

chief benefactors of the World in its social and religious reformations. The fiery zeal of Luther and Knox has often been censured. Assuredly it was not in either at all times so perfectly under the guidance of heavenly wisdom as could be wished; yet who can estimate the importance of the indomitable energy and burning zeal of these men to the success of the reformation in Germany and Scotland? It is grand to see how their zeal made them strong to burst asunder the fetters which had for ages enslaved the mind of Europe. And I cannot but think that, but for the Christian sincerity and noble earnestness of Cromwell, British liberty might have perished in its cradle; and, had not Burke been as earnest as he was wise and eloquent, it might at the close of the last century have gone down in the darkness and anarchy of a licentious democracy. Verily, gentlemen, I am most anxious to impress you deeply with the fact that nothing great or beneficial for the world has ever been achieved except by earnest and energetic men. It is the earnest missionary, such as Brainerd or Williams, who under God converts a heathen tribe; it is the earnest minister in a Christian land that edifies and blesses his congregation; it is the earnest statesman who secures true liberty for his country, and resolutely defends it; and it is the earnest counsel at the bar to whom the innocent man on his trial looks with confidence, to whom the jury give a believing ear, and to whom the judge turns with respect. Why should it be otherwise, if earnestness be, as we have defined it, clear views of great truths, and a keen perception of motives to the performance of duty? Without this no professional man is entitled either to confidence, love or esteem.

There never was a time when the world stood more in need of men of true earnestness than at present. For are not these the men *who alone can guide and restrain* the popular mind in the new channels into which it is now at all points forcing itself? "Give me a place to plant my fulcrum on," said the ancient philosopher, "and I will move the world." Give us earnest men, say I, and then we will move the moral world rightly. Assuredly we see on all hands much ardour in the prosecution of certain objects. There never was an age in which men sought wealth or political power more keenly, or cultivated more sedulously the physical sciences and the mechanical arts. In all this there is much to commend, and much that furnishes ground for hope. Yet these things are not the highest that ought to enlist the heart of man. For the highest of these should but be means of far higher ends. While man seeks by means of the material to make progress towards the moral and the spiritual, the course is wise and the end will be good. But, when man seeks his highest enjoyment solely in the visible and material, he forgets

the chief end of his being, and fatally mistakes the source of his true happiness. Nor can it be affirmed that the moral and spiritual interests of society are sought with an earnestness at all proportionate to their value. In short, what we want are men whose souls shall be fired with intense desire to bring the world nearer in conformity with the Divine will, and thus secure for it all the material advantages which science and art can afford, and at the same time elevate man to that position which, as a social, moral and accountable creature, his Creator intended him to occupy.

The world must sink into materialism and social anarchy, if there cannot be found men of strong minds and simple piety, earnestly bent at any sacrifice to accomplish this for themselves and their fellow-creatures. If this be romance, remember it is the romance of the Bible. For what is it but the love and self-denial of Christianity? Oh, was not He earnest in His mighty purpose *when He set His face as a flint* to make, in every sense, the greatest sacrifice the universe has ever witnessed? And were not they earnest and self-denying men whom He sent forth to proclaim to a lost world the hope of man and man's chief end? My young friends, by looking to your Saviour you not only learn the way of salvation but also learn from Him and from the example of His apostles the lessons and the motives to pure and untiring earnestness in prosecuting high ends for your own good and the good of others. But on this I do not enlarge: suffice it to say that he who is enlightened by the Spirit of God, and warmed by the hope of the Gospel, and zealously seeks the highest objects, will not fail to give to the less a suitable place in his affections and a proper share of his efforts. It is impossible, while you seek the eternal welfare of your fellow-men, entirely to overlook their temporal interests. The greater here does not cashier the less, but gives to the less its true position. Mere fanaticism can alone err on this; but fanaticism has as little of the warmth of heavenly zeal as it has of heavenly light.

It has been shown that all healthy earnestness must spring from high and pure motives. But now, in conclusion, have you not, as students, many such motives to make you earnest in duty? All of you are looking forward to important stations in the world. Not a few of you have the ministry in prospect. But is not that young man chargeable with presumptuous folly who expects to be an able minister of the Gospel and yet shows no earnestness whilst in College to prepare himself for that sacred calling? If your souls are burning with holy desire to proclaim in after-days the salvation of Christ to your fellow-sinners, you will now ardently embrace every opportunity to fit yourselves for the work. But, be your future field of labour what it may, I beseech you to

be intensely diligent now, else you will never occupy it with honour, usefulness and comfort.

And let me just, ere I close, press home on your conscience another class of motives. You have been sent here by parents whose tenderest earthly hopes are bound up in your success. Nor is it unlikely that some of them at great personal sacrifices, and not a few family privations, have striven to get you prepared for College, and are now in the same way striving to carry you through it. I put it to you if that student has either filial affection, honour or gratitude, who knows all this, and yet can be a trifler. But, gentlemen, some of you possibly know more than this. Have you parents who often with believing yet trembling hearts are at the Throne of Grace in your behalf? Does His eye, who sees all things, see them frequently

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