A SERMON

DELIVERED

AT THE METHODIST CHAPEL

April 5th, 1846,

ON THE

APPROPRIATE CHARACTER AND RESPONSIBILITIES

OF

YOUNG MEN.

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NEWBURY, VT.

PRINTED BY J. M. MCELDOE.

1846.
CORRESPONDENCE.

Rev. C. T. Hinman:

Dear Sir,—The young gentlemen of Newbury Seminary express their gratitude to you by a vote of thanks, for your interesting and instructive Discourse, delivered on Sabbath afternoon last, and respectfully solicit a copy of the same for publication.

H. S. NOYES,
L. FISH,
P. H. HINKLEY. Committee of Publication.

Newbury, April 7, 1846.

Messrs. Noyes, Fish, and Hinkley:

Gentlemen,—In complying with your request as expressed to me in your note of yesterday, permit me to express my gratitude to you personally, and through you, to the other young gentlemen of the Seminary for their vote of thanks, as well as for many other manifestations of their regard. Should one young man be made better in life, or happier in eternity, I shall most cheerfully bear all the opprobrium that may be thrown upon me from any source, for the publication of a hastily written sermon. Respectfully yours,

C. T. HINMAN.

Newbury, April 8, 1846.
SERMON.

Rejoice O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.—Excul. xi. 9.

This text has been so often and so fully explained, that I presume I shall be excused for using it merely as a motto to the remarks that are to follow; and should I in discussing the subject chosen, take a wider range than is common in the pulpit, I trust the circumstances of the case,—and the object of the sermon, will be considered a valid reason for so doing.

By no circumstance is the actual state and future prosperity of a nation more accurately determined, than by the character of its young men. Under the parental roof and among their early companions, they have been the ready recipients of any principle that has been presented to them; without asking the quality of the food that has been served up for their nutriment they have indiscriminately eaten from the hand of virtue or vice, and their character is the sum of whatever of good or evil the actual state of society has brought before them. The past has made their character, they are to make the character of the future. The impulses that are now acting upon the minds of the young, are of a stronger class than those that have acted on their predecessors; in some respects better, in others worse; and therefore we should expect to find their character more marked, more fully developed. They may know more of
virtue, they do know more of vice. The light, that now shines upon the infant's pillow, and fills the eye of childhood, is stronger than that of other days, whether it comes down like the golden sun-light from heaven, or flashes up from the blue flames of Hell.

No period ever required more from its young men. Never was more depending. Never so much. I confess I cannot approach this subject with perfect calmness. There is something so interesting, so noble in the character of a young man. God is about to intrust to him the government of the world. The warm blood courses through his veins, and the fires of youthful passion glow in his heart. He carries in his bosom the elements of an angel or a fiend. The wide world is before him, and every thing he looks upon is new. He inhales the fresh air of the morning, and his spirits are buoyant, and his heart beats high with hope. The sun rises without a cloud and smiles, and he smiles. He feels that he is free, yet knows not how to use his freedom; he lives in action, and yet knows not how to act. Energetic, yet with no settled object. Like a spirited race horse, about to be let out upon the fiery course, he pants to be gone. He is ready to try his speed with any courser, and too often enters rashly upon the race, and finds himself distanced in an hour, and perhaps irreparably injured for life. The elements of his character, that present the highest beauty, that render him at once the pride of angels and of men, become his ruin.

