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Rev Andrew Wyke

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BY ANDREW WYLIE, D.D., PRESIDENT.

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YOUNG GENTLEMEN,

The address which I am now about to make to you, is the last that you are to hear from me in your college life. This circumstance awakens emotions which must be suppressed in silence, since words could not give them utterance. This much, however, I must be allowed to say, that your correct deportment, attention to study, and respectful regard to the imperfect assistance which it has been our pleasure, no less than official duty, to give you in your scientific and literary pursuits, have left on our minds an impression in your favor, which time will not efface.

As a last testimony of my regard, I would affectionately dedicate to you, the remarks which are to follow. They relate to an objection against the christian religion, which exists in the minds of many, especially of the young. And as your welfare will essentially depend on having your minds given up, without reserve, to the dictates of this religion, as your safest guide in the business of life, and your best resource for comfort in adversity, I have thought that I could not occupy the present occasion with better advantage to you, than by some remarks intended to obviate the objection which it is proposed to consider. The subject will have the advantage of unity; and it will be better that you carry with you from this place, an abiding impression of one great matter of transcendent importance, than to have your attention distracted by a multiplicity of monitory hints. If the main point be well established, if you be christians in principle, every thing else, as it respects both your duty and interest, your usefulness and comfort, will follow as a matter of course. Instruction and discipline are the main parts of education, and he has been best instructed who has learned how to teach himself, and best disciplined who best knows how to govern himself. It matters little what or how much a man

may have learned, if he knows not how to regulate "the hidden man of the heart," the springs of action and sources of enjoyment within the soul.

Humility, meekness, forgiveness of injuries, moderation in our attachments to and pursuit of worldly objects, patience, self denial, and the like, which have with propriety been denominated "the passive virtues," hold a principal place in the morality of the gospel. But they are not admired by the world. On the contrary, they are commonly thought to indicate a mean and ignoble spirit, and are supposed to stand in direct opposition to courage and a sense of honor; which, when united to a certain confidence in one's self, a high valuation of worldly distinction, and a lively sense and prompt resentment of insults and injuries, constitute what commonly passes in the world for the character of a gentleman. And as all these traits of character are supposed to be, and some of them really are, opposed to the passive virtues, the religion of the gospel, which so clearly enjoins these virtues, is thought to be unfit for a man of spirit.

This is the objection which I propose to consider.

A preliminary remark is here necessary. What christianity is, must be learned, not from the average character and attainments of those who profess it, much less from the specimens which may be found in any particular place or neighborhood. The profession of men must be estimated by the standard of their creed, not their creed by their profession. The best are imperfect, and in practice fall below their own rules. Allowance must be made for the infirmities of nature and the bias of education, from which none are perfectly free. Christianity as it is practiced is much less estimable than christianity as it is understood. And even as it is understood, it is far less worthy of esteem, than as it really is. There are errors in judgment; and the practice of men diverges still further from the line of rectitude than their opinions.

In point of charity, the conduct of most professing christians, in the present day, appears glaringly deficient; so that if one should now utter the encomium which the behavior of primitive christians extorted from the mouth even of enemies, "Behold! how these christians love one another," he would be thought to speak words of the bitterest irony. We must, then, look at christianity as it is taught in the sacred scriptures, if we would form a correct estimate of its genuine character and tendency.

There is no aspect of christianity at which the feelings of the young and ardent are more apt to be shocked, than that forbidding frown with which it seems to regard not only the honors, profits, and pleasures, but even the common and innocent enjoyments of this life. But christianity has often been misrepresented in this particular. The oriental style of the sacred writings has not been fairly interpreted. Properly understood they condemn "the world and the things of the world," as objects of desire, not absolutely but comparatively; condemn them when loved immoderately, pursued anxiously, possessed unthankfully, or used selfishly. They forbid us to regard them in any other light than as means to an end. They prohibit no pleasure that is innocent; or, which amounts to the same thing, they prohibit none which does not stand in the way of some greater pleasure. And such is the case with all pleasure which is impure, ill timed, or vicious by excess. That state of mind, in short, which christianity requires us to maintain, in

