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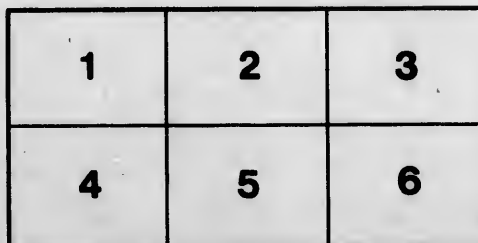
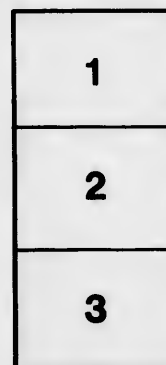
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The Value of Earnestness.

A N A D D R E S S

DELIVERED AT THE OPENING OF

THE THIRTEENTH SESSION

OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF QUEEN'S COLLEGE.

BY THE REV. PROFESSOR GEORGE,

VICE PRINCIPAL OF THE COLLEGE.

KINGSTON :

PRINTED AT THE DAILY NEWS OFFICE.

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GENTLEMEN :—

A YOUNG MAN, to enter College with well-grounded hopes of success, must not only possess such a measure of elementary learning as shall fit him for the business of his classes, but must also have certain mental qualities, without which neither the labors of his Professors nor his regular attendance will much avail. Of these qualities *earnestness* is of the first importance. A Student may have naturally a ready apprehension, a retentive memory, and a lively fancy, but if he wants earnestness he will make little progress in those branches of learning, and in that kind of knowledge, for the acquisition of which there must be patient and severe toil. As I regard earnestness not only of vast importance to your progress while here, but equally so to your success in future life, I avail myself of the present occasion to throw out a few thoughts on this important subject. But, anxious to make the Address practical, so that it may furnish plain lessons for your use, I shall avoid certain metaphysical topics which would naturally enough occupy our attention in another place.

Suffice it to remark, that your earnestness in pursuing an object *will be entirely regulated by the nature and force of the motives under which you act.* As man's responsibility depends solely on his capacity to deal rationally with motives, so the outcome of his mind will be as the motive influence is. But as motives are the mind's reasons to itself for what it does, it is not enough that these lie within the field of its vision, or receive a transient glance to produce earnest action. They must be steadily looked at, so as to be seen in all their value, ere they can enlist the mind fully in behalf of the objects which they commend. The motives which merely pass before, but do not stay in the mind, so as to affect the understanding and heart, are but floating and ineffective fancies, which have scarcely more influence on a man's conduct than the birds which fly over his head in the air.

This is no doubt the unhappy condition of not a few minds. Such minds possess little valuable thought, no definite purpose, and no ardor of action. But, again, as knowledge, in the comprehensive sense, can alone furnish motives of varied and powerful influence for rational creatures, so it is plain that he who has the largest stock of knowledge, in its different kinds, has the largest stock of motives on which to draw. The ignorant, whose ideas are few, and their notions crude and everyway imperfect, cannot possess any great share of motives. Yet, it is not the eye wandering rapidly or carelessly over a

wide and beautiful landscape that awakens a peculiar interest in any one spot ; but the eye resting on this or the other object with patient and delighted gaze, that brings it home to the soul in all its peculiar charms, and in all its definite grandeur or beauty. *Just so must there be a realizing faith in the truth seen to produce a healthy earnestness.*

