

## The Pulpit.

## A SERMON TO THE YOUNG.

(BY W. C.)

"But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and thou hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them."

And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.—2 Tim. iii. 14-15.

The words of the text had reference to and were addressed to Timothy. He was probably a native of the city of Lystra. All we know of his father is that he was a Greek. His mother, Eunice, and his grandmother, Lois, were Jewesses, and were good and pious women. This is evident from the manner in which they trained Timothy. Paul's testimony on the matter is: "When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and in thy mother Eunice, and I am persuaded in thee also; and from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures." Timothy, like Samuel, was blessed in having a good mother, and no doubt Jeremiah and Daniel had pious mothers—the histories of these men would indicate as much. The mother's influence is the strongest, and the most lasting that is brought to bear on human character. Fortunate are the children who are trained under the care of an enlightened Christian motherhood. Were such an agency universal in the church, the Kingdom of God would be greatly hastened in the world.

Paul, in addressing his dear brother at this time, reminds him of the great privilege with which he, in early life, had been favored, and admonishes him to continue in the good counsels of his teachers. To learn is one thing, and to carry into practice the truths thus received is another, and quite a different process. To learn is only rudimentary—it is preparatory—it is a means to an end. The training given to Timothy was not merely mental and intellectual culture, however desirable such might have been, but it was of a practical kind, fitting him for the more important duties in the actual realities of life. His teachers had a definite object in view. They had taken a proper estimate of life. They drew marked and well defined lines between temporal affairs and the deep and more important concerns of eternity. They had weighed carefully the issues of life. A young and immortal being very dear to them, had been put into their care and keeping. It was a trust pregnant with big results. They realized in some measure the weight of their responsibility. He must be trained for God—for good—for usefulness—for happiness and heaven. Salvation was the watchword of these two devoted women. Eternal life in heaven was the consummation of their hopes.

They had an object in all their plans—clearly and well defined—the present and eternal well-being of their darling boy. To this they devoted their lives. They commenced their work in the right way and in the right time. There is great advantage in adopting the proper methods of doing our work, and continuing on so. They commenced their work when he was a child. They did not wait till he had grown up to be a big boy. No, they were too wise for that. He was only a child. There are a number of Greek words used in the New Testament to express youth, and rendered young men, children, and little children, but none of these words are used in this connection, but a word used in only one other place in the New Testament, and means babe—newly born or unborn, and so Paul would convey the idea that even before Timothy was born, the pious prayers of his mother went up to a throne of grace for a blessing upon the unborn child, and we have no doubt that they followed him through the days of his infancy. We know not but he might have been dedicated to the Lord from his very birth. We little know how deeply we are indebted to our mother's prayers. Samuel, the chief and best of the prophets, was just what the faith-giving prayers of his mother made him.

We could name many such women in the early church, as Monica, the mother of the celebrated Augustine, who played such an active part in church history. Also Nonna, who by her prayers, and silent influence of the religion which shone through her life, gradually won over to the gospel her husband Gregory, who had belonged to an unchristian sect, and he became a devoted bishop.

Her first born son, whom she had long yearned after, she carried, soon after birth, to the altar of the church, where she placed a volume of the gospels in his hands and dedicated him to the service of the Lord. The example of a pious education, and this early consecration first received from his mother, of which he was often reminded, made

a deep impression on the son; and he compares his mother with Hannah, who consecrated Samuel to God. This impression abode upon him while exposed, during the years of his youth, which he spent at Athens, to the contagion of the Paganism which there prevailed. This son, the distinguished church teacher, Gregory Nazianzus says of his mother, "that her emotions, when dwelling on the historical facts connected with her faith, overcame all sense of pain from her own sufferings... and death surprised her while praying before the altar." (Neander's Ch. His. vol. ii. page 261).

We take it for granted, from the text, that Timothy was a willing recipient of the good things taught. The word "continue" implies that he had learned the scriptural lessons in childhood, and it was Paul's desire that as he grew older he might not depart from them.

