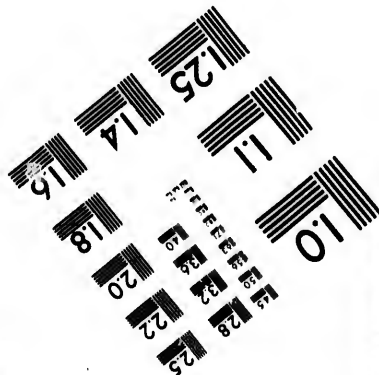
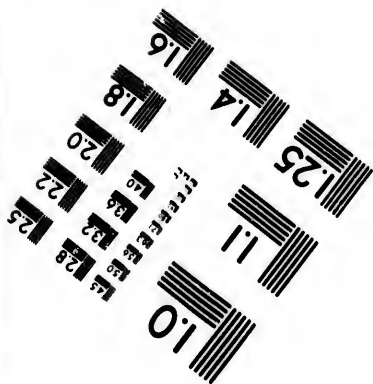
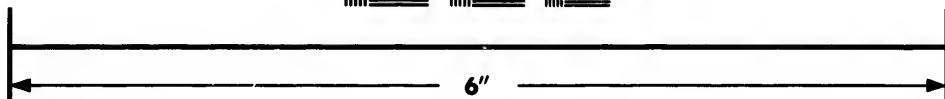
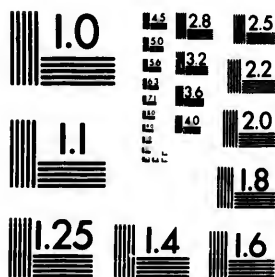


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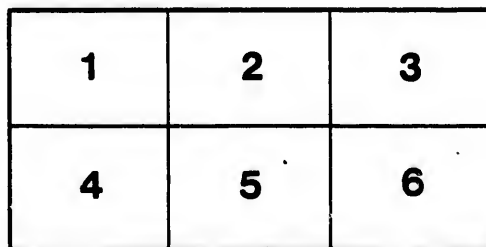
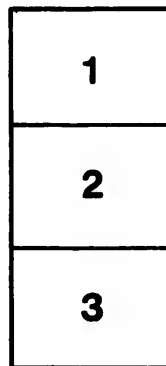
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# THE CHARACTER OF JOSEPH;

OR,

THE YOUNG MAN'S MODEL.

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## AN ADDRESS,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

Saint John Young Men's

CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION,

ON

Thursday Evening, 20th March, 1856.

BY THE

REV. J. R. LAWSON.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

W. C. Milner

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**The Contents of the following Address we highly approve of.  
And its circulation among our youth we strongly recommend, as  
calculated to effect much good, by producing a love of virtue  
and an abhorrence of vice.**

**W. B. KINNEAR,**

***President of the Young Men's Christian Association.***

**JAS. PATERSON, L. L. D.,**

**LEBARON BOTSFORD, M. D.,**

**T. W. DANIEL,**

**E. E. LOCKHART,**

***Vice Presidents.***

## ADDRESS.

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THERE is perhaps no department of study that is more instructive than Biography, or that which details the sayings and doings of the men of other years. One main advantage flowing from the presentation of truth in this form is, that thereby we see *principles reduced to practice*, and are, therefore, in a more favourable position for forming a correct estimate of their *real value*.

It is a law of our nature that we are more deeply impressed by the exhibition of actual results, than by hearing of circumstances fitted to produce them. We may hear the most minute description of a complicated piece of machinery; or we may be even admitted to an actual examination of the machinery itself, and we may admire the genius of the contriver, and the artistic skill of the operator; but, how much deeper will be the impression produced on our minds, by seeing it in actual operation, and all its complicated adjustments harmoniously co-operating in the production of the intended result.

So it is also in relation to *mental* and *moral* attributes. Such attributes far more deeply affect us when acted out in living character, than when embodied in a system of mental and moral philosophy. We may hear the *moral philosopher* most ingeniously analyze that affection of the human soul, which we call Benevolence; and from an examination of physical developments, the *physiologist* may pronounce a Howard of the past, and a Florence Nightingale of the present, illustrious examples of such a state of moral feeling; but, how much brighter are the views which we have of the *nature* and *tendency* of benevolence as a virtue, and how much more profound are our sentiments of respect for these illustrious examples of it, when we see the *former* flying from country to country, from city to city, from prison to prison, enduring the stench of the filthiest dungeons, in order to ameliorate the physical and moral condition of their degraded inmates; or when we see the latter, as the true sister of mercy flying on pinions of love and compassion to the hospitals of Scutari, to minister with her own hands to the sick and dying soldiers.

Now it is well worthy of our notice, as an illustration of the wisdom and goodness of the Author of Revelation, that He has adapted his method of conveying truth to the mind, the conscience, and the heart, to this constitution which He has given to man. Hence in the Revelation which we have received from on High, we are not simply told what Truth is—the beautiful adaptation to each other of its various parts—how it will operate in certain circumstances—and the effects which it is fitted to produce; but the machinery is set a-working before our eyes, and we are invited to “come and see” all its parts, harmoniously co-operating in the production of the grand effect—“Glory to God in the highest, on the earth, peace, good will to men.”

