

**YOUTH'S MONITOR;**

OR,

**A DISCOURSE**

UPON ECCLESIASTES XII. 1.

TO THE  
WORTHY AND RESPECTABLE GENTLEMAN,  
MR. THOMAS WESTBY,

HEIR OF THE ANCIENT AND RELIGIOUS FAMILY OF RAVENFIELD,  
IN YORKSHIRE,

*Grace, mercy, and peace be multiplied from God the Father, our  
Lord Jesus, and the blessed Spirit of truth.*

WORTHY SIR,

THE many obligations I have been under to promote the welfare of your worshipful family, did extort from me, some time ago, a promise to write something for your private use, comprising admonition to youth, of which, since then, I have in some measure repented, and could rather have wished I had totally waved. First, Because I now perceive there are many far more excellent treatises extant upon this subject, to which I might have referred you, better than to have troubled you with my jejune scribbling. Secondly, Because my various avocations have so long protracted my finishing and sending it to you, that you are almost past it and have grown up, not only to maturity in age, but have given such proofs of your unparalleled diligence in your studies, and proficiency in learning, yea, and also of your exemplary piety, that it may seem needless to write what you so well know, and so well digest and practise. Yet, notwithstanding, upon second thoughts, I have at last persuaded myself to set apart a little time to prefix this Epistle to it and send it to you. First, Because I am frequently called upon by such as are concerned for you, to do this, reminding me of my promise: and a promise is a debt which I am conscientious in discharging, though in the smallest cases. Secondly, Because you are not yet past all danger of miscarrying. As long as you are at sea you may suffer shipwreck: corrupt nature will be working, Satan will be tempting, a wicked world seducing, and the heart is very deceitful; who knows how God

may leave young men of good education, great hopes, and mighty progress in religion. Hazaël would not believe that so gentle a lamb as he thought himself, should be transformed into such a mad-dog as the prophet predicts he would be, and did prove. But what saith he? "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?"\* Ah, little do we know what is in these corrupt hearts of ours! How many remarkable instances doth this age afford, of very hopeful young gentlemen, whose surprising civility and tractableness in religious families have given great indications of internal sanctity and saving conversion, but who have so far degenerated as to prove a scandal to religion, a reproach to their friends, and a ruin to their families. A swine in a fair meadow gets not many spots; and a lion chained up neither roars nor ravens; sed solve leonem et senties.† The viper on Paul's hand appeared not till it was heated; gunpowder lies as harmless as sugar till sparks fly upon it; occasio facit furem;‡ and without regeneration there will be a degeneracy. Forced motions are of no long continuance; the stone ascending only by the strength of the hand, soon falls; but that which moves naturally stops not till it come to the centre.

Saving grace is a second nature, yea, a divine nature; at first it is infused, but afterwards, being much exercised, it becomes as a settled habit. Besides, the man savingly converted and sanctified, comes under the promises of God relative to perseverance; being a member of Christ, he receives daily influence from him, and being in covenant with God hath omnipotence for his support, and God's fidelity for his sure auxiliary. But the most specious hypocrite, or the demurest formalist, hath not hold of God, nor hath God such hold of him, but he may and will fall foully, finally, totally, and so that sad verse is verified in him: *Angelicus juvenis senibus satanizat in annis.*|| It is not to tell what a height of prodigious villany persons well educated may attain, and how they may willingly choose and prefer vain company to religious society, the ale bench before the church, impure songs before sacred hymns, yea, and employ their wicked wit in defending it: as *Florus* sung on the

\* 2 Kings viii. 13. † Unloose the lion, and he will shew you what he is.

‡ Opportunity makes a thief. || The young angel becomes a devil in old age.

ale bench: *Nolo ego Cæsar esse, ambulare per Britannos, rigidas pati pruinas, &c.* The witty emperor Adrian, hearing of it, answered extempore: *Nolo ego Florus esse, ambulare per tabernas, latitare per propinas, pulices pati rotundas.* The sensualist feels nothing of the sweetness of heavenly pleasures, and being accustomed to objects of sense only, sits down contented with that in which brutes can take as much pleasure, and freely sells his birthright for a mess of pottage: and the voluptuous cardinal will part with his portion in paradise for his portion in Paris. Not that I suspect you, dear sir, of such sad things; I hope “better things of you, even things that accompany salvation,” Heb. vi. 9; but caution is needful to the best; and to you, to see to it, that your principles be well grounded, your nature changed, and your soul interested in Christ, else you may prove as bad as the worst, though, for the present, you seem better than the best. It is very easy for the subtle fox to change his skin, and not his nature. Oh, how many like chameleons are coloured according to the description of things near them, conforming to the company they converse with! But the sincere Christian hath his principles fixed both in head and heart, and his spirit is fixed on God his centre; his motto is, (like queen Elizabeth’s) *semper idem.* His foot standeth in an even place,\* lying square to every command, not as the hypocrite, who is a globular body, touching only in a point, and so tumbles from one side to another, as occasion serves. O what an excellent thing it is to be holy, *ἐν πάσῃ ἀναστροφῇ*, in every turn of place, company, condition, station, and relation!† None will be truly so, but he that is firmly centred upon the rock of ages, whose heart is set right for God; this grace of God is the Christian’s bias, that inclines him to keep the right course; it is as the little stone that the bee is poised with, that the wind blows her not away. Alas! you meet with many a dreadful blast in passing over the sea of the world, and unless your ship be well ballasted, it will split or be sunk: but be sure you engage our blessed Lord to be your pilot, and he will bring you safe to the haven. I know you are to pass a more critical hour than ever yet you have seen, when you are passing from your puerile years into a more

\* Psal. xxvi. 12.

† 1 Pet. i. 15.

adult state, and exchanging your juvenile studies for maturer law speculations, amidst the flower of the nation, in the inns of court. There, there will your Shibboleth be tried, when brisk and airy youth shall meet with a course of life, removed from the bondage of a slavish pupilage, and company suited to a liberal genius, where you will find right hand temptations adapted to seduce your flexible nature, and have a plentiful allowance capacitating for enjoying what the senses crave. In such a case, there is great hazard; this will be Satan's hour, and the power of darkness. O what need have you then to pray, as Augustine, that the heart and the temptation may not meet together? That you may be helped in the shooting of this gulf, I beseech you suffer the words of exhortation, and take the advice of one who hath passed a long voyage of almost sixty years, who hath spied Sylla and Charybdis, and discovered some land-marks and sea-marks, of which I am bound to give you warning, and doubt not, but you will take some notice of them.

1. Daily read some portion of the scriptures, not only in their original language, but in your mother-tongue also; not for speculation or controversy, but for exciting your affections, and directing your ordinary conversation.

2. Frequently attend a plain and awakening ministry. Inquire and find out pure and powerful ordinances; where Christ is, there be you. Be not content with jingling rhetoric, or moral lectures, or empty formalities; sit by pure waters of the sanctuary.

3. Get unquestionable evidence of your effectual vocation and saving regeneration. Be not content without a principle of saving grace, faith unfeigned, a repentance to salvation, love without dissimulation, hope that will not make ashamed, and sincerity in all.

4. Observe, and obstruct betimes, the bent of natural corruption; take special notice of your own iniquity, the peculiar plague of your own heart: be sure to obviate that with a mortifying process of means, watching, fasting, fencing, and fighting.

5. Lie not down under guilt. Oh, when you are stung, look up by faith and prayer to the brazen serpent; let the

day's offences be the evening's recollection and humiliation, and to-morrow's caution and circumspection.

6. Always set yourself in God's presence: "Cave, spectat Cato.\*" But you have a better watchword, there is an eye that sees, an ear that hears, a hand that writes down your words and works; nothing is hid from him.

7. Make conscience of thoughts. Heart sins and heart duties are not to be slighted. Springs and roots must be carefully looked to. Examine every passenger and its errand; if a bad thought assault thee, raise upwards a thought against it, for strength and pardon.

8. Give gracious admission to the Spirit's influence. This is a kind messenger from Father and Son. Send him not back without his errand; make him welcome when he comes to instruct in what is truth, to prompt to duty, or to keep back from sin.

9. Study your talents, and improve them for God. You are not master, but steward of health, riches, time, and faculties, and must give account. Keep straight reckoning, run not in arrears, think this the last day of your stewardship.

10. Think no sin nor duty little. A small duty omitted, leads to a great sin, and little sins are great in their tendency; a small wedge makes way for a greater; choose the greatest misery, rather than the least transgression.

11. Judge no mercy small; but look on it as worth the most sincere gratitude. It cost dear, even Christ's blood, and will cost you dear, if slighted—even the loss of it here, and eternal remorse hereafter. O study the claims of gratitude!

12. Be careful in selecting, and improve well your company. Make not the great, but the good your familiars. Countenance piety in the meanest, and bless not the profane, if rich, whom God abhors. Always make use of the wise, to improve yourself as a Christian or as a scholar.

13. Set every thing in its proper place and station. Let God be highest to you, as he is in himself. Love him above all, love other things for his sake, sit loose to the creature. Let religion be as your meat, recreation as the salt to other employments.

\* Take care, Cato is observing.

14. Engage the whole man in God's worship. Make conscience of inward sincerity, and upright aims in God's immediate service. Do nothing without warrant from the word of God, and have a spirit suited to the word, and God's glory as the end.

15. Look to yourself amidst unforbidden liberty. The rank-est poison is conveyed in sweetest perfumes; we suspect least when we are in most danger; a calm precedes a storm; descent into a whirlpool is easiest.

16. Look to principles as well as privileges. Mind dispositions, as well as God's dispensations about you. Wait on God in the way of his judgments as well as mercies. Evidence your title to the legacy you expect from God's love or Christ's purchase.

17. Let every one be better, none worse for you. Do good to every one's soul or body. A good report makes the bones fat. Have some savour of goodness in all companies. *Exempla movent, monent, trahunt.\** Make not others' sins yours.

18. Be of a public spirit, and of public utility. A private Christian is of both if he act as a Christian, but a magistrate (as you may come to be) much more. In both capacities, a selfish person is an empty vine and hateful.

19. Study perfection; rest not satisfied with attainments. Be holily covetous, and ambitious. *Si dixisti, Satis est, periiisti.†* You will not be so good here, but you may and must be better. Grow in knowledge, holiness, acquaintance with God, and heavenliness.

20. Deny yourself in all. Get out of self into Christ in every duty. Be clothed with humility; that is the comeliest ornament. You can scarce have too mean thoughts of yourself, supposing you do not deny the grace of God in you, or unjustly detain from men the use of it, or from yourself the comfort you may have by it. But boast of, or trust in no good you have or do, for it is not yours, and it is mixed with your infirmities.

I am loth to weary you with rules which I cannot practise myself, but am reaching after. We all have a place in this

\* Examples influence, admonish, and excite imitation.

† If thou sayest, It is enough, thou art undone.

school. Death only advances us to commence perfect graduates. It is above, that the spirits of just men are made perfect. O that we might endeavour to do God's will here on earth as it is done in heaven, with at least similar sincerity, zeal, universality, and constancy! It would be a happy thing if, when we are alone, we behave ourselves as if we were in heaven with God; and when we are with others, as if we were come down from heaven, to shew men what a life is led above.

But lest I should discourage you, I must put you in mind of Jacob's ladder, Jesus Christ, from whom you will have strength for your progress, pardon of failures, and a sure hold with his right hand to keep you from falling. If you have Christ you have all, if you want Christ you want all; according to that useful distich:—

Si Christum discis satis est, si cætera nescis,  
Si Christum nescis, nihil est si cætera discis.

Oh for Christ at God's right hand for your justification, reconciliation, and acceptance in duties! Oh for Christ in your heart, for sanctification, mortification, and consolation! Study Christ, whom you can never know too well, or love too much. *Christus et cælum non patiuntur hyperbolem.\** Christ is the sun of righteousness; the sun was ever admired and deified by the heathens, but we cannot overprize Christ; they called the sun ἡλιος, from עֶלְיִן, the most high God, but we are sure our Jesus thought it no robbery to be equal with God. The sun is in constant motion. As the Father works in daily providence, so our dear Lord does in us and for us in his constant influence. The sun shoots his rays downwards, so doth our Lord convey his mercy to the sons of men, that our fire of love may mount upwards. O the benefits of this glorious sun! Eudoxus said, he was made for no other purpose than to behold the sun; yea, he could be content to be burnt up by the heat of it, so that by that near approach he might learn its nature. This, this indeed, is that noble and necessary study, without which we are dunces, and shall be swallowed up in eternal darkness. O sir, amongst all the varieties in this world, admire nothing but Christ. Time would fail to tell of his ex-

\* Christ and heaven do not admit any hyperbole.

cellencies, he is the chief of ten thousand. Study him in a four-fold respect :—

1. As propounded *nobis*, to our eyes and ears in the word and sacraments.

2. *Præ nobis*, before us, as our pattern for imitation.

3. *Pro nobis*, for us in the sacrifice of his death, as an expiation of our sins.

4. *In nobis*, in us by the habitation of his Spirit, that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith, without which all the former are insignificant to our souls.

And in order to your prizing, admiring, and improving discoveries of the blessed Jesus, be sure you study original corruption, natural inability, and the abominable nature of sin, which is worse than the basest creature, the misery of hell, or the devil himself, inasmuch as the cause hath more malignity than the effect. This also is an endless, fathomless subject; never any sounded to the bottom of it, as Augustine saith of original sin: *Traductâ culpâ, nihil ad prædicandum notius, nihil ad intelligendum secretius*. It cannot be told how cunningly sin steals upon men, and how insinuatingly it works within them, and how notoriously it breaks out in many! and this comes on gradually, for, *nemo repentè fit turpissimus*.\* Sin carries men down to hell by winding stairs. *Obsta principiis*; stop this disease betimes; flee from youthful lusts. Joseph would not breathe in the same air with his lascivious mistress. Be very scrupulous about tampering with occasions of sin.

*Ne pecces, Deus ipse videt, tuus angelus astat,  
Accusat Satanæ et lex, mens conscia culpæ :  
Mors incerta furit, cruciat te luridus Orcus,  
Et manet æternum tristi damnatio pœnâ.*

But if you have sinned despair not of pardon, repent and believe. Remember there is no sin so little but without repentance it is damnable; and there is no sin so great, but upon repentance and faith in Christ it is pardonable. Thus ends

Your cordial friend,

OL. HEYWOOD.

\* None becomes wicked all at once.

*Aug. 28th. 1689.*

# YOUTH'S MONITOR.\*

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## ECCLESIASTES XII. 1.

*Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.*

It is of great importance to the health of a place to have clear air and pure water; strong winds clear the air, pure springs produce wholesome streams: the former proceeds from the immediate hand of God, and the latter derives advantage from the sedulous hand of man. How careful are men to keep their springs from pollution or putrefaction! Much more care should all men take to prevent the seduction or depravation of youth, and to season their minds with salutary truths, and to have their hearts furnished with saving grace. O what influence may a rising generation have upon the future! Education and examples are propagating. God saith of Abraham, "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord."† Observe it, how can Abraham command his successors when himself is dead and gone? The virtue of his commands survives his person; though he be gone, his pattern and instructions live and flourish to many generations: as many copies are taken after the original of the king's picture, or as one circle occasioned by a stone cast into water multiplies to a hundred. What need then have parents, tutors, ministers, and magistrates, to mould the spirits of young persons for God, to be a seminary for the church and the commonwealth! that such fresh and refreshing streams may make glad the city of our God. There is nothing in which young persons are more faulty than in their forgetting God, and there is nothing produces more mournful effects in

\* The following Treatise is taken from a Manuscript Volume belonging to the descendants of Mr. Heywood, which has been written with great accuracy by the Author, and apparently finished with more care than several of the Works published by himself.

† Gen. xviii. 19.

the world, it brings both sin and misery; and there is nothing that God inculcates as a caution to Israel of old, so much as to guard against this: "Beware lest thou forget the Lord thy God—only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen;" therefore it is said, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God;"\* this is the character of graceless souls.

No wonder then if the royal preacher affix this memento on the doors and before the eyes of all young persons, of both sexes and of all degrees, nobility, gentry, ministers, and people, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." It is now as seasonable an admonition as it was in his days; for as the world grows old, so young persons presently arrive at shamelessness, and to the highest degree of profligacy; though young in years, they grow old in sensual indulgences and profaneness.

The text presents to us two things; namely, *a duty*, "Remember thy Creator;" and *an argument*, "Before evil days come."

In the duty we have for consideration, *the agents*, young persons; *the act*, remember; *the object*, thy Creator; and *the season*, now, in the days of thy youth.

1. Why calls he on young persons?

(1.) Because the old will not hearken, but grow obstinate.

(2.) Because the young are most apt to forget God, chap. xi. 10; this is an antidote against their sin.

(3.) The word בְּחַרִּית is feminine, this denotes tenderness of spirit; they are now most soft and pliable, soon receive impressions. The word is significant, rarely used, for other words that signify age are masculine.

(4.) The word may be translated choice of days. Saul is called, "a choice young man, and a goodly:" and any thing that is most excellent and the very best, is called choice, as "choice sepulchres," "choice gold and silver," "choice fir-trees;" and so this time of youth is the flower of man's age.† In these passages the same word is used.

2. Why doth he bid them remember? why not rather fear, love, serve God?

(1.) Because as forgetting God is the root of all sins of omission and commission; so remembering God is the principle of graces, holiness, and obedience. Men never commit a sin but they forget God; Heb. xii. 5, "Ye have forgotten the exhortation;" so holiness is mindfulness of God and his word.

\* Deut. vi. 12. iv. 9. Ps. ix. 17.

† 1 Sam. ix. 2. Gen. xxiii. 6. xlix. 11. Prov. viii. 19. Isa. xxxvii. 24.

(2.) Words of knowledge usually denote affection and practice in scripture; \* “This is life eternal to know God,” John xvii. 3; so this word signifies, acknowledge, fear, love, serve God.

3. Why doth he say thy Creator? why not Jehovah, God, the Almighty?

(1.) The word *Creator* is very emphatical, and shows God’s right and man’s duty; his relation to, and dependance on God, and his great ingratitude if he disregard his Creator. †

(2.) It is yet more significant if we consider that it is in the plural number, אֱתֵרֵינוּ, creatorum tuorum. First, To shew the plurality of persons in the divine unity, which is frequent in the scripture, Gen. i. 26. ‡ Secondly, Because preservation is a sort of continued creation, and lays multiplied obligations on the creature: and it is *thy Creator*.