That man can believe in abstract truths which come from the distant or the past, and have their consequences lying in the remote future, is what fits him for being a subject of God's moral government, ennobles his character, and makes his responsibility fearfully great: Unless truth be apprehended it cannot be believed. Yet to see it as it transiently passes before the mind, and to have it made a part of your thinking, feeling, and conscious self, is by no means the same thing. The latter is faith, while the former is but a momentary apprehension, or, at most, amounts only to trivial speculation. It is the believing man who can be truly the earnest man. Hence a sceptical age is, on the whole, ever characterized by mental stagnation, except in as far as men are moved by mere material interests, or are aroused to action by pride, ambition, or malice. For he who has no faith beyond the evidence of his senses, has no motive to be zealous about anything beyond the claims of sense, or the more powerful claims of one or other of the malign passions. It is true, for the gratification of these, the sceptic will contend with more than the zeal of a religious fanatic : but further his zeal cannot carry him, as no man's zeal goes beyond the range of his belief, such as it is. Hence the reproach cast on theological combatants for their extravagant heat in debate, and the commendation accorded to sceptics for their calmness, to be rightly understood or adjusted, demands a serious consideration of the objects at issue, and the feelings by which the parties are animated : for while no apology should be offered for bitterness of spirit in debate, it nevertheless should be borne in mind, that when men are contending for religious and moral principles which they regard as essential to the highest interests of man, great allowance should be made for a warmth which the sceptic never can feel who has no fixed belief in these principles, and who can easily embody his most effective argument in a heartless sneer. The sceptic is cool, not from superior wisdom, but from want of faith in all that most deeply interests the heart of man. It is great truths, believed firmly, that give to earnestness all its healthy intensity and all its real value. When a man sees a truth which he believes is of unspeakable importance to himself and his fellow-men, emanating from that God to whose authority he bows, his feelings are naturally awakened as he embraces it, or as he labors to bring it to bear on the minds of others.

Widely different, indeed, are the effects which the same truth

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will produce, or fail to produce, in different minds. "What must I do to be saved?" is a question which many have never uttered, and which, as uttered by others, produces no emotion, and leads to no practical results. But when the same question is uttered by a man who sees his guilt and trembles for its consequences, how intensely earnest is the emotion with which it is put. Faith makes all the difference. For the soul that hath embraced the truths which this question involves, cannot but be awakened to deepest earnestness. Indeed, indifference in hearing or uttering important truths is painful evidence of mental weakness, or of that unbelief which chills the feelings, while it deadens the conscience and darkens the understanding. Men who believe what is great will be greatly in earnest. A strong faith was the chief ground of the ardent zeal which burned in the bosoms of the first preachers of Christianity, and enabled them to achieve their grand moral triumphs amidst difficulties and trials which would have utterly appalled men not thoroughly in earnest. With them heaven and hell, man's immortality, a Saviour's love and His all-sufficient atonement, were no conventional hearsays, which could be coldly repeated, but the most solemn and deeply interesting truths which the God of mercy had ever revealed to his creatures. Hence these men spoke with an earnestness which arrested the thoughtless, aroused the sensual, awed the proud, instructed the ignorant, and comforted the penitent. When Felix trembled and the Jailor at Phillipi rejoiced, be assured of it, Paul was speaking with an earnestness which the truths he believed naturally inspired. O, if men saw God's truth in its doctrines, duties, promises, threatenings and motives, as it was seen by prophets, apostles and martyrs, how would their bosoms burn with love to it, with ardent zeal to reduce it to practice, and earnest desire to make it known to others! A mind in communion with the Eternal mind and gazing intensely on the Throne and the Cross, cannot fail to be zealous.

You perceive, then, that that faith which brings the soul into connection with "*the substance of things*," and which gives to it the evidence of the great verities of God, is really that which produces a healthy and efficient zeal. It will, however, readily be seen that I make these allusions, not from any intention in such an address as this, either to explain the nature of faith or any one of the Christian doctrines, but simply to illustrate the principle out of which all true earnestness springs. For while it is readily admitted that the essential truths of religion, clearly seen and firmly believed, must produce great earnestness; yet, not these alone, but every truth, how remotely soever connected with them, and which has direct bearing on the welfare of man in any of his relations in life, when believed, will produce an earnestness commensurate to the interests which it involves. For he who is wisely zealous for the

greatest will not be wholly indifferent to the less. Indeed, the temporal wellbeing of man is not a thing of little moment. In the view of virtuous men, human happiness or misery is not a small matter. Hence, whatever may lead to the attainment of the former, or enable poor erring mortals to shun the latter, must ever be an object of deep interest to all good men.

