelation of my plans of future achievement.

That was more than thirty-five years ago; but the picture is not painted, nor is the preliminary sketch made. Something happened. One evening a young man, my Sunday-school teacher, came to my home and spent the evening. He talked about my life, about my need of Christ, and about an immediate decision to live rightly. The teacher staid till after midnight; staid till I had knelt by his side and prayed for myself. It did not occur to me that I could make a half hearted profession of faith in Christ; and I wouldn't have done it anyway. For me to accept Christ was to devote my life to his service. The picture was forgotten; the ministry and the possibilities of a life given to Christian activity absorbed my thoughts.

I have always been skeptical about that great painting which was to be; but I might have been an artist, and, in fact, I think I would have been,

but for this; something happened. I have told you what.

A few weeks ago some friends of ours—a young father and mother—were exceedingly happy in planning for their first born child.

Christmas was near, and it was the first Christmas since the child had been given to them. They planned a celebration in their own home, though they knew the little one would not comprehend. The happiness was to be the parents' rather than the child's. But something happened. One night the young father knocked at the door of my home. His child was ill, and while waiting for the physician's arrival, he wanted counsel. He went back to his home, and in half an hour he returned, and knocked again. It was midnight. He said, "My child is dead." Two days later the little one was laid away beneath the white snow. The parents were dazed. First they sought out a child whom they could make happy. Then they visited an alms house, and found there another child into whose life they could carry sunshine. They had planned for their own offspring; but something happened. Do you understand?

A boy was born in Iowa. His parents consecrated him to God's service. The boy grew to

manhood; but he didn't want to preach. He said, "I shall study law." He went to college; but there was a strong religious influence in the college, and he did not like it. In those days there was little or no religious influence at Cornell. The young man deceived his father, and represented that he wanted to go to Cornell for the studies there. So he went to Cornell. Something happened. One day C. K. Studd, who came to this country from Cambridge University, was to give an address at Cornell. This young man went into the hall—just inside the door-way. He heard the speaker say: "Young man, seekest thou some great thing for thyself; seek it not." The young man left the hall. He walked the campus all night, and fought the great battle of his life. When morning came it was all over; the young man had surrendered, and was ready for Christian service. He remained at Cornell and graduated; but before his course was completed there, a marked change had come over the college; the atmosphere had changed—the influence of the young man's attitude toward Christ was felt throughout the student body. Since then his voice has been heard around the world in addresses to students; there

is no one voice that has been listened to by as many students as that man's. He was going to be a lawyer. Something happened.

Several weeks ago a boy of eighteen was at work in a bank in New York City. He had a good home in New Jersey, Christian parents, and a fine position. One day he had some difficulty with his co-workers in the bank. He became angry with them, then rebelled against his father. Soon after he dropped out of sight. There was absolutely no trace of him. A search was made. Descriptions of the tall young fellow—he measured six feet three inches—were sent over the country, all in vain. Sometimes the father would receive a letter stating that his son had been seen in a given place, but such clues were of no value. The parents were heartbroken. Something happened. One day a tall young fellow—six feet three inches high—clad in the picturesque garb of a Maine woodsman, walked into the office of the secretary of the Bangor Young Men's Christian Association. He spoke to the secretary and told him he had cut his knee; he had no money, and he needed treatment. Would the secretary help him?

"Where have you been at work?" asked the secretary.

"I've been chopping in the woods."

"Is that your business?" was the next question.

"No, sir," was the reply.

"What is your business?"

"I work in a bank."

"Do your parents know where you are?"

"No, they do not."

"Do you think you are treating your father and mother right?"

"I don't know," replied the stranger.

"Don't know," exclaimed the secretary, "what are you talking about? I have a son. If I don't hear from him each week I can't do my work, and your parents, you say, haven't heard from you in six weeks."

The conversation continued. The Prodigal relented; after a time he knelt and prayed. When they rose from prayer the boy wrote a letter to his father. It read thus:

"DEAR FATHER,—I have, through the goodness of God, started to do the right thing. I have given my heart to God this noon, and am a different man already. I have done you a woeful wrong, and I know it has been a greater sin in God's sight. Do not worry any more, I am coming home. I never thought it possible that I

could have such peace of mind. Everything is dark behind, but bright before. I feel now that God will bring everything out all right. I am coming home, and I am no more the kind of man I was. God is holding me, and not the world. Forgive me the past; God has. YOUR SON."

The secretary placed in the same envelope a note to the father saying that he would provide for the boy until he could hear from home. Out in New Jersey the heart-broken father received a letter from Bangor. He read it and staggered. The letter was from his wandering boy in his boy's handwriting, and with it was a note from the secretary telling where his boy was. When the father regained consciousness he started for the East; he reached Bangor, and the Y. M. C. A. A little later, in a quiet home in the suburbs, there was a scene which would touch any heart. There was a father—six feet three inches tall; his son the same height. They stood with their arms around each other, the tears streaming down their cheeks. Neither the father nor the son could speak. That night the train out of Bangor carried the father and the son, and yesterday I was in the secretary's office when two letters came—one from the father and the other

from the son,—telling of the merriest Christmas ever known in that New Jersey home. That boy had his plan—a plan of rebellion, of wickedness and of wandering. Something happened. An axe glanced; he cut his knee and in that happening was wrapped up a return to father's house, a new hope, a truer manhood.

A long time ago a young man—not long married—was shepherding his father-in-law's flocks, when the unexpected happened. He saw a bush burning, and yet the bush did not burn up; it was not consumed. The young man said: "I will turn aside and see why the bush is not burned, and will learn, if I can, the meaning of this unexpected happening." As soon as he turned aside to learn the meaning of it, God spoke to him out of the burning bush and called him—the young shepherd, Moses—to a great mission. When the unexpected comes into your life you need not be afraid; you need not rebel; you need not ignore it. Better far it will be for you to find out the meaning of the mystery if possible. Perchance out of it God will speak to you; and in the summing up of your life's experience later you will say as multitudes of others have, "I had my plans in life; something happened."

AFFLICTIONS.

"He was afflicted." Is. 53:7.

One day last week I was making hurried preparations to leave home. It was nearly train time, and there was need of haste. As I passed quickly from one room to another I was surprised to hear a burst of harmony. I stopped and listened. There was no one in either room but myself. For a moment I did not understand it; but I soon saw the explanation. In one of the rooms was an auto-harp, which someone had placed on the floor, and leaned against the wall near the doorway. As I hurried from one room to the other I had carelessly hit the auto-harp with my foot; it had fallen over upon the hard floor, and the pleasant sound I heard was the result. The auto-harp was afflicted. The word afflict comes from two Latin words *"ad"* against, and *"flictum"* struck. Put the two words together and the "d" in the *"ad"* floats into an "f" like the first letter in *"flictum,"* and we have "afflictum" or "struck against." The auto-harp was "struck against" with my foot. That

is why it gave out the harmony. A harp never affords music till it is "struck against" or afflicted. I reached a church one rainy Sunday morning in September before the time for the service. It was a gloomy day; even the church as I entered it seemed overshadowed. Few people would be at church that morning, and I wondered whether the pastor of the church would succeed in conducting a cheerful, inspiring service. After a time a man entered the organ loft, and sat in the organist's seat. He struck his feet against the pedals, and his fingers against the keys. As soon as the great organ was "struck against" or afflicted, its rich tones rolled through the edifice, like a message from heaven—a message of good cheer.

I sat in my study in my own home writing. Suddenly the happiest, sweetest melody one can hear floated through the house. A member of the family was "striking against" the piano. Do you see how it is? The bell that calls to church is silent, and voiceless till it is *"ad flictum"* or struck against.

Last summer I was away out in the fields. The air was suddenly filled with an odor like mint.

I had not noticed the character of the vegetation till then; but I said, "It must be under our feet—this mint." It was true. Not till our feet "struck against" or afflicted it, did the sweet mint give forth its pleasant odor. It was in much the same way that you discovered the geranium in the greenhouse as you passed through. Your arm struck against the sensitive leaves, and when it was afflicted it flooded the place with fragrance.

The sum of human happiness is measured by the way we act when "struck against," or afflicted. A man went to a small village expecting to spend the night with some friends. Through some misunderstanding he was treated with a strangeness amounting to discourtesy. For a moment he was hurt. His heart was grieved. He was "struck against." But it was only for a moment. He went to the village hotel and ate supper. Going to his room he began to write letters to his friends—each letter a cheerful, helpful epistle which would not have been written had he found a welcome where he expected it, or had he not been "struck against." Before he slept he had written fifteen letters, and if they gave any comfort, courage or pleasure to the recipients it was all due to the man's slight affliction.

Would we ever have had some of the sweetest of modern hymns if Fanny Crosby, the blind hymn writer, had not been afflicted? Would the world have had "Paradise Lost," but for John Milton's affliction? Would we ever have heard of "Pilgrim's Progress," had John Bunyan not been "struck against?" If you look into this matter you will be encouraged, strengthened and inspired, as you see how much comes to us and to the world through somebody's affliction. Of him to whom God gave the greatest mission conceivable, even the redemption of a lost world, and the bringing of life and immortality to light, it is said: "He was afflicted."

LIFE A VAPOR.

James, 4: 14. "It is even a vapor."

Here is a letter from a noble man—a benevolent friend who encloses a check for one hundred dollars for Good Will Farm. It was written on the anniversary of his birth. He speaks of the rapid flight of time, and says: "Truly life is a vapor." That is a quotation from the epistle of James. Now James lived a long time ago. He never made a visit to a modern laboratory, and so he was not familiar with the variety of vapors in these days. He knew about one vapor. That was the vapor of water, the kind of vapor with which we are most familiar. When it hangs over the river we call it mist. When it hovers between us and the sun, or against the blue sky, we call it cloud; when it shuts down over the sea we call it fog. When it escapes from the nose of the tea-kettle in the kitchen, or from the smoke-stack of a locomotive we call it steam. James, in his epistle likened life to vapor. Vapor is another name for steam. This is called the steam age: so it is, and it is therefore the age of vapor.

Is there anything more powerless and worthless than the vapor which rises over the river when the sun goes down, or which floats above us for a time as a fleecy cloud and vanishes in thin air?

Is there anything more powerful than vapor when it is confined in iron tubes—restrained by walls which make its direction and its force available? Thus controlled it turns the wheels of industry; transports freight and passengers; drives ocean greyhounds across the Atlantic—a mighty power is steam, restrained, controlled, kept within bounds.