4. What is the import of this word—*now*?

The word is copulative, וְזָכַר, and remember; the Hebrew word וְ, signifies a hook, or crooked nail to join things together: so it is used Exod. xxvi. 37, “Their hooks shall be of gold:” || so the meaning is, either, (1.) that it is a conjunction copulative, joining this to the former two verses, which in the Hebrew bible are part of this chapter, (for division of chapters is a modern thing and human.) Or, (2.) an additional clause and signifies—moreover; as if he had said, I do not only give the young man negative rules, but positive commands; thou must not only remove anger, or grounds of sorrow from thy heart, but be sincerely and seriously religious. A negative holiness must not serve thy turn, but be truly as well as timely pious. Or, (3.) if it be translated—*now*, it adds further emphasis to the exhortation; as if it were said, childhood and youth are vanity, therefore now while thy years are green, and thy bones moistened with marrow, even now, in this dark age, get thine eye enlightened with the knowledge of God; and in this slippery age, get thy soul duly stayed and settled with the remembrance of God thy Creator, and the ends of thy creation: pass not this flowery season of thy age in vanity, but get thy thoughts fixed upon God.

DOCTRINE, *It well becomes young persons to remember their Creator.*

The days of youth are a proper time for souls to be mindful of their Creator; it is never unseasonable, but it is then most suitable. Youthful piety is lovely and commendable, pleasant and advantageous, excellent and honourable; it is a jewel in a gold ring, a pearl or precious stone curiously enchased, that doth make the possessor appear rich and highly respected.

\* Verba notitiæ affectum et praxin connotant.

‡ Psalm cxlix. 2. Isa. liv. 5.

† Deut. xxxii. 6.

|| Exod. xxvii. 10.

1. This is typified in the first-fruits to be dedicated to God. Exod. xxiii. 19, "The first of the first-fruits of thy land thou shalt bring into the house of the Lord thy God." Mr. Ainsworth observes out of Maimonides upon Exod. xxii. 29, that the Hebrews were to bring the first-fruits of seven things, namely, of wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives, and dates. And if one bring other besides these seven kinds, they are not sanctified; only observe, the passage saith, "thou shalt not delay to offer the first of thy ripe fruits." Again, "The first-born of thy sons shalt thou give unto me." This is of importance to us, and the paschal lamb must be a lamb "of the first year," Exod. xii. 5, which also hath its significancy, for the Jews thus expound it: that a lamb after it was eight days old and forward, was allowable to be offered in sacrifice for the passover, and if it was but an hour older than the year, it was unlawful. This typifies not only the perfection of Christ, but that youth must be devoted to God.

2. It is commanded, Matt. vi. 33, "Seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness." First, in order of time; the first thing in the day, begin every morning with God; the first in the day of natural life, begin your lives with godliness. Some think this precept refers to the account of Solomon's asking wisdom, 1 Kings iii. 6—11. True grace or wisdom, is the first link in the golden chain that draws all things necessary and desirable after it. God commands, that all ages should praise him; "young men and maidens; old men and children," Psal. cxlviii. 12. Aged David leaves this legacy with his son Solomon, 1 Chron. xxviii. 9, "And thou Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind," &c. Paul the aged thus charges his son Timothy, 1 Tim. iv. 12—16, "Let no man despise thy youth, but be thou an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity," &c. So Titus, ii. 6, "Young men likewise exhort to be sober-minded," or discreet; that is, seriously religious.

3. It is commended and rewarded: Josiah is praised, because in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David, his father; and in the twelfth year, he began to clear Judah and Jerusalem from the high places. What a fine character is left upon record of young Abijah, the son of Jeroboam, 1 Kings xiv. 13, "The child shall die, and all Israel shall mourn for him, and bury him; for he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave, because in him there is found some good thing towards the Lord God of Israel, in the house of Jeroboam." Something grateful or acceptable was found in him; God takes well a small good in

hopeful youth. Jesus, beholding the towardly young man, loved him, Mark x. 21, though it was not sincere or saving good that was in him. God reckons it both as a great ornament to young men, and an inestimable privilege to his people. Amos ii. 11, "And I raised up of your sons for prophets, and of your young men, for Nazarites. Is it not even thus, O ye children of Israel, saith the Lord?" As if he should say, you may well think I had a great respect for you, when I not only received you into covenant, but your children; yea, into the covenant of Levi; and not only when they were grown up, but even while children, as Samuel and Jeremiah. Strange and rare it is, that young men, who are most addicted to pleasures and wine, become so abstemious, grave, and seriously religious; this reflects honour on the persons and people, where such singular devotedness to God is found.

For more profitably discussing this important subject, I shall propose these inquiries:

I. What is implied and intended in this word, remember?

II. How young persons may use their memories, so as to promote religion?

III. Wherein their remembering their Creator may have an influence on practical godliness?

IV. Why it becomes young persons to remember their Creator, or be seriously religious?

And so to apply the whole.

I. What is the meaning and import of this word, *remember*, which may discover the reason why the Holy Ghost lays so much stress upon it?

I answer, the word, remember, is very extensive and comprehensive in its import, for it intends four things:

1. To call to mind things past. This is the proper import of the word remember. Psal. lxxvii. 10, "I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High. I will remember the works of the Lord, thy wonders of old." Even so young men must remember,

(1.) What they are made of: Gen. ii. 7, "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground." So the wise man informs us in this chapter, ver. 7, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was." O young man, forget not thy origin, thou art nothing but a little mean clay clotted together with blood, as mortar tempered with water, and animated with subtle breath, whereby thou art wrought up to a walking statue. A consideration of this would pluck down thy peacock's plumes, and lay thy honour in the dust, when thou beginnest to advance thyself as if thou wert not a mortal creature; it is a wonder to

think how men's spirits are elevated with riches and honours, as if they were not mortals.

Men's great sin and misery proceed from their forgetfulness of themselves, whence they are, and whither they are going. Hence Philip king of Macedon, employed a page every morning to call to him, "Remember, sir, you are a mortal." Would to God, young persons would consider, "that they dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust; which are crushed before the moth."\* You are brittle glasses, soon broken; crazy tabernacles, at best, quickly dissolved.

(2.) Reflect on your sinful state and acts. You were altogether born in sin; estranged from God even from the womb, going astray as soon as you were born, speaking lies.† You come into the world with a sad stock of sin, and set up that wretched trade as soon as you exercise reason; while you were children, you soon learned to lie, swear, mock at godliness, be disobedient to parents. Augustine, observing two children sucking at a mother's breast, the one cast a peevish, morose look at the other, envying that it should suck at the other breast, cried out, O Lord, when was the time, where was the place, that I was free from the buddings forth of this accursed root? Young persons should be often saying, "I remember my faults this day;" this is the true nature of genuine repentance, for men to bethink themselves, or bring back to their heart.‡ Sin came from the heart in commission, and must be brought back upon the heart as a burden, if ever there be repentance. O remember the sins of childhood and youth, that God may not remember them. || Alas! when I was a child, I thought, spake, and acted as a child; I was childish in my conceits, senseless in my imaginations, wild in my notions, and brutish in my affections and actions: poor vain man, I would needs be wise, though I was born like a wild ass's colt. § I was empty of good, and soon filled with trash and pollution, and was still generating more, till at last my soul was loaded with guilt and impurities. O that they were a pressing load upon me!

(3.) Remember the rebukes of Providence under which you have lain; these are worth recollecting, not only correction by parents, but chastisements of God's hand. If you revered fathers of your flesh, will you not subject yourselves to the Father of spirits, that you may live? Have not some of you borne the yoke in your youth, sicknesses, small pox, fevers, agues, and other weaknesses? Yea, have you not been scourged with your own rod? Just as fond children eat fruit till they

\* Job iv. 19.      † Psalm lviii. 3.      ‡ Gen. xli. 9.      1 Kings viii. 47.  
 || Psalm xxv. 7.      § Job xi. 12.

become disordered, even so men's own wickedness doth oft correct them, and their backslidings do reprove them: \* so that they may thank themselves for what they suffer. Oh that you could say as the church, Lam. iii. 19—21, "Remembering mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall, my soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me. This I recall to mind, therefore have I hope." You may learn so much good from reflecting on what you met with in your younger days, as may prove beneficial all the days of your life; both to keep you low in humility, and raise up your hearts in hopeful encouragement.

(4.) You must remember the many obligations laid upon you in your younger days to be the Lord's; how early you were dedicated to God in baptism; you were given up to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and his name put upon you; you were washed in the laver of baptism, and are engaged to put on Christ, to furnish the answer of a good conscience to God. You must remember your parents' examples and instructions; their counsels, admonitions, and prayers: for the vows of God are upon you. The kindness of God should lead you to repentance, and it becomes you to be often saying as David, Psalm cxvi. 16, "O Lord, truly I am thy servant, I am thy servant, and the son of thy handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds." O young persons, think and think again upon the various and gracious acts of Providence, these will engage you to gratitude and obedience. Psalm cv. 5, 6, "Remember his marvellous works that he hath done.—O ye seed of Abraham his servant, ye children of Jacob his chosen." O be ashamed to be unfruitful under all these genial showers from God and man. Tremble to break through all these bonds. How dreadful will your case be, if all these be lost upon you, if sin supplant these methods of grace.

2. The word signifies, a representing of things absent, as if they were present before our eyes; or things distant, just at hand. God was much withdrawn from David's soul, but yet he could think of an absent God. Psalm lxxvii. 3, "I remembered God and was troubled." This remembering is believing meditation and heavenly contemplation upon unseen objects, which is a heavenly life. The natural eye only beholds things present as objects of sense; but faith beholds things not seen. † This is called by Augustine, ‡ "a kind of mathematical memory containing dimensions, which the sense of the body does

\* Jer. ii. 19.

† Heb. xi. 1.

‡ Mathematicorum memoria, quæ dimensionum rationes continet, quarum nullam corporis sensus impressit.

not impress upon the mind." Much more doth the soul conceive of objects far beyond the bodily senses, as,

(1.) God himself. O what heavenly musings had David upon God, which occasioned real effects on his elevated soul: Psalm lxxiii. 5, 6, "My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness—when I remember thee upon my bed, (how is that?) and meditate on thee in the night watches." When the memory is full of God, the heart is sweetly employed and delighted with divine enjoyments; especially the soul is awed to a spiritual obedience by remembering of God's omnipresence. "I have set the Lord always before me," said David: "and again, Thy loving-kindness is before mine eyes, and I have walked in thy truth." O happy soul, that can thus remember God, and think, now God's eye is upon me, God forbid I should do any thing unbecoming such a presence.

(2.) The word of God, his precepts, promises, and threatenings. We are not always reading the word, but must be constantly thinking of it, and meditating on it "day and night." David was much given to this sacred employment of his sanctified memory. One while, he will "hide God's word in his heart, meditate in his precepts:" and again he says, "I will delight myself in thy statutes, I will not forget thy word. I remember thy judgments of old, O Lord, and have comforted myself. I will never forget thy precepts, for with them thou hast quickened me;"† and many such passages. Oh of what use would the daily remembrance of God's word be to us! The precepts would direct our practice, the promises would furnish us with pleas in prayer. If "the word of God dwell richly" in us,‡ it would be our daily monitor to shun sin and practise duty, for we never commit a sin, or omit a duty, but we forget a command. Heb. xii. 5, "You have forgotten the exhortation."

(3.) We must remember instances; examples of mercy, justice, piety, charity, humility, sobriety, chastity, and all other virtues. Examples are moving, melting admonitions. A bove majore discit arare minor. || Older men and aged women, by holy practices, are detailers of good things to the younger. Ministers and others must be patterns of good works. Mark the end of men's conversation: "Be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."§ Cæsar set Alexander before him as a model, and the Ephesian law would be a seasonable item to young men—'Αὐτὸς ὑπομιμησ-κεσθαι τινὸς τῶν τῆ ἀρετῇ χρώμενων, ever to bear in mind,

\* Psalm xvi. 3. xxvi. 3. † Psalm i. 2. cxix. 11, 15, 16, 52, 93.

‡ Col. iii. 16.

|| The younger ox learns to plough from the older.

§ Tit. ii. 3, 4, 7. Heb. xiii. 7. vi. 12

persons eminent in the practice of that virtue you would imitate; and this would make us ashamed of lagging so far behind, and would quicken our pace in pressing after. The scriptures and histories are full fraught with examples of most heroic acts. It is a quicker despatch to travel our journey by examples than by precepts; \* yet see those patterns be according to precept, follow men no further than they follow Christ. And as you must remember good men as way-marks, so remember instances of bad men as rocks and shelves, where many have been shipwrecked and drowned: "Remember Lot's wife;" † and let others' ruin be a caution to thee. Read history lest thou become a history, and take warning by others' harms. Always bear in mind the ancient and later monuments of God's vengeance, so shall you wash your feet in the blood of the wicked, and cleanse your souls by observing the spots of others. It is a mercy when God hangs up others in gibbets to be warnings to us. Study Deut. xxiv. 8, 9. 1 Cor. x. 6, 11.

(4.) Remember Jesus Christ; his person, natures, offices, death and passion, his resurrection, ascension, and session at God's right hand. Oh! whatever you think of or forget, be sure you keep Christ in memory: our Lord appointed his supper for this end, "Do this in remembrance of me." Remember Christ's mean birth, holy life, accursed death, and high advancement to God's right hand. Determine with yourselves to know, own, study, and admire nothing but Christ crucified; esteem all things dross and dung in comparison of him; ‡ let Christ be as honey in your mouth, as melody in your ear. || O remember his "love more than wine;" § that is, lay up records of love for future times, when it may be withdrawn as to the sense thereof. It is the great interest of believers to set up memorials of divine love and its appearances. O sirs, how can you forget Christ who did remember you at so dear a rate? Methinks every soul should be like that good man, that never went to bed or rose up, but had this in his mind and mouth: "Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift," 2 Cor. ix. 15.

3. Another signification of the word—remember, is to have a foresight of, and preparation for something future. Thus God saith, "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy;" ¶ and I shall take that part of our remembering, proper to all persons, but especially to young persons, as an instance,

(1.) The sabbath is to be remembered; which implies, not only a reflecting on God's institution, and keeping the sense

\* Longum iter per præcepta, brevius per exempla.

† 1 Cor. xi. 1. Luke xvii. 32. ‡ 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25. ii. 2. Phil. iii. 7, 8.

|| Mel in ore, melos in aure.

§ Cant. i. 4. ¶ Exod. xx. 8.

of past sabbaths still upon our spirits, but a serious preparation for it, arranging our weekly affairs, so as to be no impediments in the sanctifying of it, maintaining a composed frame of spirit suitable to it, to enter freely into the duties of it. Alas, how apt are young men to forget whose day it is, and grow volatile and frothy upon it, so finding their own pleasure.\* The more of the sabbath you have on weekdays, the less of the week you will have on the sabbath. You should put on your best spiritual suit, (as it is said a devout Jew did his bodily, before the approaching sabbath,) saying, Come, my soul, account this the queen of days, the very face and beauty of all other days.

(2.) Remember the changes and vicissitudes you may meet with in this life, and accordingly you must forecast, and provide for both best and worst: and he that is stocked with grace for prosperity, will be better furnished for adversity. Methinks, young persons are like mariners that are about to set sail, that must prepare rigging, cables, victuals, fresh water, anchors, and other things necessary for a long voyage; not knowing how tedious and hazardous it may prove. Thus must young persons get well furnished, for they may say as Moses to Pharaoh, "We know not with what we must serve the Lord until we come thither."† Little do you, my young friends, know, what sharp services God may call you to; you must therefore sit down and count the cost of the building, whether you have sufficient to finish it.‡ A young man unprincipled, is like a ship without mast, tackling, anchor, or other provisions; which is at the mercy of winds and waves, on the vast ocean, and is soon lost, or sunk, or driven on rocks and shelves and dashed to pieces. O sirs, I beseech you remember, you may be cast into such companies, places, snares, and straits, that all the wit you have will not bring you off, except you have received both renewing and assisting grace; and the latter you cannot expect without the former. You must stock yourselves with all things necessary, as young persons in setting up a trade, that your stock may not be run out before you have accomplished your purpose, nor your money spent before your journey come to a close.

(3.) Remember your death. It is a foolish word of inconsiderate persons to say, 'I no more thought of such a thing than of my death.' Fond man! what reason hast thou to forget death? thou sayest, 'I am young yet;' senseless arguing, art thou too young to die? hast thou not seen, as young as thou snatched away? shouldst thou not wait "all the days of thy appointed time, till thy change come?"|| Canst thou be assured thou shalt live to old age? A youth came to a Hebrew

\* Isa. lviii. 13. † Exod. x. 26. ‡ Luke xiv. 28. || Job xiv. 14.

doctor, desiring him to give him some rules to instruct him to live and die well. The doctor said, how old art thou? He answered him, eight years of age. Come again, said the doctor, six or seven years hence, and I will instruct thee, thou art yet young enough. Yea, sir, replied the child, but I have been in the church-yard, or cemetery, and I laid me on a grave that was as short as I, whereby I do perceive I may die before I shall arrive to that age: a wise answer. Lord, open the eyes of the young, to see death posting on towards them, behind them, as it is before the faces of the old; it is as dangerous, though less visible; therefore you must betimes claim kinship to the worms, for they will shortly claim kinship with you, say as Job xvii. 14, "I have said to corruption, thou art my father; to the worm, thou art my mother, and my sister." This is the wise man's advice in the context—"Let him remember the days of darkness, for they shall be many;"\* that is, death; for the grave is a dark, lonesome house. He saith, "they are many," he saith not, infinite or everlasting; for though the grave be a long home, yet eternity of weal or woe is our last and everlasting destiny. You must die certainly; you may die soon, and suddenly; yea, if you be wicked, you may die before your time.† Alas! most men forget this dying hour.

