"TAKE HEED UNTO THYSELF,"

By Professor D. B. Willson.

Gentlemen of the Theological Class: I state my theme this evening in the words of the Apostle Paul, in his first letter to Timothy. They occur near the end of the passage, beginning: "Let no man despise thy youth." He then exhorts Timothy: "Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon these things, give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine, continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." The Apostle then gives Timothy instructions concerning the Church. But first of all he charges him: "Take heed unto thyself," and this is what I seek to press upon you. I intend to consider this heedfulness under the two views: 1. Of your student life; 2. Of your spiritual life.

I. Take heed unto yourself in your student life.

II. You have gifts and opportunities. What shall be the fruit of these? Shall they remain unimproved, to be returned to the Lord as was the buried talent? No; they are to be used with diligence. The best result must be produced. Abundant fruit must be rendered to Him whose we are. There must be diligence. You may possibly

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recall an article, "The Talent for Work," by Dr. William Mathews, wherein are quoted the prophetic words of Arthur Hallam, a fellow student of Gladstone: "Whatever may be our lot, I am confident that Gladstone is a bud that will bloom with a richer fragrance than almost any whose youthful promise I have witnessed." Dr. Mathews also says: "It is true that men have different degrees of aptitude for a particular pursuit; but it is equally true that all truly great men have become such by intense and persistent toil." He quotes the words of Sydney Smith: "Yes, he is a miracle of genius, because he is a miracle of labor; because, instead of trusting to the resources of his own single mind, he has sacked a thousand minds; because he makes use of the accumulated wisdom of ages, and takes as his point of departure the very last line and boundary to which science has advanced; because it has ever been the object of his life to assist every intellectual gift of nature, however munificent and however splendid, with every resource that art could suggest and every attention that diligence could bestow." Before I read the article, I had gathered up some testimony of the same character in preparation for this address. I now add it in part. The great Newton is twice mentioned in the article. He was frequently heard to declare that "if he had done the world any service, it was due to nothing but industry and patient thought; that he kept the subject under consideration constantly before him, and waited till the first dawning opened gradually by little and little into a full and clear light." Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton said: "The longer I live, the more I am certain that the great difference between men—between the feeble and the powerful, the great and the insignificant—is energy, invincible determination, a purpose fixed and then death or victory." I might add that in diligent labor for Christ, he that loses his life saves it; he is a victor. Sir Astley Cooper said: "My success depended upon my own zeal and industry." Samuel D. Gross, whose monument stands in the National Capital, and who quotes this, says: "Much has been said about the inspiration of genius. The greatest efforts that have ever been made at the forum, in the pulpit, or in the Senate, in ancient or modern times, were the result of hard study and patient labor." Of himself he says: "The only genius I possess is the genius of industry." All the testimony goes to show that great patience is needed, and attention to details. All recognize this who do work that remains. Buxton defined genius as patience. Claude, the painter, studied mosses, flowers, the stones, everything that had to do with accuracy and faithfulness in his art. He said: "I spare no pains whatever, even in the minutest trifles." So with Jerome. "After mentioning the pains which it cost him to unravel the entanglement of names in the Book of Chronicles, he recalls a famous word of encouragement addressed to old by Antigenidas, the flute player, to his pupil, Laemolus, whose skill had failed to catch the popular fancy: "Play to me and the Muses." Jerome describes his own set purpose: "Like Iasenius, I play to myself and to mine, if the ears of the rest are deaf." Therefore, the work of Jerome in translating the Bible endures.

*In the Saturday Evening Post.*
In all this diligence and toil, regard must be had to our strength. We are limited. Hugo of St. Victor said: "Study everything; thou wilt afterward see that nothing is superfluous." True enough, but we are held in. Calvin with his trials was led to say of Jethro's counsel to Moses: "Let God's servants learn to measure carefully their powers, lest they should wear out, by ambitiously embracing too many occupations. For this propensity to engage in too many things is a very common malady, and numbers are so carried away by it as not to be easily restrained. In order, therefore, that every one should confine himself within his own bounds, let us learn that in the human race God has so arranged our condition that individuals are only endowed with a certain measure of gifts, on which the distribution of offices depends. For, as one ray of the sun does not illuminate the world, but all combine their operations as it were in one, so God—that he may restrain men by a sacred and indissoluble bond in mutual society and good will, unites one to another by variously dispensing his gifts, and not raising up any one out of measure by his entire perfection. Therefore, Augustine truly says, that God humbled His servants by this text; just as Paul reports, that hardships were inflicted on him by the messenger of Satan, lest the grandeur of his revelations should exalt him too highly."* 

