

bling. "To set one's foot in the way of good is oftentimes not so difficult as to go vigorously forward in it. The power of temptation is great: the tinder of vice is naturally in us; even a little spark can kindle it."

**13. Take fast hold.** Instruction is useless unless it is immediately seized and applied. If you dally with it, it will elude your grasp when you reach for it. To a man surrounded by an evil environment these precepts are life-preservers thrown out to one who is in danger of drowning. If he neglect to "take fast hold," he may be destroyed, for "She (wisdom) is thy life."

**14. Enter not.** Out of his own bitter experience and his wide observation of the evil results of such a course David exhorts his favorite son to avoid "the path of the wicked." There is no surer destroyer of the purity and the honor of youth than evil companionship. Not only do "evil communications corrupt good manners," but they cast a blight upon the whole life—physical, intellectual, and spiritual. "Impossible as it is that a stone fall into the water and remain dry, so impossible is it that a lover of evil company be not betrayed."—Zeltner. **Evil men.** One of the unfortunate things in this connection is that men who have heeded instruction frequently indulge in the worst forms of vice, and instead of soaring to the highest heaven seem to grovel in the lowest hell of wickedness and sin. This is seen particularly in connection with intemperance and its attendant evils, for there is no sin that entails a greater measure of awful consequences upon humanity. It is one of the most enticing paths of the wicked, and the wise man will give heed to the exhortation, "Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away;" or, as another has said, "Venture not into the company of those who are infected with the plague, no, not though thou think thyself guarded with an antidote."

**16.** Those who walk in the path of the wicked seem to have no greater delight than to entrap others and drag them to ruin also. It is their meat and drink to do evil, "for they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence." "I have made a thousand dollars in the last three months," said a saloon-keeper. "You have made more than that," quietly remarked a listener. "What is that?" was the quick response. "You have made my two sons drunkards. You have made their mother a broken-hearted woman. You have made much more than I can reckon, but you'll get the full account some day!"

**18. Path of the just.** The attractiveness, the glory, and the blessedness of the other path are hinted at by the way of summarizing and

clinging the argument. This path is "a growing light, not like the light of a meteor, which soon disappears, or that of a candle, which burns dim and burns down, but like that of the rising sun, which goes forward shining, mounts upward shining."

**19. The way of the wicked.** The sharpest contrast is drawn between the two paths, as revealed by the characters of those who walk in them and the results of their experiences. A wise man, or one desiring to order his life according to wisdom, should not hesitate as to the choice of paths—one full of light and leading to life, and the other full of darkness and leading to death. "Sinners are in such darkness that they are insensible to the objects that are leading them to ruin; thus they stumble at the great deceiver, at one another, at divine providence, at their common employments, at the nature and tendency of their religious performances, at the preaching they hear, and at the blindness of their own hearts."—Emmons.

## Thoughts for Young People.

### About Paths.

**1. Everyone is in a path.** Everyone is going somewhere. It is vitally important we should ascertain whether ours is "the path of the just" or "the way of the wicked."

**2. Every path in morals, as well as in geography, leads somewhere.** "The path of the just" intensifies in brightness till the perfect day dawns. "The way of the wicked" grows darker and darker daily.

**3. The most important question that can be asked concerning a man is not so much "Where is he?" as "Where is he going to?"** Not so much "What has he attained?" as "What is his ideal, and how zealously is he pursuing it?"

**4. Back of all human facts "standeth God amid the shadows, keeping watch above his own."** The reason that "the path of the just" is so delightful is, God is with them. The reason "the wicked stumble" is, God is against them.

**5. "In which path am I?"** When that question is answered it will be easy to ascertain what destiny I am approaching.

### By Way of Illustration.

**Obedience.** It was stated at a meeting of the American Prison Association that the history of the criminals showed that in almost every case their course of ruin began with disobedience to parents. No one is wise who does not take counsel with the experienced. The engineer who takes no notice of signals runs a serious risk of

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