Every young man ought to see in the present state of society the effects of an evil course, and the means of avoiding them, the reward of virtue and the means of obtaining it. Many a man who now finds himself incarcerated within the walls of a prison, suffering a felon's punishment with a felon's heart, in the spring time of his life had hopes as buoyant, and prospects as flattering as yours. The star of his destiny rose in the calm mild seren-
ity of a summer's evening, but ere it reached the zenith, it disappeared in clouds and darkness. In the present state of society, you may see as in a mirror, your beginning, your progress, and your end. The same road now leads to real greatness that has ever led there; the same to ruin. The relation between cause and effect is forever unchanging. If you pass the present, and look down the stream of time as it swiftly rolls on to eternity, bearing on its bosom the countless millions of other days, you will find the same laws governed them, that govern you. The laws of mind are as certain as those of matter, though from their peculiar connection with the agent, they are not always so readily determined. If you possess and retain a certain character it will lead you to a certain course of action and to a certain end. You cannot draw sweet waters from bitter fountains. No inquiry then can be more important to a young man than this, what character shall I possess, that I may properly meet the responsibilities of life? The subject then that I wish to bring before you, is THE APPROPRIATE CHARACTER, AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF YOUNG MEN. In the narrow limits of a single sermon you will not expect me to mention every trait, that may be desirable in your character, or point you to all, for which you are responsible. I shall designedly leave many things unsaid, that are as important as any thing I design to say. But these you will be able to infer from the general principles I lay down.

A man's character is his absolute state. It lies in the man himself, and is the result of all that nature and circumstances have made him. His reputation is what others think of him, and may or may not harmonize with his character. A very bad man may have a good reputation, though one who really has a good character is seldom considered a bad man. As every one has in reality a char-
acter of his own, something which makes him what he is, so in action he should have a character of his own, and show by his action what he is. Never be the mere copyists, the servile imitators of another. Have a seal of your own and use it. Let every thing you touch bear its impress. Depend upon no one but yourself. I do not design to recommend a reckless independence of character, a determination to be, and do different from others, simply for the sake of being different, but act yourself, your own individual self. The sin of many young men, as well as of many whose age and experience ought to teach them better, is a reckless independence. They would abrogate all law, and dissolve society into its original elements, introducing that exclusive individuality, that existed when Adam reigned alone in paradise. If with such a return to the original elements of society, men could return to their original purity, it would be well. But this is not the object. They wish to be independent of God, as well as of man. It is this liberal, free-thinking spirit, that leads to radicalism, skepticism, infidelity and downright atheism. It is a vast moral malstrom, and its wide-circling eddies, have already drawn in thousands and engulfed them. Young gentlemen, you had better never embark on this sea. It is full of dangers. It is dark and sunless, and its unfathomed caverns reach down to the regions of eternal death. While you avoid this latitudinarian liberalism and unrestrained freedom on the other hand, do not rush into the iron arms of custom, or lose yourselves in servile imitation on the other. Avoiding Scylla do not dash upon Charybdis. While you have the fire of youth, seek the wisdom of age and the strength of manhood.

To do this you must search for the secret spring of action. Never be contented with knowing the fact that men act: earch for the causes of their action. The greatest fountain,
from which you are to draw this knowledge, is in your own bosoms. He who knows himself, knows others. He who would search the hearts of others, should search his own. Within, you have the world in miniature.

But this knowledge will be of little avail, unless you govern yourselves. "He that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city." It is the province of beasts, to be governed by passion, of men, by pure reason. I speak not of passion merely, but the whole mind, the entire man. The great object of mental discipline is not only to give you the power to govern and restrain the mind when unduly excited, but to arouse and stimulate it. When ennui or sloth has enervated it, or relaxation abated its usual vigor. Emergencies will occur, which no human foresight can reach, when the command of your mind will be of inestimable advantage to you. By a skilful use of this power, many a man has apparently by a single effort placed himself on the very top of the pinACLE OF fame. But the truth is, it was the result of a thousand efforts. Long years of patient labor had enabled him to bring all the energies of his mind to bear upon a single point, to collect truth for the illustration of a single idea, and by this means the amount of light, that was collected round it, was immense. Thousands had seen its image before; but it was faint and dim, and the shadow of uncertainty sat upon it, now it sparkles and glows in the sunlight of truth, and absolute demonstration satisfies every mind. Strike for this giant power. Know yourself and you will know others. Govern yourself, and you may govern others.