regard to worldly interests and advantages, is not indifference, but moderation. And do not reason and experience inculcate the same lesson? His, indeed, is a slothful and abject mind, whose sensibilities honor, glory, excellence, distinction, cannot awaken. But what are the things that create a just claim to these lofty titles? Are they the phantoms which excite the cupidity of a low earth-born appetite, and which the ambitious worldling pursues with senseless ardor? Do they belong to the mere circumstances of our external condition, which change with every turn of fortune, and pass away with this transitory life? Are they not rather the things which belong to the soul itself, and which, like the soul, are heavenly in their origin, and immortal in duration? An understanding illuminated by the rays of truth, a conscience purged from the dregs of ignorance, prejudice and superstition, and established in firm dominion over passion and appetite, a heart pure and upright, reflecting the image of heaven's own benignity on all around, and a will prompt and resolute in executing righteous determinations; these are the things which confer distinction. This distinction, so truly grand and illustrious, that in comparison with it all earthly honors are mean and contemptible, christianity sets before our eyes as the mark and prize of our high calling, prescribes the course which leads to it, and furnishes the requisite means and strength for its attainment. It produces moderation in earthly attachments and pursuits, not by extinguishing the ardor of our nature for whatever is great and excellent, which would, indeed, be to debase it, but by calling off its energies, and engaging them in a higher and more honorable enterprise. There is, indeed, no sphere on earth, in which the loftiest feelings of the soul of man can be enlisted, which can bear a comparison, in point of dignity and grandeur, with that into which the spirit of our holy religion invites the aspiring footsteps of youth. Enter it; and seek with all the ardor of which you are capable, for glory, honor, and immortality.

Let us, next, examine whether there be any thing base or abject in that meek and forgiving temper, which christianity requires. This temper is nearly allied to that moderation in our attachment to earthly things, which has already been considered; and may indeed be viewed as one of its fruits. For the injuries and consequent resentments, which so much disturb the life of man, take their rise from an undue valuation of earthly things; which is nothing else than the want of that moderation which we have been considering. Property, reputation, and the other goods of the body, are the only things which are liable to injury from without. The soul is invulnerable. The pleasures of a good conscience are safe from the grasp of the spoiler. The poisonous breath of slander cannot infect them. Hope in God, and the other goods of the soul, are in better custody than walls and bars of brass or adamant. And these are better, far better, to us, than all the earth—than all the universe, without them. These are the treasures of which the Savior speaks, laid up in heaven, where moth nor rust do not corrupt, and where thieves break not through and steal. Now, can any thing be plainer than that, if the heart be with these treasures, injuries and wrongs will be slightly felt, and therefore not so certainly resented, as if the case were otherwise? For what can the injury affect? The right of property? Death takes from the good man all his earthly property. But the good man is not injured by death. It is said,—for I do not vouch for the truth of the story,—that there

was once an island in the Ohio, just below Pittsburg, the title to which was contested in law; but that, before the termination of the suit, the river had washed away the island;—a fit representation of man's property in earthly things. The current of time wears them away, till at length not a particle remains. Is it reasonable, then, that injuries sustained in things so perishable, should greatly disturb our peace or inflame our resentment? If not, then there is nothing base or pusillanimous in christian meekness. On the contrary, it is noble, it is magnanimous, to say, by our conduct, to such as are eager to contend with us about the objects of worldly ambition, "Though not indifferent to these things, we do not consider them worth the trouble of a contest. We will neither waste our time, nor sacrifice our tranquillity, nor pollute our conscience, nor dishonor our religion, by disputing and wrangling about them. Take them. They are not our gods. We relinquish them to you to whose happiness they seem so necessary. As for us, we know how to indemnify ourselves, by turning the loss we have sustained into an important advantage." So you may see, among a company of sporting children, the oldest generally—that one, at least, whether oldest or youngest, who has the most magnanimity—the readiest to relinquish his playthings, to satisfy the querulous cupidity of his more selfish associates.