We are furnished with a striking illustration of the principle in the case of our *Blessed Lord and Saviour*. We have no formal delineation by the Evangelists of the character of Christ, but we are furnished with a minute account of what he *said, did, and suffered*. To use the language of a distinguished writer.\* “We are not told that he was *devout*; but he appears before us in all the purity and elevation of intimate and habitual communion with his heavenly Father:—we have no statement of his personal virtues; but we see him in all the unblemished rectitude of demeanor, contracting no taint from the contact of an ungodly world:—we have no eulogy of his benevolence, but he “goes about continually doing good:”—of the admirable combination of “meekness and gentleness” with fearless decision of principle his Biographers say nothing; but in his intercourse with friends and foes, these qualities unfold themselves in a manner which at once captivates our affections and commands our veneration. No laboured panegyric is pronounced on the tenderness of his friendly sympathies; but two touching words let us into his heart—“Jesus wept.” At every step of his progress, in every situation, and in every company, by every word and action, some feature of his character is brought out and placed in a light incomparably more advantageous for impression, than could have been effected by the most eloquent eulogium.”

It is in this way too, that the character of the *Saints* is exhibited before us in the inspired history. We are not told so much what they *were*, as what they *said* and *did* and *endured*. They are brought before us in a variety of positions:—the wheel of divine Providence is perpetually revolving, and bringing them into new scenes of temptation and trial, developing new features

\* Dr. Wardlaw.



of their character; and from their conduct in these everchanging scenes, we are left to draw our own conclusions as to the nature of the internal machinery, the character of their governing principles. We are furnished with no lengthened panegyric of Abraham's faith; but we see him at the command of God, leaving his father's house and his own people, "not knowing whether he went." We have no laboured eulogium on the devotedness of Daniel and his fellows; but we see *him* in the lion's den, and *them* in the burning fiery furnace, rather than renounce their allegiance to their God:—We have no lengthened description of the Seraphic love of the Apostle Paul; but we are invited to contemplate him in "journeyings often," in "perils" of every description, "in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness;" and from a contemplation of the picture of his travels, labours, and suffering for the name-sake of his Lord and Master; we are left to draw our own conclusions as to the strength of his faith, the ardour of his love, and the fervency of his zeal.

It is in this way that we collect together the various ingredients which compose the "character" which we have selected for this evening's Lecture. In the inspired history, there is not a lengthened eulogium on Joseph's moral excellencies; but we are invited to look at him in various positions, calculated to develop the principles of his moral nature; and from a review of his conduct, in these ever changing circumstances,—his conduct at home and abroad,—as a servant, a prisoner, and then a governor,—from his conduct as a son, a brother, and a father; we are left to collect and arrange the various elements, which when so collected and arranged, present before us one of the most beautiful pictures of moral worth, which adorn the pages of the Scriptural biography.

Before entering upon an analysis of such a character, I think it necessary to remark, that it is not the design of the Spirit of inspiration to present the youthful son of Jacob before us, as a *perfect model* of moral excellence. Whilst there is no scripture character, with the exception of Him, who in "all things has the pre-eminence," marked by fewer of those moral excrescences which indicate a deranged state of the moral system, and which are inseparable from the present state of imperfection, we are not by any means to look upon him as a *perfect* pattern of virtuous principle and deportment. But making allowance for all imperfections, (and who is there that liveth and sinneth not?) I think it will be allowed, that with the exception of Him who was

fairer than all the children of men, there is no Scripture character, that is more worthy of our admiration and imitation than Joseph. He presents before us such an assemblage of high moral qualities, as entitle him to rank among the brightest stars that bespangle the firmament of inspired history.

Amongst these moral excellences. I assign the first place to that feature of his character which shines brightest of all, viz. :—*his purity.*

You are all doubtless acquainted with the incident, which developed, to the admiration of ages to come, this illustrious feature of Joseph's character. Contemplate a young man with youthful passions in full development—a stranger, too, in a foreign land, far removed from every external influence calculated to support virtue in the hour of trial—allured by the fascinations of a lewd mistress—and in circumstances that gave promise of entire secrecy, as far as man was concerned; and yet coming forth from the fiery ordeal with moral character unscathed—with not so much as one hair of a good conscience singed; and you contemplate such a picture of virtuous decision—of nature conquered by grace, as has never been surpassed and seldom equalled.

It is not a favourable feature of the age we live in, that this topic is so seldom adverted to in the pulpit or on the platform.—Other vices are analyzed, exposed; and by the terrors of the fiery law and the promises of the Gospel the young are exhorted to beware :—Ministers will preach on drunkenness and other vices—Associations will be formed for the suppression of intemperance—Meetings will be held and Lecturers will exert their powers of reasoning to persuade the young and old not to look on the wine when it is red, when it giveth its colour in the cup; but how seldom are they warned with equal fidelity to beware of the fascinations of the “strange woman, whose feet go down to death, whose steps take hold on hell.”