I feel extremely anxious to impress your minds with the necessity of sound knowledge to a healthy faith, and of strong *faith to a healthy earnestness*. Without knowledge zeal is but a temporary excitement, and is often the ready means by which demagogues—Clerical as well as Lay—have gained not a few of their unworthy ends. While, on the other hand, faith laying hold on fragments of truth, but never embracing it as a whole, is almost certain to pass into some form of malign fanaticism. These principles, if clearly understood, would explain much of the folly we witness in the world, and not a few of the most frightful crimes which have desolated society.

Hence, you perceive, what we desiderate is not mere earnestness. This may spring from the grossest errors and produce the most disastrous consequences. It was indeed this, in one of its most awful forms, which at the fanatical call of Peter the Hermit, aroused all Europe to arms, and filled the plains of Asia with needless carnage. And when the hour came that saw all the old barriers of society in France give way, it was again this that filled Paris with such lamentation and woe as no city in modern times has witnessed. It is only good to be *zealously affected in a good thing*. Zeal in what is bad, not only fits man for great crimes, but is sure to beget that blind approbation of crime which steels the heart against remorse, and by drawing to its aid the approval of conscience, fatally prepares the soul for almost any sort of wickedness. A dull, wicked man, may be loathsome, and in many ways mischievous; but who can set bounds to his criminality, who is thoroughly in earnest to gratify his own bad passions? To find an apology for a wicked course of conduct, in the reckless ardor with which it is prosecuted, although common enough with writers of a certain class, is yet one of the most pernicious lessons that can be taught to the young. To be blind to the claims of justice, or to invert these, and then seek for justice in mere revenge, with quenchless ardor, is perhaps as true and simple a notion as we are able to form of the wickedness of devils. And just in as far as this is seen in bad men, who employ great intellectual powers to accomplish bad ends, whatever fictitious charms may be thrown around their character, or by what sophistry soever it may be disguised, still to all virtuous persons the ardent hero of wickedness is an object of peculiar loathing and dread. If it be painful to see a human mind becoming imbecile through inaction, it is still more so to see a mind frenziedly active under the influence of some

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vicious passion. To be thoroughly in earnest to go to perdition or drive others to it, is the consummation of madness. Yet this madness has been celebrated by not a few writers, who appear to be so enamored with ardent heroism, that they not only lose sight of what constitutes true heroism, but find in the daring with which great crimes are committed, something that gives them the hue, if not the substance, of virtues. It were easy, not merely from writers of fiction, but from grave historians, to illustrate this pernicious commendation of men whose heroism was simply a daring, reckless wickedness. Let me guard you against being imposed on by this most mischievous sophistry. No man is a true hero who tramples under foot the laws of God and the rights of his fellow-men. A man may be great in wickedness without being great in anything else.

But while it is true that misdirected earnestness, like every other power—and it may be said to be the misdirection of all human powers—can only produce harm; still it is no less true, that the earnestness which springs from right motives, and strives to accomplish worthy ends, is of unspeakable advantage to man. *It strengthens all the powers of the mind.* For although it may be assumed that all men have the same radical faculties, yet it does not follow that they all have these originally in equal strength, or have an equal capacity to perform the same amount of labor, or produce intellectual fruit of the same kind. It will hardly admit of question, that there are original elementary differences necessary to make one man a true poet, another a great orator, a third an able statesman. Yet, experience shows, that be the original powers what they may, the mind cannot acquire either the strength or material for putting forth great efforts without long and severe exercise. The health and vigor of the mind result not less from exercise than the health and vigor of the body. But—now mark it—without earnestness, men will never vigorously exercise their mental powers.

It is the want of this, or of the motives which lead to it, that is the cause of the sloth and frivolity which ruin so many young men. For, although they possibly had good natural parts, yet as these were never thoroughly exercised in the prosecution of any great object, their powers were either never unfolded, or suffered a premature decay. The latter, which is often witnessed with pity, would never take place without some mental or bodily disease, had all the faculties of the soul been laboriously exercised. For when there is an earnest application to duty, all the powers of the mind not only find employment, but are wonderfully strengthened by every effort that is made. Hence, the task accomplished by an earnest man, but prepares him for still higher achievements.