Supposing it proper, in the abstract, to engage in a contest for the vindication of our injured rights, there still remains the further consideration, whether it be prudent. And this is often the more important question of the two: for such is the tendency of pertinacity and unreasonable violence, on the one side to generate evil thoughts and feelings, if not to lead to unwarrantable measures on the other, that it is next to impossible for any man, however just his cause, to come out of scenes of strife, as innocent as when he entered them. The christian knows this. He has been taught it, perhaps, by bitter experience. If not, it is suggested to him by a kind of moral instinct, which forewarns him of other dangers more to be shunned than the danger of ~~suffering detriment to his worldly interests.~~ The patriarch Abraham, whose character is adorned by many of the most brilliant traits, relinquished to the Philistines the wells which his servants had digged, to Lot his choice of the best district of country when they were about to separate, and to the king of Sodom his own share of the spoils which his bravery had recovered from those confederate kings who had laid the country under contribution. How much more noble and dignified was his conduct in these instances, than if he had been tenacious of his rights!

Cases are not wanting in the history of those enterprises which are undertaken for the sake of worldly honor, in which the exhibition of that same passive spirit, which in the christian is treated with scorn, is not only necessary for the success of the enterprise, but confers a reputation for the most heroic qualities, upon those engaged in it.—Mungo Park undertook to lay open to the view of the civilized world, the hitherto dark and unexplored regions of the African continent. His journey lay through countries inhabited by a barbarous people, who paid no regard to the rights of property, and were too numerous to be opposed by any force that he could take with him. He had, therefore, to submit to be plundered by these savage people, of whatever articles he had about him, which pleased their fancy or suited their convenience. To resist would have been followed by instant

death to himself and his enterprise. He needed not to fight the barbarous natives to prove his courage, for that was unquestionable. Nor was he ambitious of gaining a reputation for courage, among the savage people through whose country he traveled. The honor to which he aspired they could not bestow. His thoughts were on England and the civilized world, whose applause he knew would be a rich compensation for all his sufferings.

Now, let us suppose a sensible savage speculating on the conduct of Mungo Park. "This white man," he would say, "is a singular sort of being, as different from other men in his character and feelings as in his complexion and outward appearance. When we insult and plunder him, he shows no appearance of resentment. Nor will he be persuaded to settle among us, nor to return. He is intent on nothing, he cares for nothing but what pertains to the further prosecution of his journey. Surely he must be some demented, or else some guilty wretch, who having been driven from home by the hatred and contempt of his countrymen, is only happy in the idea of removing himself from them, to the greatest possible distance." This mean opinion of the character of Mungo Park, which we have supposed the savage to entertain, however natural to one in his situation, every one sees is owing to his ignorance and degradation of mind, and that if he could be raised to such a pitch of moral and intellectual improvement as would give him an insight into the real motives and principles of that celebrated traveler, his contempt would be changed into admiration. The grandeur of the undertaking would, in his more enlightened views of it, dignify that meek and submissive deportment which was so necessary to its accomplishment.—Practical christianity is a high and holy enterprise, the object of which is to transform the character of man into the image of God. An object of greater moral grandeur cannot be conceived, and in proportion as it takes possession of the mind, it must raise it above the low gratification of resentment and revenge.

There is no occasion on which a man of spirit is allowed, and even required, according to the commonly received maxims of life, to be more quick in his feelings of resentment, than when imputations are unjustly heaped upon his character. Here let it be remarked, that christian meekness does not imply indifference to reputation. On the contrary, the rules of christian morality require, not only that our conduct be right, but secured by prudent circumspection against misconception—"that our good be not evil spoken of." We are to shun not only evil, but the appearance of evil. Whatever things are true, honest, lovely, and of good report, we are exhorted and commanded to think of and practice. But since experience teaches, and the case of the divine Author of the christian morality himself abundantly demonstrates, that no conduct can be so prudently guarded, nor any character so pure as not to be assailed, and that with some show of plausibility, by the tongue of calumny, it becomes a question of considerable moment, as well as difficulty, what course of conduct should be adopted on such occasions. And here, also, I am unable to find any thing in christianity, incompatible with a proper self respect, or the highest degree of honorable feeling. It forbids the practice adopted by the self styled men of honor; and so does reason and common sense. For to take away the life of the calumniator, or to expose mine to his fire, will not satisfy my honor, because it will not prove my innocence. It forbids too the practice of the blackguard, which is to render railing

