

Written for Our Work.

**Thoughts for the Young.**

BY REV. J. G. SCOTT.

Delivered in Queen's Avenue Methodist Church  
Sunday evening, October 23.

Text: Prov. 14:12—"There is a way which seemeth right to a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."

My thought has been directed to this by two circumstances. A short time ago a young man said to me, "I do not understand that, I cannot understand why a man may take a path in life that seems all right, and yet the end is dangerous and disastrous to him." It has been to-day directed to this line of thought by expressions that have fallen from the lips of some young men in my hearing now, and therefore cannot be out of place as I bring it before them, and I pray the Master that we may be fortified thereby. I do not wonder that in the minds of many young people, there is a difficulty, that what seems right and proper and conducive to happiness shall hold so much of danger, and that it should be so difficult to discover just where the danger lies. I do not wonder, further, in thinking upon it, that their difficulty is increased when they read our text.

Now, man is the most royal part of God's creation in this world—has parts that none else has; has a future before him that when you think of it you would suppose, if possible, that that even the seeming of being right would be avoided in the case of that which may be injury to anything of such transcendent value as the soul. Now, man alone has within his sphere this danger. You may take the orders of creation as they go down below man—you may take the insects that float in the summer sunshine, or the herds that roam and graze upon your fields, and that cannot be said of them; you cannot say there is much peril to them. There is very little danger, and it lies within a very narrow compass—that of being maimed, or being deprived of life. In these two simple circumstances the danger arises to all that lies below man; but when you go up to man and take him as he is, connected with both worlds, associated with God himself, and destined to live for evermore, and the question assumes a shape it has not as it applies to the lower creations. You will see the reason for this. Take the ox as he grazes upon the hill, his wants are very few. He makes his way through life apparently without difficulty; he is happy. Just at his feet are the flowers;

below him the river murmurs along toward the ocean; far stretching in the distance is a landscape that in its beauty would surely cause admiration in you, but the ox sees no beauty or loveliness in the landscape, and all the worlds above him never quicken a sensation of pleasure in him. You understand there is a difference. Your whole soul is caught in the rapture of the beauties that glow all about you, and the voices that speak of God, of immortality, and purity coming through these beauties. There is a difference between you and the creature. There is a beauty and a dignity and a power about every faculty of your moral and mental nature to which they are utter strangers, and there are companies of these faculties and results growing out of them that left you to be the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty, and that fit you, under proper conditions, for associations with angels and with God himself. You have a thought and a mind, a conscience and a responsibility that comes with it. Now there is just here, meeting you as you go into life this fact,—that all men are born equal and yet unequal. You come into life in the condition of universal helplessness, and that touches every man everywhere. Another circumstance that lies right beside it is that there is not only helplessness, but there is absolute ignorance, for outside of the mere sensations of want and pain every man and woman born into the world knows no more when they are born than the clothes in which they are wrapped, and the man that afterward becomes a tower of mental or physical strength is as helpless when born into the world as those that are weak all through life. So with each man and woman there is an equality given, but there is also a vast inequality, a vast difference. There is a difference in your natural endowments—in the power of mind with which God has gifted you: there is just as great variety of difference in the endowments of mind as there is a variety in the physical forms of each man and woman that you behold, and so men are not born equal. There is another fact, and that is that there are hereditary qualities transmitted down to you in some cases, and these have their influences upon you. There is another point upon which we all stand to work out the great problem of life on an equality, and that is that all men begin alike to find out the way of life for themselves, and to discover what is the proper life and how that life is to be led,

and the dangers to it, and how these dangers are to be avoided. You should stand as a man and a woman in the full sense of the term. Now, standing there as we start out to find out for ourselves and shape our course in life, Oh, immortal men and women, who are to live for ever, that long future depends upon the direction of our steps here. The question comes, how is it that beyond us just at that point where the greatest danger is, there is a way that I may take that may lead out into disaster and destruction. Well, now, in the first place, I want to say that you know people who labor under a difficulty in forming an estimate of the true value of your soul and of eternity and of the law of God, from your surroundings. I want to point out that very clearly to you. It is so natural for you to take the voice of those that are around you as your direction, to set as a learner at the feet of some one older than yourself. They are near; God is far off. Their words come to you direct; the words of God do not come just in the same form. Now, then, you are likely, because of present voices, to get your estimate of the value of these things from the value of what lies around you. And now I will point out the danger. The people around you have not themselves the proper conception of these things, and by their example, by their teaching, goes in the direction of saying to you that the things pertaining to the physical world and mental world are of more importance than those which belong to the spiritual world. Your friends have spent more thought and talked more, as a rule, on how to educate you for this world and upon the business of this life, than they have put into getting you ready for immortality and everlasting life, and if you are going to form your estimate of the value of eternity and God's truth—the philosophy of all philosophers—from the estimate they gave you of the value they attach to these, then God help you, God pity you. I hold up to you the folly of many men to-day who take exception to God's book, who have never examined it at all, and the reason you can trace back to neglect in the home. But let me say to you that the beginning of evil always appears to be harmless. Now, take in the vegetable world, the seed of the poisonous plant and the seed that produces an article of food. You can take, if you will, from the animal kingdom, a young lion and a young tiger. Look at them. Are they not beautiful? They would play with the children; they are perfectly harmless. But it would be bad for you to take the mature production of the poisonous seed into your system, and bad for you to play with the lion or tiger when it has attained its full strength. There would be danger, and yet the beginning of the evils that