Is there anything sadder, or more worthless than the purposeless life, uncontrolled, floating about like vapor? Is there anything more potent in this world than life, when placed under the guidance of omnipotence, or when restrained and controlled by the love of Christ?

It is the restrained vapor that accomplishes the herculean feats of the twentieth century. It is the controlled and governed life that is accomplishing mighty things in the world today.

And therefore your life is like vapor. It is brief at best; but whether it amounts to anything depends upon your willingness to obey James'

exhortation and "Submit yourself to God," for control, for direction, and for accomplishment of good. It is the restrained and directed life which tells just as it is the controlled vapor that is powerful. James used a suggestive expression indeed, when he likened life to vapor.

TAKE TIME.

"In the process of time."

You can find this expression in several places in the Bible. It is in Genesis 4:3, Genesis 38:12, Exodus 2:23, Judges 11:4 and II Chronicles 21:19. The expression is a part of the history of everything that ever happened; that is happening; that will happen in the future.

The world was without form and void. "In the process of time" God brought order out of chaos; and form out of shapelessness. There was a first man and a first woman. Children were born to them. "In the process of time" the world was peopled. But it was not done in a moment.

A babe was born. "In the process of time" he grew, learned to walk and to talk; wore kilt skirts; knee breeches; long pants. His chest broadened; his shoulders squared; his muscles hardened. He went to school; reasoned; planned; worked; shaved; saved; succeeded in business. But it was "in the process of time."

It is hard for boys to recognize the time element in the doing of things. You fellows want to force things. You have your plans for life and you want to consummate them today. You have your dreams and you are anxious to realize them now. The boy who went to work on a job three weeks ago is thinking that "it's about time for a raise in pay."

A friend of mine went to New York and secured a position. In this he was very fortunate for he had the assistance of an influential friend. At the end of six weeks he wrote me: "if there is any chance for advancement here it is so small that it's like going through a long tunnel—the opening is so far away that it looks mighty dim." The men who employed him began lower down and on smaller wages than he; they succeeded only "in the process of time." There were days that seemed very long, and "the process of time" seemed very slow. It is always so to the young. But there is no true success in this world except "in the process of time."

It is so with the formation of a Christian character. There is not a boy here who does not admire a strong, noble, Christian man. Such a man he wants to be, but he wants to be such a

man today. Such characters are developed only "in the process of time." You wish you could stand at this desk today and talk as freely as I do. I can remember when I wished I could do it. When I accepted Christ, at fifteen years of age, I wanted to go to the prayer-meeting in the old north church in Guilford, but I had courage only to go as far as the door and look in. The meeting was about to commence, and not having moral courage to go in and sit down, I wended my way home with a sinking heart, though I had promised a man that I would surely be in the meeting that evening. I wanted to be a witness for Christ; but I could be only "in the process of time."

If you have any plan in life you had better begin to work it out now. If the plan is worth anything you will need all the days and years that can be yours "in the process of time." If you are working out a plan you need not be discouraged because it is not completed now. The most you can expect is that it may be a finished product "in the process of time;" for nothing worth the doing can be accomplished in a minute. Be patient. It's first the blade; then the ear; then the full corn.

DIOTROPHES.

"But Diotrophes."—III John, 9.

Did you ever know a person named Diotrophes? You know Adamses, and Jonathans, Solomons and Davids, Elijahs and Jobs, Matthews, Johns, Marks, Lukes, Peters and Pauls, but never a Diotrophes. Parents do not like to name their boys after such a character. John, who wrote this Epistle, knew about the original Diotrophes and expressed himself freely. Diotrophes was troubling the church. He would not entertain the missionaries sent out by the church nor would he allow others to do it. He was like a dog in the manger—a dog that neither eats hay himself, nor allows the oxen to eat, on account of his continual barking. He "prated against the brethren with malicious words," and this conduct stirred John to the depth of his nature, and he wrote to Gaius—"I'll attend to him when I come."

It was John—the gentle John whom Jesus loved—John who wrote the gospel of love—John

the Divine—who thus attacked Diotrophes in a letter to his friend Gaius. If Diotrophes had simply hindered John himself and said malicious things about him, John would have held his peace. His own character was what it was; his own interests were in God's hands. But when this man with unruly tongue, who wanted to be first in everything, and who, for the sake of being a leader, hindered the progress of a great cause, got in his work, John's indignation rose. The cause was bigger than John; bigger than Diotrophes; bigger than any one who was identified with it. Put this down where you will remember it—"the whole is greater than any of its parts."

Sometimes people forget this: sometimes they don't want to remember it. We often see persons like Diotrophes who were not at their birth named after him. If you are a member of a baseball team bear in mind that the team is bigger than you are. You are only a part of it. If you will spoil the prospect or imperil the interests of the team for your own gain you are not fit to belong to it anyway. You are mean enough to sneak out of it, and the sooner you do it the better for the team.

If you are a student remember that the school is bigger than you are—you are only a small part of it. Think long and carefully before you do anything for selfish gain or gratification that will bring reproach upon the school, or in any way interfere with its growth and fair name.

Some day you will join a church. Be sure and join the church rather than the minister. The church is bigger than the minister; bigger than yourself; bigger than any friend you have in it.

If the interests of the church require a change in the pastorate, no matter how much you love the pastor remember that the cause is bigger than the pastor and yourself combined, and stand by the church. The whole is greater than any of its parts. It is possible that you may be a pastor yourself sometime. If you are, and the time comes when there is a threatened division of the church over your case—some standing by you and others getting farther and farther from you—don't start off with a little squad and form an independent organization of your admirers. That will mean a division of the church, and the weakening of what ought to be a growing force. Say to the church: "The cause is infinitely

greater than I am. I instruct you all to stand by the cause. I can better afford to retire, you can better afford to have me than that the cause should suffer." If you take this course no one will associate you with the Diotrophes whom John was to straighten out, the first time he saw him. Be a man—a leader if you can—a Daniel—a Paul—but don't let yourself develop into a short-sighted, narrow-minded, selfishly-ambitious, unruly-tongued Diotrophes.

SPARKS FROM YOUR OWN FIRE.

"Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks; walk in the light of your fire and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand: Ye shall lie down in sorrow." Isaiah 50: 14.

"I am the light of the world." John 8: 12.

Two texts do not mean that I am going to preach two sermons; don't be alarmed. The world needs light—more light. This Old Testament text is a warning against walking in light of your own creating; the New Testament text points us to the true light.

Men go on rejecting the light and spend their time kindling fires in order that they may walk in the sparks thereof, but it is not wise.

I. Sometimes men insist that the light of reason is all that is needed. They take facts: these they call premises, and from them they draw conclusions. We all do this and it is necessary that we should; but there are times when the light which is thus shed upon our path is not enough.

We kindle a little fire with our facts and our conclusions and we walk in the light of the sparks thereof, and ignoring the true and all sufficient light, we soon or late lie down in sorrow.

I have a friend who professes to be guided by this principle, viz.; that every man is doing the best he knows how. He kindles the fire thus: premise the first, the nearer right a man does the happier he is; premise the second, every man desires to be as happy as possible, therefore, conclusion, every man does the best he knows how. If my friend walks in the sparks of the fire thus kindled, he will trust men who are unworthy of his confidence, be robbed of his choicest possessions by men who are not doing as well as they know how, and one day he will lie down in sorrow. The light from the sparks of our own fires is often dim, short-lived, and unsatisfactory; but Jesus said, "I am the light of the world."

II. Some persons ask only for the light of human experience. It is not safe to ignore such light; it illumines life's pathway, but it is not sufficient. We often find men in sorrow because they have been content to walk in the sparks of their own kindling.

A boy left his country home and went to a great city. He secured humble lodgings, sought employment, found it, worked faithfully, was promoted, got a good foothold socially and financially, and is honored as a successful man. That is one boy's experience.

Here is another boy who says that that man's life is all the light he needs. Out of the man's life he gathers the leading facts, and then he says: I am going to leave the country and live in the great city—I shall secure humble lodgings, seek employment, find it, work faithfully, be promoted, get a good foothold socially and financially and all men will honor me because of my success. He has built his fire, and proposes to walk in the light of the sparks. He goes to the city, but the position is not easily secured; his courage begins to fail; his ambition weakens, the sparks throw but little light, he begins to drift and is swallowed up and lost. Then he lies down in sorrow. Human experience cast light on his way, but it was not sufficient; but Jesus said: "I am the light of the world."

I have often been troubled by the willingness of some men to walk in the light of my own experience at Good Will. I have stood before

multitudes and told the simple story of the first money for the work and how cottages and school buildings and all needful things came for the founding of a great work for coming generations. It seems like a simple thing to do; but I have never told and never can tell of the long years of preparation, of the days of conflict and the nights of toil before the public knew of the work or even of the plan; and so, when any one asks me to advise him to go forward and attempt the same thing I am always fearful that he has built a fire and is walking in the uncertain light of the sparks.

A few years ago a man—an entire stranger of course—wrote that he had somewhere heard me tell the story of Good Will and he wanted to know where I would advise him to locate a similar work and in what place I thought it would be appreciated. He told me in his letter that he had a wife and children and a few hundred dollars. He proposed to put the money into the beginning of his undertaking. I was troubled that he should be walking among the sparks, and so I wrote him as kind a letter as I could, cautioning him against hasty action in a matter upon which I feared he had but little light. He replied

in a sarcastic note in which he said: "I asked for bread, and ye gave me a stone."

My experience was dim light indeed for him; but Jesus said, "I am the light of the world."

III. There are those also who regard the advice of acquaintances and friends as all sufficient. "In the multitude of counsellors there is safety." That's true. But before you kindle a fire with the advice of your acquaintances and walk in the sparks thereof, you should be sure that the counsel is from the wise and that it is mature and unselfish. A weakness of youth is the willingness to follow the counsels of the short-sighted and the thoughtless. Many a young man has listened to advice of others no wiser than himself, and then, kindling a fire, has walked in the light of it only to lie down in sorrow.