for railing. But it does not forbid us to abhor the calumniator, and detest his crime; nor does it preclude us from the right of vindicating our character against his unjust aspersions. This, however, is not always necessary. It is not necessary when the charge alledged against you is vague and general. Should you, for instance, be called knave, hypocrite, liar, or the like, you need offer no defence against such imputations; because no person of respectability will ever make them, and because they are not susceptible of refutation, other than that which the tenor of a good life affords.—It is not necessary when motives are impeached. For, of motives God only can judge. And when the form of the action is good, for men to ascribe it to corrupt motives, as bad men—and women—are very prone to do, is to condemn themselves. Such accusations should not, therefore, be honored with a refutation. They carry their refutation on their own brazen front.—It is not necessary, or I should perhaps rather say, it is useless, in cases where accusers and judges are leagued together, and determined to have their victim. It is remarkable that the author of christianity, when charged by the Jews with being in alliance with Satan, defended himself against the charge; but that afterwards, when on his trial before Pilate, knowing that his death was determined, “he answered nothing.” It is not necessary when your accusers are notoriously given to envy. Such take a peculiar delight in defamation. And perhaps they should be indulged in it, since their venom is harmless, except to themselves. In general it may be remarked that calumny is rarely to be silenced by any thing that one can say in his own defence. The best defence against it, is a good conscience, and an upright and useful life. When these prove insufficient, as sometimes they may, the believer in christianity has left him this further resource, that it is a small matter for him to be judged according to man’s judgment, seeing “He that judgeth him is the Lord.” To Him, therefore, he can commit himself, in the confidence, that in due time He will “bring forth his righteousness as the light, and his judgment as the noon day.”

We will next consider whether the meek spirit and passive virtues of christianity, may be justly charged with being inconsistent with a sense of honor. There are few words in our language, about the meaning of which people generally entertain so vague and false notions, as they do about this little but very significant word, honor. It is thought to be an aspiring after the outward marks or signs of preference and respect. Nothing can be more false. The Scriptures give us the true idea of it, when they tell us, “He that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.” There are cases in which to seek, and much more to contend for, the preference, is an infallible mark of a base and ignoble spirit. One who is conscious of qualities deserving respect and attention, is seldom solicitous about respect and attention. A contemptible spirit wishes to hide itself from its own view and the view of others, by show, bluster, and arrogant pretensions. Where the claim upon our respect is clear and indisputable, it need not be urged. But your blustering hero will not only urge, but enforce it. And when this is often done, resistance will at length be roused. Thus it will be found, if we examine the matter to the bottom, that pride, which is often used as synonymous with honor, is more nearly allied to meanness than it is to that noble sentiment. Pride is at the bottom of all the tumult of the world. For where all are arrogant, each one is anxious to check and repress the

arrogance of all the rest. Hence the world is full of contentions. But the spirit of christianity is a meek and quiet spirit. And yet, it too has occasioned no little disturbance in the world. This sounds somewhat paradoxical. Perhaps the following remarks may explain it.