After what has been said, it will not be inferred that a mind naturally very feeble can be greatly or rightly in earnest.

Such a mind cannot have that view of motives which will produce this. Yet, a mind with powers below mediocrity, when earnestly bent on the performance of duty, will accomplish in the end what at first sight might appear wholly beyond its reach. It is thus that some young men who, from their deficiencies on entering College, were objects of suspicion to their friends, and of pity or contempt to their more gifted class-fellows, have, nevertheless, by an earnest application to study, turned out respectable scholars and most useful professional men. Hence, when their success in after life is spoken of, you often hear the remark in reference to some one of them, Yes, he was a lad of but slender powers of mind and ill prepared for College, but his earnest application made up for his deficiencies. For, let it never be forgotten by you, that it is just constant and earnest application to duty which forms those valuable habits on which success in life so much depends. Genius can work with habits, but cannot create them. Earnestness is mainly instrumental in doing this. Nor is this all. How rapidly does that student apprehend what is brought before him, and with what accuracy does he retain what he reads or hears, whose eye glistens with the ardor of a soul on fire as he catches another and another truth by which he is to master the subject of his study. Have no fear for that young man, for he is in earnest. If he has naturally good parts and fair advantages for their cultivation, he can scarcely fail to reach distinction. Even under great disadvantages he is sure to be respectable. For a soul in earnest is animated by that vital heat by which all its powers are expanded and its fruits brought to maturity. If this be not the Promethean fire, the Promethean fire is nothing without it. Depend on it, a want of earnestness in the business of your class, will of itself sufficiently account for your want of progress in learning, and ought to be a sufficient reason to your parents or guardians for your failure here. The earnest student follows with delight the guidance of his Professor, and makes acquisitions at every step. But the frivolous and slothful, although he may be dragged through the *course*, yet at the close he will be found not covered with laurels, but with dust, and will be seen to have gained hardly anything but hatred to study and an aversion to those who dragged him through it. Unless you are earnest, lads, I must tell you solemnly, that I have no hopes of your success within these walls, let your Professors be ever so able and ever so faithful. And, moreover, ever keep in mind the momentous consideration, that all your labors here, and all that you learn in this place, are but the means to future usefulness. O, could we only make you thoroughly earnest students, we would have accomplished much to make you able and successful men in life. For, without this, you will succeed but poorly in any profession to which you are looking forward;

You will all have much to do with the minds of your fellow-men in your different professions and careers. For to enlighten, guide, restrain and comfort the minds of others, is not only a great part of the business of the clergyman, lawyer and statesmen, but of all educated men in every sphere in life. All earnest men are not fit for this, for zeal without knowledge, as has been shown, can only mislead. Yet, assuredly, no one *has ever done great things for his fellow-men, or any great thing with them*, who was not first of all very much in earnest. Your position for acting on others may be favorable, the knowledge of your profession extensive, your character irreproachable; but, if you are wholly destitute of enthusiasm, you will find yourself sadly impotent to influence their minds. Even the kind and zealous attentions of a medical man to his patient inspires confidence, which is half the cure. Whereas, in those departments in which mind to produce the desired results must come more directly into contact with mind, a want of earnestness will, to a great extent, neutralize even high intellectual attainments and professional acquirements. The lawyer who pleads with a languid indifference for a client whom he thinks in the right, will find his forensic knowledge and logical arguments to do but little to secure a verdict in his favor. But this evil becomes far clearer and altogether more hateful in the minister of religion. As he of all men deals with the highest truths and the most important interests that can occupy our thoughts, and has the most powerful motives to enforce them strongly, a cold indifference in handling his subject is a heavy impeachment of his understanding or conscience. But the principle I am anxious to enforce is more or less applicable to all who would beneficially move the minds of others. This they cannot do unless they be in earnest. To a great extent men believe, because they see others believe. I stop not to enquire into the great good or evil of this. It is enough for my purpose that it is one of the most obvious and yet one of the deepest laws of our nature. Hence, if you wish others to believe what you say, you must say it earnestly. For the earnestness of your tone, look and action, is the symbol to your fellow-men of the truthfulness of your heart. He who utters a thing with chilling indifference, solicits doubt from those who listen, either as to his sincerity or the importance he attaches to it. Unless we suspect deception or ignorance in the speaker, we are so constituted as to admit his truthfulness when his soul unfolds itself in natural and simple earnestness. False men have no wish to be deceived; yea, the falsest have a selfish love of sincerity in others, hence are pleased with that earnestness which they regard as a proof of it; while men of truth looking for it in every one, and loving it devoutly wherever they find it, are delighted with the honest earnestness which they naturally regard as a mark of it. Indeed,