There was a boy I knew and loved. Often did I advise and counsel him. Then for a time we were widely separated. One day I discovered that, in the course of a long journey, I was to spend a day or two near where he lived, and I wrote asking him to call on me at my stopping place. I looked for him and expected him, but he did not come. A few weeks later I learned

of his unhappy marriage, a marriage which was followed by a separation and a series of events which added to the blight on the young man's life. I did not know till a few days ago why he did not call on me when I kindly wrote and asked him to. But after he received the letter and had ignored it the lady with whom he boarded said: "Why didn't you go and see him as he requested?" "I'll tell you," he replied, "I had about decided to marry Annie and I knew that if I saw him ten minutes I'd never do it." He had listened to the advice of two or three as short-sighted and even more foolish and fickle than himself. Out of this flashy material he had built a fire and walked in the sparks thereof till he had married the unworthy woman whom he knew he should have shunned. It was a flickering fire at best; for he knew that a short talk with any unselfish friend would extinguish it, but he walked among the sparks and lay down in sorrow. There is a depth of darkness about us which the fires of our own kindlings, whether with our premises and conclusions or with the experiences of others, or with the counsels of acquaintances, cannot disperse or even penetrate, but Jesus said: "I am the light of the world."

CONFLICTING CURRENTS.

And falling into a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground. Acts 27:41.

Life is often likened to a voyage on the ocean. In prose and in poetry we read of "life's tempestuous sea." Every ship that sails out of harbor carries two possibilities—the possibility of a safe journey and the possibility of shipwreck. Each young life has the same possibilities before it. One of the great dangers is that the young man will, like the ship on which Paul was sailing, fall in a place where there are conflicting currents, and be grounded.

Years ago I had a long talk with a boy about fifteen years old. I counselled him the best I could and he listened attentively. I could not learn afterwards that he followed my counsel or in any way cared for it. Two years later he sent for me; wanted me to come to him quick as I could, and when I found him he told me a sad story. Long before I ever met him, a young man who was so corrupt that he wanted every-

body to be as bad as he was, had advised him. He liked that young man's advice best, because to follow it required no will power, and no restraint. By great suffering he had been forced to appeal to me, though I could not help him, and a few months later, before he was eighteen years old, he was in an insane asylum. In his life two influences met. The counsel of two men were in conflict.

Last week I met a student. He told me he was in a quandary. Many of his fellow students were accustomed to dance and were theatregoers. He himself had never been to a dance; had never been inside a theatre. His father and mother wanted him to keep away from the dance and the theatre; his fellow students wanted him to join them at both theatre party and dance. Two seas met. The counsel of parents and the invitations of fellow students were in conflict. He wanted my advice and counsel; but to act as pilot for a young soul when it is in a surge requires consummate skill. It is not in the lives of men in the prime of life or of students alone that there come conflicting tides. I see in my audience a boy of fourteen, with whom I talked yesterday. He

wants to be a student, to secure a good education; to make the most of his God given abilities which we all recognize in him; to develop into a noble Christ like character. He wants to do all this, and he acknowledges it. But he don't want to go to school any more; study often comes hard; he'd rather be earning a little money each day than laying foundations of success; he'd rather let his little ship drive before the wind, and bring up where he may. He confesses it. So there is the boy. Two seas meet in his life. He is in the surge of two conflicting tides. Who can pilot him?

But this boy is not an isolated case. There are at least a score here today who are right in the meeting of two powerful currents. For me to say, "I will pilot you safely through it," would be folly on my part. Your best friends are fallible; your wisest counsellors may guide you onto the rocks. You need a guide with skill beyond any of us; and you will always need him. Just now the face of a loved boy comes before me—a boy who is in heaven today. I would have acted as pilot for him always if I could have done so; but he had friends of his own age—some friends who were lacking in moral courage and in Chris-

tian purpose. One evening they invited him to a house where the lewd and the intemperate resorted. Such a proposition had never come to him before. There were two besides himself. He had never meddled with strong drink; reared in a Christian home he had been trained to a pure, manly life. But they—the three of them—went together toward the abode of sin. He thought of his Christian father, his gentle, loving mother; he seemed to have a vision of the Christ of whom he had learned and whom he wanted to serve; but there were his companions ready to sneer, ready to call him coward, ready to be offended. Here were two mighty currents; they met. I was not there to counsel; his father and mother did not dream of his peril. The three reached the doorsteps of their destination; but he suddenly said: "Fellows, I can't go in there; you ought not to go. Good night," and he left them. His life after that was brave, true, beautiful. He is not now, for God took him; but I have always been glad that there was a pilot able to guide him through the crises of life.

So long as your life is to be like a voyage at sea, why not sing in your heart that sweetest of all mariners' songs.

"Jesus, Savior, pilot me,
Over life's tempestuous sea,
Unknown waves before me roll,
Hiding rock and treach'rous shoal."

OWING OTHERS.

"Owe no man." Rom. 13:8.

It will pay you to look up this word "owe."

That is, it will pay you if you are at all interested in words and care to understand them. You know what the word "ought" means: the word "owe" means the same thing. If you "ought" to do a thing you owe it; if you "owe" a man anything you "ought" it, which means that you ought to pay it.

If I give you my note today for a thousand dollars, payable five years from today, with interest at six per cent payable annually, I do not now "owe" the thousand dollars. It is a debt, but it is not an "ought" because I ought not to pay it. At the end of the year I will owe the interest—that is, I ought to pay it. At the end of five years I will owe the principal—that is, I "ought" to pay it.

Perhaps now you can understand what this instruction "owe no man anything" means. It does not mean that you shall not have the use of

another's property after agreement has been made for the use of it; but it does mean that if you ought to do anything to or for a fellow man it is wrong to leave it undone. This is true of money; it is true of human sympathy; it is true of love. If you ought, then do it. If you ought to pay your tax, pay it. If you ought to pay your rent, pay it. If you ought to honor your father and mother, honor them. If you ought to sympathize with a sorrowing friend, sympathize with him. If you ought to love your neighbor, love him. If you ought to be loyal to school, or college, or home, or church, or Christ, be loyal.

Whatever you ought to do you owe, and the command is not to leave such things undone.

"Owe no man" anything, whether it be money, sympathy, moral support, love, or loyalty.

JOB 29.

The twenty-ninth chapter of Job is the middle chapter of the old testament. This statement is not of the slightest value unless it helps you to remember the character of the chapter. It is a groan—a solid, prolonged groan from opening word to closing phrase. Job was unhappy; yea, he was miserable, and I will tell you about it. He lost all his oxen and sheep; but other men have met similar losses and been cheerful. His sons and daughters were dead; but others have lost their loved ones and looked up. He had boils, but others have suffered from carbuncles and smiled. Yet Job was miserable.

Let me tell you that there were three mistakes in Job's experience, any one of which is more powerful to rob a man of happiness, than loss of property, or the death of friends, or the appearance of boils.

1. Job got to thinking entirely about himself. He was the subject of all his thinking; the object of his own pity. There are only twenty-five

verses in the chapter, and the pronouns "I," "my" and "me" occur over forty times. He was self centered, and of course he was miserable. A man who allows himself to get into Job's state of mind is in a fair way to lose property, miss friends, and get sufficiently run down physically to have boils. If you don't want to get despondent and hopeless you had better think about some body else than just your own little self. The more you study your own ailments the more ailments you will have to study.

2. Job got to living in the past. Hear the way he starts out: "Oh, that I were as in the months past!" There is a multitude of people who manage to live on the by-gones of life. Just now, in 1903, they tell of the delightful times back in 1900, and 1901,—what blessed times those were!

In 1905 they will be telling you of some wonderful experiences they had in 1903; but you never hear them say that they are getting sweet out of life today. One of the qualities which I always admired in my dear friend Dr. A. T. Dunn was his ability to get so much out of life day by day. It was not the good times of a decade ago, but the good time of the present in

which he delighted "I am having a great time," is worth a score of "I had a good time in the months that are past."

The past will take care of itself; the present is ours; the future ought to shine brighter and brighter.

I have no sympathy with people who are longing to go back to childhood days. What! be a child again? Do you suppose I want to go back to childhood and be a boy like some of these before me, ten or twelve years old: back to student days and have the experience that goes with eighteen or twenty years? A thousand times "no." The future has infinitely more for me than the past; the past was never equal to the present. It was a grievous blunder Job made, and there are many like him.

3. In all this chapter Job made no mention of any blessing. Things might have been worse. He had lost his property: but he had an appetite, and digestion—of course he had. He had lost his family, but there was the sunlight, the fields, the sky above him, and he was not blind. He had lost comfort, but he had his intellect—an intellect which his trying experiences quickened—for Job was not crazy. He

had boils, but there were several things worse than boils which did not reach him.

We cannot ignore the discomforts of life; but whatever they are, they do not overshadow all of God's blessings or the greater part of them. Better count your blessings and look up.

MINGLED SEED.

"Thou shalt not sow thy field with mingled seed."—Lev. 19: 19.

The sower is a familiar figure in Scripture.

"Behold a sower went forth to sow." "In the morning, sow thy seed." "Whatsoever a man soweth," etc.

This command prohibits the sowing of mingled seed. It is a part of the Levitical law. In a figurative sense we often speak of ourselves as sowers—our words and deeds are the seed. "Thou shalt not" sow the mingled. Let's look at it.

1. He who sows mingled seed leaves his real purpose in doubt. If, in crossing a field, I meet a man sowing, and find his measure is filled with equal portions of peas and oats, what do I know about his purpose? Does he want a harvest of peas, or does he intend to gather a crop of oats?

Last week a boy was speaking of a young man whom I happen to know, and he said: "I don't understand him. He's a glib talker in meeting,

but when he is alone with me he's a different fellow entirely." What is that young man's purpose—can you tell? In an evening meeting he scatters good seed—gives expression to noble thoughts and high purposes; when he is alone with my friend he says things not fit to be said, and things he would be ashamed to have us hear. But what is his purpose? He is sowing mingled seed—the good and the bad. No one can afford to do it.

2. He who sows mingled seed may be responsible for mingled sowing by his neighbor.

A few years ago I was about to have a field sowed with oats. I had been cautioned against charlock—the pest of the Maine oat fields. So I was talking about sending away and getting some oats that were absolutely clean. But a man told me that one of my neighbors though it wouldn't pay and that he was sowing such oats as he had—oats that were mixed with the seeds of the charlock. So I did the same—sowed mingled seed. My neighbor had a harvest of oats and charlock; I had a harvest of charlock and oats. My neighbor was, in a degree, responsible for it all—not only for his own sowing of mingled seed, but for mine as well.

If one day we sow to the spirit and the next day to the flesh, others will. If one day our works are strong and pure, and the next day corrupt and blighting, others will be influenced to a sowing of mingled seed like our own.