(4.) Remember your accounts. Our Lord, as a nobleman, delivers ten pounds to ten servants, with this charge: "Occupy till I come." This is every one's work, especially that of young persons. O what a comfort to say, "Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds!" God gives every one a talent: woe be to that slothful servant, who lays up his talent in a napkin; but a thousand woes to him that wastes it in wickedness. Think within thyself, young man, how shall I give account of health, strength, genius, parts, accomplishments, learning, riches, honours, and my golden hours? Shall God give me the use of these, and the devil receive the application? If my master shall give me a sum of money, and send me to the market to buy necessaries, and I spend it in prodigality, and come drunk home; how dare I look him in the face? If my father be at great charge in my education at schools, and I return a poor silly ignoramus; how can I answer it? "Every one of us shall give account of himself to God."‡ How shall I come off before the impartial, heart-searching Judge? Since then, I must appear at the general assizes, I am resolved to keep a petty session beforehand—daily to set matters straight with God and my soul; according to that good counsel:

\* Eccles. xi. 8.

† Eccles. vii. 17.

‡ Rom. xiv. 12.

Sum up at night what thou hast done by day,  
 And in the morning, what thou hast to do ;  
 Dress and undress thy soul, mark the decay  
 And growth of it, if with thy watch, that too  
 Be down, then wind up both, since we shall be  
 Most surely judged, make thy accounts agree.\*

4. Remembering, imports an affectionate, practical, spiritual, improving of truths, objects, or things known and thought of : and in this sense is the text to be understood. It includes these four things—*Valuation, affection, application, and observation.*

(1.) Valuation. So the word is used, Eccles. ix. 15, “ No man remembered that same poor man ;” that is, nobody prized him according to his real worth, or great usefulness ; no man praised him, or spoke well of him ; none gave him thanks, being an obscure person, and expecting no more good from him. In this sense we must remember our Creator ; that is, so as to admire him, and to praise him ; scripture is full of this. Psal. cxlv, is composed as a psalm of adoration, addressed to the infinite Creator ; verse 10, “ All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord, and thy saints shall bless thee.” All God’s works do celebrate his praises objectively, as they give occasion for man’s adoring their Creator. Man, as man, praiseth God actively ; but saints only, bless God intentionally and regularly ; for this purpose was Psalm civ. composed. O that we could also learn this great lesson, in which the inanimate creatures are so perfect !

(2.) Affection. Cant. i. 4, “ We will remember thy love more than wine.” O the blessed relish and transporting delight, our souls have in the late received expressions of divine love ! It is more sweet than delicious wines. It becomes all, and especially the young, (who will take delight in something) to delight themselves in the Lord, which is both their duty and their privilege.† O that young persons would exercise their thoughts with pleasure on the name, nature, properties, word, and works of our glorious Jehovah ; and also the person, natures, states, the actions, discourses and prayers, the sufferings, death and resurrection, the offices, purchase, and glorious intercession of our dear Lord Jesus. Surely these, if any thing, are worth an affectionate remembrance, that we may echo and answer his love with love.‡ When, O when, shall that great command be young men’s employment, “ Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, soul, and mind !” || O where can you bestow your virgin affections better ! Whom can you think on with greater complacency ? Surely, the sunshine of divine love should produce the heavenly reflection of your love back to him ; since his is costly love, yours pleasant.

\* Herbert’s church, p. 16.

† Psal. xxxvii. 4. Isa. lviii. 14.

‡ Amo amorem ejus.—*Augustine.*

|| Matt. xxii. 37.

(3.) Remembrance, imports application, and believing appropriation. On God's part, it imports his acceptance; Psalm xx. 3, "Remember all thy offerings;" but how? it is added, "and accept thy burnt-sacrifice." Thus persons should so remember God, as to accept and meditate on him: so ver. 7, "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; but we will remember the name of the Lord our God;" we are resolved to depend only on God. When our Lord saith of his supper, "Do this in remembrance of me," doubtless he means application and improvement. Alas, what comfort can we take in God or Christ, unless we fiducially own him as ours: this is the main thing in religion. Our duty lies in adverbs, our comfort in possessives. The remembrance of God strikes terror into an uninterested soul. What is God, if he be not my God? \* And what are we better for him, (savingly) if we do not appropriate him? Hence, saith the church, Isa. xxvi. 8, "The desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee." O sirs, this is the very life and marrow of your remembering your Creator, by owning him as your Father in Christ; "This is life eternal, that they might know (not by mere speculation, but believing application,) thee to be the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." Faith can reach as high as heaven, and embrace far distant objects: † yea, such is the nature of faith, that it can really appropriate all in God, and in Christ, and in the promises of the word, to itself, and make them its own.

(4.) Remembrance, imports a practical observation, and a conversation suitable to this remembrance. The life must correspond with the belief; hence God often repeats it, that his people must remember, and do all God's commandments. David saith, "I have remembered thy name, O Lord, in the night, and have kept thy law." Practical remembrance is most useful and comfortable. Men do truly remember no more than they practice. Head-knowledge signifies little, without lively workings in the heart, and holy works in the life. If you could say all the bible by heart, if you have not the law of God written on your heart, and transcribed in your life, it were not of any worth. Some have had prodigious memories, they could repeat whole sermons, and give an account of volumes; yet they have forgotten their duty: this will prove a complicated, aggravated sin. Thy head challenges thy feet, and thy wicked heart perverts both. A strong memory contradicted by an obstinate will, leaves the possessor inexcusable. Science, without conscience, is a torch to light men to hell; dictates of conscience, without

\* Quid est Deus, si non sit meus.

† Heb. xi. 13.

practical compliance, will prove a faggot to increase the unquenchable fire. Know as much as you can; remember what you have learned; and practise what you do remember. Remember the rule, and square every step by it. Let memory retain, that life may profit by, divine truths.

Thus I have despatched the first head, what is implied and intended in this word, remember, and remembering our Creator.

II. The next inquiry to occupy our attention is, how young persons may use their memories, so as to promote religion? Or, what helps they may employ to assist them in their remembering their great Creator.

First, A natural, artificial, and spiritual memory must be distinguished,

1. There is a natural memory in man, and also in brutes.\* Every man hath something of memory. Cœlius Rhodiginus tells us of the hart, that it hath so bad a memory, that if it be feeding and hungry, yet if it look up, it forgets what it was doing, and seeks a new pasture: and the historian informs us of a man, that had forgotten his own name; that however might be occasioned by falls, blows, or diseases.† But all men, naturally, have a memory. The philosophers observe, the dullest geniuses for invention have often the most tenacious memories; so things that receive slowest impressions, as a stone, keep them the longest; but wax and water have quick impressions, and they are soon lost. This however is certain, that some men have naturally far better memories than others; experience demonstrates this: but this is not the memory I am speaking of, except as the foundation of what follows.

2. There is an artificial memory; some in this way have arrived at a prodigious degree of retentiveness of memory. Seneca, by artificially improving his memory, could repeat two thousand names in order, and two hundred verses, beginning with the first syllables at the end. Many other instances have been given us of the stupendous memories which some have had; but this is not the recollection I design, yet we make use of lawful helps to further our remembrance.

3. There is a spiritual memory, that is, the natural faculty of the soul spiritualized. (1.) Subjectively, by renewing the faculties, or (2.) Objectively, by fixing the memory on other and better objects than it was wont to think upon. Our Lord tells us, John xiv. 26, that the Holy Ghost shall bring all things to our remembrance. This is done immediately by the Spirit's assisting the memory, as he doth the mind, will, and affections, in other duties, helping our infirmities; † or else through the

\* Memoria in brutis, reminiscētia in hominibus.

† Rom. viii. 26.

medium of ministers and ordinances, and even by the endeavours of Christians with themselves, using God's appointed means to quicken and fortify their memories. It is thus that I shall answer this query:—What helps must a young man employ to further his soul in his remembering of God, and divine things?

1. Learn to know what the memory is, and of what use it may be in religion. Memory is a wonderful faculty. Cicero admires it, and calls it, a remarkable evidence of the divinity.\* Augustine calls it, the internal receptacle, dens, or caverns of the mind, where it lays up what it receives.† Neither of them can tell where the memory is seated. But the scripture saith, Luke i. 66, they “laid them up in their hearts;” and “Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart,” Luke ii. 19; in her heart, in a moral, if not in a natural sense: heart memory is the best memory. Heathens can tell us that, Mnemosyne is the mother of the muses: I am sure memory is needful in divinity. What are we better for what we hear unless we remember it? The apostle saith of the gospel, that by it we are saved, if we keep in memory what is preached, else we believe in vain;‡ he means the substance of gospel doctrine, though not every particular sentence. Bring this to thy conscience, shall I hear in vain, read in vain, believe in vain, and so ruin my own soul? God forbid, the matter is of infinite importance. I must look after a good memory, or I neglect and endanger my salvation. God forbid, I should excuse myself with saying, I have a bad memory, God looks for no more than he gives. I have a memory and must use it to his glory; I can remember worldly things, and why not spiritual?

2. Rest not contented with an unsanctified heart. A gracious heart will help to a tenacious memory. “The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, soul, and body may be preserved blameless;” this will take in the memory. O that in the inmost part, the Lord would “make me to know wisdom;” that “my reins might instruct me in the night seasons.”|| God's image is in all wisdom, righteousness, and true holiness.§ A habit of grace in the heart would be a bias in the soul to incline it God-wards; grace gives wings to all the faculties to mount aloft. Nothing strengthens the unstable memory so much as grace; the memory is without tightness, and lets all good out; but grace stops the chinks of this leaky vessel. It is grace only that “renews a right,” in the margin, constant “spirit within.”¶ Grace only expels those

\* Insigne divinitatis argumentum. † Animi ventrem, antra, cavernas.

‡ 1 Cor. xv. 1, 2. || 1 Thess. v. 23. Psal. li. 6. xvi. 7.

§ Col. iii. 10. Eph. iv. 24. ¶ Psal. li. 10.

swarms of vain thoughts that lodge in me, and fills every corner of my heart with something of God. O "unite my heart to fear thy name;" engage my whole soul to thee. If God have something within me, I shall not forget him and his benefits;\* that which is heaven-born will surely be mounting heavenwards.

3. Be sure of being savingly related to God, and interested in Christ. Relation is the root of remembrance: "Can a maid forget her ornaments? Can a woman forget her sucking child?"† In a public edict a man will be sure to retain in his memory what relates to his own case and tenure. "Hear thou it and know it for thy good;" if you cannot think of all the sermon, secure at least what concerns thyself; say, this is for me. The language of the believer is, "Who loved me, and gave himself for me. He is my God and I will prepare him a habitation (in my heart;) my father's God, and I will exalt him."‡ Interest or property is an excellent help to memory: if Jehu forget other things, yet he can remember a prophecy that related to himself against the house of Ahab, 2 Kings ix. 25, 26. If you will not remember others' concerns, yet surely you will remember your own. Will a man forget to eat his meat or put on his clothes? Surely if God were your God, though you could think of nothing else, you would with Thomas break out into a rapture, and cry, "My Lord and my God;"§ he forgot all to think of this, and this word *my* was a special memorandum.

4. Endeavour to increase in your hearts the flame of divine love. Men cannot forget what they love: the rich old usurer will not forget where he laid his bag of gold. Love frequently reviews the object, and so renews decaying memory. Things highly esteemed by us, are deeply imprinted in us; a warm heart will influence the head; strong affections will be prevalent arguments. The man thinks of his beloved when waking, and dreams of her when sleeping; he cannot forget her, every thing he sees puts him in mind of her: so would it be if your heart were wrapt in the flame of love: "Set me as a seal upon thy heart;" what follows? "as a seal upon thine arm."§ Observe it, that which is on the heart in point of affection, will be on the arm as to observation and remembrance. Love much and you remember well; what has affected your heart you cannot easily forget. David's heart was depressed very low at times, and then raised very high in the actings of faith, and it rests upon his spirits long after: so he saith Psalm xlii. 5, 6, "O my God, my soul is cast down within me, therefore will I re-

\* Psal. lxxxvi. 11. ciii. 1, 2.

† Jer. ii. 32. Isa. xlix. 15.

‡ Job v. 27. Gal. ii. 20. Exod. xv. 2.

§ John xx. 28. § Song viii. 6.

member thee from the land of Jordan and of the Hermonites :” David upon the throne cannot forget poor David a fugitive.

5. Take pains with your spirits, to work things on your heart. Experience tells us what wonderful memories some dull people have arrived at with taking pains. It is not to say what God’s blessing and man’s industry may produce ; the more weight is laid on the seal, the deeper impression is made on the wax. Memory carries the image of things : often viewing things begets lively images : thinking oft on truths is harrowing the seed, it covers that which else would be picked up or washed away. “ Meditate on these things, give thyself wholly to them :” \* a transient glance will not do, you must work things into your spirits. You must incline your ear to wisdom, and apply your heart to understanding ; cry, lift up your voice, seek, search for it as for hidden treasures :—then you shall understand the fear of the Lord, Prov. ii. 2—8. Let a burning glass be slightly passing, though the stuff be never so combustible, it takes no hold ; but if it be fixed, the sun-beams unite and kindle fire : just so it is,—“ Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us ?” † Serious recollection brings strong impressions. An apple when tossed in the hand, leaveth the smell and odour of it behind, so do truths.

6. Compare things together, if you cannot remember things by themselves taken abstractedly ; yet when you form ideas of things in your mind, a visible object may bring to recollection something invisible : as the sight of one man may put you in mind of another that you had forgotten, thus an artificial memory is produced. But I shall only give you one instance : when God has delivered a prophecy or a promise, and we forget it, when we see any thing like an accomplishment, it will bring the first notice of it into our remembrance. When former prophets threatened judgment, and it came to pass, then they could call menaces to mind and say : “ Like as the Lord of Hosts thought to do unto us,—so hath he dealt with us,” Zech. i. 6. When the disciples saw Christ’s zeal, they remembered the prophecy, “ The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up,” John ii. 17. And after his resurrection, they remembered Christ’s expression, which was not only a monitor, but a key to unlock that mystery. ‡ Jesus’s miracles brought John’s preaching to their remembrance, and became a means of their believing : so may you, when ministers are dead and gone. Think, O now I remember, how frequently and seriously such a good man inculcated such a truth ; it comes fresh into my thoughts as if it had been but spoken yesterday ; now I feel the truth of what he

\* 1 Tim. iv. 15. † Luke xxiv. 32. ‡ See Acts xi. 16. Luke xxii. 61.

spoke of the evil of sin, both in the guilt of it upon my conscience, and the punishment of it on my whole man. I now think of that great truth, of the need I have of Christ, how precious he is: he told me I must suffer persecution, and when I feel, I cannot but remember that prediction, 1 Thess. iii. 3, 4; and so in other things.

7. Frequently repeat to others what you would remember: this is a great help. Many will give an account of various passages in sermons, preached thirty or forty years ago, who have forgotten as pertinent and profitable matter spoken the day before. What is the reason? They have familiarized them to themselves by frequent repetition. If you would presently, after hearing a sermon, or reading a chapter, fall into discourse about it, it would rivet your notions in your minds. Scholars find this an excellent help to memory, nothing is of such advantage: hence Deut. vi. 6, 7, "These words which I command thee this day, shall be in thy heart." How? "Thou shalt teach, (Hebrew is, whet or sharpen) them diligently unto thy children, and thou shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house." O that talk of sermons, scriptures, and truths, were more in fashion! If every one would cast in his mite, and contribute something, what a treasure would be gathered! If every one bring a little fuel, what a fire would be kindled! The two disciples talked together of the things that had happened, and they had burning hearts: before they parted, our Lord joined himself to hold a parley with conversing disciples.\* Be not ashamed to speak of the things of God: David saith, "I will speak of thy testimonies before kings and will not be ashamed."† How often do we find David's sacred lips expressing the delights of his heart, which return with great advantage upon his memory, and help his meditation: and this is the duty and characteristic of a truly pious man who hath the law of God in his heart, his mouth "speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment," Psal. xxxvii. 30, 31.

8. Proceed immediately to the practice or improvement of those truths which come home to your conscience. Practice is both the end and means of a good memory: imprisoning truths quite loseth them. If you "hold the truth in unrighteousness,"‡ it cannot stay long with you. If you live not answerably, you bury all in the grave of the oblivion; but present, lively practice doth, as it were, harden the hopeful buds and blossoms of good, that they are not so soon blasted. Hence when David had a good thought in his mind, he worked it on his affections, and brought it into action. Psalm cxix. 55—57,

\* Luke xxiv. 14, 32. † Psal cxix. 46. See ver. 13, 27, 43, 52. ‡ Rom. i. 18.

“ I have remembered thy name, O Lord, in the night, and have kept thy law.” See, his was a practical memory: and what then? “ This I had, because I kept thy precepts.” What had he? It may be a better memory, or more elevated affections, or more evidence of God’s love to his soul: “ Thou art my portion, O Lord.” Thus an activity of life and contemplation, do mutually contribute assistance to each other, if you live what you hear, you shall know more: “ If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine.” Sin stupifies the memory, holiness fortifies it; no man hath a better memory than the practical Christian.

9. Study the art of forgetfulness. Themistocles said, “ he would rather learn the art of forgetfulness than of memory.” One saith, we shall never make progress, till we unlearn that well, which we learned ill. A boy will never spell well till he forget his wrong spelling. Socrates desired his scholars to unlearn what they had learned; so must you. “ Forget also thine own people, and thy father’s house.” I dare not say, with some philosophers, that discipline is nothing else but *Αναγνωσις*, a remembrance: for they held, that souls existed before they were in these bodies, as Pythagoras did. Indeed, if we respect Adam’s perfect knowledge in innocency, there may be some truth in it; but, alas! by his fall, his intellect was obscured, and how soon he forgot God! We have lost God’s image, and a new creation is necessary;\* and how awfully have we descended into the grave of oblivion, remaining there till divine grace work the miracle of a first resurrection, and a second birth.† The tablet must be made clean before you can write any thing on it; you must be “ transformed by the renewing of your mind;”‡ then you will approve God’s will. No man can form a new impression in wax, till the old be defaced; so you must forget the world, its profits, pleasures, and honours, for better: they say, that children’s memories are clear,|| because not ruffled with worldly circumstances. O that every soul were “ as a weaned child!”§ for how oft do the cares of the world thrust out the word of God: and it were well if we were children in malice, forgetting injuries. That is a happy memory which forgets wrongs; yea, you must forget dearest relations, when standing in competition with Christ. And lastly, you must forget your duties, graces, and attainments, that you may “ press forward”¶ to what is before. It is the saying of an ancient, that the remembrance of past virtue

\* 2 Cor. v. 17.