the principle we are laboring to explain is so well understood, that those who attempt to impose on others are conscious they cannot do so *without at least pretending they are in earnest*. That their impositions succeed to such a frightful extent is additional proof of that law of our nature to which we have referred.

While eminent speakers have differed from each other in many of their attributes of eloquence and characteristics of mind, earnestness, from Demosthenes to Chatham, is one of the things they have all had in common. No doubt this assumes different aspects, according to the diverse temperaments of men and tastes of the times. In some men, earnestness is calm, but intense; in others, bold, fierce, or tender, as the case may require. Yet, in every able speaker, and in accordance with the nature of his subject, will earnestness be found to exist. It cannot be otherwise, when the mind is kindled by clear views of important truths to be explained or enforced, or a great object to be gained.

Unquestionably, a cold logic, rigorously applied, is an indispensable instrument to the effective speaker: for how can he speak so as to instruct, or even please, who does not reason clearly? Yet, if conviction be the great end of all speaking, he will miserably fail in this whose thoughts do not glow in his own bosom and burn on his lips while he addresses others. The iceberg often reflects a brilliant light, and sometimes gives forth colors in all their prismatic beauty; but there grow no flowers or vines on its slopes; and the mariner, after a moment's curious gaze, turns away from it with cold aversion.

A speech or a sermon may have in it much knowledge, for plodding diligence may collect this, and a little learning may enable a man to give it proper arrangement and suitable expression; but if it be not warmed by a whole-hearted earnestness, it will but imperfectly reach the understanding, and will not at all touch the heart or the conscience. But this, it may be said, applies only to popular addresses, delivered in public assemblies. Although its application to these be more obvious, yet it is by no means confined to them. In a word, earnestness is necessary in every man who speaks to instruct or move, be his subject what it may. I have never seen more genuine enthusiasm than I have seen in certain teachers while unfolding mathematical truth, or in explaining the principles of Latin Syntax. And why not? Important truths were to be taught, and the education of pupils cared for, and these men, not only from a love of their profession, but from a conscientious sense of duty, were in earnest. There is really so little genuine enthusiasm now in the world, that one rejoices exceedingly to find it where he but little expects it. True, the strength of a man's earnestness ought to be measured by the value of the matter in hand; for he who is very earnest about

trifles, is likely to become an inveterate trifler, and a sore vexation to all who have the misfortune to act with him. But, to do good to others, in the faithful discharge of our duty, is no trifle. And he that is ardent in lesser duties is not like to be cold in greater.