3. He who sows mingled seed will reap a mingled harvest. This is the law. "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." He who sows wheat reaps wheat. He who sows charlock reaps charlock. He who sows blessings will harvest blessings, and he who sows curses will harvest curses.

Have you read the daily papers of late? Then you know about the man who lived a double life; who scattered blessings in one community and curses in another—while one portion of his fellow men bless him, others anathematize him. For his good sowing he reaps benedictions; for his evil sowings he reaps shame and death. Oh, the sorrow of it all!

I want to utter a command in such language that you will never forget it. I want to repeat it till it is impressed upon your heart. I want to emphasize it until it is so imprinted on your mind that it can never be effaced. Listen! "Thou shalt not!" Do you hear? "Thou shalt not"

pretend to be one thing while at heart thou art another. "Thou shalt not" play the hypocrite. "Thou shalt not" live a double life. "Thou shalt not" sow thy field with mingled seed.

PROSPERITY.

I John, 1. "That thou mayest prosper."

If anybody knew how to pray for his friends it was John, the evangelist. Christ taught him. When John prayed for his dear friend Gaius, he asked three things; first, that he might prosper; second, have good health; third, have corresponding spiritual strength. In other words John asked for his friend three blessings—a full purse, a sound body, a strong spirit. This upsets some ideas of the Christian life and disturbs the accepted relation of things.

Some men have business days; some have religious days; some go through each day arm in arm with business and religion. They pray over their religious interests; they pray about their business affairs. Their religion sheds a kind of halo over their business transactions; their business transactions are made a means of advancing the cause of religion. John wanted Gaius to have a full purse; thereby his religious influence might be increased. The man who gives twenty-five thousand dollars a year for the

cause of Christ is a strong factor in the religious life of our nation. He is doing a noble thing. The man who gives twenty-five cents a year to religion is doing a splendid thing if that is all his means permit; but any one can see that he would be worth more to the cause if he could give twenty-five dollars or twenty-five hundred dollars. The man who has not money enough to dress properly or to pay his laundry bill is not as useful or influential as he might be, if he had a fuller purse. The Bible nowhere says that "money is the root of all evil." On the other hand it abounds in the wisest of business maxims —principles which are at the foundation of business success. They were given for our good. John surely set us a good example when he prayed for the financial prosperity of his friend.

DECISION.

Joshua 24:15. Choose you this day whom ye will serve.

You have sometimes been asked to decide for Christ. I wonder if you understand what it really means. There are words and words. Sometimes we get accustomed to using a word without ever having looked up its meaning or understanding it. "Decide" is one of those words made up of two other words, and it means to "cut off." Now you may wonder what "cutting off" has to do with the Christian life. Why should anyone be asked to "cut off" for Christ, and what should he cut? Well, to decide is to cut off a controversy or a struggle and make an end of it.

Last summer the ball team played a game of baseball and won; it played another game with the same opponents and lost. Then there was a controversy—a struggle. It was a question which team was the stronger, and it was said that the third game would decide it. That is, the third game would cut off the controversy and make an end of it. Do you understand?

Last October two men had a quarrel. The matter came before a judge. He listened to all that was said on each side. The judge said; "I will decide this tomorrow." He meant, or what he really said was, "I will cut off this controversy tomorrow; I will make an end of it."

The next day the men listened to his decision—to his cutting off of the struggle and the making of the end of it. The men were not satisfied, and they said "This doesn't decide it; it doesn't cut off the struggle and make an end of it;" and because the words of the judge did not cut off or put an end to it the matter was not decided. Do you understand now what it means to decide?

When you are asked to decide for Christ we mean that there is a controversy in your heart about Christ; there is a kind of struggle about him. One day you are about persuaded to accept Christ and follow him. The next day you are about persuaded to live without Christ. So there is a controversy going on in your heart all the time—a struggle between right and wrong. It is then that the word "decide" is used, and you are asked to "cut off" the struggle, or put an end to it, and to do this in Christ's favor.

One of the real difficulties in the life of a young Christian is a kind of half decision, or half cutting off of the struggle. The partial decision puts one in an unfortunate position. The only safe and happy course is a full, prompt decision for Christ.

Boys who lack decision have the hardest time in life. When a struggle between right and wrong, duty and pleasure, the world and Christ comes up, the quicker it is wisely cut off the better.

ENTANGLEMENTS.

II Tim. 2:4. "No man that warreth entangleth himself."

1. Paul loved Timothy. His advice to his beloved son in the Lord was sound. He seems to have been fond of the figure of the soldier. We are familiar with his exhortation; "Endure hardness as a good soldier." In this text he says; "No man that warreth—that is, no man who wants to be a good soldier—entangleth himself with the affairs of this life." Paul did not mean that a Christian must have nothing to do with the affairs of this life, but that he should not be entangled with them. Did you ever see a bird in a net, his wings caught in the meshes so he could not fly? Then you know what it means to be entangled. Did you ever see an awkward boy on the deck of a steamer get his feet caught in the ropes so he could not walk? Then you know how a Christian is situated who is entangled. It is the Christian's first duty to keep free from all entanglements. An entangled bird cannot fly; an entangled boy cannot walk;

an entangled Christian cannot make progress.

There are many things of this life which may entangle us. To know what they are is to be made cautious.

1. Too much business sometimes proves to be an entanglement. In passing through a town once I called on a friend. He was a Christian—a member of a church. I asked him about the religious life of the community. He told me that there had been unusual interest in religious things there that winter; that many special meetings had been held; that a goodly number of young people had begun a new life. I asked him who they were, thinking that among the number might be some personal friends; but he replied that he did not know. He said he had been building a new barn; he had been very busy; he had not had time to devote to things religious. I saw the barn afterwards. My estimate may not be correct; but I judged the barn to be about 28ft. by 30ft. Here was a man who had enlisted in Christ's service; but the building of a small barn had interfered with his spiritual life, and retarded his progress.

Be a farmer, if you want to; build barns as large as you can wisely plan; but take care not to

build one so large that it will be an entanglement. If you can't build a barn 28ft. by 30ft. without getting entangled among its beams and rafters, let some one else build the barns and you do something for an honest living that will not stop your progress heavenward or retard your spiritual growth.

I was in the office of a business man not long ago. He owns and runs a store. He has occupied various positions of public trust. There is a multitude of interests in his life; yet could you have heard him talk that morning as I did, you would have thought he had nothing to attend to but the religious interests of the community where he lived. The church is beautified each Sunday with flowers from his green house; he is superintendent of the Sunday-school; is always found at his place at morning worship, and at the mid-week prayer-meeting. If you can shoulder a multitude of interests as that man can, without retarding your spiritual development, do it; but if to do so entangles you, let men like him hold town offices, and assume public responsibility. "No man that warreth entangleth himself."

One day not long ago a man said; "I have made a deal of money lately—a great deal of

money. I made enough by a recent transaction to give away half a million dollars." A little later he began to draw his checks for benevolence. He could assume vast business responsibilities; but these burdens did not interfere with his love for the church, his interest in the cause of Christ or his sense of gratitude to God for his blessings. My friend, go into business if you choose; assume as great responsibilities as possible; make all the money you can, make vast sums of it; but if you find that you can do this only at the expense of your Christian character, a bright religious experience, and faithful service, then stop. Character is above achievement; religious experience is worth more than gold; eternity is beyond time.

"No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life."

2. Evil associations are usually an entanglement. These are the more dangerous because the young do not see the danger at all. Sin is often made attractive. One seldom realizes when he is beginning to be entangled.

A boy went from the country to Boston. I counted him among my young friends. Two years after he went to the city he was back in the

country for a few days. He was a wreck, mentally and morally. There was evidence also that he was not far removed from physical wreck. I talked with him one day as he rolled in the tall grass on the farm in an agony of mind.

His cries could be heard far up the road. It was pitiful—indeed it was. But later he told me all about himself. When he went to Boston he had a good boarding place. His associations were good; by these he was helped.

After several months a young fellow whose acquaintance he had made proposed that he change his boarding place. At first he refused; but later he was persuaded. The change was made. He at once became entangled, and the downfall was exceedingly sad. The average boy who starts out to make his way in the world gets a job. Then he gets a boarding place, and for him a boarding place is a house where he can eat and sleep. But the character of his boarding place, aside from the quality of the food, or comfort of his sleeping room may determine his life's experience, and settle his fate for eternity. Life is more than food and lodging—at least it ought to be, and "no man that warreth entangleth himself."

A mistake is also made in the choice of a place to work. A boy has two opportunities. In one there are ten dollars, and clean wholesome surroundings; in the other there are twelve dollars and degrading influences. The thoughtless boy takes the twelve dollars; the boy who has enlisted ought to be able to say: "I would like that larger remuneration for my services, but since I have really enlisted in a warfare, I cannot afford to become entangled for two dollars a thousand times multiplied. I will therefore build a strong, clean foundation, even though some one else takes the larger sum which I so much need. First in my life must be a successful warfare; and 'no man who warreth entangleth himself.' "

The choice of a school or college often has a boy's fate wrapped in it. The associations of school and college are powerful one way or the other. A well known educator told me a year ago that there were three young fellows in the school of which he is principal who were preparing for college. He had been preparing them for the college for which that place is a fitting school. One day he learned indirectly that these students them and asked for an explanation. They told were all going to another college. He sent for

him that they were going to college to get an education; that in the college where they had intended to go, there were practices and customs which would seriously interfere with their educational plans. They did not care to become entangled, and so they were going to another institution, and they went. They acted on the general principal that "No man that warreth entangleth himself." It is a good principle to apply to college life, to business life; but above all, we should not lose sight of it in our religious experience.

WORKERS TOGETHER.

"We then, workers together," 2 Cor., 6: 1.

This is not the whole verse; but these words are the text. There are two words in it for us to think about. They are "workers" and "together."

"WORKERS."