Every young man should aim at leaving his own mark on the world. But let it be the stamp of truth, of virtue. Let it be a bright spot, not a corroding canker, or a gangrene that shall eat into the vitals and riot upon the soul of community, as the worm shall eat into your unconscious
body in the tomb. Let it be a bright spot, nay, let it be a zone of golden light, that shall encircle the globe. Seek for all the influence you can justly acquire, then use it to the best possible advantage. Never seek merely to avoid doing evil; seek to do good, and the greatest possible amount of it. Never aim to be "little and unknown," aim to be great in virtue, and known and read as such by all men. With all this you may combine the profoundest humility. In a mind truly great, pride and arrogance never reigned; they cannot breathe in such an atmosphere; they cannot digest the aliment it feeds upon. They would die of sheer starvation. That man will generally be proud of himself, that is destitute of every trait that ought to make a friend proud of him. The greatness you should aspire to attain is always found with meekness, and a strict regard to the dictates of conscience.

Act from principle. Let it be a leading trait in your character. A correct moral principle places you in the proper relation to every created being in the universe, to nature and to nature's God. Science yields a brighter light; nature appears in a richer dress, clothed in the livery of heaven. "Brightness shines in the midst of brightness." A thousand obstacles to clear intellectual vision are removed, and God is seen, with but a single veil intervening to obstruct his glory.

We do not affirm that the greatest minds and clearest heads have always been connected with the purest hearts; far from it. But we do affirm, that had these same intellectual giants had holy hearts,—light from heaven in which to see the works of heaven's architect,—they would have seen clearer. If there is one evil more truly deplorable than another, a sight at which angels weep and heaven covers itself in sackcloth, that sight is an intellectual giant thoroughly corrupted; one of the strong champions of the
prince of darkness. Look at Hume, at Voltaire, at Bolingbrooke. God designed that heart to be a palace for himself; but his palace has become a den of dragons. Its broken arches, and fallen pillars, and moth-eaten walls, over which the willow once wept and the ivy twined, are crumbling into ruins; and in its once magnificent halls, and splendid drawing-rooms, and inner chambers, vipers now hiss, and the loathsome reptile crawls, and the green-eyed pestilence finds a home. See such a man fallen, see a fallen angel. Write it then in living letters on the tablet of memory that, there can be no real greatness without moral principle.

Justice and honesty are beautiful in themselves, and necessary to him who would act well his part in life, that would meet the claims of society upon him, and the claim of heaven. Yet mere morality, and honesty and justice, are not sufficient. These are beautiful plants; they bloom close upon the margin of the river of life. Their thirsty roots almost sip from its waters. But alas! a drought has too often shown that they strike not their roots deep enough, when they spring from earthly seed; their beauty has faded; their leaf withered; the flower dropped its head and died, and even the stalk that bore it, snapped by the gentlest breeze lies withered in its prime. In coming days when the blight has passed away, and the pearly dews and gentle showers have again invigorated the thirsty earth, the little grassy spires touched by its former pride and beauty may combine to weave a shroud of green around it, and caress it with their dewy arms, in death, but they cannot raise it. With the refreshing showers, other plants, spring up, and where once bloomed the rose, now blooms the thorn.

That the plant may be immortal the seed must be divine. Your resolves for morality, integrity, and rigid justice may be honestly and sincerely made, and though made with all the heart, they will prove a useless resolve. That they may
be lasting, they must have the divine effluvium breathed upon them by the Holy Spirit. The sine qua non, without which all things else are vain, is a pure heart, one brought under the controlling influence of the Gospel. With this you are prepared to meet anything, that providence may assign to your lot. And adversity will come. The day of life will not be all sunshine. Clouds will gather, and tempests blow. You will have to meet, and struggle with the giant spirit of the storm; and unless you have the strength of moral principle, you will either quail before it or fall in the conflict. Nothing but strength from the unseen hand can support you. Lean then upon that arm. Draw your strength from the great fountain of strength on high.