There is little excuse now for ignorance of the conditions of our physical well being. Knowledge is increased, and diffused. What was once the knowledge of a special class is common to us all. What is it, then, to know ourselves, herein to take heed to ourselves? Then within the limit to labor with diligence, as did Dr. William Goodell, the missionary, who in his school days and after life in the ministry wrought so faithfully! 

As to connection to books, strength varies. He says of himself: "One thing is certain; and I think of it even now with satisfaction, that for the sake of a collegiate honor, I never studied fifteen minutes the more, no, nor ten, nor even five, during my whole course; and that my eyes and health were as good at the end as at the beginning. My health was indeed always feeble, and three hours a day were just about my average time of study. But then when I did study it was in good earnest, concentrating my whole mind directly on the subject. It was much the same during all my term at the Theological Seminary, and during much of my missionary life. I have been able to devote but a few hours a day to close study. But though leeele from childhood, I have hardly ever been sick a day."* 

To the most strenuous effort has been given. What fruit shall come from diligent, patient study in the careful use of the powers of body and mind as given of God. "Take heed unto thyself." "Study to show thyself approved unto the Lord, diligent, patient" (2 Tim. 2:15). It is not wise, then, to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."* 

II. Take heed unto yourself in your spiritual life. 

The Song of Solomon, in describing the relation of Christ and His Church refers to Christ as speaking of her as "a garden inclosed," and to the church as giving Him this invitation: "Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits."* What is true of the church is true also of her members in this.

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*Life of Dr. William Goodell, pp. 23, 26. 
*Song of Solomon, 1:11.
We are to watch against any wrong aim in seeking the ministry. The aim must be that we may serve. "Who, then, is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that plants anything, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase. Now he that plants and he that waters are one: and every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labor." 1 Cor. 3:7. "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." 1 Cor. 4:2. Is it not true of all positions that we must seek to serve? Dr. J. A. Smith, editor of The Standard of Chicago, wrote about a quarter of a century ago, "Patience: or The Kingdom and the Patience." In it he asks: "What is more noble than service? Indeed, this is the real distinction, rightly viewed, of rank, office, reputation, power, when at last gained. The title and the high place are but trilles apart from this, and are felt to be such so soon as the novelty of recent possession has worn off. It is the true honor and the true advantage of elevated position that it opens doors of opportunity, and provides both means and methods of service. Nothing save a sense of this, and a spirit in sympathy with it can prevent elevated position from becoming utterly irksome, its insignificance, its taxing cares an insufferable burden; its duties hateful, its conscientiousness felt simply as a more vexatious exposure to criticism and calumny. He, who finds in such spheres corresponding service, and with a love for that service holds and fills his place, has hit upon the only way to gain in place.

*Burrowes on the Song of Solomon, p. 381.
*Burrowes on the Song, p. 395.
command to a lower: 'I do not think so, Howard. A major-general is entitled to an army division, and no more. Why, I believe I should be flying in the face of Providence to seek a command higher than that intrusted to me.' Such was my first instructive lesson in the great leader. He begot in me a confidence which years and experience never lessened.*

Here might come in the affecting incident as to Howard himself at the great review in Washington at the close of the war:

General Howard had commanded the Fourth Corps of the Union Army in the advance from Chattanooga to Atlanta, and led the right wing in Sherman's March to the Sea. The troops had gathered at Washington for the grand review. Gen. Howard was sent for by Sherman, and was asked to yield his place in the column for a former commander, who was urged on Sherman for the post of honor on that day. When Howard pleaded his right to the place thus coveted, Sherman did not question it, but in his perplexity turned to him and said: "But, Howard, you are a Christian!" And he who knew well the Apostolic injunction, "in honor preferring one another," gave way. This evidence of his spirit of self-denial is not marred by what Gen. Sherman did afterward, when he ordered him to ride by his side at the head of all the troops of his command. It only illustrates what is eminently true in that which is spiritual, that he that humbles himself shall be exalted.