† Rev. xx. 6.

John’iii. 3.

‡ Rom. xii. 2.

|| *Liquidae sunt puerorum memoriae.*

§ Psal. cxxxix. 2.

¶ Phil. iii. 13, 14.

is the ditch of the mind;\* that is, when a man thinks to merit by it, or when it puts a stop to further progress. If you look back as Lot's wife did, you are not fit for the kingdom of God.

10. And lastly, rely on the Holy Spirit for strengthening memory. It is God's promise, it is Christ's purchase:† it must not be regarded as a cipher. You can do nothing without the Spirit's assistance: prize it, praise God for it, all good comes from it. The Holy Ghost makes ministers, overseers, to be your monitors. He indited the scriptures, works by the visible seals of the covenant, and surpasses all the phylacteries and other monitors of old: "Grieve not the Spirit,"‡ that would seal you; follow the Spirit's guidance, walk in it, be led by it, depend on his assistance, commit what you have to the Spirit of God, that he may bring it forth to you when you have most need.¶ But above all, plead the promise of the Spirit, which our Lord saith, shall abide with his people for ever. Say, Lord, I have a slippery, deceitful memory; it will hold piles of vanity, but it lets slip profitable truths. I have lost many a good sermon truth and impression, and left to myself, shall do again; I have neither ability nor will to lay up any thing carefully, nor lay out seasonably, unless thy Spirit help me. My soul is a leaking vessel, close the leaks, fill it with living water, keep it from running out; open my heart as thou didst Lydia's, to thy divine influence; write thy name and law there in indelible characters; forgive my forgetfulness; give me the art of remembrance; come in, Holy Spirit, do thine office in me and for me. O for a present memory! Thou, O God, hast promised thy Holy Spirit to them that ask him, I know neither how, nor what to pray for as I ought, let the Spirit help my infirmities: take not away thy Holy Spirit from me.§ When I am called before magistrates, let thy Spirit suggest to me what to answer: when I am assaulted with a temptation, or ready to step aside into sin, let thy Spirit be my monitor.

III. A further inquiry proposed, is, In what way the remembrance of their Creator may have influence upon the young, to promote practical godliness?

In answer to this inquiry, I shall briefly lay down the following considerations, which by the blessing of God may be of service to produce serious piety in young persons.

1. God created all things of nothing by the word of his power. This is an article of our faith, Heb. xi. 3, "Through

\* Memoria virtutis, fovea mentis.—*Greg.* † John xiv. 26. ‡ Eph. iv. 30. § Gal. v. 16. ¶ Luke xi. 13. Rom. viii. 26. Psal. li. 10, 11.

faith we understand, that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." God had no matter to work upon, nor tools to work with; his own fiat produced all things out of the barren womb of non-entity, therefore I believe that God is omnipotent; to be believed on in his word, feared for his power, and trusted for his promises. I will with Abraham believe, "God who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were."\* If God say the word who can contradict it? He is able to perform promises, and execute threatenings. He that made all things of nothing, can in a moment reduce me and all things to nothing; yea, can cast soul and body into hell. Who would not fear and tremble before this infinite Lord God? before whom all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing.† Our God is the true God—that hath made the earth by his power, established the world by his wisdom, and stretched out the heavens by his discretion. I will own no other God, but this world-making Jehovah.

2. God created man in his own image; Gen. i. 26, "And God said let us make man in our image after our own likeness." It is four times repeated in two verses, to show the certainty of the thing, and accuracy of the workmanship. O what a fine, pure, perfect, unspotted creature was man, when he came out of God's hand! He was able to do God's will, rule himself, and all the creatures: but "how art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!" He was planted a noble vine, but is now a degenerate plant.‡ The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, are as earthen pitchers;§ such as were brought up in scarlet, embrace dunghills, we were God's Nazarites, "purer than snow, now our visage is blacker than a coal." O what a change! once God's glorious image was upon us, now the ugly image of the devil. Woe is me! O that this may humble me! the darling of heaven has now become the devil's slave; he who was Lord of the world is now degraded below the beasts of the field, I behold the fair estate that my ancestors once possessed, but by rebellion forfeited, and I am turned out. Woe is me!

3. God has created us capable of knowing, loving, serving, and enjoying himself. Man's body is "fearfully and wonderfully made, curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth."§ God made man of a better mould than the animal race. What an excellent production is man's body! Galen viewing thoroughly that little member, the eye, composed a hymn for the praise of

\* Rom. iv. 17.

† Matt. x. 28. Jer. v. 22. Deut. iv. 35.

‡ Isa. xiv. 12. Jer. ii. 21.

§ Lam. iv. 2, 5, 7, 8.

§ Ps. cxxxix. 14, 15.

its creator. Some Creatures are abashed at the majestic countenance of man, but then what a masterpiece is the soul of man! upon which still remain some traits of God's image.\* Even the meanest beggar and basest sinner, have impressions of God upon them more than brutes: for though the soul be deprived in its faculties, yet the substance thereof remains, it hath many excellent qualities. How capacious is the soul of man! It can pass through creation; it can consider the fabric, use, and beauty of animals; the signatures of plants, their nature and virtues; it can view the vast ocean, describe the sun's motions in the ecliptic; calculate tables for the moon and planets, and invent cycles for the computation of time, foretell future eclipses to the fraction of a digit; it can run backwards to a man's actions through many years; it can look forwards beyond death and the grave into another world; it can look inwards and dig into the hidden corners of the breast, where the vulture eye of another cannot pierce; yea, it can rise above the heavens to the being of God; for as Phidias carved his image so dexterously on the shield of Minerva, that it could never be taken out without breaking the whole to pieces, so there is some sense of a Deity in the worst of men. Therefore why should I not act like myself? Why do I not blow up those sparks of reason? O that I could show myself a man! Why may I not act rationally, though I cannot act spiritually without a new infused principle? A heathen could say, "I am greater, and born to greater things, than that my soul should be enslaved by my sensual appetites."† I will now act like a man; plants, beasts, and fishes act according to their kind, why should not I? I will go as far as I can, and see what grace will do.‡

4. God created man after his own image; therefore he, and he only, is able to repair this image in my soul. God's children are described, as being such as "put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him;" yea, "in righteousness and holiness of truth." Both texts say, the new man is created, which is the proper work of omnipotence. I find, "that in me dwells no good thing;"|| that is, savingly good; and by nature, I am without strength, not able to work any good in my soul; yet, thou canst renew thine own image in me, thou hast even promised in the new covenant, "to put a new spirit within me." Lord, go again over thy work, which sin hath so marred and defaced; let me be thy "workmanship created in Christ Jesus to good

\* James iii. 9.

† Major sum et ad majora natus quam ut sim mancipium corporis.—*Sen.*

‡ Ad ultimum virium. || Col. iii. 10. Eph. iv. 24. Rom. vii 18.

works." Thou hast said, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." O make all things new in my soul; "Create in me a clean heart;"\* give me a new stock; let me have new habits of grace, that I may live a new life, aim at new ends, act by a new rule, and be formed for new privileges; for now "in Christ Jesus, that is, in this new testament dispensation, circumcision avails nothing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature:" either a new man, or no man in Christ. Lord, make me a new creature, that I may be a true Christian.

5. God created the human nature of Jesus Christ. He, he alone, "is the image of the invisible God," in a more peculiar manner than any man; "the first-born of every creature," "the beginning of the creation of God." The Holy Ghost formed the body of our Lord, in the womb of the virgin, and so divine power "created a new thing in the earth, a woman, to compass a man;" a virgin conceiving. Thus Christ is the highest branch of all terrestrial beings, the chief of our kindred, higher than all the kings of the earth, he that unites heaven and earth in a blessed conjugal bond. O that my soul were related to him! Would to God I were of the royal family of heaven, a partaker of Christ, and anointed with that precious ointment that runs down from the mystical Aaron's head to the skirts of his garment! As Christians are so called from this sacred unction, let me feel the benefit of this holy oil: "For both he that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified, are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren."† And will the Son of God call me brother? And may I through him call God, Father? This is the height of my ambition, this is the highest title of honour, the finest escutcheon that ever was blazoned. May I "be among the first-fruits of his creatures," by my new birth. Would to God, I were a branch of this "true vine," a member of his mystical "body of his flesh and of his bones."

6. God created man and all things with a dependance upon himself, not to be absolute, independent, or self-sufficient beings. Because we are his offspring, therefore "in him we live, move, and have our being;" "he upholds all things by the word of his power:"‡ Father and Son are still working. I do as necessarily depend on God for my being and well-being, as the beams on the sun, as the streams on the fountains. God forbid, then, that I should forsake God, my Maker. Shall I be so foolish and unwise, as thus to requite the Lord that made me, bought

\* Ezek. xi. 19. xxxvi. 26. Eph. ii. 10. 2 Cor. v. 17. Psal. li. 10.

† Col. i. 15. Rev. iii. 14. Heb. iii. 14. Psal. cxxxiii. 2. Heb. ii. 11.

‡ James i. 18. John xv. 2. Eph. v. 30. Acts xvii. 28. Heb. i. 3.

me, and daily feeds me? Shall I kick against him that holds me in his hand; or run away from him, who is my life and the length of my days? Shall God nourish and bring me up, and shall I now rebel against him? Woe is me that ever I have sinned against so great, so good a God, and bountiful benefactor! "I have sinned, what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men?"\* Now will I seek reconciliation with my sovereign, because my poor territories are nourished by the King of heaven's country, Acts xii. 20. I will now cast down my arms, and rebel no more; I will ask of him every morsel of bread, every portion of raiment: for "every good gift, and every perfect gift, cometh down from the Father of lights." I will expect all from him, and ask his leave to use my lawful comforts. Away with pride and conceit of self-sufficiency, that make any mortal men say, "We are lords, we will come no more unto thee." No, no, I will still go to God for all I want, and am sure I have daily wants; then let my trade with heaven be kept open for ever.

7. God created man and "all things for himself," Prov. xvi. 4: that is, for his own glory. It is true, God did not need his creatures, nor can any created being add to his essential glory; he is infinitely happy without us; but men must "speak of the glorious honour of his majesty, and declare his greatness." All his works praise him passively and objectively; men, as men, speak of his glory actively and declaratively; but saints bless God spiritually and acceptably. O that as other creatures glorify God in their kind, so may my soul be, and speak, in a due and regular manner, for God's glory. Lord, help me to attain this great end. As all the streams come originally from the sea, and return back thither; so let all the lines of my life, thoughts, affections, and actions, return to their centre. There are many obligations on me to be thine; I am not my own, I am made by thee, and for thee; I am "bought with a price," and therefore will glorify thee in body and soul, which are thine.† God forbid, that I should alienate any of thy goods to my proper use, and so commit sacrilege. In thy hand my breath is, and thine are all my ways; therefore thee will I glorify. Whether I eat, or drink, I will do all to thy glory. Of thee, and through thee, and to thee, are all things; "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."<sup>‡</sup>

\* John v. 17. Deut. xxxii. 6. xxx. 20. Isa. i. 3. Job vii. 20.

† Jer. ii. 31. Psal. cxlv. 5, 6. Eccles. i. 7. 1 Cor. vi. 20.

‡ Dan. v. 23. 1 Cor. x. 31. Rom. xi. 36. Rev. iv. 11.

8. God created man, that he might worship and adore him, and him alone. This is his due by virtue of the law of creation; even the devil is bound to it as a creature: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." But the due manner of worshipping God is by institution. O that I could "serve the Lord with gladness," and "know that the Lord he is God; it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture." This relation to him, as my Creator, lays a great obligation on me to worship him; but I cannot worship acceptably, with reverence and godly fear, except I be in the relation of a child to a father. O make me a child of thine; give me the spirit of adoption to cry, "Abba, Father." Teach me to worship thee in spirit and in truth. Help me to cry like a child, my father, and not turn away from thee.\* I will own no other God, than that God who made heaven and earth; yea, the same God that made me. "O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker; for he is our God." God forbid, I should fall down before the work of men's hands; God in Christ is the object of my worship; his glory is my end, together with the enjoyment of him; his word is my rule, and his Spirit, my assistant.

9. God made us, therefore we must daily, and especially at last, resign ourselves into his hands; whether we do or suffer, live or die. This is that excellent use the apostle makes of this doctrine: 1 Pet. iv. 19, "Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator." You must look to your state as well as acts; for it is not pleading the relation of creatures only, for such are devils, and there is "a people of no understanding; therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will shew them no favour." Say not, he that made us will not consign us to destruction: can you think to serve Satan all your life, and be saved by God at death? With what confidence can sinners, when they have been the devil's drudges, commit themselves into God's hands? But God's children may say, with comfort, as David, as our dear Redeemer, and as the protomartyr Stephen: "Into thy hands I commit my spirit;"† and God will bid it welcome. You may commit your body to the grave, as a safe repository, and your soul into the hands of him who redeemed it, and say with blessed Paul: "I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he

\* Matt. iv. 10. Psalm c. 2, 3. Gal. iv. 6. John iv. 24. Jer. iii. 19.

† Psal. xc. 6, 7. Isa. xxvii. 11. Ps. xxxi. 5. Luke xxiii. 46. Acts vii. 59.

is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day," 2 Tim. i. 12.

10. God created man, and therefore when you are sore oppressed, with inward or outward troubles, fly to him for relief. Thus did Job, chap. x. 9, "Remember, I beseech thee, that thou hast made me as the clay, and wilt thou bring me into dust again?" as if he had said, Alas, Lord, thou knowest full well the materials I am made of, even weak and corruptible ingredients; if thou handle me too hard, I shall faint under thy hand: "Are not my days few? cease then, and let me alone, that I may take comfort a little."\* Dost thou not pity them that fear thee? "As a father pitieth his children,—so wilt thou, for thou knowest our frame, and rememberest that we are dust." Why then, Lord, dost thou crush me under the severe hand of avenging justice? Is my strength the strength of stones? or is my flesh of brass? Wilt thou break a leaf driven to and fro? and wilt thou pursue the dry stubble? † O lighten thine hand a little from me; give me some breathings, and intervals of mercy; but if thou lay one hand on me, put the other under me, to hold me up, and in due time to raise me.

11. God created all things good in their kind, therefore nothing is to be despised that God hath made; every thing is to be set in its proper place. At the close of every day, God saw that it was good, but the last day when he had made man, then it was very good; ‡ every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving. God forbid, that I should despise any part of God's workmanship; he is to be admired in the least and most contemptible creature, as it is God's work, for his work is honourable and glorious. The least insect speaks much of God, as well as the glorious sun: God is great in great things, and not small in the least. || Every tree, leaf, stone, and blade of grass, declares God's glorious attributes; visible things speak the eternal power of the glorious, invisible God. I may and must spell God's name in all: I will abuse none, lest I make the creatures groan under the burden of my sin and guilt. God forbid that I should despise any of my fellow-creatures for their natural defects: "Have we not all one Father? hath not one God created us all?" Is not man, the humblest man, "the image and glory of God?" § Do not rich and poor meet together, and hath not God made both? Let no man despise another for his defects, either in corporeal or intellectual endowments; for God might have made thee so.

\* Job x. 20. † Psal. ciii. 13, 14. Job xiii. 25. ‡ Gen. i. 4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 31.  
|| Magnus in magnis, nec parvus in minimis. § Mal. ii. 10. 1 Cor. xi. 7.

Stoics were wont to say, that it was better to be a fool in human shape, than wise in the form of a brute.

12. I shall add but one thing more, which is this:—that if God be our Creator, he can (if need be) effect glorious things for his church and children. He hath not spent all his power in the first works of creation, in making this stupendous fabric of heaven and earth: he that hath done this, can do more. The same almighty power that spake the word, and all things were produced out of the barren womb of non-entity, can also command deliverance for Jacob. “By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth:” there needed no more than God’s fiat for the producing of all created beings. This is that which has raised the hopes of God’s fainting people, in the church’s low estate: Psalm lxxiv. 16, 17, “The day is thine, the night also is thine: thou hast prepared the light and the sun. Thou hast set all the borders of the earth; thou hast made summer and winter:”—therefore thou canst easily deliver thy church by thine own power, when there is no ground of hope from outward means or ordinary instruments. If God’s people be in apparent danger in their dwellings, God can “create upon every dwelling-place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all, the glory shall be a defence.” Nobody can injure God’s children without his leave; for he “created the smith that bloweth the coals,—yea, the waster to destroy.” None can lift up a hand or tool without him: “I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil; I the Lord do all these things.” If souls want peace, God saith, “I create the fruit of the lips—peace.”\* If your mercy be all gone, he can produce more; for he is the Father of mercies. If your comforts be run out, he can create new; for he is “the God of all comfort.” He is never at a loss; his mercies are “new every morning,” renewed every moment. He that made the sea can command it to be dry; he that made fire, can forbid it to burn; he can make a whale to secure Jonah in a storm, and place him safe on dry land; he can cause lions to forbear their fierceness, that they shall not hurt his Daniels. O who would not acknowledge and serve such a God; see Isa. xliii. 12. Let all persons, especially the young, be sure of a covenant relation to him, and act faith in all cases upon him.

The fourth head consists of the reasons why persons must remember their Creator, or be seriously religious, in the days of their youth.

\* Isa. v. 5. liv. 16. xlv. 7, 8. lvii. 19.

The arguments I shall produce, shall be persuasive, as well as probative; drawn *ab æquo*, from its equity—*ab honesto*, from its honourable distinction—*à commodo*, from its advantage—*à periculo*, from the danger of neglecting it.

I. *Ab æquo*, from its equity: it is an equal, just, rational thing. Practical godliness is the most rational thing in the world; so saith the apostle Rom. xii. 1. The presenting of our bodies as a sacrifice to God, is called a “reasonable service;” it is most conformable to right reason, as,

1. It is most equitable, that the Supreme Being should have the choicest sacrifices devoted to him by all created beings. Those high intellectual spirits, the angels, are the chief, who are absolutely devoted to God. Next to them are rational beings, made a little lower than angels, and with respect to them, God deserves the very best of what they are or have. Now youth is, as it were, the male of the flock: Saul is called “a choice young man, and a goodly.”\* Surely such a one is fittest for God, who is worthy of the best men, best faculties, best time, and best days; for none is like unto him.