Evil, too, will assail you. She does not always transform herself into an angel of light. She sometimes will assume a threatening aspect. The frown of public sentiment will sit on her brow; and though no sword, or faggot’s flame be found in her hand as of olden times, that frown will be almost as terrible. Public sentiment to most unsanctified hearts is as resistless as the nod of Jove. To stand up boldly under its withering frown, you will need help from God. You must have the sublime consciousness that you are right to support you, or you will wither before its fiery glance. Having such a consciousness, filled with zeal, and with holy ardor in his master’s service, what a noble sight does a virtuous young man present.

He is the noblest visible work of God. He stands among his fellows like Saul among his people: He has a sublime consciousness of virtue and uncorrupted integrity. He drinks the waters of life and eats the food of angels. Youth blooms on his cheek; virtue in his heart. His morality is not a mere outside garment, that he can lay aside at pleasure; it is a part of his nature. It beams from his eye, falls from his tongue, and speaks in every action. He
knows his acts are to be tried in heaven's chancery, where
thoughts are reached and intentions cancelled. To be ad-
judged good by men, is one thing, by God, quite another.
What mere earthly title ever surpassed that of the Grecian
Aristides, the Just; and yet who dares say that the all-see-
ing eye could detect no injustice in his heart? Recollect
that eye is a flame of fire; and while you aim to have this
the exponent of your character among men, have it the
same with God. If you desire high titles, seek this. Let it
be your motto in life, and the epitaph upon your tombstone
in death, and the character you shall sustain at the bar of
God,—The Just.

If you in reality sustain the character above described, it
will exhibit itself in your attempts to elevate the standard
of morality, and justice. There is a strong tendency in
the age to depress it. It shows itself in the halls of jus-
tice, at the merchant's desk, in reckless speculations, and in
the political campaigns of our country. That man, who is
dishonest in politics, will be dishonest anywhere, to his
neighbor, to his God. Gold would buy him, and personal
advantage would perjure him. Honesty never bends.—
You may break it, and trample it under your feet, and grind
it to powder; but it never bends. It stands, if it stands at
all, like a pillar of parian marble. Its foundation is truth,
and Virtue smiles from its summit.

And let it be remembered that constantly, and by insen-
sible degrees, you form your characters. No one by a single
bound rushes to ruin. The devotee of destruction floats
along on the smooth surface of life's river without a care.
Not a breeze stirs its silvery bosom, not a ripple breaks upon
its shore. Listless and inactive, he supposes the whole
world the same, and expects the evening's shade to find
him, where he met the morning's dawn. But every mo-
ment leaves its mark upon him. Slowly and imperceptibly
he moves onward to destruction, and perchance wakes not from his reverie, till his frail bark leaps from the cataract’s verge. Many a man has found himself an infidel before he knew he had ceased to be a Christian. He stepped into hell the very moment he supposed he was gaining the highest battlements of heaven.

That settled religious character you should attain, is formed also by degrees. You may be regenerated, in a moment; but virtue has not therefore become a habit. It has not been engrafted into your very nature, and become a constituent part of your being. Every breath you draw you should throw out again upon community as fragrant odors to perfume the air; every pulsation of your heart should beat in unison with the divine mind. Ere this is effected, you will have many a conflict with internal foes, much opposition from without. But in this contest with sin, remember it is not “A peerage or Westminster Abbey,” but it is the universal empire of Christ on earth or a crown in heaven.