I know that this is a theme, a distant allusion to which is considered indelicate before a miscellaneous assembly. I have yet to learn, however, why it should be so. I have yet to learn that directing the attention of any audience to any thing that the Holy Spirit of God has revealed in his word, is an infringement of the laws of true decorum, or calculated to offend the most delicate sensibility.

The presence of females is the circumstance that is considered by some as sufficient to render the public allusion to this subject peculiarly delicate. With regard to this circumstance, I would say,

that to females that cultivate purity of thought, of language, and of action, there is not the slightest danger of any such allusion proving offensive, or bringing the blush to their cheek: "To the pure all things are pure." And in regard to females of an opposite stamp, I would say, if they can sit, and talk, and dance, and sing, with well known libertines, and even luxuriate in the impure language, the wanton gesture, and the meretricious leer without any blush of shame crimsoning the cheek: is it not the vilest hypocrisy in them to *affect* a blush, when, either in the House of God, or in the lecture room, a distant allusion is made to that vice, which of all others is marked deepest with the seal of everlasting death. If the Holy Spirit has placed the incident in Joseph's history on record, he has done so that it may be *read*, that it may be *pondered*—that parents may speak of it at the fireside to their children, that ministers may speak of it in the pulpit, and that the friends of virtue may draw from it motives to encourage the young in the cultivation of moral purity.

My young friends, I cannot pass away from this feature of Joseph's character, without tendering to you a word of affectionate and earnest warning to beware of the sin of *impurity*. Even when it is simply confined to the heart, there is no vice that exerts such a debasing influence on the mental and moral powers, and when practised outwardly, it gives the death blow to every intellectual energy, and every noble aspiration. "It commences in impurity of heart, continues in debasement of life, and ends in a shattered constitution, early death, and ceaseless pain hereafter." If you would avoid the sin and its consequences here and hereafter, guard well your thoughts. Avoid all impure conversation. Avoid, as you would the flames of hell, the company of the libertine. Turn away your sight and eyes from every lascivious publication and picture. Ponder frequently and prayerfully the words of God in relation to the strange woman that flattereth with her lips. "Hearken unto me now, therefore, O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth, let not thine heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths, for she hath cast down many wounded, yea many strong men have been slain by her; her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death," Prov. 7, 24—27.) "This ye know, that no whore monger nor unclean person hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ or of God." Passing from this feature of Joseph's character, I notice that he presents before us an example of *integrity* and *honesty* in the management of every affair with which he was entrusted.

Sold by his unnatural brethren to a company of Ishmaelites, he is brought down into Egypt. He is brought into the service of a distinguished Egyptian, Potiphar an officer of Pharaoh, and Captain of the guard. How does he conduct himself in this employment? We can learn the character of his service from the confidence his master reposed in him. We learn in the history that the Lord was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master—the Egyptian. And his master saw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord made all he did to prosper in his hand. And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand, and he knew not ought he had save the bread which he did eat," (Genesis 39, 1—6.) We follow him a little farther, and we find him in a dungeon in which he is immured for the sake of a good conscience and the glory of God. How does he conduct himself there? With so much wisdom and integrity, that the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did, he was the doer of it. The keeper of the prison looked not to any thing that was under his hand; because the Lord was with him and that which he did, the Lord made it to prosper," (Gen. 39, 22—23.) Following him a little farther on, we see him taken from prison, elevated to the second place in the land of Egypt, and having all the affairs of the realm entrusted to his management. The confidence thus reposed in him by Potiphar, though a slave, the confidence reposed in him by the gaoler, and the greater confidence reposed in him by the monarch, in entrusting to him the helm of affairs in a most critical period of Egyptian history, shew us the excellent spirit that dwelt in him, and the wisdom and integrity, which through the grace of God, characterized all his transactions.

My young friends, I would say to you—"Go ye and do likewise." The greater number of you are, I presume, occasionally in the employment of others. You have a character to acquire, and on your character mainly depends your success in life. "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold." If you would secure that good name which will be far better to you, than all adventitious circumstances of rank or fortune, which will make you respectable and influential whatever be your position in the world; let me whisper one thing in your ear—*Be upright in little matters.* If you are in the employment of others, do not let the eye of your employer be your regulator, but a high sense of duty. Do not make promises which you do not see your way clear to fulfil.

Do not contract debts which you do not see your way clear to discharge. Do not undertake any work which you are not prepared to finish in exact accordance with the letter of your contract. Let truth, honour, and integrity be your guides in every transaction. Then you will get on in the world. Those that know you will have confidence in you. You will never want a friend in the time of need. And better than all, you will enjoy the approving smile of a conscience "void of offence toward God and man."

Again, Joseph presents before us a beautiful example of *filial affection*.