Civil duties and respects rest on civil relations; natural, on natural. Christianity interferes with neither. It gives to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; though Cæsar happened to be a Tiberius or a Nero. A pious son is bound to obey an impious father. A pious husband is bound by the marriage covenant to an irreligious wife. A father may not disinherit his wicked son, though for the purpose of bestowing his property to pious uses. Christianity does not allow moral feeling to interfere with, or disturb the natural or civil relations of life, or business purely secular; but leaves us in these respects, to govern our conduct and intercourse with others by the general considerations of natural affection, civil respect, prudence and worldly interest—always, however, according to the dictates of justice and humanity. But in all those cases where the outward act is intended to express the state of the moral feelings, christianity is pragmatical and imperious. Hence a christian, though bound to pay civil respects to "the powers that be," may not pay *that kind of respect* which is expressive of approbation to any wicked man, however powerful by rank and station. He may not violate conscience at the will of a tyrant. He may not, in private life, make intimate friends of any who are not "the excellent of the earth." He may not countenance, even by his presence, any evil action. He may not disguise his moral sentiments. Where properly called, in the providence of God, to exhibit a testimony in the cause of righteousness, he may not decline it through fear of man. With what scrupulosity he is required to guard his honor from contamination is manifest from the distinction which, in his intercourse with the world, he is required to make between a professing christian whose character is notoriously bad, and one of a like character who makes no profession. With the latter he is allowed to associate in the ordinary affairs of life: with the former he is forbidden even to eat.

Christian meekness is not to be confounded with a tame indifference to moral distinctions. It has sensibility. It is not an inert thing, but has life and power. It may not be able to destroy "the unfruitful works of darkness," but it will have no fellowship with them, and in this way at least, it will reprove them. It need not provoke a quarrel with the wicked, but it must come out from their company. Though not absolutely required to contend with "an unclean thing;" it will not treat it with the familiarity of a touch.

The spirit of christianity requires us to abhor that which is evil, as well as to cleave to that which is good. The two cannot, indeed, be separated. For if we love virtue we must loathe its opposite.

In that brief but excellent description of the good man which we have in the fifteenth Psalm, it is said that in his eyes a vile person is despised; and the inspired apostle in his epistle to the Romans denounces and condemns those, "who, knowing the judgment of God that such as commit" certain evil deeds which he mentions, "are worthy of death, not only do the same, but take pleasure in them that do them." There is nothing more important to the maintenance of an upright course of conduct in life, than that the moral feelings be preserved, by all possible care, in their proper tone and vigor, which they cannot be, if their inward exercise is unduly repressed; or if, in their outward,

manifestation, they are constrained to put on appearances which do not naturally belong to them. The sanctuary of the heart must not only be guarded against all approach of impurity, but it must never be belied by holding out signals, whether in word or action, which do not correspond with the voice within.

You, who, as yet, have not been much conversant in the history and science of the human heart, can hardly imagine how anxious persons who are secretly disturbed by the consciousness of guilt usually are to win or extort, from those of established character for moral worth, some sign or testimony of approbation. And none but those who have attentively studied the Bible can be aware with what assiduity of caution the spirit of christianity has guarded its disciples against the temptations to yield in this particular. This explains the paradox before mentioned. The anxiety on the part of the bad to obtain the countenance and sanction of the good to their vicious practices, and the determination of the good not to comply, produce the war between them. The slightest compliance would often produce a compromise. It has been remarked truly, that had the primitive christians only consented to cast a pinch of incense on the heathen altars, the fury of persecution might have been stayed.

In this age of refinement, that, in some respects, remarkable exhibition of christian character which was made in Europe during the progress of the reformation begun by Luther, is commonly, I think, censured for its rudeness: and perhaps justly, for there can be no merit in coarse expressions and vulgar manners. Yet it is questionable whether the current of public sentiment may not have been carrying us into an opposite and more dangerous extreme. Not that *our* manners are in danger of becoming too much refined—far, far from it—but, under the idea that the christian character is all passivity and meekness, there may be danger of taking from it that vigor and freedom of moral sentiment and action, which was so conspicuous—though attended with an unnecessary harshness of character—in the reformers. In the change that has taken place from rudeness to refinement, christianity has not been the gainer, if in adopting the courtly smoothness of modern manners, she has lost her honest expression of look—her bright and dauntless eye—her countenance, glowing with animation—her commanding, awful brow, capable of putting on a frown to appal the guilty—her noble port, and mien indicative of her origin and destiny.