With an eloquent modern writer, though not in his language, we may ask, Had this been the character of men in past ages, what a change would have been produced? Ere this, the world would have been a magnificent temple of the Great God, vocal with his praise, and filled with his glory. Every mountain top would have been gilded with golden light, and every valley would have overflowed with the streams of salvation. God would have walked and talked with men. The world’s historian might then have written its history without a tear, and the wholesale murders and heartless butcheries of the race, that have left a stain upon the earth, which nothing but its final consumption by fire can obliterate, would never have been chronicled. The crescent and the cross would have met in the holy city; in a general convocation of praise.
The conqueror of the world would have led his victorious troops over the east, as a band of holy missionaries, and the kingly palaces of Babylon, robbed of their splendors by Cyrus, and its costly temples, of their gold by Xerxes, would have found their loss restored by Alexander, proclaiming with his dying breath the fullness of a coming Saviour. Hannibal would have been a modern Brainard, and instead of braving the Alpine snows, would have plunged into the trackless wastes of Africa, as a prophet of the Lord. Caesar would have invaded Briton with an army of Apostles, and like John the Baptist, have prepared the way for the advent of the Messiah. Bonaparte would have deluged Europe in an ocean of heavenly light, and conquered kingdoms for the Redeemer. Cromwell would have been a Paul, and Charles XII, a Luther, and Voltaire a preacher of Jesus. Byron would have been a second David, and Hume a Matthew Henry. The Jacobin Club of France would have been a great Bible Society, and the Christian Alliance would, ever this, have embraced the entire world. This is not fancy. It would have been, in substance, historic truth, had men possessed the character God designed they should. Young men, we appeal to you, and ask, shall this be the history of coming ages? It depends upon the character you possess, and retain.

We pass to the second division of our subject. The Responsibility, of young men. These will be embraced under two general ideas, the facilities afforded you to prepare yourselves for action, and the use you should make of the power thus acquired.

The principles and habits of the age give you access to every class of mind. You are not limited by those broad lines of distinction, that in other countries and in other times have presented an almost impassable barrier to the action of one class of society upon another. The proud
Grecian would not be approached by the Helot; the Roman patrician by his plebeian neighbor; the lordly Russian by the humble serf. But to you, access is given to all classes of mind. You meet upon the broad equality of natural right. You meet every individual as your equal, your brother. You owe allegiance to no king but Heaven’s.—The question is not asked in New England, who are your parents? but what are you? Inequalities there are in condition, and must be; God has so ordained it; yet this inequality is not so marked as to prevent access to any mind. Be your condition what it may, aided by the appropriate force of character, and the general equality of right, you may rise above it. Shakespeare made himself the brightest glory of the British drama, though his father could never write his own name. Hayden, who has filled the world with music, was the son of a sexton, and his mother was a servant in the family of a nobleman. Adrian sixth, who wore the papal tiara and set his foot, though tremblingly, on the neck of kings, in his boy-hood studied in the streets of Louvaine by the public lamps, and in the porches of Churches, when lighted for evening service.—But he died in the chair of St. Peter. In another sphere, and with vastly greater facilities, you may do as much.—You may leave your impress not upon one mind or a thousand, but upon the race. This responsibility you cannot avoid, if you would. It meets you at the very threshold of existence. It comes upon you with the first dawning light of your being, and will remain upon you till the shadows of death darken your vision. Every act, even the smallest, has its influence; every breath will be as fragrant odors to perfume the air, or as a miasma spreading pestilence and death through all its borders.

Not only is free access given you to the minds and hearts of all, but the facilities afforded you to prepare yourselves
to act with the greatest possible force and effect upon them, are immense; and the responsibility is commensurate with the facilities.