It is not necessary for me to say much about work. We all understand that it is the key to our best development; the secret of our happiest attainment. The working boy has always had an advantage over the idler; he has it now; he always will have it. In the first place he has the advantage of strength. Last November the greatest athletic contest in modern times took place on Soldier's Field at Harvard. The right of one of the men on the Harvard football team, to play, was questioned. He played, and afterwards he acknowledged that he should not have done it. He had received pay at one time in the past in some form of athletics. This deadens the lustre of Harvard's victory. But some men not well versed in such matters are saying:

"What difference does it make? He probably earned money in that way to help himself through college, and he had a right to do it." To such men the ruling of the college athletic associations seems foolish; but it is stated that in the English University the ruling is still more severe, and that a student who works at all for money—even though it be sawing wood—is not allowed a part in the athletic contests. Why? Because the student who works his way through college—whether it be tending furnace with the consequent shoveling coal, or cutting wood, or anything else—is physically stronger than the one who only takes the regular training in the gymnasium. Put a boy who works, against the boy who does not work, and you have an unequal contest always. Blessed is the boy who has something to do, and is willing to do it. In the second place the boy who works has a feeling that he is doing something; that he has a real share in this world's activities. It adds to his self-respect. It adds to other people's respect for him. A few years ago I interviewed several wealthy men, in order to ask them these questions:

"Can you tell when you earned your first money; how much was it; how did you earn it,

and what did you do with it?" Most of the men were aged; some of them were millionaires. They had doubtless made thousands of dollars of which they could not give the history; but without an exception, each man was able to tell all about that first money, and their replies were published in the GOOD WILL RECORD. Not one of them has been able to forget the sense of manliness—the feeling of satisfaction experienced when he had worked and earned something. It mattered not whether he got the money selling buns on training day, or trapping muskrats and selling the skins, or working in a factory, or cutting wood, or doing chores—the sense of having achieved something was there.

"TOGETHER."

"Together" means union. It stands for unity. We are taught its value constantly. Its worth is seen in "E Pluribus Unum." It is taught by "In union there is strength," and by "United we stand; divided we fall." Last summer on the Assembly Athletic field I took some photographs. One of them I counted of no value. After it was developed I thought it was the picture of a boy running in a baseball game. In looking over the photographs several persons came to that and I

said: "It's not a good one, it's blurred; I think the camera must have jarred." But one morning some boys were looking at it and I heard one of them say: "What's he doing anyway?" The boy who is in the picture was near by and I said, for his benefit, in a bit of pleasantry: "Oh, he's *trying* to make a home run." But the boys objected. They told me that it was not the picture of a boy in a ball game; but of two boys in a three-legged race, and they proved it. Two boys were united—running together in such unity that I had not suspected the presence of the second one. That was running "together." If they were after the prize they were "workers together." Whether they won, I do not know; but other things being equal, of course they did.

"WORKERS TOGETHER."

I have no doubt the Corinthians were gratified with the way Paul addressed them. I want to use the same language in speaking to you: "We then, workers together." Imagine Paul addressing the Corinthians in these words: "We then, loungers together," or "We then, idlers together." Would you be pleased if I should stand here today and in all seriousness say to you: "We then, idlers together;" or "We then, loungers

together?" No, you would be ashamed. I counsel you then to be "workers together," for all that is best in the community or in the world. The firm whose partners and employes are "workers together" achieves financial success; the school whose teachers and scholars are "workers together" secures a high standing; the family whose members are "workers together" finds that it has the key to the happiest family life in the world. There are times when we must stand alone; work alone; suffer alone. There are other times when we can do most and be the most by becoming "workers together." Christ came into the world to accomplish his own mission. He worked alone; prayed alone; suffered alone. He also chose twelve men who were to be "workers together." And now he calls us; calls us into his service to be "workers together" for him, and, marvellous to relate, "workers together" with him.

FULL KNOWLEDGE.

I know whom I have believed. 2 Tim. 1 : 12.

The agnostic says: "I do not know." The Christian says: "I believe." Paul was not an agnostic; for he said, "I know." He was a Christian; for he said, "I believe." He put the two expressions together, into one of the most triumphant statements on record: "I know whom I have believed.

There are three ways of getting knowledge. We may read; we may listen to statements from the lips of others; we may have personal acquaintance. Paul had knowledge which he had secured in the three ways. He had read the Old Testament scriptures, with their prophecies about the Messiah. He had been up to Jerusalem to see Peter and hear him tell about Christ. On his way to Damascus he had heard the voice from heaven saying: "Why presecutest thou me?" and he had cried, "What wilt thou have me do?" Some one has remarked that the word Paul used when he said "I know" meant that his

knowledge was interwoven. I don't know whether the word admits of such a construction; but that is the kind of knowledge Paul had of Christ. His knowledge was woven into his very life and being. I have seen various plants and flowers in the past decade which were new to me. Some of them were beautiful; but I cannot tell the names of them now. When I was a boy I found one day, near a stone wall, a bunch of blue flowers. I picked them, and hurried to father who was working in a field near by. "What are these?" I asked. "Liverwort blossoms," said father. Later in the season I discovered a red flower of great beauty. I picked it, and delighted with my find, hastened to mother. "What is it?" I inquired. "That is a columbine," said mother. In the same way I learned to know the anemone, the adder tongue and the pipsissewa and each season I visited the places where these flowers bloomed; I gathered them for myself; I gathered them for mother, and friends. I loved the flowers and the knowledge of them was woven into my life. You can puzzle me with some flowers; but liverwort and anemone, columbine and pipsissewa, are a part of my being. I cannot forget; I cannot be confused; because I know. If

you stood on this platform with me you could see the design on the carpet which covers it. The design in the carpet is not a stamp—a mere impression. It is interwoven. You could not take out the design without destroying the carpet. You cannot take out knowledge that is interwoven in a man's life without destroying the life itself. It's a part of it. Such was Paul's knowledge of Christ. Romans might imprison, threaten, and persecute; they could even behead, but they could not separate his knowledge of Christ from him.

One day, two or three years ago, a bookkeeper for a wholesale firm in Maine left his native state and the firm he had served and went to California. He had read about Christ; he had listened to the testimony of others; but this was the extent of his knowledge of the son of God. He had robbed his employers of two thousand dollars, but the firm had neither discovered the theft nor suspected him of dishonesty. On the Pacific slope, he was persuaded to accept Christ. As soon as he did this he confessed that he was a thief. He explained the circumstances, and was advised to say nothing about it till he could earn the money to pay back the amount; and then he

could inform the firm he had robbed, and make restitution. But he said: "No, I cannot do it, I cannot be right toward God till I am right with my fellow men." He crossed the continent—from California to Maine—in order to confess his crime, and to say he wanted to pay back as fast as possible. What is the difference between the young man on his way from Maine to California with his money gotten by fraud, and the same young man, on his way from California to Maine to make his crime known to his employers, who have never for a moment suspected him? It is a difference in knowledge of Christ—the difference between knowledge gained from books and testimony, and knowledge gained by accepting Christ and testing his power to save.

My young friend, it is not enough for you to be in possession of knowledge about Christ, gained from books and testimony. Such knowledge is the basis for the fuller knowledge which you may have if you will, but it is not enough. The knowledge of Christ you should seek is that which is gained by personal surrender to him, and personal testing of his power, and his sympathy—such knowledge as will enable you to say: "I have knowledge of him whom I have believed

and the knowledge is woven into my being; it is a part of my life, and nothing can separate it from me, or separate me from the love of Him."

SEEING THE INVISIBLE.

Heb. 11:27. "Seeing him who is invisible."

The eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews is sometimes called "God's Roll of Honor." Moses' name appears on the roll. You have read the story of Moses, and are familiar with its details. But the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews makes an additional statement. He says that Moses "endured as seeing him who is invisible." That is invisible which cannot be seen. The air is invisible. The message which passes us on the wires of the telegraph or telephone is invisible. Spirit is invisible. God is a spirit; He cannot be seen and no man has seen Him at any time. You understand that our New Testament is "translated from the original tongues." Sometimes a translation can be worded so as to make the meaning clearer than at first appears in our English version. It is said that Martin Luther translated this passage thus: "he endured as though he saw him whom he did not see." Do you understand? That is what Moses did—endured as though he saw

Him whom he did not see. He acted as though he saw God; but God was not seen with the natural eye. Stephen, when he was stoned, endured as though he saw Him whom he did not see. Paul when persecuted did not see God, but he endured as though he did see Him. So have a multitude of others. Last week a boy friend was tempted to dishonesty: he had a chance to be very dishonest, with no prospect that he would be found out. He thought about God and knew that God saw him, and that the dishonest act would be a sin against Him. He resisted the temptation just as though he saw God watching him: but God is invisible—He cannot be seen. I think the men who do the most heroic deeds are men who, like Moses, endure and do as though seeing the invisible: and it will greatly help you and me if we form the habit of thinking of God as He is—a person, but invisible, and then endeavor to act as we would if we could see Him.

SUBDUE; SUBMIT.

Gen. 1:28; James 4:7.

There are two words I propose to leave with you. One is in the Old Testament; the other is in the new. The first is in the book of Moses; the second is in the epistle of James. One is "Subdue;" the other is "Submit." Each is the part of a command; both commands are binding upon us, for our own good. God commanded Adam to subdue the earth. It was a long time ago; but the law has never been repealed. It is still man's duty to subdue the earth and if he doesn't do it the earth subdues him. I had a garden once. It was well laid out, carefully planted, and gave abundant promise of a good harvest. I spent much time in that garden watching the grass and picking out weeds. I was master of the garden. I kept my eye on the growing plants, and on the sprouting weeds. I was master because I subdued it. In July I went on a vacation which lasted six short weeks. On my return that garden was a "sight to be seen." The weeds which I had kept under had tri-

umphed. Lettuce and onions, beets and cucumbers, beans and tomatoes were swallowed up by rampant weeds. Because I was not there to subdue them, they had quickly triumphed and brought the garden into a hopeless condition. In the little garden plot we call character there are seeds of evil as ready to spring up as were rag-weeds in my lettuce bed, or pig-weed in the cucumber patch. If you don't watch out and subdue, these evil things will spring up, grow fast and conquer you. You had better watch. Two weeks ago you told me that you had not told a lie in three weeks and that you were sure you would never tell another. This morning you lied. The old tendency is there—subdue it.

Last winter you were guilty of a petty theft. It was a bit of contemptible meanness, and you felt so guilty that you resolved that you would never do another dishonest thing. You lived an honest life till last evening. You feel guilty again today; and you are convinced that the dishonest germ is there. It is of the earth—subdue it.

You dropped swearing a year ago. This morning you uttered an oath in an unguarded moment. The old habit will be upon you again

if you are not watchful. It is your duty to subdue it. Whatever is dishonest, whatever is unlovely, whatever is not of good report, whatever is impure—subdue it.

James says: "Submit." The full instruction is to submit yourself to God. This is not a command to submit your body to God. It is not a command to submit your mind to God. Nor is it a command to submit your spirit to God. It is a simple, direct command to submit yourself—body mind and spirit, to God, your creator. Joy does not reach its height, life does not reach its fulness, character does not reach its perfection till we have learned to submit. And so I am asking you to take these two words with you, and to regard them as commands to be obeyed. Subdue the earthy; submit to the heavenly; subdue the human; submit to the Divine.