Contemplate him when but a youth in implicit obedience to his father's command, cheerfully undertaking a long and perilous journey in search of his absent brethren—listen to him inquiring so affectionately of his brethren concerning their father—"the old man of whom ye spake," reflect on his anxiety to have his aged parent brought down into Egypt as soon as possible, that he might provide for him in the time of famine—the tenderness which he manifested in meeting with his father. "And Joseph made ready his chariot and went up to meet Israel his father to Goshen, and presented himself unto him, and he fell on his neck and wept on his neck a good while," (Gen 46, 29,)—and then contemplate his subsequent attentions to his aged parent, as recorded in the history; and you are presented with an illustrious example of *filial affection*.

Here is another element in the character of this devoted youth, which I would invite you, my young friends, to *ponder, admire, and imitate*. The tie that binds parents and children is peculiarly tender, and the responsibilities that cluster around that relationship are peculiarly weighty and solemn. It is one of the commands of that eternal immutable code of laws—founded on the eternal fitness of things—binding upon all—and enforced by sanctions of the most awful import, "honour thy father and mother that thy days may be long upon the land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee," (Exodus 20; 12.) Respect for their persons, cordial obedience to their lawful commands, and a comfortable provision made for them in declining years, and frequent and fervent intercession on their behalf at a Throne of Grace, are the great duties that are required from children in fulfilment of this precept. The threatenings addressed to those who disregard these filial obligations, and trample under foot the authority and the feelings of their parents, are of the most awful character. "Cursed be he that setteth light by his father or

mother, and all the people shall say Amen," (Deut. 27, 16.) To manifest the Divine abhorrence of this sin, it was enjoined in the law of Moses, "If a man have a stubborn or rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that when they have chastised him will not hearken unto them; then shall his father and mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place. And they shall say unto the elders of his city, this our son is rebellious, he will not obey our voice, he is a glutton and a drunkard. And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from you, and all Israel shall hear and fear," (Deut. 21, 18—21.) Again is it declared—"The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother: the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it," (Prov. 30, 17.)

We are furnished with a striking exemplification of the divine abhorrence of this sin in the case of Ham, the youngest son of Noah. Instead of drawing the veil of filial love over the blemishes of his parent, when he found him in a position which indicates that the best men are but men at the best; he went out and made an exposure of his father's infirmity, before his two brethren. What was the consequence? The curse of God came down upon Ham, and was also entailed upon his posterity.—"Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren, God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant," (Gen. 9, 25—27.)

On the other hand, blessings the most precious are promised to those who cultivate and practise filial piety. "Honour thy father and mother, that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth," (Ephes. 6, 1—3.) We are furnished in the Divine word with one peculiarly memorable instance of cordial filial submission, and of God's gracious approval of it.—We read in Old Testament history that Jonadab, the son of Rechab, commanded his children to abstain from wine. How did they receive that injunction? Did they allege that such a prohibitory law was an infringement on their rights and liberties? No—We do not read that they even so much as inquired why such an injunction was given. They felt that Jonadab was their father, that he had a rightful authority over them, that he would command them nothing without sufficient reason, and, therefore, though their appetites might clamour against the prohibition, their better feelings triumphed, and they threw down the cup,

once and forever, in obedience to the order, "Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye nor your sons for ever." What was the testimony which God gave of his gracious approval. "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; because ye have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab, your father, and kept all his precepts, and done according unto all that he hath commanded you; therefore, thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Jonadab, the son of Rechab, shall not want a man to stand before me for ever.—(Jer. 35, 18—19.)

*Note.*—Although I do not bring the matter forward in illustration of the duty of abstinence from wine in the present day, yet I may be permitted to make a remark on that subject. I do not think that there is anything, apart from the circumstances of the case, sinful in the moderate use of wine; and I would not pronounce a man a bad member of civil society, or a bad member of the Church, who does not see as I do in regard to the circumstances which would seem to demand total abstinence from it as a common beverage. But that there are circumstances in which it is right for a parent not only to abstain himself, but also to command his children to abstain, is evident from the fact, that Jonadab's prohibitory law received the sanction of the great Law Giver. Now if in *those days*, there were circumstances that demanded abstinence, then it will not be denied there may be circumstances now. And whatever others may think of the matter—(and I know that there are wiser and better men than I am, who take the opposite side of this question,) I do think that we are encompassed in the present day with circumstances which loudly call for entire abstinence from all intoxicating beverages. There is such a thing as the being partaker of other men's sins: and in no way are we so likely to participate in their guilt as by giving them the sanction of our example. Paul says—"it is good neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth or is offended, or is made weak,"—(Rom. 14, 21.) Again, "if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend,"—(1 Cor. 8, 13.) The Apostle felt that, though every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused if received with thanksgiving: yet circumstances might arise which would render it incumbent on him, to abstain wholly from a gratification lawful in itself, for the sake of others. Are there any individuals in the community on whom our example is calculated to exert an influence? Are there any individuals, who by seeing us indulge in the moderate use of intoxicating drinks, would be emboldened to use them immoderately? then on the principle that governed the conduct of the Apostle Paul, we are under an obligation wholly to abstain. We are under an obligation to deny ourselves, even a gratification lawful in itself, lest that we should make our brethren to offend. It is on this ground that I feel it to be my duty to abstain from all intoxicating drinks—as a parent, to command my children to abstain—as a minister, to use my influence with the members of my Church to persuade them to abstain—and here as a lecturer, to urge upon the young men of the Christian Association to "touch not, taste not, handle not." Such being my views and feelings, I cannot but approve of the "prohibitory law," which has recently passed the Legislature of this

Again, another bright gem in Joseph's character was his *meekness* and *patience* under calumny and ill treatment.