We may, in imagination, picture to ourselves this interesting family. The father may have died and left the young mother in widowhood. She with her infant son and her mother, constituted the family. They lived in a heathen city. The gods of the heathen were the divinities worshipped, Jupiter and Mercury, and all those known in Grecian Mythology. In the midst of this polytheistic paganism, lived this Jewish family, devoted to the ancient worship of their fathers, the worship of the one, true, and only God of the Hebrews—the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They possessed a copy of the Law and the Prophets—God's revelation to the Jews. They studied those sacred records. To them they were the word of life. From them they instructed their child. We can fancy with what eagerness he would listen to the story of the creation of the world, and of man—the entry of sin into the world, and would speculate, as all boys do, why the great and mighty, and good God permitted sin to come into the world, and why all should suffer and die for the sin of disobedience in one, and why the serpent was allowed to have power to do harm to man in his innocence, and as the reading went on, and the next great calamity took place in the days of Noah, and he learned of the flood waters that destroyed all flesh, save only the family of Noah, his thoughts would be called out to consider the problem of sin in its nature, its consequences and punishment.

And then the history of Abraham, the father of the Hebrew nation, and father of the faithful, with all the wonderful details of his life of faith and trust in God, that was counted to him for righteousness; and Isaac the quiet, meditative man; and Jacob, with his busy, active and eventful life; and the charming story of Joseph, the boy sold into slavery through the envy of his brothers, who rose from slavery to be the most popular and successful prime minister that ever served a king or country, in ancient or modern times. What boy has not read it with mingled feelings of sorrow and gladness—pity and approval? Then he would learn of Moses, the man of God, his strange experience in infancy, his court life, his life in the desert, and his part in the wonderful exodus from the house of bondage in Egypt to their own goodly land, and so all down through the wonderful book of God, telling of Samuel and David and Solomon and Daniel and Mordecai and all the other Old Testament worthies, with full readings of the Law and the Prophets, in which gospel truths contained in type, and symbol, in ceremonial observance—Messianic promise and prophecy. We can well imagine how his young mind would feed on the very best of the hidden manna of God's own bestowing.

No wonder Timothy took so kindly to the gospel to which he was so well prepared by the teaching of Lois and Eunice.

His, like Samuel's, was a case of early piety, and it is a beautiful thing wherever found. It is the young bud that expands to the sweetest flower, or rather it is the plant that sends out the early blossoms that gives promise of a summer's glory and autumn's richness. Some make light of child-piety, and tell you that it is abnormal, and out of place, in other words, that it is both premature and immature—that it is a fraud and a deception, and found not in actual experience, but principally portrayed in the literature of the Sabbath-school library; that pious children are only those sickly or sentimental ones, who are sure to die young, that early piety, so-called, and death are twin sisters, and go hand in hand, and they hold up the idea of a real, genuine case of early piety to ridicule and scorn. They will tell you such tendencies denote imbecility, and lack of brain power, and such persons are deficient in intellect. They will tell you that every young man has a certain amount of wild oats to sow, and that such a course

is necessary for the proper development of his character. That wild boys make the best and staidest old men, and the most useful members of society. That our best and ablest ministers and deacons and leading men were the wildest and fastest young men in their respective families, and that boys who are too bad to keep at home are sent to college to prepare for the ministry.

In this day of advanced thought, we find even opinion in a mixed state, and even lies are adulterated. In the foregoing falsehoods there are streaks of golden truth, but they are lies all the same, and bear the trade mark of the company that manufactured them, the president being the devil, the father of lies, whose head office is in the "pit," an extensive and long established house. The world has too long been deceived by this company, whose yellow handbills are scattered in all directions by the hellish agents of this house. It is time that the red flag of danger was raised to warn the innocent and unsuspecting of the unsafety of the way.

Early religion is a real and genuine thing. Scripture and history testify to the fact. The church in all ages has been blessed with early conversions. That young men have been wild, and been reclaimed, we freely admit, in hundreds and thousands of cases, but how much better and brighter and more useful would their lives have been had they come to Christ in their young days. It is the universal regret of such persons that they did not come to the Saviour sooner, and so far from exposing them to death it is the very best means of prolonging their days. A course of religious morality is best adapted to insure true bodily health and strength.

Timothy had known the holy scriptures from childhood, and they were able to make him wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. This was the opinion of Paul, who was himself well versed in the Hebrew scriptures, and was taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers. He had been brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, the most learned and moderate in the Pharisaical wing of the Jewish Sanhedrin, or great ecclesiastical council of the nation. This opinion has been indorsed by the best and most learned men from the days of David King of Israel to the present time.