2. As God is our Creator, so it is equitable that he should have the best, the flower, cream, and quintessence of our time: this is the argument in the text, considered already. If a man make an instrument for his own use and service, it is fit he should have the best thereof. God made us for himself, O let him not have the devil's leavings! Ingenuousness should move you to gratify God your maker, proprietor, governor, and benefactor, with the first-fruits of your time, thoughts, and actions.

3. Jesus Christ redeemed the young. The promise is to believers and their seed: and if they be within the covenant, no doubt but they are redeemed. “Suffer little children,” saith our Lord, “to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of God.” If you be bought with a price, you are “not your own;” therefore must you “glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are his.”† If he bought you, you should be devoted to him betimes. Christ made haste into the world, he made haste to the cross to suffer for you; therefore you should make haste to devote yourselves to him: this is very reasonable. See Rom. xiv. 7—9. 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

4. It is very equitable, because you were devoted to God from your infancy. Your parents presented you to him in baptism; wherein you were dedicated to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, which was an enlisting of you as soldiers under his banner, when bounty-money was taken for you to fight his battles, and you were brought under allegiance to the King of hea-

\* 1 Sam. ix. 2.

† 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.

ven. Now turn not your backs upon him, but enter immediately into his service, and you shall have present pay. It is perjury, yea sacrilege, to renounce your baptism. Now make good what your parents promised on your behalf, be really holy, as you are federally holy. O for a nature according to your name! Look after internal, spiritual baptism, as well as that of water. You must be born again “of water and of the Spirit.” It is most reasonable that you answer the whole of this ordinance: water on your face will do you no good, without grace in your hearts.

II. An argument is fetched *ab honesto*, from the honourable distinction, respectability, and acceptableness of it.

1. Youth is most acceptable to God. It is observed, that in the Old Testament, God frequently chose the younger brethren: as Abel, Shem, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Ephraim, and David; for God delights in the young. A German divine saith: “God loves to be taken hold of by little hands.” Dr. Andrews saith: “The children’s hosannahs were as delightful melody in our Lord’s ears, as men’s hallelujahs.” Jesus loved his youngest disciple, John, best: and will not you seek to be most acceptable to our gracious God?

2. It is most desirable among men. Who will choose an old man for a servant? In Scripture, all persons that were fit to keep servants, had young men to wait on them. Abraham “took two of his young men with him:” this implies that most of his servants were young. They were young men that waited on David, Elisha, Boaz, and Jonathan: \* and God tells Israel, that their king will take their “goodliest young men for his work,” 1 Sam. viii. 16. Nebuchadnezzar chose out of the captives, “children in whom was no blemish, well favoured,—to stand in the king’s palace.” † Yea, it was so essential to a servant to be young, that, in the Hebrew, a lad and servant are expressed by the same word: and is it not decent, and very becoming that God should have young men to stand in his courts? this is an amiable sight indeed.

3. For young persons to be in God’s service is a kind of honour and ornament. It is a young person’s honour to be religious: this is a sparkling diamond in a gold ring. Youth is the golden age: grace is a precious pearl: and what greater preferment can a young gentleman have than to attend his prince? “Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable,” saith God. “The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour,” ‡ saith Solomon. Yea, this also reflects credit on religion. O what a noble sight was it, to see

\* Gen. xxii. 3. 1 Sam. xxi. 4. Ruth ii. 9.

† Dan. i. 3, 4.

‡ Isa. xlili. 4. Prov. xii. 26.

that brave company of two hundred and thirty-two in Ahab's army, that were "young men of the princes of the provinces," into whose hand God gave all the Syrian host. What a glorious appearance of divine power was it, to see little, young, ruddy David, return with the giant's head in his hand: it was a credit to the cause to see such a conqueror.\* Youth may be considered the sinews and ornament of a nation; young men are the beauty of our assemblies; "Children's children are the crown of old men."† O give honour to the "Ancient of days," by attending his royal throne in the prime of your age: honour the Lord with your first-fruits.

4. It is honourable, or of good report, among the saints and churches, to see young persons own God and his ways. The apostle saith, "Provide things honest in the sight of all men:" yea, saith he, "providing for honest things in the sight of the Lord:"‡ I pray God that ye do that which is honest. Now honest dealing, in these places, imports being irreprehensible, and unreprouable; not obnoxious to censures either of God or man: scandalize none, nor give any just offence, but allure others by your good example. O what a lovely thing is this in young men! To walk so justly, holily, and friendly to all, as to recommend godliness to others, and give them an occasion to glorify God, embrace, and run hand in hand with them in the way to heaven; that old men may be ashamed to be outstript in virtue by young people, and may be provoked by a holy emulation to haste after them. What an excellent thing it is, to see young men "blameless, and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, shining as lights in the world," Phil. ii. 15.

III. The next head of argument is drawn *à commodo*, from the advantage of being religious, and devoted to God in early life. There is a fourfold advantage in being religious in youth.

1. In younger days, persons are more pliable, and gentle, and more easily wrought upon, than when grown up. Take a piece of clay, fresh and newly brought out of the pit, it is more easily prepared for use and moulded, than when it is hardened by the sun: tender-hearted youth is more easily cast in a mould and stamped with new impressions than afterwards. If you take a young willow betimes, you may sooner bend it than when it is grown up:

Flexilis est juncus, salices flectuntur amaræ:  
Robora dura, minus.—————

Some have observed, that young persons have good feelings,

\* 1 Kings xx. 14, 15. 1 Sam. xvii. 33, 57.

† Prov. xvii. 6.

‡ Rom. xii. 17. 2 Cor. viii. 21.

many convictions, and if they wear out these, they are more rarely wrought upon. They take notice that betwixt the ages of fifteen and twenty, usually sinners are converted; if they pass the flower of this age, it is doubtful whether ever their souls be espoused to Jesus Christ. There are (*candida tempora*) fit and proper seasons for God's working; miss them, and you miss for ever. Who knows but this is "the accepted time," your "day of salvation?"\* God's Spirit will not always strive. Esau outlived his day, so may you; and woe be to you if your day of grace be past and gone.

2. What you get in your younger days will make more durable impression on your spirit. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it," Prov. xxii. 6. We see by experience the strength of education. What persons learn in childhood, grows up with them, and becomes a second nature: a vessel seasoned with any thing new will savour of it long after: if cloth be first dyed in the wool, it holds its colour. When David would have his countrymen skilful, he bade them teach the children the use of the bow: † they prove the best artists that learn their trade young. Thus it is in matters of religion: none are such experienced Christians, as they that set out young; these are they that are best acquainted with the mysteries of grace, the methods of Satan, the danger of sin, the deceits of the heart; these have been long trained up in Christ's school, and have got a holy custom of gracious practices, a habit has been thus acquired, by reason of use they have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. ‡

3. The scriptures distinguish with a high emphasis and encomium, such persons of all degrees, as have been religious in youth. It is very observable what an eminent character God gives of several young persons: the Holy Ghost noting not only their piety, but the age in which their piety manifested itself:—Isaac and Joseph were young patriarchs—Joshua and David, young commanders—Samson and Gideon, young judges—Solomon and Josiah, young kings—Mephibosheth and Abijah, young princes—Chimham and Obadiah, young courtiers—Samuel, Daniel, and Jeremiah, young prophets—Elisha and Baruch, pious attendants on aged prophets—Elihu and Heman, amongst the wise men—Paul and John, young among the apostles—Timothy and Titus, young evangelists—Ruth and Anna, young widows eminent for piety—Philip's daughters, prophetesses, who were virgins: and many more, husbands, wives, children, servants, rich and poor might be produced; and they

\* 2 Cor. vi. 2.

† 2 Sam. i. 18.

‡ Heb. v. 14.

proved most eminent in their advanced age, who remembered God most affectionately in their youth. Behold a cloud of witnesses, go ye and do likewise: "Do thou worthily in Ephratah, and be famous in Bethlehem," Ruth iv. 11.

4. The remembering and acknowledging of God in youth, will be great satisfaction in old age. O what joy will reflection upon youthful piety yield! Even Seneca a heathen could say, "youth well spent is the greatest comfort of old age."\* David could confidently plead with God for deliverance out of the hand of the wicked, "For," saith he, "thou art my hope, O Lord God, thou art my trust from my youth," Psal. lxxi. 5, 6. Then he could plead with confidence, "Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth," ver. 9; see also ver. 17, 18. An ingenuous master, will not turn off a superannuated servant. When the proconsul bade Polycarp deny Christ and swear by the emperor, he answered, 'I have served Christ these eighty-six years, and he hath not once injured me, and shall I now deny him?' Jacob could say, "God hath fed me all my life long unto this day;"† he hath been kind to me all my days, and I trust he will look to me even to the end; and shall I now turn my back on him? Whither can I go to mend myself for a master? "Thou only hast the words of eternal life."‡ He that hath been the stay of my youth, will be the staff of my age? I dare venture my soul upon his promise, who hath hitherto maintained me by his providence. "In the days of my youth, the secret of God was upon my tabernacle, his candle did shine upon my head, and by his light I walked through darkness;" and though now "the sun, and the light, and moon and stars be darkened," in this my natural horizon, yet "the Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?" "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me."|| I have abundant experience of his grace and presence. O the days of mercy I have had many years ago! A good man said, "I got that in my youth, which I would not for all the world have to get now."

IV. The last head of arguments is fetched, *à periculo*, from the danger of neglecting to remember our Creator in the days of our youth. There is a twofold danger to which young persons are exposed.

First, Young persons, more than others, have many difficulties to break through, that they may sincerely be religious and duly think of God. I shall hint at a few:

\* Optimum senectutis solatium, bene transacta juvenitus. † Gen. xlviii. 15.  
‡ John vi. 68. || Job xxix. 4. Eccl. xii. 2. Psal. xxvii. 1. xxiii. 4.

1. Original sin begins working betimes. Man is not an unblotted paper, *rasa tabula*, that you may write what you will on, as Aristotle dreamed; nor doth he learn evil by example only, as Socinus maintained; but “the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth:” yea, wicked and estranged from the womb; “he goes astray as soon as he is born speaking lies.” “Vain man would be wise, though he be born like the wild ass’s colt.”\* This root sprouts early; this spring diffuseth itself in many streams, and soon overflows all the banks, and breaks the bounds of modesty; so that without the grace of God restraining or renewing, it is not to tell what a height of shamelessness in sinning young men may arrive at, as Newgate and Tyburn have testified. You need the antidote of grace, to guard you from this infectious disease.

2. The nature and character of youth, call for this more than at any other period of life; it is an age exposed to many falls and slips. Of its own nature it is a light, trifling, and inconstant age, and therefore needs the counterbalance of grace; it is quickly hurried away with wind and tide, and hence ballast is necessary. Youth is a slippery, glassy age, as the word used Psal. cxix. 9, signifies; it is like quicksilver, and therefore requires the grace of God to settle and establish it. It is a fervid age, so the Greek word for youth imports, and has occasion for a cooler to quench the flame of passion. It is a dark age, and so the word signifies Eccl. xi. 10; therefore wants light, both within and without, to guide it into and in the way of truth. Methinks a young man setting out in the world without grace, is as a ship proceeding to sea without pilot, victualling, masts, or rigging, which lies at the mercy of the winds and waves, and is quickly split on rocks, or driven on sands.

3. The temptations with which youth is assailed from Satan, vain company, &c. make this duty most necessary. The devil and his instruments do what they can to deprave and pervert youth. It is recorded of a philosopher, that he had spent forty years to corrupt youth. They say, “Cast in thy lot among us, let us all have one purse.” O what insinuating tricks of legerdemain have sinners! As it is said of the harlot, “With her much fair speech, she causeth him (that is, the young man) to yield; with the flattering of her lips, she forced him.”† They must be devoutly churlish that can resist her rhetoric. Satan and his agents, lay their strongest siege against virgin souls; their main design is to corrupt and poison these springs. Thus swindlers entangle a young heir in their gambling scenes; drunkards study to debauch youth, and, when they have done

\* Gen. viii. 21. Psal. lviii. 3. Job xi. 12. † Prov. i. 14. vii. 21.

it, glory in the conquest and accomplishment of their enterprise : and many times it is an easy victory. Youth is tinder, to catch sparks of temptation : you need a cover for the barrel of gunpowder. O what necessity of a fence, to keep off such bold intruders ! That fence is the fear of the Lord, the remembrance of our Creator.

4. The ingenious and wily shifts and excuses, which young persons are apt to invent for the purpose of resisting, or at least, delaying this great concern, make the minding of our Creator more necessary. It cannot be told what strange reasonings are framed in the witty heads and wicked hearts of young people, to evade plain duty. Tush, say they, youth will have its fling. I must sow my wild oats. Would you have young people like old, sage, grave persons ? That would be ridiculous. I have all the world before me, I have room enough to mend, I hope to be better in a little time ; sudden changes are dangerous, I am not so far gone yet, but I may be better. Have not old people had their youthful frolics ? Such an honest man was but so and so, when he was young. Many an unhappy lad makes a good man, and many a sober, stayed youth hath fallen into intemperance in old age ; as the proverb is, young saint—old devil. There are many demure youths that pretend piety, but they are no better than their neighbours. I am no hypocrite, I am what I seem, I scorn to seem one thing and be another, as I see some do. Such language as this, the devil and a wicked heart invent, to gull and beguile young men. The Lord open their eyes to see the fallaciousness of this arguing. Will this language be approved at the great day ? Is this suitable to God's word, by which thou must be judged ? Canst thou not answer this thyself ? Wilt thou stand by it in a sober mood ? There is nothing more common amongst libertine youths, than thus to evade good counsel, and harden themselves in sin : but the remembrance of God in youth will abundantly answer all these vain cavils, and prevail against these apologies. This is a great difficulty which young men have to encounter, which will put them hard to it, and nothing but serious godliness can be effectual for its counteraction.

Secondly, As young men have many difficulties in their way, they are also in apparent hazard, if they do not sincerely remember their Creator. For consider,

1. You grow worse and harder daily. Your minds are more corrupt, your wills more obstinate, your consciences more callous, (it is well if they do not become seared,) and your affections more extravagant. Every act of sin strengthens the

habit: custom in sin takes away conscience, and the disease may grow invincible: "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil."\* A callous hardness grows on the foot with much travelling. Sin will grow bold, and stupidity seizes gradually on all the faculties. Repentance becomes daily more difficult: he that will not repent to-day, will be less inclined to-morrow.† Disuse to holy exercises makes them appear a harder service; the further you go in sin, the greater space you have to return back; you are daily making yourselves work. Who would ravel yarn, which they must unravel again with more trouble? God Almighty awake your spirits.

2. You daily grieve the hearts of your parents and pious relations, and that is a grieving of the Spirit of God: they pray for you, counsel, admonish, and endeavour to persuade you; they weep over you, and cannot prevail; if ever you repent, these pains they take will be as stings in your souls, to wound you with remorse; if you do not, they will be as faggots to scorch you with flames of everlasting fire, and your parents will be brought in as evidence against you, yea, your dearest friends on earth will approve the execution of justice. I have heard of a tender-hearted, indulgent mother, that had a dissolute son; being greatly afflicted with some outrageous villany which he had committed, she spoke thus to him: "Ah, my poor graceless son, thou hast been a great grief of heart to me, but the day is coming, when I shall triumph in vengeance being executed for ever upon thy forlorn soul." This was spoken with so much earnestness by a mother, of whose strong affection he had so much experience, that it wrought trembling in his spirit, and from that time he became a new man. Oh that this were considered of! a day of reckoning is coming, wherein the recollection of parents' groans will produce horror.

3. You are daily losing a world of comfort, and heaping up sin, guilt, and shame, for future time. Little do you know what sweetness you fail of enjoying in the ways of God; for "wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and her paths are peace."‡ This made the convert Augustine cry out, Too late have I loved thee, O Lord, too late have I loved thee. || O what a pity it is to have lost that pleasure I might have had in this course! On the contrary, you are daily treasuring up wrath by filling your souls with guilt; and I will assure you, the sad remembrance of youthful vanities will fill your souls with bitter grief. Oh the worm of conscience you are feeding,

\* Jer. xiii. 23.

‡ Prov. iii. 17.

† Qui non vult hodie, cras minus aptus erit.

|| Serò te amavi, Domine, serò te amavi.

the sting that you are preparing ! That will be a dreadful day, when you shall be forced to possess the iniquities of your youth ; yea, when your very bones will be full of the sins of your youth : old strains will now be felt to purpose. Youthful sins cause fearful pangs in decrepid old age. Preventing physic is better than that which cures ; for in the latter there is more pain and hazard. What madmen are they that make wounds in their flesh, (like mountebanks) to try the sovereignty of their balsam ! Surely such experience is the mistress of fools, especially since it is a great hazard whether you will repent or not, for it is a great peradventure, whether God will give you repentance. \* Oh therefore defer not application another day.

4. Your day is passing away apace: you are dying creatures. There is a time to be born, and a time to die : the time of life is not worth reckoning on, we quickly rise, then fall. Man cometh forth as a flower, and is cut down ; in the morning it flourisheth and groweth up, in the evening it is cut down and withereth : no mention made of noon : thousands drop away in their minority or youth, and never arrive at old age. Your times are in God's hands, not in yours : † how quickly can God spurn you off the stage of this world, and lay you in the silent dust : you may never arrive at old age. What you do, do quickly : to-day if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts : now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation : oh that you knew the day of your visitation ! seek him while he may be found, call upon him while he is near : ‡ put not God off any longer : give him the prime of your days . let the time past of your lives suffice to have wrought the will of the flesh : || you have time little enough behind, yea, less probably than you are aware of ; if you reckon on many years to come, God may say, Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee. § You build castles in the air, if you imagine you shall certainly come to old age. But suppose you should live to old age, the words of my text describe it as consisting of evil days and years, when you shall say, I have no pleasure in them. It is a pity the best of your days should be spent in the devil's drudgery, and that God should be put off with your tottering age, as if you should keep your horses idle in the days of their strength, and begin to use them when lame and enfeebled with years ; or keep your garments till old and moth-eaten, and then begin to wear them ; or keep your meat till it be spoiled and fit to cast to dogs, and then think of using it. Alas ! sirs, old

\* 2 Tim. ii. 25.