VENOMOUS BEASTS.

He shook off the beast into the fire and felt no harm. Acts 28: 5.

It was a cold, wet morning on the island of Malta, and the band of shipwrecked travellers, of which Paul was the most important, had suffered all manner of discomforts. The best cure for one's own sufferings is the ministering to the comfort of others. It was not in Paul to sit around and shiver while others fed the fire. He was a saved man and he was saved to serve. He quickened his own blood by moving for others. Once when he picked up some sticks and leaves to throw on the fire a viper fastened itself on his hand. It was a deadly thing—that viper was. People were scared and expected to see the man swell up and die. Paul did nothing of the kind. He shook the venomous thing off; it perished; Paul was unharmed.

Reptiles are cold blooded; a good fire warms them into life. In the religious world a fire quickens the poisonous. There are forces of evil which seem to be dead; religious fervor in a

community will warm these into activity. There are experiences in the life of churches called revivals. Some of the meanest things by ungodly men have been done when the community was aroused to religious enthusiasm. When the church is chilled through or too benumbed to do anything but shiver the devil can sleep. An active church quickens him as a fire warms a viper. If you don't believe this keep your ears open the next time there is an unusual moral or religious interest in a community.

One evening I reached Bath, Maine. I was there on a personal errand. I did not know that there was to be a meeting in the city that night under the auspices of the Civic League and that its secretary was to be there; nor had I heard of the unusual temperance agitation in progress in the city. I was standing on the street waiting for a trolley car when a repulsive looking man paused near me. "Say," he said to me, "see here, are you one of the men that's come to be at that temperance meeting tonight?" It was my first knowledge of the meeting, but I said: "Well, I just came in on the train." "See here," was the reply with an oath, "we don't want you here; the sooner you get out the—"

Just then the trolley stopped for men and as I stepped on the car the man shouted to the conductor: "Take him up to Brunswick and keep him there; we don't want him here." The car moved on and I left him there on the pavement as excited as a lizard near a hot fire. It was only a suggestion of the excitement in the rum-saloons of the town that night—excitement and venom stirred by the fires of temperance agitation. I suppose there was enough of hissing and of thrusts at temperance that night in Bath to have caused the Civic League of Maine to suddenly swell up and die—poisoned by the venom of the lawless and unclean if there were any power in it. At Malta it was the viper that perished; Paul was unharmed.

A series of meetings was being held at West Hampden, in Penobscot County, Maine. The preaching was fearless and searching; great interest was aroused and much good was being done. Three miles from the church lived a man more ungodly than his ungodly neighbors. The religious warmth in the community aroused him; the religious enthusiasm started his slumbering hatred of the church into activity. One day he said to his neighbors: "Those meetings have been

going on long enough; let's go over tonight and put an end to them. I'm going to break up the meeting tonight, anyway. Come on." So when the time came they started for the church. The man had much to say; he said enough to have struck terror to the heart of church and preacher had they been afraid of angry thrust of venomous tongues; but neither preacher nor church was really in any danger. At Malta it was not Paul, but the poison in the viper that perished. These men reached the church; they entered it with hearts full of hatred. But the man's threat was never carried out. Before the meeting closed he asked the people to pray for him; and to the end of his days he was an earnest, consistent member of that church. Neither preacher nor people suffered from him; the poison and hatred in his heart came to an end like the poison they thought would end Paul's career.

In every-day life our best efforts may seem to provoke evil to activity. A fire warms the cold blooded; warmth means life. I never suspected that my schoolmates were opposed to religion until I accepted Christ; their petty attempts at persecution were simple proof that the opposition was in their hearts; but nothing had happened

before to warm it into activity. But there was never a sneer or a laugh or a joke at the expense of my Christian purpose that did me any harm. In fact the harmlessness of the worst attempts to annoy me was the basis for a stronger faith and more determined purpose in life.

Not much progress can ever be made by one who fears to build a fire lest he be the object of a poisoned thrust; small achievement indeed in the realm of mortals or religion for him who is frightened when he knows that evil is actively engaged against him. That heartless jibe because you are active in Christian work cannot harm you if your faith is in God; that evil thrust of a poisoned tongue will not injure you if your hope is in Christ; that sudden activity of an evil force in your heart or life will prove impotent as the viper on Paul's hand if you have the courage to continue faithful in well doing. "Paul shook off the beast into the fire and felt no harm."

THE POWER OF A BRAVE DEED.

"Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear." I Samuel 17: 36.

You have heard much about the first wrong deed in a boy's life. Perhaps you have been told how the first petty theft opens the way for a career of dishonesty and crime; how the first glass prepares the way for intemperance and drunkenness; how the first immoral act leads to others, and to a life of vice and consequent shame. If so, then you have probably mastered one or two very simple propositions like these: if you never drink the first glass of alcoholic drinks, you will never become a drunkard; if you do not commit the first dishonest act, you will never become a thief; if you are never guilty of an immoral act you will never become a vicious man. All this is true. In any life of crime there must have been a beginning. A wicked deed is cumulative. By this I mean that a wicked deed gains force by addition. A boy stole ten cents. The theft was not detected, and one day he had a chance to steal a dollar. He

remembered that stolen dime, and his escape. The memory of it encouraged him in the belief that he could take the dollar and not get caught. He had now added to his first petty crime; and a willingness and desire to steal had grown strong. Each dishonest act after that added to the influence of the first theft. The last I knew of him he was on Blackwell's Island—a convicted criminal.

The history of any drunkard you may chance to know can be written in the same way. There was a first glass. The memory of it opened the way for another. Each glass added to that first one made drinking easier, and drunkenness more probable. That first glass was cumulative. But I wonder if you think much about the cumulative power of a good deed. A noble, courageous act is cumulative just as a mean one is, and you ought to remember it. David had been faithful in watching his father's sheep. A bear came out to attack the lambs and David slew it. David got the idea that he could do just such things. That brave act was cumulative. One day after that a lion prowled around, bent on carrying off a lamb. David remembered how much grit—how much real courage it took to slay the bear, and the very memory of it made him bold. He

killed the lion. Afterwards he reached the Israelitish camp and found everything in confusion. All Israel was dismayed. Goliath had again defied the Israelites, and there was no one to go out against him. But David remembered how hard it was to slay the bear; and how much easier it was to destroy the lion. The memory of two brave acts inspired him. He said to Saul: "I slew both the lion and the bear," and explained his belief that he could put a stop to the boastings of that giant of the Philistines, and he did it. But if David had not mustered all the courage he had and slain the bear; if he had not been helped by the memory of it to kill the lion, he would never have gone against Goliath. That first brave deed upon the hillside in defence of his father's flock was cumulative. It gathered force by addition; but there had to be a first brave deed. And it is true today that there must be a first noble act before there can be a life of good deeds, just as there must be a first glass before you can become a drunkard, or a sot.

A clipping agency, at the request of Dr. S. Weir Mitchell saved records in ten months of eleven hundred and sixty-three persons who risked their lives in an effort to save others from

peril of water, or fire, or death through some calamity. Each such act, except in cases where the would-be rescuer lost his own life, paved the way for other acts of bravery. I know of one boy who has saved six persons from drowning. A splendid record; but there was a first attempt, and the others followed.

There must be a first facing of an audience, no matter how small your courage, before you can become an orator; a first stand for the right before you can be an efficient champion of good; a first testimony for Christ before you can be a strong witness for Him. The cumulative power of a wrong act means that, if you don't watch out, it will be easier for you to be mean than to be manly. The cumulative power of a good deed means that, by watchfulness for opportunities, it will be easier for you to do the manly, heroic, Christ-like thing than to act the part of meanness or cowardice.

"Each victory will help you some other to win." "Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear." Hasn't he been gaining courage by adding to his first brave act? Now let him tackle Goliath of Gath; he is well able to do it.

David was first the champion of his father's sheep; afterwards the leader of a nation. Do the

first noble, manly thing that presents itself. It will open the way for still nobler deeds.

CONDITIONS OF GOOD SUCCESS.

Thou shalt have good success. Joshua 1:8.

These words are brought to my mind by a letter just received from a young man, once a Good Will boy. In speaking of his own welfare he says: "I am having good success." He was not quoting Scripture and he did not know that his language would suggest to me the first chapter of Joshua; but it does.

Moses was dead. God spoke to Joshua, and assured him of good success. The success was to rest on three conditions, strength, courage and obedience. Times change, customs and methods change. Principles remain forever the same. Our manner of living is quite unlike that of Joshua's time; but the conditions upon which one may have good success are the same today as in the olden times. Good success crowns the strong, courageous life. Be strong, have courage, obey God. But one of you is thinking of men who have never been regarded as strong men, who are moral cowards, and utterly ignore the law of God. You call them successful. But

is their success *good* success? Last week a few miles from here a man was convicted of murder in the first degree, and sentenced to prison for life. Once he planned a murder; he succeeded in his plan. The plan was damnable; his success was fiendish. The cashier of a bank planned to carry on a system of embezzlement—a system of stealing. He carried out the plan in all its details. The plan was wicked; his success was iniquitous. Be strong; have courage; obey God and thou shalt have good success—that quality of success that crowns a life of wise activity.

Strength. To meet the first condition you must keep the body under subjection. Only the subjected body long remains strong. It is one thing to be a king; it is another thing to be a king's subject. It is one thing to rule; it is another thing to be ruled. One may control his appetites; or he may be controlled by his appetites. Whoever controls his appetites and passions is a true man. Whoever is controlled by his appetites and passions is a glutton, a drunkard, a libertine. To be strong, every part of the body must be in subjection. A few days ago a boy told me he didn't want to do a certain thing any more. Why? Because he had got so he

could do it, and he wanted to do something else. He could do it—just do it, and that was all. But there was not a man in the country who would give him fifty cents for doing it all day. There are men near us who receive three dollars a day for doing what that boy can do. The difference is in bringing the hands and fingers in such subjection to the will, that they do quickly and skillfully what my boy friend's hands can just do, and only do.

Yesterday a boy in my office was looking at a picture—a drawing. Having admired the work, he said: "I would like to be able to do that. myself." The difference between that boy and the successful artist who drew the picture was only a matter of fingers subject to the will and taste. The boy by nature is as artistic in taste and has as much love for the beautiful as the successful artist; the one has his fingers under subjection, the other has fingers, but he cannot make them do what he wants them to do. Be strong. To be strong see to it that your body is brought, in all its parts, in complete subjection. This is the secret of strength; strength is a condition of good success.

