

of the Gospel, and establishing in every good word and work our growing lads, and our young men, just entering or about to enter on the duties of life.

Many of those who habitually reside among us have begun early to do something for their parents and themselves, and in so doing may breathe a far less wholesome atmosphere than that of a well ordered home. Not a few again in order to follow their different callings, and many attending the different Educational Institutions in the city, are under the necessity of living away from the more immediate care of their parents. In the well being of one and all of these we ought to feel the warmest interest and more strenuous and well considered efforts for this end are what we greatly need as citizens, as congregations and as a church. Upon the character of our young men the future of our country greatly depends. Our dearest hopes are centred in them, and in the coming glory of their faithful Christian lives. Our anxiety with regard to them is not so much that any of them should be saved from bodily disease, or from death, as the words of David, taken simply, expressed a wish that Absalom might be. This we may and ought to desire, if it be God's will to spare them, but none whether young or old, are exempt from those outward ills to which flesh is heir, and we must be ready to resign with un murmuring submission our dearest upon earth to the Divine disposal. Our question, "Are our young men safe?" must be asked with a far higher meaning. Are they safe from the festering wounds of sin and from the death of the soul? Are they safe under the shield of the Captain of their salvation, and in their Heavenly Father's love? Are they safe from ingratitude to parents, from sloth and self-sufficiency; from the neglect of the business in which they ought to be diligently engaged? Are they safe from untruthfulness, intemperance, dishonesty and profanity and other hideous forms of immorality and ungodliness?

Such questions we may well ask with the most intense solicitude regarding our young men when we consider the temptations to which they are exposed. Some of them may be happily placed for the most part among those who will be their comfort and their stay, but even then they are liable to be drawn aside from the right path by the evil ways and maxims of others. Some may be placed, on the other hand, among the idle and frivolous, or in the still more to be dreaded companionship of the careless and depraved. Under such ill-omened auspices many an amiable and unsuspecting disposition is liable to be led astray, and while those who are poorer and with less external advantages have their own risks to avoid, others who are better off in a superficial and worldly point of view may so abuse their gifts and opportunities, as Absalom did, as only to render their disgrace more notorious, and more terrible their fall. It has been said with regard to temporal things, and there is both reason and truth in the saying, that a man's most severe struggles and trials are usually those which he meets with before he reaches the age of thirty. It is true in spiritual things, as well as

temporal. Young men are not only liable to be assailed by many temptations but are less able firmly to withstand them. Mindful of that in which they take pleasure for the present they are often thoughtless of the future, and buoyed up by an over-weening confidence in their own strength, until they find themselves involved in snares, and dangers from which it is difficult for them to be set free. They are comparatively ignorant of the wiles of their spiritual enemies, and heedless of the warning, that all sin, however fair and alluring it may now appear, in the end biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. Like raw and untried levies they need to be yet more perfectly instructed in the use of their weapons, and how to guard against surprise and repel attack. They need to be supported and encouraged by the help and example of trustier and harder companions whose campaign has begun before, and by the veteran troops of the army who know every stratagem of the foe, and are at hand able and ready to succour their less experienced and weaker comrades, remembering what they themselves once were.

How pregnant too with issues of future happiness, or misery, are the years of early life! While it is beautiful and pleasant to behold our thoughtful Christian youth, rejoicing in the service of God, and devoting to Him the days of their fresh and vigorous lives, how sad and painful to see and hear of others spending the springtime of their existence in ways far from God, and from righteousness, if not in open vice! What can be looked for from such an irreligious and misspent youth but a harvest of calamity and woe to themselves, to their parents and friends and to all around them, if they grow up unheeded without kind hearts to care for them, and brotherly hands being stretched forth to save? It will not do to let the unhealthy taint gain such a lodgment in the system that the whole moral frame is so warped and stiffened by it as to render the cure at an after stage much more difficult. No doubt, blessed be God, the whole of our time here is a day of grace and merciful visitation, but the prospects of a man's mature life in a religious, and moral, as well as in an intellectual and temporal point of view, must always greatly depend on his right employment, or misuse, of the golden opportunities presented to him in his youthful years.

In what ways then ought our efforts to be put forth so as most effectually to reach and be helpful to our young men? With respect to those who reside with their parents they are still in a great measure under their eye, and the influence of a regard for their good opinion, and that of their community in which they have been brought up. With respect to these, affectionate parental advice, oversight and Christian example will of course still form most powerful factors as a means under God, of moulding their characters and determining their course aright. Yet even in such cases every help which others can give is needed for those who, having grown up among us, have now come forth a wider circle, and ought therefore to be more the objects of the general care. In what way then can we