The spirit of service gives a sense of freedom in the minister's public exercises. All have more or less a sense of bondage, but not all may fathom it. It is a blessing to be freed from it. Two articles in the Presbyterian, written years apart, illustrate this, the early one headed, "Clogged By His Reputation," the other as late as July 5 of this year, and headed "The Power Before the Throne." The former says: 'A minister of acknowledged pulpit ability once declined an invitation to preach in the place where he was visiting, on the ground that he had not time to prepare as good a sermon as he would like to; and that it was a matter of principle with him on no occasion to compromise his reputation.' The writer thus comments on the incident: "If we do not condemn it as a crime, must we not at least smile at it as a weakness—this going about as a prisoner, lettered with any such self-forged and self-riveted chain? **. To the minister who gives to his people the very best that is given to him, will more and better be given to take its place. Trusting in this and in the boundless resources of divine truth, he refuses the temptation that seldom whispers, 'This which you have gotten out for the mid-week evening lecture is too good for that; keep it for the larger Sabbath audience,' a temptation to 'withhold more than is meet,' and which tends inevitably, if yielded to, to mental as well as to spiritual 'poverty.' It is said in the once well-known biography of a talented young preacher who died soon after entering on his first pastorate, that his death was no doubt hastened by the disappointment, too keenly felt, of small audiences, occasioned by a succession of stormy Sabbaths. In pleasant contrast to all such unworthy solicitude was the spirit of one of the greatest of preachers, as well as the greatest of teachers, President Mark Hopkins of Williams College, who once said to me: 'Not infrequently when Saturday night comes, I am too weary from my week of teaching to prepare as I would like for the next day's sermon. But I never trouble myself in the least about it. I lose no

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*Gen. Howard's Reminiscences in the Christian Union.

**Rev. Dr. Addison Bellard.
sleep on account of it. I always at such times retire at ten as usual, and in the morning I do the best I can and let it go."

The other article I have mentioned says: "We read a great deal of the power before the throne, and in the incident that follows we do not wish to undervalue in any wise the minister's preparation for the pulpit. At a certain convention, with a large congregation—among them many clergymen and their wives—the preacher for the morning failed to put in an appearance on account of sickness. A call was made for some one to take his place. Who would volunteer? No one seemed inclined to do so. Several of the distinguished ministers present were urged personally to respond, but all seemed unwilling. It became a somewhat serious matter what was to be done. Some one suggested that a young man, who had recently been appointed as a local evangelist in an obscure field, should be asked to address them. He reluctantly consented. As he rose to go forward, his young wife followed him, taking a seat near the front of the church as he entered the pulpit. Secretly she knew who he was, or had ever heard of him. He began the service with some difficulty, but soon the embarrassment wore off, and he became calm and collected. "The writer* then refers to the wife of the preacher: "Her eyes reflected the preacher's face, for they were always upon it. She believed in him. She would not miss one syllable that poured forth from those lips, and her silent prayer went heavenward unceasingly that God would bless his utterances to the spiritual uplift of the people. And God did bless them. No one who was there that morning ever forgot that service."

"This spirit of service tends to subdue all wrong spirit toward brethren in public place.

*Rev. W. A. Breckner.

"As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body being many, are one body, so also is Christ." The closing Sabbath School lesson of the last quarter was The New Life in Christ, Colossians 3:1-15. The eighth verse says: "But now ye also put off all these: anger, wrath, malice."

Verses 12-15 are: "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercy, kindness, humility of mind, meekness, long suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these, put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body, and be ye thankful."