Courage. To be courageous one does not need to enlist in the army or to become an officer in the United States navy. Nor does one need to search for the great thing to do in order to prove his heroism. The world has its heroes; but there are more acts of real heroism each day than the world hears of in a decade. Once—long ago—those who looked toward Mt. Vesuvius saw the great cloud of smoke rising about her summit, and spreading out so it looked like a great uplifted tree. Then fell that awful shower of ashes which buried the doomed cities—Herculaneum and Pompeii—a thousand years deep. Centuries passed, and as the doomed cities were uncovered, there came to light the form of the watchman who stood at his post, though all the city was fleeing. The world sings the praises of that hero—the watchman of Pompeii. But last week two boys went into the woods of Maine hunting. The snow storm came on, and the boys were bewildered. Our local daily tells the story thus:

"The boys were eleven and fourteen. The older became exhausted, and lay down. The younger tried to defend him from the cold and the storm. He secured branches of evergreen

and built them up over and about him. The steam whistle of the nearest village blew; men who were in the woods in the storm heard it and escaped from their predicament. But how could this boy go, and leave his exhausted companion in the wilderness. Ah, who can measure the length of that night of suffering; who can tell how long were the hours to that lonely boy hero. The day broke. Near by the lad heard the sounds of a woodman's axe, and left his companion long enough to go and tell the tale. Help was then secured; when he returned with the man to the place where the boy lay the soul had left the body; and the lifeless form of the unfortunate young hunter was carried to his home. And today the life of the lad who kept the silent vigil through all the long night in that awful storm is in the balance. You need not go back to the ruins of those infamous cities of the past for lessons in courage. The story of the watchman of old interests me; but the tale of that boy hero of the Maine forest thrills me through and through.

Come nearer home. There is a boy at Good Will thirteen years of age. It is his duty to light a fire and sweep the floor of the Good Will office

at seven o'clock in the morning. He has no key. Some one unlocks the door for him. One frosty morning last fall no one appeared to unlock the door. The keys were in possession of persons who, by peculiar circumstances, were away from Good Will. I reached the office at five minutes of nine. I found the doughty lad there, on the door step. His fingers were cold; he was stamping his little feet on the stone door step to keep up circulation. Five rods away there was a cottage into which he might have gone. He might have deserted his post and played with boys within sight. But his post of duty was in that office; if he couldn't be there, he would at least be as near it as he could. For one hour and fifty-five minutes he had stood at the threshold waiting for the key. The stolid indifference to danger on the part of the watchman of old; the devotion of the boy in the storm to his perishing companion; the faithfulness of the lad at the door step of the Good Will office—these are the same quality of courage. There are opportunities for the exercise of courage in our daily life. There are exhibitions of it all about us. To undertake a liberal education, working one's way through college; to decide to devote two, three, or five

years to the task of becoming expert in some trade or occupation; to deliberately announce one's self a disciple of Jesus Christ—all such deeds are manifestations of a courageous spirit.

Obedience. This, too, is a condition of good success. Such obedience is submission to the will and the law of God. Some of us want to escape discipline. Here is a piece of marble. It is rough. There is no symmetry or beauty about it, but it is marble. There is another piece of marble. It is a thing of beauty and value. The first piece has escaped the hammer and chisel. The other has been fashioned by uncounted blows, and the cutting process. There is a piece of silver ore just as it came from a mint in Montana; and here is a piece of wood I have just taken from the Good Will Museum. The ore and the wood are unsightly and of little value. Here is the cup won from the Camp Durrell base ball nine by the Good Wills in an Assembly game of ball. It is silver; the handles are wood. This piece of ore has escaped the crusher, the smelting furnace, the refiner's fire; and because it has escaped it is of little worth. This piece of wood has no admirers and no value. It escaped the saw, the chisel, and the carver's tools. But see

this cup! Its handles came from the hands of the wood carver; this metal has passed through the furnace and the refiner's fire, and has submitted to the tools of the burnisher. There is severe discipline in store for those of you who are to have good success. Like the wood you will have to be fashioned. Like the ore you will have to be refined and burnished. This we call training and discipline. It is obedience; it is submission. Just as we are strong, courageous and submissive in the school of God's discipline, we shall have good success.

GIVING.

It is more blessed to give than to receive. Acts 20: 35.

It is the Christian's privilege to give. If one is so selfish in spirit, so narrow in sympathy, that it is not to him a privilege, then it becomes a duty.

I. Every boy and young man should give. The giving should be intelligent. He should be able to give a reason for his generosity; and be able to defend it. A few weeks ago country districts were infested by men claiming they had a broken arm, or a festering sore, and asking for aid. One of these men appeared at Good Will. He did not come to me, but he told a pitiful tale to some of the boys. It is said that one of the older boys gave the fraud fifty cents. I suspect it was all the boy had. I know that another boy had thirty-five cents. It was his all; but he gave it to the imposter because his heart was touched by the pitiful tale. That was giving; but it was not intelligent giving. The boys gave without

knowing whether their benefaction was wise or reasonable.

II. Every boy and young man should give. The giving should be cheerful. I do not know that God loves a giver. There is much giving which does not commend itself to the more thoughtful in a community; and it can hardly meet the approval of God. No, I am not sure that God loves a giver. But God loves a cheerful giver. Let your giving be cheerful.

III. Every boy and young man should give. The giving should be according as God has prospered him. One can hardly question the wisdom of giving a stated portion of one's income. It is the best way. A boy ought to adopt that plan at the very beginning. He then knows at any time what he can give. A man said to me not long ago: "Wife and I have our way of giving—we give when we feel like it, and when we don't feel like it, we don't give." There is a better way. It is to give from principle; whether you feel like it or not.

There is much good in store for him who gives.

I. Giving broadens one's sympathies. It makes life interesting. It gets a person to thinking about something besides himself, or his own

immediate surroundings. One day a large number of visitors appeared at Good Will. It was an excursion. A group of the visitors had started from the office to go to the Chapel, and were passing Christian Endeavor Cottage. Some one mentioned it. "What!" exclaimed one of the group, "is that Endeavor Cottage? I must go into it, and go over it. I helped build it, I gave twenty-five cents towards it." The visitor was one of several hundred Endeavorers who gave twenty-five cents each toward that cottage. It was not a large sum, but it had increased the interest of the one who gave it.

II. Giving increases one's enjoyment in life. The Scripture says: "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth; there is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to poverty." This does not mean that giving makes a man rich; or that withholding makes him poor, but there is such a thing, and we often see it. When I was a boy mother took my brother and me to the graduating exercises of the Institute. The band played. One of the players came over where we sat and shook hands with us. Just as he left he gave me a handful of peppermint drops. To me it was a great treasure. We did not get much

confectionery in those days, and a handful of such sweets I had never possessed before. I might have given mother some of my treasure. She would have enjoyed it, and I would have been pleased to see her happy. I might have given my brother some—he was mighty fond of such things, was that brother—and I would have known that he, too, was sharing my treasure. But I was too selfish—stingy is a better word just here—and I held the treasure in my fist. Graduating exercises are not interesting to boys of the age I had reached. Essays and declamations had no charm for me. The exercises were long, the night was hot, and I fell asleep. When the last essay had been read, and the last word spoken, mother woke me. My first thought was of my candy. There was considerable stickiness in the palm of my hand, and there were traces of syrup between my fingers. That was all. I had held that little treasure of sweet in my warm, close fist, till it had melted and trickled away between my fingers. Mother didn't get any of it. My brother didn't get any of it. I didn't get any of it. But it was gone. I have seen the same thing later in life on a larger scale—men who grasp this world's goods till their treas-

ure is gone, and they neither have it themselves, nor have blessed others with it. Yet they have become poor. Such a course is folly.

III. Giving affords one a knowledge that he is a co-worker with God. A more satisfying knowledge than this, one cannot have. It is worth much for one to know that he is working with God. I have a friend who has had the privilege of working with some of the best known preachers in the world, as an assistant. If I mention a well-known London preacher, my friend exclaims, "I worked with him once two weeks." If I have occasion to speak of the greatest preacher Brooklyn ever held, my friend says: "Ah, did you know him? I worked with him in his church once." It is plain as one talks with him that he glories in having been a co-worker with well-known men. It may be an honor. Let it pass. Better, infinitely better than to be a co-worker with this man or that, no matter how famous he may be, is to be a worker with God for the advancement of His kingdom. We may so give of our means that we may know that he owns our sacrifices, and that we are workers together with Him.

THE STRONG MAN'S NEED.

"Because you are strong." I John 2:14.

The Bible is a book for the strong as well as for the weak. Its promises are not alone for the sick or feeble. Its precepts are for the young; not for the aged only. I may need the Bible sometime in the future if I am sick; I cannot tell. I need the Bible now because I am in health. Perhaps I shall need the Bible sometime in the future when I am old; I am not sure. I need it now because I am young. God's Word is not medicine; it is food. It is not a prescription; it is Life. But if we make it ours now, it will be ours when sickness or age approaches. If I were the captain of a ship, I would not sail from the harbor, no matter how fair the weather, without a compass. I would need it under prosperous skies; if I had it then, I would have it when the storm overtook the ship.

It is the custom to pray much for the sick and the feeble. It is a good custom; may it never die out. But more and more do I see the wisdom

of praying for the strong. We think the sick may die; but that which is worse than death may overtake the strong. For a strong man to be left to himself and become a power for evil—a leader of others in iniquity—is sadder than for the sick man to die. The feeble may die; the strong may spread moral death.

You are familiar with the story of the boy in Golden Rule Cottage who proposed to say his prayers at bed-time because he wanted God to protect him, but who didn't see any need of praying in the morning because he could take care of himself in the day-time. It is a mistake which others have made. It is what we call the self confidence of the strong. But if I am going to pray but once a day, it must be in the morning. We may feel that we are all the time under God's protecting care, but if there is one part of the twenty-four hours of the day when I need him more than another, it's in the day-time, when I am about my business or meeting my fellow-men, or writing letters, or "saying things." When I am asleep at night I make no blunders, I wound no one's feelings with my tongue; tell no lies; commit no robbery; concoct no ungodly schemes. If I am ever to be allowed to do such

things, or if there is any danger of incurring guilt, it is in the day-time when I am awake. Because we are in the world—strong and active—we need God's watchful care, and his restraining power. Let the feeble pray; it is well. The strong must pray, or something may go wrong. Let the feeble read the Bible and comfort themselves; it is well. But the strong must be fortified by truth or evil may triumph in the life.

