

developed types of the three classes of forms of false wisdom now referred to, are not very likely to be regarded as wise, nor are the false maxims, from which their loathsome development has arisen, in general so likely to be at least acknowledged as those of wise men.

But there are two qualities to which the name of wisdom is more commonly and openly applied, and which are therefore more apt to be mistaken for it—prudence, and intellectual abilities or learning. He is often termed wise who, in the pursuit of some end which he has in view, such as wealth or reputation, not, it may be, wrong in itself, yet low and unworthy as his great aim, employs best the means for its attainment. This, however, is prudence, not wisdom. Prudence regards not so much the end as the selection and use of the means for its accomplishment, and may be displayed in the pursuit of the worst design as well as of that which is in itself lawful; whereas the province of real wisdom is to select and employ the best ends, as well as the best means by which they may be gained.

Again the term, wisdom, is often applied to intellectual talents or knowledge, or to both combined. Those who are distinguished by the quickness of their invention and the soundness of their judgement, or by the extent of their acquirements in the knowledge of learning, nature and philosophy, are often regarded by the world as wise, and looked up to with a kind of reverence by those less gifted or less well-informed. But mere intellectual abilities and acquirements are far too narrow a basis on which to rest the edifice of wisdom. We are not merely intellectual but moral and responsible beings, and are formed not only for time but for eternity; and that can never be real wisdom which is concerned only about one part of our being, and seeks to provide only for one, and that the least important, portion of our interests. Human intellect or learning cannot change the inner man or regulate the life. Wisdom therefore is that of the heart as well as of the mind, and involves the foresight of and preparation for the future, while it considers and fits for the present. Intellectual knowledge and understanding are no doubt most useful to it as a means, but are not to be rested in as an end, and are in themselves altogether insufficient for the health and contentment of our souls, far less to be a ground of self-exaltation, or to vindicate the claim of their possessor to be considered wise. Wisdom is not only the knowledge of the good and the true but its choice and its pursuit. God is love as well as light. And there can be no real wisdom without the love of God and man, of good and of truth, without, in short, the wisdom of the heart. Real wisdom, therefore, is a characteristic of the wise man in the whole of his spiritual nature, both moral and intellectual, and especially the former. And hence the qualities ascribed to it by the Apostle, in so far as he describes it in connexion with the subject he had more immediately in view, are all of a moral kind, when he says: "The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and of good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy." This wisdom, it is evident, is not speculative only, but practical, and in this sense it is also used by David when he prayed for his son, "only that the Lord would give him wisdom and understanding, that

he might keep the law of the Lord;" where it signifies that view of duty which is accompanied and followed by practice, and then he adds "he shall prosper,"—all other things, whether for the life that now is, or for that which is to come, will be added thereunto. Wisdom includes in it the perception of the best end and the forethought of the best means for its attainment, but there can be no wisdom without acting on the perception and the use of these means.

Real wisdom, therefore, consists in the choice of the best ends and best means for our right guidance in life, and in acting in accordance with these, in a spirit of constant dependence upon God, and the exercise of supplication unto Him for His grace and strength. This wisdom it is the duty of all to cultivate and in some measure to possess. We are not here, however, to consider it in its universal obligation and importance, neither shall we now attempt to treat of all its various features, which would require a volume, not a lecture. We shall confine ourselves simply to the consideration of some of the features and rules of real wisdom in young men, to which it is more especially necessary to give heed, by which they may be preserved from errors to which they are more peculiarly exposed, and be led to views and a course of action, which it is more peculiarly incumbent in them in their position and circumstances as young men to cherish and to pursue.