The Bible is a unique book—there is no book like it. It has a merit possessed by no other. It has done that which lies in the power of no other book to do. Its truths have a wonderful influence on the mind of man. It supplies a need felt in the experience of every human heart. It makes him wise unto salvation. It teaches him what he is, and what he ought to be, and reveals to him the best and only way for his attainment. It takes him by the hand of faith, and leads him to Christ Jesus. It tells him of the preciousness of that faith—that faith which worketh by love—that justifying faith by which we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

This Bible is given to us—we have it as a birthright. It is not only the best of all books, but it is the cheapest. By the efforts of the two great Bible Societies in England and America, the Bible is brought to the doors of the humblest home in our land, and no one need be without a copy of the scriptures; and it has been spread abroad in the world, in hundreds of different tongues and dialects of the heathen. To this book we invite you this morning in the spirit of the text. It is worthy of your attention. It teaches that which concerns us most to know. It reveals to us a knowledge of ourselves, which we can learn from no other source. It teaches us the best, the purest and the highest morality, based upon the highest principles of love to God and love to our neighbor. It embodies the most perfect system of religious truth. It not only teaches, but it transforms—it not only affects the intellect, but it has a refining effect on the emotions, and a renewing of the will. It moulds our character to the model of Christian ethics. David understood this well when he propounded this ethical problem: Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way? He knew it was a vital and important matter to the young. And so he gives the solution at once, lest it might escape his memory. And to an experienced Christian like David, it was easily answered, it was by a careful attention to his course in life—guided by the teaching of God's holy word—"A taking heed thereto." Our lives and characters should be built up and established upon the truths of God's holy word.

And, now, in conclusion, we would impress upon the young the wisdom of such a course of action—of establishing a true Christian character. We have only one life to live—we can build but one character—see that it is a good one—lay the structure on the broad foundation of the gospel of truth—build uprightly—build by the plum-line of equity. Don't build like the leaning tower of Pisa, liable to topple over by the adverse winds of circumstance. Build so that your edifice will be strong, noble and beautiful. Let no suspicion linger around its precincts. May the escutcheon of your character be so bright, and pure, that the breath of scandal will have no power to dim or defame it. Be truthful in every relation of life. Be faithful to your word of honor. Truth is the very cornerstone of Christian character. It gives strength and value to it. The world is not so slow in its appreciation of veracity, and it bases its estimate of a man by the standard of truthfulness. We would, therefore, say to the young, make "your word your bond." Cherish it sacredly as the most precious jewel in your possession. Your success in life depends more upon what you are than upon what you have. Truthfulness inspires confidence and trust among men. Where truthfulness exists, there is a fair understanding—there is safety. The peace and prosperity of a people depend upon truth and righteousness.

With truth you have honesty, for they cannot be disjointed. If you establish a name for truth, honesty follows as a matter of course.

Let your lives also be pure. Childhood is emblematic of innocence. It is the normal condition of the young. It is desirable that purity so peculiar to this age should be maintained into more mature years. Timothy was kept in the right way by being taught the scriptures from a child—his life was an embodiment of his teaching. It is well known that what we most study comes to form a part of our personality. Our characters are moulded by our favorite literature—our lives are governed by it. David says: "The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes." Commandment is here used to express God's word. By a careful study of the Bible—making it the man of our counsel—we incorporate its pure principles into our very nature, and we become pure. No one truly seeking for counsel there, and taking its truths into his heart can by any possible means lead an impure and immoral life.

Purity leads to holiness—holiness is the passport to heaven. The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews gives this exhortation: "Follow holiness, without holiness no man shall see the Lord." Holiness is purity realized and accepted, and forms the top stone—the completion of the beautiful edifice; a Christian character.

May you all build, and build wisely and well. Lay the foundation broad and deep—add to it day by day, and year by year. May it rise a beautiful house, and a safe and strong one, against which the rain may descend, the floods may come, and the winds may blow, and beat violently, yet it falleth not, because it is founded on the rock of God's eternal truth.

## "KEEP SHORT ACCOUNTS WITH GOD."

If there is the smallest sin upon the conscience there can be no true peace. Every sin has its shadow, and the least shadow is sufficient to come between the soul and God. The Father's smile is not the privilege, merely, but the right, of each child in the divine household, and nothing but the consciousness of sin—sin unpardoned—can interfere with this privilege. How important, then, is it that the conscience should be kept free from the shadows which arise from sin unforgotten, and therefore unforgiven.