Indeed, what is worth being done by a rational creature, should be done with a suitable earnestness. I am not afraid to say, that the youth, who is in earnest even in his innocent amusements, is not very likely to turn out the worst scholar in his class. Still, we cannot but remark, that your zeal should rise in its fervor in proportion to the importance of the duties. But to return: let no man deceive himself in thinking that he can act powerfully on his fellow-men *if his heart be cold to them*, and if he be indifferent to his subject. I say coldness of heart, for this is the evil which mars so much good, as it sufficiently accounts for that coldness of manner which spoils the *medium* betwixt mind and mind. It has often been matter of chagrin and astonishment to the accomplished speaker—accomplished in all respects but in one—how his elaborate and highly polished address produced no other effect than a cold compliment to his taste and scholarship. It could produce nothing more: it wanted earnestness—it touched not the heart. A wax figure may be perfect in all its parts, artistically an object of taste, but never can be an object of love; for it wants the warmth and beauty of life. But then, remember, it must be true natural life, not the galvanized life of an affected earnestness, which is even more hideous than the stiffness and coldness of death. And it might be well for certain persons to consider, that imitation, which has in it the vileness of falsehood, and has always a hard task to perform, has none harder than when it attempts to pass off the false for the true in earnestness. As this is not very difficult to detect, so it is peculiarly offensive. Nor is it unworthy of remark, that in the mysterious communion of mind with mind, all ordinary forms of language can but imperfectly, without the aid of earnestness, unfold the more subtle meanings, and the more exquisite feelings of the soul. This is indeed the grand interpreter of what lies deepest in the human heart; for it not only throws out nicer shades of meaning than mere words can utter, but starts in the bosoms of those you address, trains of thought and emotion beyond the power of a cold expression of language to awaken. It is not the mere words spoken by a General at the head of his army, *when the decisive moment has come*, but the burning earnestness of soul with which they are uttered, that touches as an electric spark ten thousand bosoms in a moment, and makes the most ordinary soldier an invincible hero. But this is just as true, although not so strikingly seen, in all the other relations of life in which the mind of one man is brought effectively to bear on the minds of others.

It were a great mistake however to suppose, that earnestness can only exert its influence on other minds, when aided by voice, look, and gesture. If written thought is greatly to interest and move the heart, it must be thoroughly imbued with earnestness. This is, indeed, the chief quality which makes that striking difference betwixt the productions of men merely of talent, and the far higher productions of men of genius. That it is at least an essential element in every work of genius, no one will doubt. In addressing the scholars of a Literary Institution, it is unnecessary to do more than merely hint, that this is one of the grand excellencies in the choicest productions of the Greek mind. It is singular with what readiness you forgive all the credulity of Herodotus, as you listen with delight to the old historian telling you with child-like simplicity all that they said to him in Egypt and elsewhere: you see that he so earnestly believes all that he states, that you have no heart to cross-question him. But while a simple earnestness is a prominent characteristic in all the higher productions of Grecian genius, it is seen in none in such beauty and force as in the more ancient pieces of the drama. Most critics are now agreed that the best of the Greek Tragedies cannot on the whole be compared to many pieces of the same sort of composition in the English tongue. Ancient Greece had enough to be proud of, although she produced no Shakspeare. Yet, how easily do you overlook the awkwardness of the plot, and barrenness of incident, and the innumerable absurdities of the Greek drama, as you get entranced with the deep wail of earnestness that breaks on your ear from the heart of every speaker in the piece. You must go to the Book of Job, or other portions of the Bible, to find anything more grandly earnest than you find in some of the Greek plays. One ceases to wonder that a people who had earnestness of soul to produce and relish such works, could dare, as they did, to bar the Straits of Thermopylæ and to fight and gain the battle of Marathon.

But, indeed, is not simple earnestness the very soul of all good poetry? A poem may want many graces which the philosophic critic may desiderate, and the want of which he laments; but if it wants earnestness, it requires not the eye of the critic, but only the sincere heart of the simplest reader, to detect its deficiencies and disown it as worthless. Even the most ordinary theme becomes interesting when the strings of the poet's lyre are struck by the throbbings of his heart. Hence, those prosaic themes celebrated by Cowper are listened to by persons of the most finished taste with exquisite delight. His earnest soul enlivens and beautifies all that it touches. You listen, believe, and are charmed, for you instinctively feel the warmth of a heart greatly sincere, as it comes into contact with yours. This might be still more forcibly illustrated by