Sold by his cruel brethren as a slave to the Egyptians, traduced by the disappointed harlot, who sought to rob him of his virtue, his happiness, and his God—immured in a dungeon dark and dreary, and loaded with irons—deceived by his fellow prisoner who promised to make intercession for him on his return to Pharaoh's court: yet we hear no complaints, nothing that indicated a disposition, to repine at the dispensations of Jehovah's providence, or to render evil for evil. On the contrary, there is every thing in his conduct under the basest ill treatment, that reminds us of the meekness and patience of Him who was "led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth."

My young friends, Joseph's conduct in this respect is well worthy of your particular attention. You will not live long in the world without meeting with losses, crosses, and disappointments, such as will be grievous to flesh and blood. Sanguine expectations will be often doomed to failure. The morning will often whisper a flattering tale which the evening will deny. Your character will be often traduced. The breath of calumny will often blow upon it. A censorious world will, like the fly, pass over the sound parts of your character, and light upon your sores. In relation to all such annoyances, let me affectionately say, imitate Joseph's example. In your patience possess ye your souls. Secure the testimony of a good conscience, and then commit your way to God. Consider all events as under the superintending providence of Jehovah. Make that Almighty Being your friend by faith in his Son. Engage cordially and zealously in His service. Let his law be your rule of action. And then as the traveller on one of the mountains of South America, can enjoy the bright sunshine on the summit, and listen to the storm raging beneath him; so from your high moral elevation, you will look down with unruffled serenity of soul upon the petty annoyances inseparable from a pilgrimage here below, and you will joyfully realise that "great peace have they who love God's law, and nothing shall offend them." And when you are reviled, revile not again, when you suffer, threaten not; but commit your-

Province, and awful in my opinion, would be the guilt incurred, and disastrous would be the consequences, should our rulers set an Azag free again, whom God has devoted to destruction; should they take Dagon and set him on his feet again and legalise anew a traffic which at every step of its progress through ages past, has been marked with "mourning, lamentation and woe."



self to Him who judgeth righteously. Meet every temptation to retaliate with the heroic language of Nehemiah—"I am engaged in a great work, and I cannot come down;" and that God who always pleads the cause of injured innocence, will some day bring your character out of the mire and filth, in which a malignant world may have submerged it, and you will sing songs of deliverance like Israel of old, whilst you see your foul accusers strewn as sea weed on the ocean's margin. Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass. And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noon day,—(Ps. 37, 5—6.)

I must necessarily pass over the bright features of Joseph's character, in order that I may have time to notice some circumstances which rendered that character *peculiarly* illustrious.—First—Joseph presents before us a notable example of virtue and piety in a *young man*.

Seventeen years old was he when he left his father's house, and all the principal incidents, that furnish the tests of his high moral qualities, transpired, when he was advancing towards the meridian of life. Although the *hoary head* is a crown of glory when found in the way of righteousness; yet virtue is an ornament peculiarly graceful to the *young*. It is always a symptom of a degenerate age, when youth is considered an apology for folly. And yet how frequently do we hear such expressions as these coming from the lips of those from whom better things might be expected. "Youth must have its follies." "Old heads cannot sit on young shoulders." "The young must sow their wild oats sometime." Now, I know that it is a melancholy truth that most young persons do early learn to walk "according to the course of this world," by indulging in evil habits, and frequenting scenes of sinful amusements. Early in life they do find the way to the tavern, the ball room, the gaming table, the theatre, and even take an advancing step in depravity, and find their way to the house of the strange woman, that flattereth with her words; and there they sow their wild oats which yield for them a harvest of painful regrets here, and unless repented of in time, eternal misery hereafter. I know that many young persons *do this*; but I have yet to learn that they *must* do it. Are they impelled thereto by any fatal necessity? Is there any propelling power that drives them, contrary to the current of their own inclinations, to those sinful and ruinous indulgences, which darken the intellect, stupify the conscience, and debase the heart, and the end of which is everlasting death? On the contrary, are not

the most alluring invitations held out to the young to walk in wisdom's ways? Is not the most gracious promise of help offered them in their efforts to resist every sinful propensity? And are not rewards the most glorious set before them as an encouragement to refuse the evil and choose the good?