We are not inclined in these days to regard confession in its true light. We look upon it as a stern and unwelcome duty, and seldom, if at all, consider it the privilege which it really is. The result is, we shrink from availing ourselves of it, and allow sins to accumulate on our conscience till their shadows grow into a thick cloud, completely hiding the Father's face. That this should be so arises, we think, partly from the fact that we are apt to attach too large a meaning to the word itself. Confession means, simply, to admit, to acknowledge, to disclose; nothing more; whereas many seem to regard it as also implying deep sorrow for sin and self-abasement before God—in other words, a certain condition of soul which must be arrived at, and for which they require a certain amount of time.

The consequence is that, instead of taking each sin at once, as soon as they are aware of it, and transferring it from themselves to the great Sin-bearer, they wait, with its heavy load upon them, for a more convenient season, afraid and unable, meanwhile, to look up into their Father's face without His pardon and without His smile.

O, child of such a Father, resolve to keep "short accounts" with Him! Let the moment when His Spirit within you tells you of a faint sin be the moment for saying, "I will arise, and go to my Father, and say unto Him, I have sinned." That

very sin has been already judged by Him, when laid by Him upon Christ, but He wants you to judge it and lay it upon Christ yourself. And the very moment you do this, "as far as the east is from the west" so far doth He remove that transgression from you, and pronounce you clean.

Yes, "keep short accounts with God." "Let your garments be always white;" "for then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot," and shalt "have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him."—Parish Visitor.

## BALANCING ACCOUNTS.

When the proceeds were counted it was found that the net gain in cash was about twenty-five dollars, which was paid over to the pastor to apply on his salary. But the pastor kept a private account of the affair, which fully convinced him that the whole festival business is vanity—even worse than vanity—and vexation of spirit. No doubt more than three-fourths of the receipts of the festival came out of the pockets of the church members; and other items not usually taken into account are the following:

Cash Account not reported by "Financial Committee"	
20 Cakes (donated) at 75c.....	\$15 00
30 quarts strawberries (donated) at 15c.....	4 50
Sugar (bought).....	1 50
Labor of 15 women two days.....	22 50
Other labor (donated).....	5 00
Total.....	\$48 50

## Moral Account.

Two ladies' prayer-meetings lost.  
Two church prayer-meetings greatly disturbed.  
One teachers' meeting lost.  
One Sabbath service injured.  
Every merchant in town bored by church beggars.  
Nearly all the members of the church and congregation more or less excited and angered by a useless discussion.  
Eight women so excited and angered as to make them unhappy for a long time.  
Two women, "sisters" in the church, so "put out" with each other that they were not on speaking terms for several weeks.  
The pastor greatly grieved and mortified by various occurrences in connection with the festival.

## Health Account.

Twenty women and girls more wearied by the festival work than by a whole week of ordinary duty at home.  
Five women take severe colds.  
Two children made very sick by over-eating and late hours.  
One infant takes a severe cold and nearly dies with the croup—making more trouble and expense to the parents.

Now, when any one hints that we ought to have a festival, to raise money for the pastor, he responds at once by offering to give the church credit for the amount expected from the festival. Of course our church has gone out of the festival business, and we all feel that we have made money and many other things by the new departure; our pastor's salary is promptly paid, and we get on without the excitement and trouble of festival giving much better than we did with them.—*Christian at Work.*

## CARE FOR YOUR EYES.

Keep a shade on your lamp or gas burner.  
Avoid all sudden changes between light and darkness.

Never begin to read, write or sew for several minutes after coming from darkness to a bright light.

Never read by twilight, or moonlight, or on cloudy days.  
Never read or sew directly in front of the light, window, or door.

It is best to let the light fall from above, obliquely, over the left shoulder.

Never sleep so that, on first awakening, the eyes shall fall on the light of a window.

Do not use the eyesight by a light so scant that it requires an effort to discriminate.

The moment you are instinctively prompted to rub your eyes, that moment stop using them.  
If the eyelids are glued together on waking up, do not forcibly open them, but apply saliva with the finger—it is the speediest dilutant in the world; then wash your face and eyes in warm water.

Each of us, putting his foot in the footprint of the Master, and so defacing it, turns to examine how far the neighbor's footprint corresponds with that which we call the Master's, although it is but our own.—*Macdonald.*

He who has more knowledge than good works is like a tree with many branches and few roots, which the first wind throws on its face; while he who does more than he says is like a tree with strong roots and few branches, which all the winds cannot uproot.—*Talmud.*

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