What gracious fruits are these to spring and grow in a cultivated heart! There is the thought in the passage of the common service of Christ. The great Sir William Hamilton had taken a leading part in the controversy that led to the Disruption. He had written freely in that painful time. Among the defenders of the Free Church movement was William Cunningham, Principal Cunningham, an able opponent of the great metaphysician. The controversy continued after the Disruption. He wrote an article on Luther for the British and Foreign Evangelical Review, April, 1866, and in October he prepared an article, "The Reformers and the Doctrine of Assurance." Sir William Hamilton, whose discussions he had examined, died in the interval—May 6. Dr. Cunningham gives this note at the first of the latter article, as to this event: "The knowledge, if we had possessed it, that he was to die so soon would assuredly have modified somewhat the tone in which the discussion was conducted; would have shut out

1 Cor. 12:18.
something of its lightness and severity, and impart to it more of solemnity and tenderness; and the knowledge which we did possess, that he, as well as ourselves, was liable to be called out of this world and summoned into God's presence, ought to have produced this result. As between these men, there is the common service of the Lord Christ. But even as to foes, as to those who seek to do one ill, they who from the heart serve the Lord, and yield to Him the fruits of grace are a "garment inviolate." They are not without defense. Calvin says: "If we are afraid of the snares and deceits of men, and if we find those who desire to do us mischief to be clear-headed, sharp-witted persons, let us remember that it is the continual office of God to strike with stupidity and madness those who are wise to commit iniquity." This must be our confidence as to our spiritual foes. The Revision amends the text in 1st Corinthians: "Ye are not your own. For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." The words "in your spirit which are God's are omitted. The text reads: "Glory God therefore to your body." But the teaching is there in that epistle as to the whole man—body and soul. Paul elsewhere says that Jesus Christ "gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." The Apostle Peter writes: "Ye are a holy nation, a peculiar," that is, a purchased "people." And Paul again: "They which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again." This new life is a productive life. It must be watched and tended. "Take heed unto thyself." *Commentary on Psalms 56.*

The American Line steamer Paris struck on the rocks of the English coast on the 20th of May last. Her captain was a sailor long tried. He had been in sea service since 1851—forty-eight years—and had crossed the Atlantic nearly five hundred times. He had gained a most honorable post, the vessel he commanded being among the best that traversed the sea. He had navigated her under her changed name, the cruiser Yale, during the war with Spain. Yet on the 20th of May, this tried sailor erred in his reckoning of the vessel's run that night and was carried seven miles north of his course and struck the rocks. In his report he says: "The accident was not due to any want of thought or anxiety about my vessel or her safety, but arose purely from the mistake I made in making my calculations above described." The Inspectors' report on the allowance necessary for the tide: "We are of the opinion, he had not taken that matter into consideration, whereas when he approached the English coast he must have encountered the flood tide on his port bow, setting him in toward land." They conclude: "Giving all due consideration to these matters, we are of the opinion that Captain Watkins has not acted with the necessary care and attention requisite in the navigation of his vessel which a master should have used, and we therefore suspend his license as a master of ocean steamers for a period of two years." No lives were lost but what awful peril in that mistake! Hence an editorial* thus commented on the report: "CAPT WATKINS' PUNISHMENT.* "Capt. Watkins of the wrecked City of Paris did a many thing in admitting his blunder and assuming the blame of the wreck of one of the finest ships that ever floated and the imperiling of a precious cargo of lives. Nevertheless, n
must be admitted that the mere suspension of his master's license for two years is in itself a small penalty for the carelessness revealed both in his own report and in the report of the United States local inspectors. The official penalty, however, is undoubtedly the lightest.

Capt. Watkins will be compelled to bear. A long professional career, with its record of 500 successful voyages, an eloquent testimony to efficiency, is placed under a cloud from which it may never emerge. The one blunder that might have had such an awful termination must cast a doubt over the future and make its perpetrator less desirable, if not undesirable, as a navigator. Men without a record of disaster will naturally be preferred before him, and when the two years of his suspension are ended he may find there is no room for him. Therein is the penalty made commensurate with the crime, for carelessness of the sort confessed to is nothing short of crime."

A seaman's record of nearly half a century marred by one false reckoning!

When I read these reports and the comment, they called to mind the passage in Ezekiel* as to the duty of a watchman, where we read:

"When I shall say to the righteous, that he shall surely live; if he trust in his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousness shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it."

Is mis-spent time a little matter with us? Is sin a light matter in our eyes? Do we undervalue holiness? Are we, from lack of care and attention, amiss in our reckoning?

Let us be diligent. Let us be careful of our spiritual life. Let us labor that our service may be accepted of the Lord, and may we ourselves be "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

*Chapter 33.

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