But, however true it is in regard to *some*, whose moral education has been woefully neglected by unfaithful parents; yet it is a calumny on the young as a *class*, to say that they must sow their wild oats sometime. There are thousands of young men who have never sown their wild oats, in the sense in which that phrase is generally understood. Through the blessing of God on faithful parental training, they have been brought early to yield their hearts to God, and thus they have been mercifully preserved from the paths in which destroyers go. I could point to more than one in this Christian Association, and many out of it, who give the lie to the infamous accusation, and though young in years, are examples of whatsoever things are true, pure, honest, and of good report. Let it be your study, my young friends, to *think*, and *speak*, and *act*, so that you may be all living illustrations of the falsehood of the allegation; remembering the solemn words of scripture—"Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting,"—(Gal. 6, 7—8.)

Second—Joseph presents before us an illustrious example of moral excellence in a *young man from home*.

Egypt was a strange land. Far removed was he from home and kindred. Far separated was he from a father's eye and from others, whose good opinion would be a powerful support to his virtue in the hour of trial. He was emphatically "*the young man from home*," and yet he dared to be virtuous still. In a degenerate age like the present, of which hypocrisy is the prevailing characteristic; is it not refreshing to look at such a picture of sterling uprightness—a picture of one though young in years, deriving his principles of action, not from mere prudence or expediency: but from a source that made him the same in Egypt that he was in Canaan—the same *abroad* that he was at *home*.

In ancient times there were some in the land of Israel who could speak half in the language of Ashdod, and half in the language of Canaan. So it is with multitudes still. They can speak the language of Canaan at home; but with equal fluency, they can speak that of Ashdod abroad—advocates of total abstinence at home, tipplers abroad—members of christian associations at

home, theatre frequenters abroad—regular church goers at home, but just as regular sabbath desecraters by rail and steamboat when abroad. Such persons are blotches on the fair face of Christendom. They put the most powerful weapon into the hand of the infidel, with which to assail the bulwarks of our faith. My young friends, let the example of Joseph be your guide in this matter. Let it teach you to aim at christian consistency wherever you go. Adopt no rule of action which you are not prepared to take with you into the steamboat, or the rail car, the crowded city, or the desolate wilderness. Remember that though the eye of friends and acquaintances may not be upon you, there is an eye that slumbers not, nor sleeps. It is the eye of Him who ponders all the goings of the children of men, that he may give to every man according to his works.

Third—Joseph presents before us an illustrious example of moral excellence in a young man, *amid influences most unfavourable to its cultivation.*

A young man may be far from home; but yet if in a strange land he be brought within range of the influence of virtuous characters; that influence will be a powerful safeguard to his virtue. But no such advantage had Joseph. Egypt was not only a land of strangers, but *idolaters*, and wherever he went, he breathed the polluted and noxious atmosphere of ungodliness and vice. As likely would a plant of the sunny South flourish amid the snows of the frozen North—as likely would animal and vegetable life luxuriate amid the miasma of the *Champagna Di Roma*; as virtuous affections would be likely to flourish in such a morally pestiferous clime as idolatrous Egypt. And yet Joseph's virtue *lived, aye, flourished*, and brought forth those fruits of righteousness of which we have been speaking. Surely we are forced to say—"this is the Lord's doing and it is wondrous in our eyes."

Now, whilst I would be sorry to make any remark that might have a tendency to lessen in the minds of the young—a sense of their obligation always to seek the society of the wise and good; I nevertheless would direct your particular attention to this fact in Joseph's history, for the purpose of shewing that a high religious character can be *maintained and nurtured* in the most *unfavourable circumstances*. You will hear persons sometimes allege as their excuse for laxity in moral deportment, that they are brought into such company in the prosecution of their lawful calling, that it is impossible for them to live as they ought, or as they would like. This is a *mistake*, and it is a *ruinous mistake* too; because such persons usually look upon it as a suffi-

oient *excuse* for their moral delinquencies, and consequently make no effort either to change their calling, or reform their conduct. Now let it be considered, that it is possible for an individual, by the Grace of God, to maintain a high moral and religious character, amid the most unfavourable influences. If Noah could walk with God amid the corruptions of the antediluvian world—if Moses could maintain holy affections in a Pharaoh's palace—if Obadiah could fear the Lord from his youth, in the licentious court of Ahab, King of Israel—if Nehemiah could furnish a bright example of holy affections, as cup bearer to the Monarch of Persia—and if Joseph could serve the Lord God of his fathers, amid the gross idolatries of Egypt,—then it will not be denied that similar examples may be exhibited, through the effectual operation of the same grace.

Whilst then, in choosing your companions and forming your engagements, you are always to take into account the character of those with whom you will be necessarily brought into contact; yet if Divine Providence has placed you in circumstances of moral danger, having influences of a deleterious nature continually darted upon you, yet be not discouraged. By the grace of God, you may even *there* keep your garments unsported from the world. Taking unto you the whole armour of God, you will be able to "withstand in the evil day." Abounding in prayer and watching—in the same with thanksgiving, you will grow up and flourish like the palm tree, or the cedar in Lebanon. And the greater difficulties you have to contend with in nurturing holy dispositions and in maintaining your christian consistency, the brighter will be your crown of glory hereafter. "Be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord, —(1 Cor. 15, 58.)

Fourth—Joseph presents before us an illustrious example of moral excellence, when *assailed by temptation*.