That general movement which takes place in the soul, when an evil action is presented to view, is usually compounded of various particular movements, of which some one predominates, according to the character of the individual, and the state of temper in which he may happen to be at the time. First, there is a sentiment or feeling of disgust and disapprobation. This christianity allows and even requires. Second, there may be a dislike of the entire character of the person who is supposed to have committed the evil action. This, also, christianity allows and enjoins, provided the general character of the person be really bad. Third, there is a contemplation of the person as guilty, and of the punishment which is coming upon him, accompanied, usually, in persons of well disposed minds, with feelings of commiseration. Fourth, there may be a desire to inflict the punishment. This last, in private individuals, christianity condemns. To inflict, as well as to award punishment, is the province of the ruler, and belongs originally to God alone: "Vengeance is mine: I will repay, saith the

Lord; therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink. For by so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." It would not change the aspect of the case adduced, if, instead of supposing, as we have done, the evil action to be merely presented to view, we should conceive it to be done to ourselves: though every one is aware that, in such a position of the case, the moral feelings, as well as the passion of resentment, would be likely to operate with too much intensity. And as the weakness of human nature makes us liable to err in this direction, it is here that christianity has planted its strongest guards, by commanding us to love our enemies, and so forth. Not that an injury lays us under any special obligation to single out him who has done it, for the purpose of making him the object of kind offices: but the meaning of the precept must be, that we are not to single him out for an opposite purpose, but should still consider him as belonging to the number of our brethren of the human family, to whom, on all needful and proper occasions, good will and kind offices are due.

There is generally little danger that the moral feelings will operate too strongly, except where self is concerned. Their intensity should be, in all cases, according to the degrees of turpitude, or excellence, which may belong to their objects, and from simple dislike may ascend, through the various grades of disapprobation, to the point of burning indignation; or from mere approval, to the most glowing admiration. But self has a wonderful power of disturbing, and even confounding this order. A man has done me an injury. But perhaps it was unintentional; perhaps it was accidental to something else, which he was bound to do in justice to himself, or others; and perhaps he has before done me an act of kindness which will far outweigh this injury. At any rate, the injury is a single act, and the man's general character may not only be good, but excellent. How absurd is it, therefore, in me to overlook the general tenor of his conduct, which is good, and fix my attention on a single action which I have pronounced not good, but which, were all the circumstances fairly considered, I myself might be disposed to justify? The spirit of christianity restrains this headlong temper, and inclines a man to judge charitably of the conduct which he is even constrained to condemn, fixing his attention on every favorable circumstance which is visible in the case, and supposing others that may not be visible. In all this there is surely nothing which is not in the strictest accordance with the nicest sense of honor, that noble principle whose primary office it is to watch over the sphere of the moral feelings, and preserve them in their purity and vigor. For when charity and meekness have performed their part—which, be it remembered, is not to control the judgment and moral feelings, but is merely preparatory to their exercise—when charity and meekness have kept back the impetuosity of passion, and checked the exorbitancy of self—and when a piece of conduct, or the character of a man, stands in our view fairly convicted of moral turpitude—christianity has no veto to interpose—let it be loathed, and reprobated.

In truth those passive virtues—that poverty of spirit—that humility and mortification to the world, which excites the contempt of the shallow-pated coxcomb, who thinks he shows his wit by reviling what transcends his comprehension, are so far from being inconsistent with honor and manly spirit, that these high qualities of the virtuous character cannot really exist without them. Every man has his ruling