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referring you to a poet of a far higher order of genius than even Cowper—a poet whose name is never heard by the ear of a Scotchman in the most distant land to which he may wander without a glow of national pride, yet never uttered by any man of piety without a painful sigh. Whether Burns took for his subject—for you perceive it is to him I refer—the moral beauties of a cotter's fireside, an unhoused mouse on a winter day, or a mountain daisy torn up by the plough, his earnest soul threw such touches of beauty into his theme as have charmed right-hearted men in all parts of the world. Much good writing may assuredly be produced by cold-hearted men of mere talent and learning, but let no man attempt to write poetry unless he be terribly in earnest. If this gives to prose one of its highest excellencies, poetry has no excellence without it. Earnestness, like charity, brings into view many hidden graces, while in composition it conceals a multitude of sins.

But if this quality of mind be such a powerful aid to written and spoken thought, it is an auxiliary not less powerful to the performance of those actions which demand much self-denial and severe and long-protracted labor. It is the man who prosecutes an object with untiring ardor who may hope to succeed. Indeed, energy of character holds out the prospect of success in any undertaking which, in the nature of things, is possible. Nor has it been seldom that the energetic have achieved what to the feeble and vacillating is impossible. But although the energy that can bear the tear and wear of severe and long toil, implies considerable strength of all the mental faculties; yet you can hardly over-estimate the importance of ardent zeal in producing and sustaining it. If you are to be successful and useful, you must lay your account by many difficulties, which must be calmly met and resolutely overcome in life. Hope to the young is of unspeakable value; but let it not paint the journey of life as a smooth path, along which you are to be borne in a half-dreamy repose, and at every stage of the road gain your object by faint wishes and fainter efforts. Our world, with its numberless confusions and miseries from folly and sin, demands from all who would either reform it or pass through it with safety, not only sound principles but much energy of character. Indeed, no great discovery has ever been made, no beneficial change wrought out in the conditions of society, but by earnest and energetic laborers. Copernicus, Tycho Brahe and Kepler were all ardent pioneers in that science which the great and earnest genius of Newton perfected. Arkwright and Watt made their wonderful mechanical discoveries by an ardent investigation of various principles of science, and laborious experiment in the application of these. Men half asleep may dream of discoveries, but it is the man fully awake who makes them. No

poet, "with eye in fine frenzy rolling," was ever more in earnest than the experimental philosopher probing nature for another of her precious secrets.

But the truth of this general view acquires its most luminous illustrations when we turn to those men who have been the chief benefactors of the world in its social and religious reformations. The fiery zeal of Luther and Knox has often been censured. Assuredly it was not, in either, at all times so perfectly under the guidance of heavenly wisdom as could be wished; yet who can estimate the importance of the indomitable energy and burning zeal of these men to the success of the reformation in Germany and Scotland? It is grand to see how their zeal made them strong to burst asunder the fetters which had for ages enslaved the mind of Europe. And I cannot but think that but for the Christian sincerity and noble earnestness of Cromwell, British liberty might have perished in its cradle; and had not Burke been as earnest as he was wise and eloquent, it might at the close of the last century have gone down in the darkness and anarchy of a licentious democracy. Verily, gentlemen, I am most anxious to impress you deeply with the fact, that nothing great or beneficial for the world has ever been achieved except by earnest and energetic men. It is the earnest missionary, such as Brainerd or Williams, who under God converts a heathen tribe; it is the earnest minister in a Christian land that edifies and blesses his congregation; it is the earnest statesman who secures true liberty for his country and resolutely defends it; and it is the earnest counsel at the bar to whom the innocent man on his trial looks with confidence, to whom the jury give a believing ear, and to whom the judge turns with respect. Why should it be otherwise, if earnestness be, as we have defined it, clear views of great truths and a keen perception of motives to the performance of duty. Without this no professional man is entitled either to confidence, love, or esteem.