It has been truly said: if we want to know what a man really is, we must view him *in temptation*. We can form no conception of the seaman's skill and courage, by merely seeing him pace the deck of his noble ship, as she walks the deep with a prosperous breeze; if we want to know what his capabilities as a seaman are, we must view him *in the storm*. We can form no conception of a British soldier's heroism, by merely watching him on a summer's day parade, marching to the tune of "Rule Britannia," or "the flag that braved a thousand years the battle and the breeze;" but if we want to know what a British soldier is,

we must follow him to Alma or Inkermann, and there see him in actual combat with the enemies of his country. In like manner, if we know the strength of a man's moral principles, we must view him under temptation. An individual produces no sure evidence of his honesty, until that he is tempted to be dishonest—no evidence of his *truthfulness*, until that he is brought into circumstances in which a falsehood promises to serve his interests—no evidence of his meekness and humility, until he receives some great provocation—no evidence of his sterling purity, until that like Joseph, he comes forth from some fiery trial unscathed—no evidence of his *loyalty*, until that the laws of his country conflict with his appetite or his avarice. But to walk in sight of uncounted gold for days, and months, and years, with a conscience still unstained,—this is to be an honest man; to tell the truth, the *whole* truth, and nothing but the truth, when prevarication would promise to promote his interests better; this is to be a *truthful* man—to freely forgive those who have malignantly wronged him, when he is in circumstances to revenge that wrong; this is to be an *humble, forgiving* man—to yield cordial obedience to the laws of his country, when these laws conflict with his worldly interests; this is to be a *loyal* man.

Such was Joseph. Was secrecy a powerful temptation to dishonesty: Joseph was allured by the promise of that. Was secrecy a powerful temptation to unchastity; he was allured by the prospect of that. Was treatment the most barbarous, a temptation to murmur; he was assailed by that. Was opportunity to revenge ill treatment a powerful temptation to indulge it; Joseph was assailed by that. But yet, as the mountain oak, all the more deeply strikes its roots into the earth, the more fiercely it is assailed by the driving tempest; so by these fierce assaults of temptation, his moral principles were all the more firmly rooted, and grounded, in the soil of a regenerated heart.

Well might Jacob in his dying benediction say—"The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob."—(Gen. 49, 23—24.) Yes, Joseph was "strong" to resist temptation; but it was "in the Lord and in the power of his might." He found Divine grace sufficient for him in the time of need; and in that alone he fought, and by that he conquered. It was not any superiority in natural principle, nor any peculiar force of resolution inherited by birth, and strengthened by education and habit, that made him when assailed by the blasts of temptation

firm and immoveable as the rock of the ocean—round which the angry waves have for ages dashed and foamed. No—As well could the stripling David, with a sling and stone, bring the vaunting Goliath to the earth, in his own strength—as well could Sampson by his own physical power, carry off the doors of the gate of Gaza, and the two posts, bar and all—as well could Daniel, by any force of natural character, cheerfully submit to be thrown into a den of infuriated lions; as could Joseph, by any power of his own, achieve the greatest of all victories, the conquest of *himself*—for “he that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city,”—(Prov. 16, 32.) But by the grace of God, he was what he was.—“The hands of his arms were made strong by the hands of the Almighty God of Jacob.” And if you, my young friends, would attain to the same character, you must derive your power from the same source. You must know where your great strength lies—you must learn, that whilst, without Christ you can do nothing, through Christ strengthening you, you can do all things. Then, you will find the same grace that was sufficient for Joseph, also sufficient for you, and from every conflict with Satan and your own corrupt passions, however fierce and long continued, you will come forth, ultimately, conquerors, and more than conquerors, through “Him who loved you.”

A few words with regard to the great principle that lay at the foundation of Joseph's character, and I shall close this address.

You see the stately vessel steaming up your harbour. There is every thing apparently to drive her back. The tide is against her. The wind is tempestuously against her. Yet on she comes—onward, and still onward, nobly braving the wind, and stemming the tide, until she drops anchor at the wharf. You *look*, you *wonder*, you *think*. What drives her forward against a combination of opposing forces? You examine, and you discover an internal agency at work, sufficient not only to keep the noble vessel steady in the most tempestuous sea, but even to propel her forward, against the joint action of wind and tide.

Now, when you look at the character of Joseph, you see something more wonderful still. What, do you ask, was the great principle that made that character so lovely? What was the foundation of such a beautiful edifice? What was the influence that propelled him forward in his virtuous career, against so many powerful agencies, all continuing their forces to drive him back? My young friends, you have the whole secret of the matter, in those ever memorable words uttered by him on the occasion of

his fiercest struggle. "*How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God,*"—(Gen. 39, 9.)