Without knowledge you can do but little. The day is passed, in which mere physical strength or personal appearance, can give you the power to govern others. In your struggle for empire you are not to measure swords of steel with your adversary; but you are to give and receive the thrusts of intellect; and it is the keenness of the sword, and not the strength of muscle in the arm, that gives the victory. Seek knowledge then, and the ability to use it. It is the very fountain head of power. Formerly the road leading to it ran through so many dismal swamps, and over so many huge mountain crags, now catching a ray of light, and now losing itself in darkness, that the young inexperienced traveller could with the greatest difficulty keep his way; and when he reached the fountain he often found the waters turbid and bitter. But for you, young gentlemen, an Appian way has been prepared. The valleys have been exalted, and the mountains made low, and the crooked made straight, and the rough places plain. Formerly to enter the fertile vale of science, the pass was over the St. Bernard, now you may go by the Simplon or Mount Cenis. Formerly the traveller must advance slowly and alone, with little or no light, but that which proceeded from his own solitary lamp; now you may proceed with rail-road speed, accompanied, and cheered on by thousands under the shining of the sun of science, cloudless and full risen. Once the elixir of life was sought in the stars, and science was an eastern slave searching the sands of Pactolus for gold, or digging for diamonds,—now it is the hand-maid of virtue, and seeks to unfold the mysteries of nature; to trace out the action of the viewless hand, that laid the foundation of the deep, and curtained the heavens. No
less a man than Roger Bacon, who stands out in his day as a beacon light on the shore of a dark ocean, says that "the most important department of Astronomy, is the science of medicine;" while a celebrated Arabian Chemist contends that medicine can only be properly mixed "according to the principles of music." One of the greatest admirers of the paripatetic philosophy admits, that he perused some of the writings of its great founder forty times, before he understood them. This mass of rubbish has been cleared away and the "entities" and "quidities" of the schoolmen no longer perplex the sincere inquirer after truth. This almost impenetrable darkness, through which so many have groped, may I not say waded, has become a sea of light.

The amount of responsibility is in proportion to the light you have received; and you may receive it not only from this, but from all other ages. You have access to all the great minds of antiquity, you can walk with them in their morning and evening rambles, enter their studies, converse with them in their writings, and almost trace the lineaments of their features by the accurate and graphic descriptions of their persons, that have come down to us.

What a rich vein of intellectual wealth is before you! Never be satisfied with picking up the refuse fragments that others have scattered within and around it; but delve into its bosom; search its unexplored windings and gather the rich palæ of golden ore and melt them down in your own crucible, then give the pure gold as an offering to God and the Church.

God has favored you with advantages above those, who have preceded you, and for these he holds you responsible. You must meet them, and at the bar of Jehovah too. Heaven has a work for you to perform, and he has placed the means of preparation in your own hands. Use them for your own
sake and for the world. You not only have the wealth of antiquity at your feet, which millions have been for ages accumulating, but you may learn the means by which it has been accumulated. You stand on an eminence, from which the most ancient kingdoms are distinctly visible.—Nineveh, and Babylon, and Thebes, and Palmyra are before you. From the mouldering ruins of a former world the greatest kings and orators and statesmen, the holiest and the best, rise up at your call, and stretch out their hands to instruct you. Socrates and Aristides, and Regulus, teach you a kind of virtue, but it is mere earth-born; a modern Bramwell and Martyn, and Wesley, and Luther, and Paul and Jesus, the virtue of the heart. The first, at death, like an expiring lamp, flickers and then disappears in the surrounding darkness; the other like the sun, sinks in its own glory. But it sinks to rise again.

You can see also the end of earthly grandeur, and the ills attendant upon vice even in this world. St. Helena utters its voice, ancient Babylon points you to the ashes of the world’s conqueror, entombed in its ruins. He fell a victim to vice. It began in him, as in all others, to work by degrees, in its incipient stages being hardly perceptible, and ended in him, as it ends in all others, by making the entire man a mass of corruption, livid and black with the stain of guilt. History shows you, that vice at heart is the same in all ages, in all conditions, under the ermine and in rags, in a palace or a hovel. Come not near her. Her flowing robes and silken tresses are filled with the poison of the Lernean hydra, and it will not only diffuse itself through all the bones and muscles of your system, but will render putrid your very souls.

Virtue has few outward attractions. But enter the heart, and you will always find, that love and peace and pleasure dwell there. You are not obliged to experiment upon vice
to learn its tendency; nor yet upon virtue. Thousands have already tried them, and the results are before you.

But you are not always to be learners exclusively, though you may always be learning. You are now arriving, or will soon arrive, at a period in which you will be called to act; to apply the moral power you have acquired.