DOING A GREAT WORK.

Neh. 6: 3. "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down."

About four hundred and forty-five years before Christ was born in Bethlehem of Judea, Nehemiah saw Hanani, and inquired of him about the Jews that had escaped which were left of the captivity. He also inquired about Jerusalem. Hanani told Nehemiah that the walls of the city were broken down and the gates destroyed with fire. Nehemiah sat down and wept. His sorrow was to some purpose. He arose and determined to rebuild the walls. The work commenced. Sanballat was greatly disturbed; so were Tobiah, Geshem, the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites. Sanballat resorted to strategy. He sent word to Nehemiah—a kind of invitation it was—to meet him for a conference in some one of the villages on the plains of Ono. But Nehemiah understood the situation and read between the lines. He replied: "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down." Four other messages did Nehemiah receive, each of the same

nature, but to all of them he sent the same answer: "I cannot come down." Other attempts were made to triumph over the prophet, all of which are recorded for you in the sacred Book. Nehemiah was a man in peril. Nehemiah was a fortunate man. He was in peril as is every one who devotes his powers and energies to the service of God and God's people. Such a person is exposed to peculiar temptations and is the object of crafty attacks.

The devil takes no interest in his own. He has no special concern for those who, living purposeless lives, will naturally and surely yield to the forces of evil. His chief concern is for those who are building up the kingdom of righteousness.

He was a fortunate man because he had a purpose in his heart big enough to fill it. You who work on the farm, in the laundry, in the bakery, in the printing office, you cannot see any practical lesson in this incident. But bear in mind that you, too, are builders. You are not at work on the wall of Jerusalem, but you are building—building for eternity, and that which you build is character. This chapel in which we worship is a completed structure. The chapel is the sum

total of granite and mortar and wood, which constitute the building. Your character is the sum total of the love, hope, faith, gentleness, truthfulness and reverence which goes into it and makes you what you are; or the sum total of the hate, fear, malice, deception and intemperance which constitute yourself. Each day you add to the sum total, just as the builder increased the amount of granite and mortar in these walls. If you are building for God, you are engaged in a great work. You cannot afford to step down. But there is peril all about you, and you must be as watchful as Nehemiah of old if you are to succeed. We should never lose sight of the fact that character building is a great work. The very thought of a structure for eternity ennobles and inspires.

A few weeks ago a boy went from his country home to a small city to live. The other day a friend of mine met him. The boy said he was getting along well, that the rest of the fellows smoked cigarettes and so he did; and then added: "The rest of them drink, and I suppose I will have to begin. They all do." The boy's eyes are not half opened. Such surprising stupidity is not excusable. When asked to drink, why did

not the boy remember that he is developing character; that the character is the sum total of what he puts into it? Why does he not say in his heart, "I am doing a great work; I cannot come down?" I can answer the question because I know the boy, and realize how unfortunate he is. He has not a real purpose in his heart. A big purpose was Nehemiah's strength. The lack of purpose is that boy's weakness. Be it every one's privilege to regard the work of developing character as a great work, whatsoever the daily occupation may be, and when the temptation to a dishonest act approaches, you have a right to say, "I am doing a great work; I cannot come down." When the intemperate ask you to drink with them, you can say: "I cannot come down." He who assails you with the suggestion of immorality and lust may wisely be given the same answer—"I cannot come down."

"THE LENGTH OF DAYS."

With long life will I satisfy him. Ps. 91 : 16.

In November the Baptist church of Damariscotta, Me., appointed seven delegates to attend a quarterly meeting in a neighboring town. In appointing these men no attention was paid to their age, but afterwards it was discovered that their ages were as follows: 78, 78, 78, 75, 72, 78 and 74. The average age was over seventy-six years. Had the church wished thus to call attention to the good age attained by her membership, three other men might have been appointed who are strong and able bodied enough to have attended the quarterly meeting, each of which has lived more than four score years. There is no doubt that "righteousness tendeth to life." I have known two or three of these men several years, and am convinced that in them is also fulfilled that promise in the last of the ninety-first psalm, "With long life will I satisfy him." But unfortunately the text does not express the original meaning as plainly as does the margin, which reads, "With length of days—or of his days—

will I satisfy him." Given, a man young or old who has fulfilled the conditions upon which this promise is based, and we may expect its absolute fulfillment.

I.

Late one November afternoon, I rang the door bell of a cosy village house in Maine, and was greeted by an aged man who was gradually losing his hold on life. It was my first interview with him, and I was delighted with all I heard. I soon understood why he was called "Uncle John" by most of his friends, and I was quite willing to become one of his nephews. His thin gray locks were as "a crown of glory," for he was found in righteousness. The genuine piety of "Uncle John" no one who met him as I did could doubt. His language was that of the saints. When his good wife would say, "Come, come, John, you must stop telling long stories and get me a pail of water," and Uncle John would reply, "Yes, yes, many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all," however irreverent or sacrilegious such a reply might seem from other lips, coming from "Uncle John" no one was shocked, and the

reply would seem as wise and appropriate as any that could possibly be offered. When he made a misstep at the top of the garret stairs, and lost his hold on a peck measure of beans, and the beans, Uncle John and the measure came rattling down the stairway with prodigious noise, however profane it might seem for others to have done it, for "Uncle John" to quote scripture on the entire downward trip seemed appropriate and suggestive. Life was full of sweet for him and he had no fear of death. "Yes, indeed," he said to me in that first interview, "I have been greatly blessed. I have lived a good many years, and I never expected to have so good a place to wait for the boat."

"Wait for the boat!" It was Uncle John's way of talking about that awful change which men call death, and dying was but the coming of an unseen messenger to row him across the river. I understood that night how in him had been fulfilled the promise, "with the length of days will I satisfy him." One day, months after that first interview, the boatman came, and "Uncle John" went across to the unseen shore. I sat by the side of his pastor in the village pulpit, at the close of the funeral services, and watched young men,

as they looked on the face of the dead for the last time, and I whispered this: "I'd rather so live that young men might pay such a tribute to my memory as this, than to have any monument of granite or marble that wealth could build." As the procession moved slowly away from the village church toward the cemetery on the hill, I discovered a young man still lingering by the church door and yielding to his great sorrow. Thinking that he might be a near relative and overlooked in the arrangements for the hour, I said to him, "My friend, was this man a relative of yours?"

"Oh no," he replied, with a fresh token of his grief, "No, but he had always been so kind to me."

"Uncle John" had fulfilled the first verse of the ninety-first psalm, and the last verse of the same psalm was fulfilled in him, and he was satisfied. But that was not strange. A man ought to be satisfied with four score years and four.

II.

Now it was about the same time, that I was riding on the Maine Central Railroad, one morning, when my friend Dudley boarded the train

and was welcomed to a seat by my side. He had his books with him and was on the way to his daily recitations.

"You are almost through with your course at the Institute are you not," I asked.

"Yes sir," was the enthusiastic reply, "two months will end it."

"And have you any plan, Dudley, beyond the Institute course?" I asked.

"Oh, yès," he replied, "I shall remain at home through the summer vacation; in September I shall enter college, and in four years I'll graduate. Then I shall be ready for work." He hesitated a moment and then added, "I shall be twenty-two when I graduate."

Even while he was speaking the train was "slowing up," and Dudley said "Good bye." As I continued the journey alone I thought much of the young man's prospects. What a splendid outlook! Here was a strong young man with a laudable ambition and with definite plans. To that life work he would bring not only a strong body, a cultured intellect, but a living faith and a Christian character. It was enough to make one like me long to go back and commence life over again and cultivate such a plan as his.

It was just four weeks after this chat on the train, when I received from Dudley's home this telegram:

"Can you come and see Dudley? He asks it."

I knew then that the rumor that my friend's health was broken, and that he was never to realize his hopes for this life, must be true. I hastened to his home for a memorable interview. I do not need to recall how the dear fellow had changed, or how wasted was the form that had seemed so strong, when last I saw him. As I took his emaciated hand in mine, in response to his smile of recognition, I said:

"Dudley, I'm glad I could come and see you."

"Yes," he murmured, "I'm glad you came today. I'm going to-night. I hoped to go last night,—but I'm here. But I shall go." I marveled greatly at what he told me of plans laid down; of hopes relinquished; of hopes infinitely brighter for the future than he had entertained before. But this I saw, "With the length of his days he was satisfied." Years have passed since the boatman came for "Uncle John," and since Dudley relinquished his hope of the life that now is, but the promise that he who trusts shall be satisfied, endures.

III.

And last week I was in a quiet home in Aroostook county. The mother in the household has lived beyond her threescore years and ten. I may never see her again in this world. As I was about to leave she asked that a chapter might be read and a prayer offered. While one went for the Bible, the aged mother said to me:

"Three years ago I had a dream. I thought then it would come to pass before this, but it has not yet. But I think it will come to pass soon now."

She hesitated a moment; but I felt sure she would tell me, and I waited.

"I dreamed," she said, "I dreamed that I was in a beautiful place,—Oh, so beautiful, I can't tell—and there was a wonderful river, flowing so deep and smooth, and I was so near it, my feet seemed to just touch it. I think it was the river of life."

Great tears filled her tender eyes, and her voice trembled with intense longing. The sacred book was handed to me, and I reverently turned and read of the beatific vision of John: "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and

the Lamb." And when the prayer had been offered I knew that in her also had the promise been fulfilled, and "With the length of her days, she was satisfied."

IV.

I had written the above when a letter came to my desk bearing a foreign stamp. It told me of the suffering of a boy friend whom I had expected to meet within ten days. But weeks ago, he was the victim in a sad accident. Day by day his strength had been failing, till the physician had little hope of his recovery. The letter said it had been hard for my friend—all this suffering, but he had borne it manfully. Several months ago he announced his determination to stand always for the right, and his life since then has been unlike the old. I shut my eyes and try to imagine Johnny pale and wasted, but it is beyond the power of my fancy, for he was so strong and active. The letter about him contains this sentence, "He says he will be satisfied to live or die, but he does want to live." Think of it. "Satisfied!" And so God is able to fulfill this promise for the aged man, the

ambitious young student, the weary mother, or the fun loving boy.

"With the length of days I will satisfy."