‡ Psalm xc. 7, 8. 2 Cor. vi. 2.

|| 1 Pet. iv. 3, 4.

† Job xiv. 2. Psalm xc. 6. xxxi. 15.

Luke xix. 42, 44. Isa. lv. 6, 7.

§ Luke xii. 20.

age is an unfit time to commence the great affairs of repentance, faith, humiliation for sin, and mortification of sin; at least, it will be late to seek them, when you should have the benefit of them; that will be a time of spending, not of getting grace. You will find it hard to exercise grace in this evil time of old age or sickness. Evil days these are called, because they bring many troubles with them; they form the winter of life, for it is a frozen, stormy season, and will exhaust all that was gotten in the summer of youth. When infirmities bend thy back, do not keep thine iniquities to break it: how canst thou get thy eyes opened to see spiritual objects, when the sun of thy reason is darkened? Alas, what a dull scholar wilt thou be, when thou hast lost the light of perspicacity, the moon of thy memory, the stars of thy judgment and fancy! What comfort canst thou take in gaining knowledge, when thou hast no joy of thy life? Alas! the severe usurer, death, will exact for loan some part or other of thy goods, a sense, one day—a limb, another, so that thou shalt be forced to die daily to nature, who wouldst not die spiritually to sin. How canst thou keep thyself, when the keepers of thy house tremble? A benumbing palsy seizing on thy hands and arms,—how wilt thou go upright in the ways of God, when thy legs and thighs falter and shrink under the weight of guilt, and the strong men bow themselves? How canst thou eat thy spiritual meat, when the grinders cease, and thy appetite is decayed? O trust not in an arm of flesh, but see to it, that everlasting arms be under you; get an interest in the favour of that God, who is eyes to the blind, feet to the lame, support to the fainting. O learn to pray: embrace and profess Christ, before the doors be shut in the streets, and you be quite unhinged, so that your lips cannot readily do their office in shewing forth God's praise. Your hearing will grow defective; the very chirping of birds will be a disturbance, and you will take little delight in the most pleasant music. O young men, then, open all the doors of your hearts to let in Christ, that in old age he may be with you; when appetite fails, he will sup with you, and you with him; when sleep faileth, he will be rest to your souls; when you can take no satisfaction in any thing, a good conscience will be a continual feast, this will furnish songs in the night;\* instead of fears in the way, or fearing what is high falling, you shall have a guard of angels, no occasion of stumbling, and walk in your way safely.† And when the almond-tree flourisheth, your gray hairs shall be a crown of glory, being found in the way of righteous-

\* Rev. iii. 20. Psal. cxvi. 7. Prov. xv. 15. Job xxxv. 10.

† Psal. xci. 11. 1 John ii. 10. Prov. iii. 23—26.

ness; when the grasshopper is a burden, God will ease you of the burden of guilt, the greatest evil; when natural desires fail, your spiritual desires shall be strong, and your last shall be more than your first.

Thus I have despatched the doctrinal part of this subject, which being practical, I shall have less need to enlarge in the application.

First, This subject is calculated to produce conviction and lamentation,

1. In them that oppose and discourage the young when they become seriously disposed, by doing what they can to hinder them from remembering their Creator. What! (say some who have become old,) must we have these green-heads old before their time? what a noise do these raw lads make about religion! they may have a good intention, but are rash and simple, forward and giddy-headed, and run before their betters: what! will they condemn all others? shall we be accounted by them old, doting fools? we are sure of *their* folly. I like not this hasty forwardness, saith one, soon ripe, soon rotten, young saint, old devil, this is but a flash, they will soon become sober on it; yea, they will tire and fag presently, nothing violent is permanent; I have seen many as forward in setting out, but they have soon become jaded and turned back. However, saith another, I love not to see young people like old folks, meddling with matters too high for them; such studies will crack their brains, make them melancholy or mad, it dulls their spirits, so that they will never make any figure, but are always poring over a book; I love to see young men sprightly and active. Thus some parents and masters discourage their children and servants from the duty recommended in the passage under consideration; and drive them from God, doing what they can to make them Satan's slaves, and more children of wrath than they were by nature. Some even take bibles and good books out of their children's hands, and put into their hands romances and plays. Ah cruel parents! ah wicked masters, tutors, and governors! either you dispirit them and drive them from God, or you do not; if you do, will it be any comfort to you to have them call for vengeance upon you in hell? Surely the sight of them in that devouring fire will not relieve but torment you, when you reflect on yourselves as instruments to drag or drive them thither. Oh merciless parents! that are reluctant to have your children happy, and rejoice to see them miserable!—But if you do not discourage them, or keep them from God and his ways, will they not still be witnesses against you? how could you bear their challenges? and what will become of

you, when their sighs and groans will rise up in judgment against you? yea, and will it not be an overwhelming sight to perceive those whom you have disregarded, sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and yourselves, the children of the kingdom, church members perhaps, shut out into outer darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth? \* that is, at your own egregious folly, which would neither enter in yourselves, nor suffer them to enter, if you could have hindered them; your case is very dreadful, for,

(1.) You are of the spirit of the chief priests, who hearing the children cry in the temple, Hosanna to the Son of David, were sore displeased, and would have had their mouths shut; or of Festus's spirit who said to Paul, "much learning doth make thee mad." †

(2.) Do not you bring upon yourselves by offending one of these little ones that believe in Christ, that terrible woe, "it were better that a millstone were hanged about your neck, and you drowned in the depth of the sea?" ‡

(3.) Do not you act the devil's part, and become as he is, accusers of the brethren, and opposers of true godliness?

(4.) Do not you come near the unpardonable sin, that blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, which shall never be forgiven? I say not, you have committed it, but you are in the high road to it, when you oppose the known truth, and your consciences cannot but bear witness against you that these young people are better than yourselves, and therefore you dislike them and say, they make themselves singular. Well, so must a child of God be: what do you more than others, saith our Saviour, or what singular thing do ye? You say, but they are more precise than wise. I answer, they are commanded to walk circumspectly or accurately. || You say, but they are gloomy, we would have them merry. I answer, but God would have them go to the house of mourning, and tells us, some sorrow is better than laughter; § for by the sadness of the countenance, the heart is made better: besides, they have a more solid joy, than your giggling laughter. If you say, you love not to see the young so sober and grave; I say, in that you are contrary to God, who saith, young men exhort to be sober-minded; if you say, they will soon have done; I answer, how know you that? If it be of God you cannot overthrow it, and perhaps you may be found, even to fight against God; ¶ be it known unto you, that saving grace is not a mere flash of zeal, but an abiding principle, which God is engaged to maintain, and we may be

\* Matt. viii. 11, 12. † Matt. xxi. 15, 16. Acts xxvi. 24. ‡ Matt. xviii. 6. || Matt. v. 47. Ephes. v. 15. § Eccles. vii. 2—4. ¶ Tit. ii. 6. Acts v. 39.

confident of this very thing, that "he that hath begun a good work in them will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ," Phil. i. 6.

2. This consideration falls heavily on dissolute and profligate young men. Alas, for the carnal youth of our assemblies! All men come into this world with their backs turned upon God; the wicked are estranged from the womb, they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies; \* and till converting grace change their hearts, they will wander all their days, and perish at last: most part of their time is spent before they know where they are, or what they came into the world for. Poor creatures get hold of sin, and draw it with cords of vanity, and are held fast with the cords of their own iniquity; † yea, which is worse, some slide back by a perpetual backsliding, they hold fast deceit and refuse to return. How careless are most young persons! there are many sins peculiar to youth, as *ignorance*, "we were but of yesterday, and know nothing," Job viii. 9.—*inconsiderate rashness*, Simeon and Levi, Gen. xxxiv. 25.—*envy*, Joshua, a young man said, "My lord Moses, forbid them," Numb. xi. 28.—*pride*, "the child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient," Isa. iii. 5.—*ambition*, Absalom and Adonijah—*error*, Judges xvii. 11, 12.—*prodigality*, Luke xv.—*sensuality*, Shechem, Amnon, and the prodigal—*inconstancy*, Eph. iv. 14, "children tossed to and fro"—*obstinacy*, Eli's sons "hearkened not to the voice of their father, because the Lord would slay them," 1 Sam. ii. 25. These and many others are the sins of young people, to which they are most inclined, and into which they are most apt to run, except restraining or renewing grace change or stop them. And O how easily are the young overtaken with sin! for they cannot foresee the consequences thereof, nor keep out of the ways of transgression; they are even apt to presume on a long day for repentance; as children, they cannot refuse the evil, and choose the good; as children, they are unskilful in the word of righteousness, and very ignorant, and therefore Paul saith, "While I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child." ‡ Youth, which is the next step from childhood, is oft little better, sometimes much worse. O how many errors are there in this second paragraph of life! God Almighty humble your hearts under them, and teach you to avoid them. Even sanctified young men may slip into sin: though Timothy was a picture of mortification, yet Paul thinks it needful to say, "Flee youthful lusts." || There are some lusts that dog youth

\* Psalm lviii. 3.

† Isa. vii. 15. Heb. v. 14. 1 Cor. xiii. 11.

‡ Isa. v. 13. Prov. v. 22.

|| 2 Tim. ii. 22.

at the heels more than at any other age. Oh how many young men run into extravagancies in these days; could I speak or write to our volatile youth, I would ask these questions:—

(1.) Can you think your jovial days will always last? No, no; the wise man makes an ironical concession: Eccles. xi. 9, “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.” O brave, saith the vain young man, this I would be at, this merry life I like well, I will cast away cares and sing away sorrows, this will be delightful: but hark, youth, after revelling comes a doleful reckoning, read on: “But know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.” Thou must pay dear for this folly, God will not let thee go scot-free, thy sweet meat must have sour sauce, thy pleasant cups will be succeeded by exposure to fire and brimstone, thy unseemly laughter will be echoed with gnashing of teeth: “woe unto you that laugh now, for ye shall mourn and weep,”\* saith truth itself: your wild oats will prove to have a sad harvest—if you sow the wind, you will reap the whirlwind. Prodigality ends in penury, the prodigal son would be glad of husks with swine; the rich glutton’s sumptuous fare was followed with the want of a drop of water to cool his tongue.†

(2.) May you not shorten your days by your own folly and frolics? How many have by sin cut off themselves from the land of the living? Jehu’s chariot is soon broken to pieces: the sun of young gallants soon sets. There is a promise of long life to such as obey God’s commands, and a threatening that evil doers shall be cut off; they shall be as the fat of lambs, consuming in smoke.‡ Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days, that is, which they might have lived according to the course of nature, or which they promised to themselves. God threatens old Eli’s sinning posterity, that they shall die in the flower of their age: this is a sore judgment. The Hebrews call immature death (כרת, excidium) a slaughter, when men die betwixt 20 and 60, or as some say, before they reach 30. Oh how many have gone off the stage before that time! How many young men have we seen waste their spirits by lewd practices, and exhaust their radical moisture by excess and intemperance, that might have lived longer if they had sinned less. “Be not over-much wicked,” saith the wise man, “neither be thou foolish: why shouldst thou die before thy time?”|| not that he would connive at a moderation in sinning, for all sin is an excess; but let not loose the reins to licentiousness,

\* Luke vi. 25.

† Luke xv. 16. xvi. 19, 24.

‡ Psalm xxxvii. 20.

|| 1 Sam. ii. 33. Eccles. vii. 16.

because "a wicked man may prolong his life in his wickedness," for thou mayest accelerate death by sin, and dig thine own grave. Oh how many have stabbed themselves to the heart! and cut their own throats! a *felo-de-se* that should be staked through and buried in a cross way, as a token of perpetual infamy; but our young gallants are honourably interred with a funeral encomium, though they were self-murderers: but God judgeth righteously, and amongst good men these fond youngsters will be branded with folly; they are the devil's martyrs, and would rather ride post to hell, than creep on their knees to heaven. God Almighty pity these forlorn creatures that have no pity on themselves, either souls or bodies. What, if one should say to you what formed the posey of a ring, as it is said, given to a vain young knight, "Drink and die," to whom it happened accordingly, would not this daunt you? What, if it be said, the next time thou art guilty of lewdness, thou shalt be taken like Zimri and Cosbi, and thrust through, wouldst thou hazard such a termination of life? What, if the next time thou swearest, or tellest a lie, or takest God's name in vain, thou be struck down dead, would not this affright thee? But how many astonishing instances hast thou before thine eyes, of the woful death of profligate youths? and will nothing prevail? Remember Prov. xxix. 1, "He that being often reprov'd, and hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."

(3.) Are you too strong for God to deal with? God can tame the wildest prodigal: he hath a long arm to reach you, a strong arm to conquer you. You can deal well enough with ministers, parents, christian friends, or even magistrates that should punish you, either you can dissemble before them, or outrun them, or hector them down; but "can thy heart endure, or can thy hands be strong in the day that God shall deal with thee?" the Lord has spoken it, and he will do it. "He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength: who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered?" "Do men provoke the Lord to jealousy? are they stronger than he?"\* Where is aspiring Nimrod, or stubborn Pharaoh, or vain Nebuchadnezzar, or ambitious Herod, or cruel Nero, or daring Julian? What is become of the persecuting emperors or usurping tyrants, that would needs pull God out of his throne, and mount into it themselves? Their bodies are in the silent dust, and their souls amidst the torments of hell. The scripture saith, "They are gone down to hell with their weapons of war; they have laid their swords under their heads, but their iniquities are upon their bones, though they were the

\* Ezek. xxii. 14. Job ix. 4. 1 Cor. x. 22.

terror of the mighty in the land of the living." I may say as the Lord saith to Nineveh, "Art thou better than populous No?"\* or art thou more rich than Cræsus? or more potent than Xerxes with an army of a million of men? or more resolute than Alexander, Cæsar, or Pompey? Alas, "what can you do in the day of visitation, or in the desolation that shall come from far? to whom will you flee for help? and where will you leave your glory?"† How soon can the infinite God crush such worms under his foot, and spurn you to the abodes of misery? you are no adequate matches for the omnipotent God.

(4.) May not your hearts or God's ear be shut? so that either you cannot repent, or God will not accept your repentance. Alas, sirs, your hearts are every day hardening like the hoof of an animal with travelling; you are as a smith's iron under the hammer, every blow increases its hardness, or as the high way padded hard with treading on it. Your hearts are every day hardening through the deceitfulness of sin; if you will not repent to-day, you will be less inclined to-morrow; "to-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts;"‡ as if it were said, if ever you intend to comply with God's mind, oh do it now, or else your hearts will be more hardened to your ruin, or God's ear may be turned from you; he may say, "Because I have called, and ye refused,—you shall call upon me, but I will not answer; you shall seek me early, but shall not find me." He gave you space to repent, and you repented not; therefore he may justly leave you in a bed of security, or cast you into a bed of calamity. || God gives repentance, and if you have long neglected his grace, he may cease striving with you, and woe unto you when he departs from you: you may outlive your day, and oh the doleful ease of such as have spent their day of grace! Study Esau's case, Heb. xii. 17, "For ye know, how that afterwards, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place of repentance, (in the margin, no way to change his mind, his father's mind,) though he sought it carefully with tears." O distressing state, miserable condition! The door may be shut, the portecullis let down, the gulf fixed, and your souls irrecoverably lost, and then woe be to you.

3. This conviction will fall heavily on some parents, masters, tutors, or guardians, who have the charge of educating youth, who do not put them in mind of this duty, to remember their Creator. Alas, this is for a lamentation; young stripplings marry wives, and have children, before they are qualified to teach them any thing but childish toys, games, sports, and

\* Ezek. xxxii. 27. Nahum iii. 8.

† Heb. iii. 13. Psalm xc. 7, 8.

‡ Isa. x. 3.

|| Prov. i. 24—28. Rev. ii. 21, 22.

so become childish playfellows, rather than grave parents, or gracious patterns of their poor offspring. O miserable church, that have no fitter persons to instruct others, than such as want instruction themselves! In the primitive church, such persons were kept among the catechumens, to be trained up for God in the essentials of the christian religion; but now children are as princes, and babes rule over some families, if not in age, yet in knowledge: \* this is a judgment, and the hidden, unseen cause of many open abominations, and much horrible atheism. If the gardener neglect his garden, weeds will spring up: vice needs not to be planted, the soil is fruitful enough in the wild fruits of darkness: if men neglect to sow good seed, the devil will not fail to sow tares. Oh what numerous instances have we of the sad fruit of neglected education! simple ignorance in youth, becomes affected ignorance in age; blushing sins in children, if not corrected, become impudent sins in age; brutish children become diabolists. † Oh what a cutting wound that must be to a father's heart, whose son's life tells his conscience, what a graceless son once spake in words to his guilty father, "If I have done evil, I have learnt it of you." ‡ Consider,

(1.) You have been instruments to give your children a miserable existence. Alas, they were born blind, they are the devil's slaves, children of wrath by nature, and though you cannot make them good, why will you not lament over them, and endeavour after their good?

(2.) You have them in their tender years, wherein you have more advantage over them. Men prune plants, break horses, train up hawks to the lure, when young; irrational creatures feed their young till they can seize prey on their own wing; if you do not the like, you are more irrational, you miss your season.

(3.) They will take more notice of you than others. Your authority over them, will add an emphasis to your admonitions: children have a natural reverence for parents. Men are very tenacious of that which is (*πατρὸπάράδοτον*) delivered to them by their parents. Let cloth be dyed in wool, not in the web, the colour will be more lively and durable. How apt will children be to say, The minister speaks out of spleen, and what has he to do with me? but they have experience of parents' affection, and know their authority, and will more easily submit. O why should you lose these golden hours?

(4.) How unlike are you to the pious parents in scripture? all the patriarchs of old taught their families. Abraham would command his children and household to keep God's ways. Joshua resolves that he and his house would serve God. Solo-

\* Isa. iii. 4.

† Job xxx. 7, 8.

‡ Si malè feci, à te didici.

mon's father taught him, and he teacheth his children to keep God's commandments and live.\* Timothy's grandmother Lois, and mother Eunice had trained him up from a child in a knowledge of the holy scriptures, and you are far from the frame of God's children, if you neglect this.

(5.) You flatly disobey a divine command : "train up a child in the way he should go;" "bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord;" this is that which God established as a testimony in Jacob, and appointed as a law in Israel, that they should make them known to their children ; † and dare you live in the wilful neglect of a divine command ?