There never was a time when the world stood more in need of men of true earnestness than at present. For, are not these the men *who alone can guide and restrain* the popular mind, in the new channels into which it is now at all points forcing itself? "Give me a place to plant my fulcrum on," said the ancient philosopher, "and I will move the world." Give us earnest men, say I, and then we will move the moral world rightly. Assuredly, we see on all hands much ardor in the prosecution of certain objects. There never was an age in which men sought wealth or political power more keenly or cultivated more sedulously the physical sciences and the mechanical arts. In all this there is much to commend, and much that furnishes ground for hope. Yet these things are not the highest that ought to enlist the heart of man. For the highest of these should but be means of far higher ends.

While man seeks by means of the material to make progress towards the moral and the spiritual, the course is wise and the end will be good. But when man seeks his highest enjoyment solely in the visible and material, he forgets the chief end of his being, and fatally mistakes the source of his true happiness. Nor can it be affirmed that the moral and spiritual interests of society are sought with an earnestness at all proportionate to their value. In short, what we want are men whose souls shall be fired with intense desire to bring the world nearer in conformity with the Divine will, and thus secure for it all the material advantages which science and art can afford, and at the same time elevate man to that position, which, as a social, moral and accountable creature, his Creator intended him to occupy.

The world must sink into materialism and social anarchy if there cannot be found men of strong minds and simple piety, earnestly bent at any sacrifice to accomplish this for themselves and their fellow-creatures. If this be romance, remember it is the romance of the Bible. For what is it but the love and self-denial of Christianity? Oh, was not He earnest in His mighty purpose *when He set His face as a flint*, to make, in every sense, the greatest sacrifice the universe has ever witnessed? And were not they earnest and self-denying men whom He sent forth to proclaim to a lost world the hope of man and man's chief end? My young friends, by looking to your Saviour you not only learn the way of salvation, but also learn from Him and from the example of His apostles the lessons and the motives to pure and untiring earnestness in prosecuting high ends for your own good and the good of others. But on this I do not enlarge: suffice it to say, that he who is enlightened by the spirit of God and warmed by the hope of the Gospel, and zealously seeks the highest objects, will not fail to give to the less a suitable place in his affections and a proper share of his efforts. It is impossible, while you seek the eternal welfare of your fellow-men, entirely to overlook their temporal interests. The greater here does not cashier the less, but gives to the less its true position. Mere fanaticism can alone err on this; but fanaticism has as little of the warmth of heavenly zeal as it has of heavenly light.

It has been shown that all healthy earnestness must spring from high and pure motives. But now, in conclusion, have you not, as students, many such motives to make you earnest in duty? All of you are looking forward to important stations in the world. Not a few of you have the ministry in prospect. But is not that young man chargeable with presumptuous folly who expects to be an able minister of the Gospel and yet shows no earnestness whilst in College to prepare himself for that sacred calling? If your souls are burning with holy desire to proclaim in after days the salvation of Christ to your fellow-

sinner, you will now ardently embrace every opportunity to fit yourselves for the work. But, be your future field of labor what it may, I beseech you to be intensely diligent now, else you will never occupy it with honor, usefulness, and comfort.

And let me just, ere I close, press home on your conscience another class of motives. You have been sent here by parents whose tenderest earthly hopes are bound up in your success. Nor is it unlikely that some of them, at great personal sacrifices, and not a few family privations, have striven to get you prepared for College, and are now in the same way striving to carry you through it. I put it to you if that student has either filial affection, honor, or gratitude, who knows all this, and yet can be a trifler. But, gentlemen, some of you possibly know more than this. Have you parents who often, with believing yet trembling hearts, are at a throne of grace in your behalf? Does His eye, who sees all things, see them frequently retire to secret places to wrestle with God for His grace to keep you from sin and bless you in your studies? And, oh! can you endure the thought that that same all-seeing eye shall behold you wasting your time, neglecting your opportunities, and falling into vicious courses? My young friends, if you cannot find motives to earnestness in duty in these views, where shall you find them? But I do hope that you will not only draw from these but from other views, the sacredness of duty, such motives as shall make you diligent and successful students while at College, and honorable and useful men all the days of your life. This is our hope, our wish, and our prayer.

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