

on unto perfection." "Covet earnestly the best gifts." "Seek that ye may excel." "Set your heart on the higher talents, and I will go on to show you a still higher path." The religion of the Bible bids you reach after the highest things of this life, as well as of the life to come. The Bible encourages men to attempt the heroic. "They that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits." Do not for one brief moment think that religion extinguishes the blaze of ambition in young human hearts. It does the reverse. "Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul, as the swift seasons roll," is the voice of true religion.

Joseph when a youth built castles in the air. He dreamed of filling places of eminence and distinction. He dreamed of sheaves bowing to his sheaf. He had visions of future greatness. He had an El Dorado before him of clean, upright manhood. Things went against him at first. It looked like a losing battle. But he kept the faith. He clung to his ideals of purity and honor, and at last climbed up out of obscurity to be the counsellor and companion of kings. By the upward gravitation of superior worth he rose to fulfill the ambitious hopes of his boyhood dreams. His career, and the career of many like him, confirms the truth that Richard Watson Gilder saw:

"He fails not—he who stakes his all  
Upon the right, and dares to fall.  
What though the living bless or blame,  
For him the long success of fame."

Let those who are in the morning of life look out expectantly into the future. There are tempting opportunities before you. A great nation like this calls for men of superior ability. Qualify yourself for highest service in law, in medicine, in manufacturing, in every department of service. There are more vacancies for able, capable men than there are men fit to fill them.

The limits of achievement in character, knowledge, discovery, invention, have not yet been reached. There are great territories of thought yet to be explored. There are continents of Truth waiting a new Columbus. There are noble poems yet to be written, noble pictures yet to be painted, noble marbles yet to be chiseled, noble reforms yet to be effected. On, God says to the soul, on, forever on.

"The peak is high, and flushed  
At its height with sunrise fire,  
The path is high, and the stars are high  
And the thought of man is higher."

The pessimist will dolefully tell you that these glorious pictures of the imagination are never to be painted on the canvas of real life. God's kind angels tell you they may. There shall be a reward, thine expectation shall not be cut off. The pessimist will point to the many who began life with fair hopes promising well, but ended in disaster, and prophesy similar failure for you.

I know men have failed. The shores of Life's turbulent sea are strewn with wrecks. But are you to begin life, handicapped with the expectation of defeat? No, no, the hopes that God has implanted within you, the aspirations after higher things are prophetic of possibilities. They bring grand achievements within the range of the possible. They are that still small voice of God in your soul, saying, this is the way, walk ye in it.

"Like tides on a crescent sea beach,  
When the moon is new and thin,  
Into our hearts, high yearnings  
Come swelling and surging in,  
Come from the mystic ocean,

Whose rim no foot has trod.  
Some call it Aspiration,  
And others call it God."

The great question that confronts every thoughtful, ambitious soul is, how am I to attain success? How am I to realize my expectations? This is the critical point in life. The purpose to excel, the determination to rise, are divinely right and good. As one has said, "There is an ambition that has about it something of the sacredness of an inspiration, and you do well to cultivate and satisfy it; only take care what means you adopt."

The most fatal mistakes are often made at the beginning of life. The moral obituary of many a man may be compressed into one line—"He got started wrong." In a letter a young man wrote me some years ago was this sad, significant sentence: "If I had started different from what I did, I would be getting along better, but—" He felt that the mistakes of his early life were hampering, hindering, baffling him at every turn, and they were. But by the grace of God he faced them, floored them, and rounded out his life with a noble success. The prayer for every young man on the threshold of life is, "I am a stranger in the earth, hide not Thy commandments from me."

My brother, if you want to get on and up in the world do this, "Commit thy way unto the Lord." In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct thy paths." My mother gave me that Bible passage at a critical hour in my young manhood. By the grace of God it turned my life into a path that has brought me the best things of the life that now is, with promise of the life that is to come.

With confidence I repeat her counsel to you. Commit thy way unto the Lord. Give yourself to the guidance of God as the Alpine traveller gives himself to his guide, as the patient gives himself to his physician.

Listen! If God guides you, you will be led to the best things of this life, and the life to come. No good thing will God withhold from them that walk uprightly.

My text is a warning as well as an encouragement. The warning is, "Let not thine heart envy sinners." Do not look longingly on the success of wicked men. Do not covet their wealth, crave their honors, or imitate their methods. The success of men who have trampled truth and right under foot, has been a stumbling block to men in every age. The seventy-third Psalm pictures an experience through which many have passed. "I was envious of the foolish when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. Their eyes stand out with fatness. They have more than heart could wish. They are corrupt. They speak wickedly. They set their mouth against heaven. They say how doth God know? Behold these are the ungodly who prosper in the world. They increase in riches."

The prosperity of the wicked led the writer of that old Hebrew poem to conclude that truth and justice and goodness were losing quantities in this world. It looked as though fraud and cunning and conscienceless brute force were the winning forces of life. "Until I went into the sanctuary of God, then understood I their end. Surely thou didst set them in slippery

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