Though as you enter upon the active stage of life, you find everything far in advance of what your predecessors found it, nothing is as yet perfect. Every thing needs the polish of a more skilful hand, the touch of a finer artist, the dash of a softer pencil. Science is but just beginning to develop itself, to unfold its beauties, and minister to the wants of man. The state of perfection, it has already attained, has been effected by degrees. One discoverer has taken science where his predecessor left it, and in his turn advanced it towards perfection. Neither the rules of Napier, nor the Binomial Theorem of Newton, were mathematically demonstrated by their inventors. To after ages, or at least, to other minds was left this crowning work.—Plato long since said "God works by Geometry," but he never proved it. The demonstration of this sublime truth has been the work of modern mathematicians. The unexplored region before you is boundless. You need not, you should not follow servilely in the track of others. Strike out into the broad ocean of discovery. You need not fear its profoundest depths. Take it as a motto that truth is divine, and "all truth is harmonious." Science will never injure you. Many persons appear to be afraid to look science in the face, and hear from her own eloquent tongue an exposition of her truths. But has Christianity or the Bible ever suffered from the discoveries of science? Its harmony with these truths, which, when the Bible was penned, slumbered in nature's arcana, is a strong additional proof of its divine origin; a proof which is every day
strengthening, and bids fair ultimately to silence the tongue of infidelity forever.

I must confess, young gentlemen, that my confidence in this sacred book is unbounded. My reverence for it is so great, the mass of evidence by which it is sustained is so overwhelming, it has already withstood so many violent attacks from the combined agency of wicked men and devils, it has so often come out of the fiery-furnace, not only unconsumed but without even the smell of fire upon its pages, that with the utmost calmness, with the most perfect self-possession, I rest my all for time and eternity upon its truth. If there is certainty any where, here we have it, and if nowhere else, it is none the less certain here. I should as soon expect, that a spark struck from the smitten steel would rise up and obscure the sun by its brightness, as that the light of science should obscure the light of revelation. As soon will the little pearly dew-drop, that sinks into the ocean's bosom, dry up that boundless expanse of waters, as will the little rills of science dry up this great deep fountain of eternal truth. The springs that feed it are perennial, and they burst out under the very foundation stones of Jehovah's throne. Science owes its being to the Bible, and the God of the Bible. And yet infidelity would here intrench itself; as though it would make the effect rise up and destroy the cause that produced it; as though nature would throw the lie in the face of nature's God. — Nevertheless, this boasted fortress of infidelity should be well guarded, and to you, young men, is this work committed, and for its proper execution you are responsible. Nothing should be allowed to be palmed off upon community as scientific truth, which is not such absolutely. It is not enough that this and all other fortresses of infidelity and vice should be guarded; you are to advance into the enemies territory, meet him on his own ground, and silence him with his own weapons.
Poverty is to be assisted, misery to be alleviated, the orphan's tear to be dried and the widow's heart soothed, and the race elevated. New schemes of benevolence are to be planned and executed; the old to be prosecuted with greater vigor. You are in a measure responsible, for the influence Christianity may exert upon the world; for your acts will in a measure determine it. And by what agent can you do more to benefit the race? What Christianity does for you, it will do for all men; what it does for this nation, it will do for all nations. Never have more inhuman acts been perpetrated under the name of religion, than by our own ancestors in ancient Britain. Says an eloquent writer, "The pen of history trembles to relate the baleful orgies which their frantic superstitious celebrated, when inclosing men, women, and children in one vast wicker image, in the form of a man, and filling it with every kind of combustible, they set fire to the huge colossus. While the dreadful holocaust was offering to their sanginary gods, the groans and shrieks of the consuming victims, were drowned amidst shouts of barbarous triumph, and the air was rent, as in the Syrian temple of old, with martial music." Such were our ancestors the ancient Druids. And what but Christianity makes us to differ? On this holy day, in our peaceful temples, we offer up our adoration to God. Had we been born a few centuries earlier we too might have been found offering up such a holocaust of human victims to Jehovah. Christianity has done this for us; it will do the same for others. In its action, like the hand that moves the world, it is noiseless but omnipotent.