1. Stand still and consider, in the outset of your career, your aims, position and prospects. You have all chosen or will soon choose the end which, as citizens of this world merely, you are to pursue for your occupation and support, and you have all the great and common end of the fulfilment of your duty to God and to your fellow-men, which you ought to choose. These ends can be successfully pursued only in the use of means. While, therefore, you concentrate upon them your attention, weigh well the best plan of proceeding in the course which you have set before you. He who engages in the business of life without determinate and worthy ends, and a definite plan in their pursuit, is like a ship without a chart and without a rudder, without any thing by which to steer, on a dangerous and changeful sea, destined never to reach its haven, but continually tost to and fro by the winds and waves, and exposed every moment to founder amid the raging billows, or perish amid the rocks and shoals of the still more fatal shore. Except too your eye be steadily fixed on the object, your efforts to reach it will be in a great measure pointless, and, unless you diligently ascertain and employ the proper means, your endeavours will as often carry you from it as help you forward to its attainment, or even terminate in its utter defeat. Consider the great end for which you have been placed here, the service and honour of your Creator,—to acquire the riches of His knowledge and favour upon earth, and a meetness for His more immediate presence and blessedness, and for the good of your fellow-men. Consider the duties of the profession which you have chosen, and what is required for success in its prosecution. Seek impartially to know your own deficiencies, that you may more perseveringly and perfectly prepare yourselves for entering upon it with usefulness and credit, or may engage in it with the more strenuous employment of the proper means for its faithful and successful discharge. And it would be well, in order that your thoughts

may be more thoroughly fixed on those ends which you have set before you, and the rules of conduct which the consideration of them will suggest, that your resolutions with regard to them may be more distinct and decided, and that they may be held more constantly in remembrance, if you deliberately note them down and commit them to writing for your own future reference and direction.

Such thoughtfulness and consideration are one of the leading features of genuine wisdom in a young man. Thoughtlessness and inconsideration are errors into which light-hearted youth, flushed with health and hope, are peculiarly apt to fall, and are the rocks on which many a stately bark has been wrecked.

"Fair laughs the morn, and soft the zephyr blows,
While proudly riding o'er the azure realm,
In gallant trim the gilded vessel goes,
Youth on the prow, and pleasure at the helm;
Regardless of the sweeping whirlwind's sway,
That, hushed in grim repose, expects its evening prey."

Imagination has been bestowed to quicken, to exalt and to delight, but not to be the guiding faculty of our minds. Hope was given to excite to action, to encourage and to console, not to be the ground of its own expectations. Yet the young man is often apt to let his energies lie dormant amid waking dreams of heaven and earth, as if the blessedness and well-being were to be his without fixed aims and efforts, as if they were to be his by some happy accident, or in some way or other, he knows not how. But in resting in any measure on such idle and delusive fancies he is only grasping the wind, he is only building his expectations for earth on a foundation more shifting and unstable than the sand, and seeking to soar to heaven on wings of wax, soon to melt, and fail him in the season of trial amid the brightness of the presence of a righteous God. Indulge not then even for a moment in any mere baseless and visionary imaginings. Let your whole soul be bent with fixed and intense contemplation on those great realities with which you have to deal, and the ends at which you ought to aim, and the best means which you ought to employ in your progress in the business and pilgrimage of life, and with the firm resolve, in dependence on the Divine blessing, that this will be your aim, and these the means which you will employ. And arise and be doing, and the Lord shall be with you.

2. Another mark of wisdom in a young man, which follows from that already noticed, as indeed all other marks do, is that he studies to perform the duties of the calling which he may have chosen in the best manner. Of whatever other temporal business and calling you may be ignorant, be not ignorant of your own. Whatever may instruct the mind on other subjects, and whatever innocent and healthful recreation may occupy your leisure hours, be they longer or shorter, let all be laid aside until the daily demands of your vocation are satisfied, and you are prepared for what it requires of you on the morrow. Make yourself thoroughly acquainted with the knowledge of your profession, and conversant with the most intimate details of its practice, and seek to be distinguished by your punctuality, diligence, integrity and courtesy in its discharge. Be not satisfied with a mere slovenly and perfunctory performance of its requirements, but seek to fulfil them well. Ask yourselves again and again: How might I have done this better? What error have I to correct, and what defect to supply? Honest industry and fixed attention to its duties are the great secret, under God,