(6.) Common humanity will rise up against you. Have you no love to the offspring of your own loins ? are you become cruel like the ostriches in the wilderness ? † cruel to their souls, their better part ? what ! will you care and care to get food and raiment for their dying bodies, and have you no regard for their never-dying souls ? O merciless parents, that will not speak a word to save them from hell !

(7.) How will the wretched children of profane or negligent parents, reprobate them in hell, and curse the day that ever they were born of such cruel parents ? O the doleful cries of your lost children will ring confounding notes in your ears ! Ah guilty and miserable father ! ah cruel mother ! that would never speak one word to prevent my falling into this place of torments, or help me up towards heavenly felicity ; nay, your bad example and wilful neglect drew me into this eternal misery ; you had time enough, and motives enow to persuade you to your duty, had you warned me while my heart was tender, and affections pliable, you had delivered your own souls and me from this scene of woe ; it was as easy for you to have put a Bible, as a play or a novel, into my hands ; to have corrected me for sinning, as for offending you about a trifle ; one word in season might have saved my poor soul : but the day is past, you and I are to smart here for our folly together, to all eternity. Oh what gnashing of teeth will this cause against each other, and against themselves for ever !

You will say, what would you have us to do for our children ? I answer,

(1.) Instruct them in the main principles of religion, teach them catechisms, inculcate practical truths, the immortality of their souls, their woful state by nature, the necessity of conversion, the excellency of Christ, the nature of saving faith and repentance, the use of the sacraments, the importance of eternity, the great end of their lives, the account they must

\* Gen. xviii. 19. Josh. xxiv. 15. Prov. iv. 4.

† Prov. xxii. 6. Ephes. vi. 4. Psalm lxxviii. 4—6.

‡ Lam. iv. 3.

give, the necessity of preparing for death, &c.; familiarize these things to them, and enforce them by your affectionate entreaties to regard them.

(2.) Teach them by your practice: let your lives be a lively comment on your rules, they will take more notice of what you do, than what you say; children are apish imitators of parents, examples are cogent arguments; say as Gideon, "look on me, and do likewise;"\* let them never see you do any thing that you would not see them do, commend religion to them by your own experience, say, taste and see that the Lord is good, try God's ways, and you will find, as I have found, that his paths drop fatness.

(3.) Correct them when they need it. A child differs nothing from a servant, he is of a servile spirit, and must be kept in awe; you must chasten him betimes, and while there is hope, before his sinfulness grow up into stubbornness, and he be past dealing with. "Withhold not correction from the child, for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die; thou shalt beat him with the rod, and deliver his soul from hell."†

(4.) Pray over them, follow your instructions, examples, corrections, with earnest supplications. Alas, all your doings will not avail, without God's grace and blessing to second all; you cannot prevail, but God can; pour out your souls with them and for them. "O that Ishmael might live before thee!"‡ You lose all your labour without divine concurrence; he only can water the seed that you sow, and make it spring up; he must strike with the great hammer; he who must teach and reach their hearts, sits in heaven: plead the covenant for them, and put them daily into God's hands, if you would see them do well.

But this is not pertinent to my design; I shall therefore return to young people.

Secondly, Exhortation and instruction may be suggested to young people, by the doctrine of the text. Be sure you take the wise man's advice, to "remember your Creator now in the days of your youth." I need not repeat the arguments already advanced, nor add new ones. Enough has been said to convince the judgment of the equity, the honour, and the advantage attending this course, and danger of the contrary. And you may reflect upon the import of this word, remember; how you may use your memory aright for promoting religion; wherein remembering our Creator hath influence on practical godliness. I refer you to what has been said on these things. All I shall yet further add, is to lay down some practical directions proper

\* Judges vii. 17.

† Gal. iv. 1. Prov. xiii. 24. xix. 18. xxiii. 13, 14.

‡ Gen. xvii. 18.

for young persons entering upon the stage of this world, and launching into this tumultuous ocean, that they may steer their course aright to the haven of eternal rest, in these twenty particulars :—

1. Remember your pedigree. Whatever respectable or noble blood you derive from your ancestors, yet your blood is tainted, you are the degenerate offspring of father Adam. You were in his loins, and sinned in him, and are fallen from God by his sin. God planted you a noble vine, wholly a right seed, but you are turned into a degenerate plant of a strange vine unto him. God made us upright, but we have sought out many inventions. \* Whatever beauty is on your natural face, sin has marred the face of your souls; whatever escutcheons blazon your arms, be sure you have lost God's image; though you may derive your family from honourable progenitors, yet know it, your father was an Amorite, and your mother a Hittite; you were conceived in sin, and are by nature children of wrath; † it becomes you to know your origin, that you may be ashamed and vile in your own eyes.

2. Look after regeneration. You need a sanctifying change, corruption cannot inherit incorruption, therefore you must bear the image of the heavenly Adam. You must be partakers of the first resurrection, and second birth, or never think of going to heaven. However amiable you are, you must be new creatures; though you may have kind natures, yet you must be partakers of a divine nature; ‡ though you should derive your pedigree from the stock of ancient kings, yet unless God be your Father, and Jerusalem above be your mother, you are spurious and can never inherit the kingdom of God. You may be respectable to the outward view, but your souls must be cast in another mould, or cast to devils who once were better than you are. || Your old state must be renewed, and a new visage put on the face of your souls, or God will not know or own you: rest not content without it, pray, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." §

3. Bind yourselves apprentices. You are already under bonds, even from your infancy; your parents dedicated you to God by baptism, you then took bounty-money to be Christ's soldiers. Confirm that vow now; let it appear you are not forced disciples, but volunteers in God's service; take the oath of allegiance to him; renew your baptismal covenant; take Father,

\* Rom. v. 12. Jer. ii. 21. Eccles. vii. 29.

† Ezek. xvi. 3, 4. Psalm li. 5. Ephes. ii. 3.

‡ 1 Cor. xv. 45—50. Rev. xx. 6. John iii. 3. 2 Cor. v. 17. 2 Pet. i. 4.

|| Gal. iv. 26. Rom. vi. 17. § Psalm li. 10.

Son, and Holy Ghost to be your God; give up yourselves to him; say, I am the Lord's, thy servant, O Lord, thy servant am I.\* This is the best bargain you can make, this consecrates all other bargains; yea, makes all comforts and crosses to become to you great blessings.

4. Get a good stock for commencement: he that begins the world with a small stock is always under his business: a lawyer must be long a student in the theory, before he be a practitioner; so a physician or a divine: it is true, practice will improve men's skill, but that is a pitiful, jejune person, who hath not laid in something preparatory to practice; as a Christian, you must lay in a good stock of truths and graces, in opposition to the ignorance and corruption which you brought into the world; without knowledge, your hearts are not good, and you will get no good by any thing you see, read, or hear; for all things should be reduced to the analogy of faith. † O therefore run to and fro to increase knowledge, read the scriptures, procure the best commentaries on them, write sermons, meditate on them, ask questions, get resolution of them, learn catechisms, study the fundamentals of Christianity. As old a doctor as Luther was, he confesses, that when he looked not over catechetical points, he was the worse for it; these are as bread and salt, always to be set before you, as the alphabet or grammar, still to be used; only be sincere in all; let integrity be at the bottom, and proficiency will advance.

5. Husband well; I mean not so directly, money and goods, (though if you waste not, you will not want,) but principally your time and talents; twice was this counsel written from the metropolis of the Roman empire—*redeeming the time*. ‡ Waste no time in the beginning of your lives, lest you want it in the end: amongst all those twenty-eight times, mentioned by Solomon, Eccles. iii. there is no mention of a time to cast away time; no, it is too precious a commodity to be undervalued. God forbid, you should throw it at your heels; this is the golden chain on which hangs a massy eternity; the loss of time is unsufferable, because irrecoverable. Heaven and hell depend on the improvement or non-improvement of a short time in this world; God forbid, you should say of your day of life, as Titus, of a natural day, O my friends, I have lost a day; || but fill up the vacancies of each day with some business for earth or heaven; spend no day without drawing some line for eternity. You need no pastimes to hasten time away, it posts fast enough;

\* Matt. xxviii. 19. Isa. xlv. 5. Psalm cxvi. 16.

† Prov. xix. 2. Rom. xii. 6.

‡ Ephes. v. 16. Col. iv. 5.

|| Amici, diem perdididi.

you cannot call back an hour, and if you be fishes taken in an evil net, your misery will be great upon you.\* Remember, time is a precious liquid in a brittle glass; O spill it not, look well to it.

6. Observe exchange-time, look to your markets; there are some special seasons, that will favour you in expediting your business with facility and success; there are nicks of time, in which, if your actions fall, they may set you forward apace: seasons of doing or receiving good last not always; the fair continues not all the year; as you have opportunity, do good; walk on the royal exchange of ordinances; frequent means of grace; it may be a greater loss than you think of, to be absent but once. Thomas was not with the disciples when Jesus came, and you know what a prejudice it was to him. The wind bloweth where it listeth. The angel comes down into the pool at a certain season, and troubles the waters; † step in upon that, give not "latitude for a day, God gives none; now or never; to-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts;" now is the accepted time, now the sun shines, now the gale blows, to waft over the ship to Jesus Christ; strike while the iron is hot, miss this hour, and you may come too late, as Esau and the foolish virgins; adjourn the court to-day, as Felix did, and there may never be another session; God may strive no more with you; quench not the Spirit, ‡ it may never kindle such a flame in thy heart again.

7. Spend not because you indulge hope. Some youngsters in prospect of an estate at age or in reversion, anticipate their income, and by lavish expences run themselves behind so far, that they never recover it, and are oft finally disappointed. Solomon a king, adviseth his son to know the state of his flocks and look well to his herds, for, saith he, "riches endure not for ever, or the crown to all generations," Prov. xxvii. 23—27; this is good counsel in morals; but it is desperate folly in spiritual things, to sin in hopes of repenting hereafter, or to run into arrears in hopes of being able to discharge them, this is to sin that grace may abound; but who gave you order to cut such large thongs out of God's leather? have you either time or God's grace at command? will you give him the other blow and then be friendly with him? but what if he reject you? and as he called and you would not answer, so you may call, and he will not regard you in your distress. What you do, do quickly; boast not thyself of to-morrow: || presume not to omit

\* Eccles. ix. 12. † Gal. vi. 10. John xx. 24. iii. 8. v. 4.

‡ Heb. xii. 17. Matt. xxv. 12. Acts xxiv. 25. Gen. vi. 3. 1 Thess. v. 19.  
|| Rom. vi. 1. Prov. i. 24—26. xxvii. 1.

duty, or commit sin in hopes of being good, when thou hast sown thy wild oats; for multitudes have gone down to hell with such self-deluding expectations. God's patience hath bounds, your hearts grow harder, you have further to go back; there is danger relative to reception; therefore, whatsoever thy hand finds to do, do it with all thy might.\*

8. Endeavour to have your minds disentangled. Be not bird-limed with the world; ingulph not yourselves in too much business; you have enlisted yourselves soldiers under Christ's banner, and no man that warreth entangleth himself in the affairs of this life: if you will be rich, you fall into temptation and a snare, and into many hurtful and foolish lusts which drown men in destruction.† God forbid you should be of the mind of Nevison, the lawyer, who said, he that will not venture his body will never be valiant, he that will not venture his soul will never be rich. An aspiring mind sets the wits to work, and Satan furnishes occasions, but the higher you rise, the greater will be your fall; sit low and you sit safely. O what a remora are riches to religion; when the young man in the gospel promised fair, this shut up his passage to Christ; this opened Demas's passage from Christ. Seek not great things for thyself; this was old Jeremiah's counsel to young Baruch, content yourselves with ordinary things; let not your sails be too high or too expansive; let your moderation be known to all men; mind not high things;‡ live not above your rank, for that will make you beggars or tempt you to be covetous; study the vanity of the world, and set not your eyes upon that which is not; labour not to be rich; yea, if riches increase, set not your hearts upon them.¶

9. Know your places. Consider in what relation you stand as children to parents, guardians, tutors; as servants to masters; as young men to grave seniors or superiors in office, age, or gifts; honour thy father and mother; children obey your parents in the Lord, mind that; let all have their due; learn to distinguish God's commands from men's; obey men's commands for God's sake, but disobey not God's commands for man's sake;§ learn to be very humble and honour the aged; beware of being out of your place, for such as are so, violate every law. Be not without natural affection, esteem others better than yourselves, shew pity or charity at home; duty to parents, is service to God. Servants be subject to your masters with all fear, to churls as well as the kind, rise up before the hoary head and

\* Eccles. ix. 10.

† 2 Tim. ii. 4. 1 Tim. vi. 9.

‡ Matt. xix. 16—22. 2 Tim. iv. 10. Jer. xlv. 5. Phil. iv. 5. Rom. xii. 16.

¶ Prov. xxiii. 4, 5. Psalm lxii. 10. § Eph. vi. 1, 2. Rom. xiii. 7.

honour the face of the old man, in so doing you fear God;\* be helpful to old persons; what a good office did that young man, Paul's sister's son, do his uncle in speaking to the chief captain? Acts xxiii. 16—22. God makes *them* old, and *you* young for this end.

10. Be careful in the relations you may form. When you marry, marry in the Lord; choose such to lead your lives with here, as you desire to live with hereafter; join not yourselves with an untamed heifer, that bears not Christ's yoke, for such are sons and daughters of Belial. Act deliberately in so great a vicissitude of life; this is the axle-tree on which runs the comfort or sorrow of your future days; a good wife is God's donation in a peculiar manner, house and riches are the inheritance of fathers, but a prudent wife is from the Lord; search her character in the scripture, ask the mercy of God by prayer, take advice of christian friends, but be sure you have the consent of parents, propound right ends, act according to rule, and then trust God for success. O what influence have mothers on children; mothers of the kings of Israel are mentioned in the scripture; though Jehoram had a good father, namely Jehoshaphat, yet he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, why so? for the daughter of Ahab was his wife;† such are the sad consequences of forming improper alliances.

11. Associate with fit and profitable companions. Company is of an assimilating nature: the fly that feeds on dung, is coloured thereby: a man either is, or will be what his company is, if it be select and constant: a man is known by his associates. Solomon saith, "In the multitude of counsellors there is safety," yet oft perplexity; but I advise you, to prefer their quality before their number. Good counsellors are better than many; some young men are ruined by flattering parasites. Rehoboam's green heads were his ruin: Hushai's politic contrivances were applauded by vain-glorious Absalom, to his destruction:‡ how many thousands have been undone by sinful company! Solomon begins his preparatory advice to the young man in this manner: "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not;" and how often doth he repeat and reinforce this exhortation? he urgeth the young to walk in the way of good men, and not to go in the way of evil men; for a companion of fools shall be destroyed. || If you would not have the plague, come not into infectious air; bad men's breath is poison, and hath malignant influence on others; such eastwinds blast hopeful

\* 1 Thess. ii. 6. 2 Tim. iii. 3. Phil. ii. 3. 1 Tim. v. 4. 1 Pet. ii. 16. Lev. xix. 32.

† 2 Chron. xxi. 6.

‡ 1 Kings xii. 8. 2 Sam. xvii. 7—14.

|| Prov. i. 10. ii. 20.

blossoms; the devil's factors juggle good natures into hell. Nebuchadnezzar became like a beast, by being among beasts: look to your company.

12. Be not too confident, but listen to counsel. Take advice of wise and experienced Christians: be not wise in your own eyes: if any one among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise.\* Quintillian saith of some, that they might have become scholars, but that they conceited themselves to be scholars good enough already: so it is with many young men. To be self-sufficient is to be altogether deficient; none err more dangerously than those who think they cannot err. Let no man think more highly of himself than he ought to think: they have been the wisest that have esteemed themselves brutish, as David and Agur.† Be nothing and you will be prepared for any thing: be humble and modest, and you are ready for divine and human counsels: whoso loveth instruction loveth knowledge, but he that hateth reproof is brutish: the way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but he that hearkeneth to counsel is wise: many more documents doth the wise man furnish of this sort; and withal he tells us, that a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.‡ It well becomes all men, especially the young, to suspect their own judgments, and not to say, as one in the comedy, I have counsel enough within myself.||

13. Keep straight reckonings. Be sure you learn spiritual arithmetic; take an account of your words and actions, see whether they be good or bad; if bad, confess them to the Lord, bewail them, obtain a pardon for them under seal before you sleep—if good, give God glory, yet lament the imperfections that adhere to them, which will prevent confidence in your best duties. Search and try your ways, commune with your own hearts;§ sleep not till your accounts be well stated; huddle not things up in haste, live not at uncertainties, as we say of tradesmen, if they cast not up their books, their books will cast up them: the longer you defer, the more loth you will be to reckon; keep petty sessions to prepare for the great assizes; make all as ready as you can against the general audit; try yourselves by scripture marks, both as to sincerity of grace and proficiency in grace: take a true measure of your increase and decays in religion. By all means use sometimes to be alone.

14. Remember, God's eye is upon you: give God the glory of his omniscience and omnipresence; study Psal. cxxxix, "let

\* Prov. iii. 7. 1 Cor. iii. 18.

+ Psalm lxxiii. 22. Prov. xxx. 2.

‡ Prov. xii. 1, 15. x. 17. xiii. 1.

xv. 5. xxix. 3, 15.

|| Consilii satis est in me mihi.

§ Lam. iii. 40. Psalm iv. 4.

your eye be ever towards the Lord;" thus was it with David, "I have set the Lord always before me."\* The knowledge of a grave person's presence will charm the roister to some reverence. "Take heed, Cato looks on thee," was accounted a serious caution at Rome; oh! but God looks on thee, man, dare not in his presence to commit a sin or omit a duty, his eyes are like a flame of fire, brighter than the glorious sun; he is of purer eyes than to behold evil and cannot look on iniquity; before thou say or do any thing, ask thyself this question, whether would I say or do this, if a grave person were present? nay, if a child were but present? Walk as in the sun, live still in Beer-lahai-roi, and say, as Hagar did, "Thou God seest me," and be sure you act accordingly.