I blush to think any young man in America, should openly deride or secretly despise Christianity. The world without it is a vast charnel house, filled with the dead and dying, whose expiring groans almost move to pity the relentless heart of death. Without the principles of Christianity, in six centuries the earth would become the tomb of the race, every valley and mountain-top would be silent, and desolation would wave her noiseless banner over the sleeping nations. In Christianity, you have the most effectual and available means of benefitting yourselves and others. As philanthropists merely, you are bound to use them, as patriots, as worthy citizens, as men.

These are considerations urged aside from the great and momentous reason, that should outweigh all others, God requires it. And dare you refuse it? Coming down from
the dwelling place of Jehovah himself, as a delegate from a higher world, Christianity meets you with its obligations. It addresses itself to your reason, to the highest principles of your nature. It tells you that you are immortal, and then points to heaven, to hell. It rightly claims every power of body and mind, and every moment of your entire existence.

Besides, if you would, you cannot avoid its claims, nor stop its progress. You may modify the manner of its action, but it will succeed in despite of opposition.

The great unit of the world’s history, is the introducing, and rendering universal the reign of Christ. To that grand point the world has been tending ever since the morning stars sang together at nature’s dawn. It was not merely the earth as it was, a mere mass of inert matter, and the heavens in their unconscious beauty, that moved the deepest, sweetest chorus of their song. It was the earth as it should be,—blessed with verdure, and bearing on its bosom, teeming millions of happy spirits, spotless and heaven-born.

God has overruled all things for this grand design. The world has been in motion, nations have arisen and fallen, dynasties have sprung into being and passed away, men have been running to and fro in the earth from a thousand different points, in a thousand different directions; chasing ten thousand different objects, crossing and re-crossing each others course, and mingling in endless confusion. Yet out of all this, God has been bringing order, and directing all things to this sublime end. What a deep laid scheme! what a stupendous movement! God calls you to be co-workers with him in this, the greatest work of his hands. It is the rolling of that mysterious stone, that was cut out of the mountain without hands. Should you dare to put up an arm to stop its progress; or throw an obstacle in its way, you may retard it for a moment, but if would ultimately advance and grind you to powder.

There is a voice from heaven that loudly calls upon you to engage with all the virtuous and good upon earth, and all the holy and glorified in heaven, in advancing it. A voice within you whispers, do it.

Every thing great and good, you are bound to promote. Do it for your brother, your country, your God. Throw away that narrow-minded selfishness, that money-Loving, honor-seeking spirit from your hearts, that is scarcely less destructive to virtue than open infidelity. Aim at something noble; at the good of man; at the approbation of
heaven. No pen can describe the influence you may exert, the good you may accomplish. Should the young men of this nation rise up in their might, with cultivated intellects and hearts burning with piety, resolved to devote themselves to the renovation of the world, the imagination can hardly picture the glorious results that would follow. Not a heathen temple would be left standing in a single century. Not an altar would smoke with incense to an unknown God. Not a profane breath would pollute the air, but every tongue would be eloquent in its Maker's praise. In the wilderness would waters break out and streams in the desert, and the ransomed of the Lord would come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their head, and sorrow and sighing would flee away.

Would not such a sight repay you for all your toil, for all your sacrifices? To join in a hymn of praise with the countless millions of earth's redeemed sons, to unite your voice with theirs in swelling the loud anthem of praise to God and the Lamb; would not this repay you?

And suppose like Cox, you should fall in the midst of your labors, fall with this sublime work but half accomplished or but just begun, fall on a heathen shore, and not be permitted to hear this sublime anthem, as one of the listeners of earth, think you its sound would be less sweet, as its peaceful numbers should break upon your spirit ears, on the heavenly hills of Canaan? Angels would seize their golden harps and prolong it; and with all the heavenly choir if not with that of earth, you could re-sing the millenial anthem.

But if the pleasures of such a moment, if all the bliss of heaven, will not allure you to this work, let duty do it; let the audible voice that speaks to you in terror from Sinai, blending with the mild accents of Jesus from Calvary, do it.

Young men, I commend you to God and his holy keeping.