passion, which points to its object as the needle to the loadstone. And, as he who holds a loadstone in his hand may make the needle follow his motions; so, whoever has at his disposal whatever another is supremely devoted to, may exact from him whatever compliances he pleases. If you "say to gold thou art my trust, and to fine gold thou art my confidence," you must submit to the conditions on which it may be obtained. The same is true of power and place. Hence there is something mean even in ambition, which has been called the vice of great minds unjustly; for little minds are not less, but more, under the influence of ambition than great ones: only, it governs them in a little way. Swift, I think, said, that "climbing resembles creeping." The miser is a slave. And what is true of ambition and avarice is true of every other passion, appetite and desire, which has for its object any earthly good. Whoever is supremely devoted to the world, is a slave. Christianity places the love of God in opposition to the love of the world. The one is the source of all our temptations: the other is the fountain of all true virtue. The things of the world are the bribes which corrupt our integrity. Whoever estimates them too highly is, in fact, already corrupted. Opportunity, and a sufficient temptation are all that is wanting to make him a villain. Two worlds contend for our hearts. I do not mean earth and heaven, as these words are commonly understood. For there is nothing in the nature of things to render earth, considered merely as the scene of present action and enjoyment, inconsistent with the hope of heaven and happiness, hereafter. But I mean, on the one hand, the moral world, in which are contained the ideas of duty, rectitude, honor, conscience, law, reason, accountability, a Deity, and our relations to Him and to one another—what the divine Teacher calls "the kingdom of heaven," which is within the soul itself—which, though not the object of sense or imagination, is more real, substantial and permanent than any thing which sense or imagination ever apprehended—compared with which, indeed, the world of sense is but a show, a phantom, a pageant—and within which reside those mysterious powers which control man's destiny—I mean this spiritual, abstract world, on the one hand; and on the other, this vulgar, palpable, gross world, which contains wealth, power, pleasure, the gifts of fortune, whatever, in short, goes under the denomination of temporal advantage. These two worlds contend for the ascendancy in our hearts. Both cannot possess it. Where the latter reigns, there cannot be genuine virtue. Where the former reigns, there is a heaven-directed soul—there is happiness built upon a rock—there are the elements of thought and feeling reduced to a new order of harmony and grandeur—there is a temple for God. But what I desire you particularly to remark is, that, in such a soul resides, and in none other can reside, the lowly virtue of self-denial, which is so far from deserving to be treated with contempt, that it merits the highest honor; since, without it, no great, extensive, or permanent good ever has been, or can be accomplished in the world. There is another objection, sometimes urged against christianity, which remains to be noticed, and which, like the objections already considered, will be found, if thoroughly examined, to redound to its honor. The objection to which I refer arises from a strange misapprehension of the benevolent efforts which it belongs to the spirit of christian charity to encourage. These cannot in most cases proceed successfully but by means of contributions from many individuals. To solicit such contributions is it-

self an office of charity, and, therefore, honorable; but it is, most unjustly, and we should hope inconsiderately, confounded with applications for personal benefit.

It is a received maxim in the world, and I believe always has been, that the person who confers a benefit is, in this respect, superior to the one on whom it is conferred. Christianity sanctions this maxim: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." It is the glory of God, that he gives to all, but receives from none. The Savior, we are told, "came into the world not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." His apostles acted in the same spirit. "These hands," said the most distinguished among them, "have ministered to my necessities, and of those who were with me." Yet the same apostle took care distinctly to vindicate his right to temporal support, establishing the rule, that they who minister in the gospel should live of the gospel. He scorned to solicit as a gratuity what justice authorized him to demand as a right: though he sometimes chose to forego that right, that he might cut off accusation from those who sought that occasion to reproach him. In these respects the apostle acted in the true spirit of christianity, which it was his great business in life to practise himself, and recommend to others—a religion which knows nothing of that ignoble temper which makes a man careless about reciprocating benefits, or contented in a state of personal dependence—a religion which enjoins diligence in business, that we may have not merely enough for ourselves, but something to contribute to charitable uses, and which even declares that, "he that will not work should not eat."

To conclude, let me say to you, young gentlemen, and beg you to keep it in mind, that christianity never can require you to sacrifice your honor. No religion having God for its author, could make such a requisition. For our nature is his workmanship: and in allowing it to be dishonored we cast contempt upon Him. Be not, then, I beseech you, ashamed of christianity. Study it: for it seems to be but imperfectly understood, even by the great body of its professors. The more you practice its precepts, the more you will be convinced of their excellence. They will teach you how to employ your time and talents to the best advantage for yourselves and others. They will preserve your consciences pure, and thus give peace within; strengthen your minds in difficulties and trials; cheer and support you in sickness and in trouble; be your guide through life; and your triumph in death.

GRADUATES OF 1834.

WM. H. B. CUSTIS,
JOS. G. McPHEETERS,

JAMES F. DODDS,
THOMAS WILSON.