15. Begin all your proceedings with God. Never attempt any thing but what you can ask God's blessing upon; be often in the duty of prayer, either in a set and solemn manner, or by frequent ejaculations. Be careful for nothing, but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God; accustom yourselves to a course of religious exercises. Be daily soaring aloft towards heaven; see your need, and go to the throne of grace for supply in the time of need; † forsake not that trade, block not up that road by sin; "pray without ceasing; do all in the name of the Lord Jesus;" prefix God's name to all your undertakings, prefer him to yourselves; let religion be still above worldly concerns; yea, mix religion with common affairs; if God should bid you ask what you please, beg wisdom, as Solomon did, the holier you are, the better will things prosper; the nearer the fountain, the sweeter the streams; creatures are sanctified by the word of God and prayer. ‡ O never set about any work without the expectation of a blessing, for which you have a warrant by precept or promise.

16. Maintain peace with all. Despise not others' circumstances, nor pick quarrels with any, though much your inferiors; "blessed are the peace-makers;" then, cursed are the peace-breakers; God appears the former, Satan acts the latter; if you despise, you despise not men, but God: study to be quiet, and to do your own business, so you will be at peace; if it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men; there is not the worst or least, but you may need their favour, or be prejudiced by their displeasure; therefore, provoke nobody. Be courteous to all, be meek and humble; || study what

\* Psalm xxv. 15. xvi. 8.

† Hab. i. 13. Gen. xvi. 13, 14. Phil. iv. 6. Heb. iv. 16.

‡ 1 Thess. v. 17. Col. iii. 17. 1 Kings iii. 7—9. 1 Tim. iv. 5.

|| Matt. v. 9. 1 Thess. iv. 8, 11. Rom. xiv. 19.

will make for peace; put not forth yourselves either without a call or without bounds; observe both warrant and limit, lest you create disturbance by putting your sickle into another's harvest. Babes are apt to be quarrelsome; contention shews depravity.

17. Be willing to bear the yoke in your youth. Spurn not at the cross; kick not against the pricks; welcome every rod that God sends; it is good to be inured to affliction betimes; sin not, to create a yoke; but if God lay it on, bear it patiently, yea, cheerfully; it is dangerous to be like a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke. You are born to trouble, dream not of exemption all your days; some have a shower in the morning, as Joseph, David; some at noon, as Job; some towards evening, as Asa. Now a shower is best in the morning, for by God's blessing, it may make you fruitful all day: by bearing the cross, you may learn to obey our Lord's command. Those prove most experimental Christians, that are trained up in the school of affliction. "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."\* A Christian is a cross-bearer, it is the high road to heaven; but be sure you suffer as a Christian. Beware of suffering for your faults as malefactors, then you would be the devil's martyrs, not Christ's.

18. Consider that you must not always be here; you that are but lately entered upon the stage of this world, must have an exit; you are transient passengers: there is a time to be born and a time to die; you dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which are crushed before the moth. After our Genesis presently comes our Exodus; we grow up in morning, in the evening we are cut down and wither, † the sun of some sets immediately after it has risen. *Orimur, morimur*, we sometimes rise only to fall; think with thyself, "this may be the last day of my life," reckon not upon years; ‡ as soon comes a lamb's skin to the market as an old sheep's. View the bills of mortality, see if young go not as soon as old. build not tabernacles below, look upwards; mind not things temporal, but things eternal, || make ready for flitting, time is daily rolling away, the sails are gathering in, you are approaching the shore, and may launch into the ocean of eternity ere you are aware; when you go, the world is gone with you, and you will take nothing along with you but either guilt or grace—remember every rational, deliberate thought, word, or deed, becomes seed sown for another world; such as you sow, such shall you reap.

\* Lam. iii. 27. Jer. xxxi. 18. Job xiv. 1. 2 Tim. iii. 12.

† Eccles. iii. 2. Job iv. 19. Psal. xc. 3, 5, 6.

‡ Omnem credẽ diem tibi diluxisse supremum.

|| 2 Cor. iv. 18.

O for a readiness to be gone hence ! get your hearts off this vain world, lay up your treasure in heaven ; let your delight be in God ; trample upon all sublunary things ; let the moon be under your feet, for the best of the world is but vanity, and much of it is vexation of spirit ; yea, man himself in his best estate is altogether vanity ; \* make the best you can of the world, it can do little for you.

19. Observe and fortify yourselves against the sins of youth, take a strict account of your constitution-sins, your relation-sins, your calling-sins, and provide fit antidotes against your respective diseases ; all ages, sexes, and degrees have their peculiar sins, to which they are most inclined. Every man wanders in his own way, therefore know the plague of your own heart, and keep yourselves from your own iniquity ; what sproutings of corrupt nature ! pluck them up or bend the bough the contrary way ; for instance, (1.) If you find yourselves ignorant as the wild ass's colt, be ashamed of it, but not ashamed to confess it ; so doth David and wise Agur. † I am like a beast, saith the one, I am more brutish than any man, saith the other ; go to school and begin with your a b c. (2.) If you find your hearts addicted to pride and vain-glory, desire the Lord to humble you, humble yourselves, consider what worms of the dust you are. (3.) If you be passionate and peevish, tame your spirits with the example of Christ's patience, reflect on the unmanliness of passion, its groundlessness and unavailing tendency ; and be angry and sin not. ‡ (4.) If you find your spirits frothy and volatile, given to mirth. O direct your attention to solemn subjects, death, guilt, final accounts, and eternity, and go to the house of mourning. (5.) If you be inclined to sensuality, O flee youthful lusts, make a covenant with your eyes, watch all your senses, away with licentious gratifications and dalliances. || (6.) If you feel yourselves prone to intemperance, make no provision for the flesh, but beat down your bodies by fasting. (7.) If you feel your hearts rising against pious ministers or Christians and disposed to make them the subject of your raillery ; think of the two captains and forty-two children, and learn to be sober-minded. § (8.) If you be inclined to covetousness, think of Gehazi, Achan, Judas, and Demas. (9.) If you begin with any bad customs, which are apt to grow into habits, study Jer. xiii. 23. ¶ (10.)

\* Eccles. ii. 11. Psalm xxxix. 5.

† Isa. liii. 6. 1 Kings viii. 38. Ps. xviii. 23. Job xi. 12. Ps. lxxiii. 22.

‡ Prov. xxx. 2. Job xlii. 6. James i. 20. Eph. iv. 26.

|| Ecel. vii. 2—4. 2 Tim. ii. 22. Job xxxi. 1.

§ Rom. xiii. 14. 1 Cor. ix. 27. 2 Kings i. 12. 1 Kings ii. 24. Tit. ii. 6.

¶ 2 Kings v. 27. Josh. vii. 25.

If you bless yourselves in sin, and put off repentance, awake your spirits with the thoughts of Esau, the foolish virgins, and examine carefully Deut. xxix. 19, 20. Prov. i. 24—28; thus you may and must suppress sin in its first appearances.\*

20. Make good improvement of your innocent inclinations. The great Creator hath so differently tempered men's bodily constitutions, that whoever studies his natural temper, may find employment in turning it into a religious channel, so regulating his natural disposition as to promote God's glory and the good of his soul; for instance,

(1.) Art thou of a phlegmatic and melancholy constitution, prone to indulge grief and sorrow? O turn this stream into godly sorrow, grieve for sin, for the corruption of thy nature, for the transgressions of thy life; no sadness will do thee good any further than it bears a religious character; be not however passive but active in self-humiliating duties like Josiah. †

(2.) Art thou naturally of a fearful timorous spirit, as Jether feared because he was but a youth? ‡ Improve this trait of thy mind to make thee afraid of sin, and stand in awe of God, fear to come near the brink of danger; tremble to imbrue thy hands in the blood of thy soul, or thy Saviour; fear hell, and sin which is worse.

(3.) Art thou of a bold, venturesome spirit, and darest attempt to meet the greatest danger or gigantic Goliath, like the stripling David? O get an undaunted spirit to encounter infernal potentates, and internal corruptions; fight the good fight of faith; let not spiritual enemies make a prey of you. O that I could say, I write unto you, young men, because you have overcome the wicked one, and because you are strong, and the word of God abideth in you. ||

(4.) Art thou of a cheerful, joyous spirit, disposed to hilarity? Turn this cheerfulness into joy in the Lord, raise up your spirits to heavenly exultation; yea break forth into singing; drunkards are jocund and sing; do you also make melody in your hearts to the Lord. §

(5.) Art thou of a ductile, facile, gentle spirit? easily drawn to any thing by the example of others, and their persuasions. O be flexible God-wards, God forbid thou shouldst be pliable with respect to other things, and only obstinate in things relative to religion; wilt thou be so good natured as to comply with any suggestion tending to thy eternal ruin, and yet boggle at that which tends to thy own salvation? O for a little of that wisdom

\* Heb. xii. 17. Matt. xxv. 12.

† James iv. 9. 2 Cor. vii. 10. 2 Chron. xxxiv. 27. ‡ Judg. viii. 20.

|| 1 Sam. xvii. 42. 1 Tim. vi. 12. 1 John ii. 13, 14.

§ Phil. iv. 4. Ephes. v. 13, 19.

which is from above ;\* which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated !

(6.) Art thou naturally witty, ingenious, and inclined to study that which may whet invention, and exercise thy faculties ? behold here is work enough before thee. Study that wisdom which dwells with prudence, which finds out knowledge of witty inventions, thou mayest find enough in the scripture to puzzle the quickest genius ; † for here a lamb may wade and an elephant may swim. Read the histories of sacred writ, find out the riddles and familiarize thyself with the parables of the bible ; Samson tried his companions with a riddle ; God bids Ezekiel put forth a riddle, and speak a parable to the house of Israel ; there are many dark sayings in the word : ‡ read the books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Ezekiel, Daniel, and the Revelation.

(7.) Art thou given to novelties, singularities, or anti- quities ? Here you may all be fitted with suitable matter ; behold, new heavens, and a new earth ; (what do those mean ?) wherein dwelleth righteousness, or righteous men. || If you have Athenian curiosity, and would hear of news, see whether you be new creatures, inquire into the nature and necessity of this new creation, wherein old things are past away, and behold all things are become new. There are also ancient things, the ancient of days ; O that you would think of him who is from the be- ginning, and inquire for the old and good way, the old and new commandment, which is both in different respects ; it is a great rarity, to have novelty and antiquity both in one subject. §

(8.) Are you succourless, yea, and destitute, so that you know not what to do for a livelihood, if left to yourselves ? Poor soul, betake thyself to the all-sufficient God, who will supply all thy wants according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. You cannot live by your own shifts, learn to live by faith ; you are not able to defend or secure yourselves from danger, fly by faith and prayer to the name of the Lord, which is a strong tower ; commit yourselves and affairs to the Lord, ¶ then take no anxious thought.

(9.) Art thou of a studious, patient, or contemplative tem- per, loving to be alone ? Well, thou hast a field sufficiently large before thee ; secret prayer, reading, contemplating the nature of God, meditating on his word and works day and night, you may read God in every thing. O that you had

\* James iii. 17.

† Prov. viii. 12.

‡ Judg. xiv. 12.

Ezek. xvii. 2.

Psalm xlix. 4.

|| Isa. lxxv. 17.

2 Pet. iii. 13.

Acts xvii. 21.

§ 2 Cor. v. 17.

1 John ii. 14.

Jer. vi. 16.

1 John ii. 7, 8.

¶ Phil. iv. 19.

Prov. xviii. 10.

1 Peter iv. 19.

Matt. vi. 25.

many and precious thoughts of God, so that when you awake, you might be still with him.\*

(10.) Art thou active, vigorous, and always occupied? so was Jeroboam, whom Solomon saw to be industrious, (of an operative head and hand,) and he found him both honour and labour, lest he should plot and do mischief. Let it be so with you, young men, since you will be busy, set yourselves in proper employments, lest (as we say of some children) you do what you should not do. Here is work enough for you in general or particular circumstances towards God, yourselves, your relations, societies, the church and nation; you never need to want employment, while you have a God, and a soul and body to be employed about. O set yourselves to work, and be daily engaged; up and be doing, be not slothful but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.† I shall conclude, with the apostle's practical application of the doctrine of the resurrection, 1 Cor. xv. 58, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as ye know that your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord." How happy a sight would it be, to see gracious young men in our congregations, plants of renown, a hopeful nursery of young trees in God's orchard, to bring forth fruit in due season! what encouragement would it give us, that God would still continue among us! If God plant trees, surely he doth not intend to pluck us up, root us out, or lay us waste for the wild boar. A young nursery may furnish many plantations, and grow up to be strong trees in due time.

Thirdly, The doctrine which has been stated, supplies encouragement to such as do or desire to remember their Creator in the days of their youth. Go forward, my young friends, as you have begun; be not appalled or amazed with the roarings of the lion of hell, or barkings of the dogs on earth, nor with the dauntings of your own spirits; fear not them that can only kill the body, but fear him that can cast soul and body into hell.‡ Consider,

1. Your Creator is able to bear you out in that to which he calls you. The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are his everlasting arms. Of pious young Joseph, it is said, "Joseph is a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall: 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." || Fear not falling out of the arms of omnipotence; be

\* Psalm cxxxix. 17, 18.

† 1 Kings xi. 28.

Rom. xii. 11.

‡ Matt. x. 28.

|| Deut. xxxiii. 27.

Gen. xlix. 22—24.

not afraid of being conquered, when the infinite God is your Captain: lean upon your beloved, and fear not; out of weakness you shall be made strong; your little one shall become a thousand; you that are feeble, shall become as David, yea, as the angel of the Lord.\* Be sincere, and you shall persevere; thou shalt be holden up, for God is able to make thee stand. "Though the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall; yet they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."†

2. There have gone before you a brave army of valiant young saints that have won the prize, and wear the crown, with palms in their hands: it is an encouraging thing to follow heroic examples. Behold the cloud of witnesses; you may say, "who are these that fly as a cloud, and as doves to their windows?" How many young warriors under Christ's banner, yea, martyrs in flames of their own love and their enemy's rage, have left us blessed instances of youthful piety! these have demonstrated, that this duty is practicable; their wisdom hath outstripped their years; their experience has exceeded many old men's, for grace doth not always crown the hoary head; great men are not always wise, neither do the aged always understand judgment; but the Spirit of God can give subtilty to the simple, to the young man, knowledge and discretion.‡ How many have you seen that, in the bud of nature, are ripe in grace! The living fish hath grown too much for the dead shell; lively grace in their souls hath outgrown their mortal bodies, and they have left glorious monuments behind them, to perpetuate a never-dying reputation.

3. God has more regard for the youngest saint than for the most glorious, yet graceless prince. The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour; a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit, whatever be his age, God stands not upon that; better is a poor and wise child, than an old and foolish king; none so high in God's books as the gracious soul, though simple in natural things, and destitute of worldly grandeur, and contemptible in the esteem of men. "Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee," saith God. || O what esteem hath the glorious God for the poorest, rawest, youngest child in his family! The great Shepherd gathers the lambs in his arms, carries them in his bosom, and gently leads those that are with young: bless God that thou

\* Zech. xii. 8. † Rom. xiv. 4. Isa. xl. 30, 31.

‡ Isa. lx. 8. Job xxxii. 9. Prov. i. 4.

|| Prov. xii. 26. xvii. 7. Eccles. iv. 13. Isa. xliii. 4.

art an attendant on the king of heaven, admitted into his presence-chamber, this honour have all his saints, old and young, rich and poor; these are they that find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man; these young people have a guard of holy angels to attend them, for they are all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them that shall be heirs of salvation; they rejoice at their conversion and guard them into heaven.\* O the honour and happiness of a young convert! he is the flower of his age, the comfort of his relations, the crown of pious ministers, and an ornament of the church of God.

4. God will give the young believer, either a long, useful life; or a safe, speedy, and desirable death. If God have work for his young children to do, they shall live long to be instruments of much good. I knew an eminent minister, who was converted at six years of age, and lived usefully and died honourably at eighty-four; "for length of days is in wisdom's right hand, and in her left hand, riches and honour;" a long life is promised as a mercy and entailed upon piety; "Come, ye children, hearken unto me, I will teach you the fear of the Lord. What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil; depart from evil and do good."† O how eminent have they been who have set out early in the ways of God! they have come late to heaven, and carried many along with them thither. But if it be the will of God, and you desire to be dissolved and be with Christ which is best of all,‡ you shall be speedily wafted over the Jordan of death into Canaan. Enoch had a double advantage; first, he was translated, that he should not see death, this you cannot expect; and secondly, he lived but three hundred and sixty-five years, which was then only a third part of the time most of them lived in those days; whence was this? Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him; || he set out early, and he was quickly at the end of his walk; God had so much of his company, and was so well pleased with it, that he would have him in his immediate presence, and therefore made him bound over the gulf of death, and lifted him up, soul and body into heaven; a peculiar privilege. But however, if your souls be seasoned with grace in your younger days, the hoary head will be found in the way of righteousness, the sting of death will be extracted, and conscience will speak peace in a dying hour; you may say as good Hezekiah did, "Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how

\* Isa. xl. 11. Prov. iii. 4. Heb. i. 14. Luke xv. 7.

† Prov. iii. 16. Psal. xxxiv. 11—14. ‡ Phil. i. 23. || Gen. v. 24.

I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight.”\*

On the whole, remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth: Why so? While the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them. As if he had said, it becomes thee, young man, now to commence a war against thy spiritual enemies; for as it is now most needful, so thou art most capable of conflicting with, and conquering thy impetuous appetites and passions, which drown thousands of the young in perdition: but old age is a weak, infirm thing, burdensome in itself, and still more burdensome, when loaded with the self-tormenting remembrance of youthful follies, with the formidable prospect of approaching death, and with an apprehension of a strict account at the bar of God. Thus the deluded old man now sees he cannot live, and dares not die; and, alas, his heart is hardened with the deceitfulness of sin, the consequence of which is, that the wretched veteran in a course of iniquity, expires in vain presumption, or awful despair. O young man, bethink thyself now of what must be done at some period, or thou be undone for ever. Do the work now, which would greatly increase thy trouble afterwards, when thou wilt have more to do, and be less prepared to do it. Pray while thou canst; pray, repent, believe, turn to God and mourn over sin, while thy heart is tender, and while it may do thee good, and be accepted of God; for the years hasten on, in which thou wilt say, thou hast no pleasure.

\* Isaiah xxxviii. 3.