Joseph believed in God's existence and attributes. He believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was to come to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. He was a firm believer in all the truths of revealed religion. He believed that the eye of God was upon him wherever he went, and in whatever circumstances he was placed. He believed, that that God, with whom he had to do, was a holy God, who could not look upon sin,—that He was a just God, and could by no means clear the guilty. He believed this all wise and glorious Being so orders the affairs of his wide empire, that a course of vicious conduct will sooner or later bring down the divine judgments upon the transgressor, and that a course of virtuous deportment will sooner or later be gloriously rewarded. He believed in the reality of a coming judgment, when all the *apparent* ills of life will be rectified—when every man will find his level—and when the wicked shall be "clothed with shame and everlasting contempt," while the "righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."—It was Joseph's firm and cordial belief in these and kindred truths, implanted in his soul by the Holy Spirit, that was the transforming principle of his character. This was the sheet anchor, that kept him sure and steadfast, when assailed by temptation's stormiest blast. This was the impulsive principle that propelled him forward in a course of steady, consistent, attractive piety, against both wind and wave.

How widely different was the character of Joseph, from that of another individual of whom we read in the inspired history : and the difference is all to be attributed to a diversity in their governing principle of action. You have, perhaps, all read the account which is given in Old Testament history of Joash, king of Israel. "Seven years old was he when he began to reign, and forty years reigned he in Jerusalem,"—(2 Chron. 24, 1.) For a considerable period he pursued a course of praiseworthy conduct. He looked very much like a truly excellent character, so that God's people rejoiced in him as one who should conduct the nation to peace and enduring prosperity. But yet there was one thing in which his character was fatally deficient. *His motives to virtuous deportment were all drawn from the eye of Jehoiada, the priest.* "He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord all the days of Jehoiada." But the moment that the eye of the aged Saint, under which he had quailed, was closed in death, then the source of his former apparent piety was dried up—the

restraints which formerly bound and galled him gave way; and from that day forward, he rapidly descended in the scale of moral degradation, until finally, he became a noted monument of God's indignation against sin, and a nuisance morally and physically to those who had rejoiced in his accession to the throne. He drew all his principles of action for the eye of man, and, therefore, like as the vessel dependent on the winds for her motive power, is driven back in her course when these winds are unfavourable; so when his motive power, the eye of Jehoiada was taken off him, then he turned back and became an apostate.

Not so with Joseph. He derived his motives to the practice of piety, not from the eye of man, but from the ever watchful eye of God; and, therefore, like the noble Steamboat that is in a great measure independent of wind and weather, having a propelling agency within: he held on his course of wise, upright, and pious deportment, through evil report and good report—in adversity and prosperity—amongst friends and strangers, until he ultimately reached the haven of everlasting glory.

My young friends—would you imitate Joseph's example—shine forth before the Church and the world, in all the loveliness of his moral character—and finally attain that bright crown of glory which he now wears,—there is one thing essentially requisite, viz.:—that you adopt the same principles of action and yield yourselves to the subduing influence of the same motives. Do not imagine that an amiable natural disposition, a refined education, graceful accomplishments, or a desire to secure the esteem of the virtuous and good, will suffice to preserve you in paths of uprightness and virtue. These may embellish you in the calm, but they will not secure you in the storm. In the dark hour of temptation, they will be as useless as are the ornaments of the foundering vessel to keep her above the wave, or as is her canvas when wind and tide are adverse.

In the very first place, seek union to the Lord Jesus Christ, by a faith of the divine operation, that you may enjoy reconciliation and peace with God through the death of his Son. Without this union, all your advantages of a graceful form, liberal education, polished manners, and refined taste, will never recommend you to that God who looks not upon the outward appearance, but looks in upon the heart. Seek grace from on high, to enable you to take the law of God as your rule of action in all circumstances, and not the maxims, opinions, and practices of the surrounding world. *Think, and speak, and act*, at all times, like Moses, "as seeing Him who is invisible." Whether you be at

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homeor abroad, amongst friends or strangers, let the words of Hagar in the wilderness be your motto—"Thou God seest me." And when tempted to sin in any of its deceitful forms; when tempted to utter the *profane* oath; when tempted to dishonesty in business transaction; when tempted to desert the sanctuary of the Most High, to indulge in a sabbath day's amusement; when tempted to go to the ball room, the gaming table, the tavern, the theatre, or the "house of the strange woman;" O, remember Joseph. Think on his weapon of defence in the hour of danger. Grasp it in the hand of faith and holy resolution. "HOW CAN I DO THIS GREAT WICKEDNESS AND SIN AGAINST GOD."

Thus planted in the house of the Lord by his abundant grace, you will, in the period of youth, grow up and flourish like Joseph, a "fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall,"—and in old age, when others fade, you shall still bring forth fruit, and aye be flourishing. "Living by faith upon the Son of God: and walking in the ways of dutiful obedience: your peace shall flow like a river, and your righteousness shall be like the waves of the sea."

"Youth is the most accepted time  
To love and serve the Lord,  
A flower presented in its prime  
Will much delight afford.  
He'll crown with peace your rising years  
And make your fruit increase,  
Will guide you through this vale of tears,  
And bid your sorrows cease.  
Give Him the morning of your days,  
And be for ever blest,  
'Tis none but those in wisdom's ways  
Enjoy substantial rest."

