

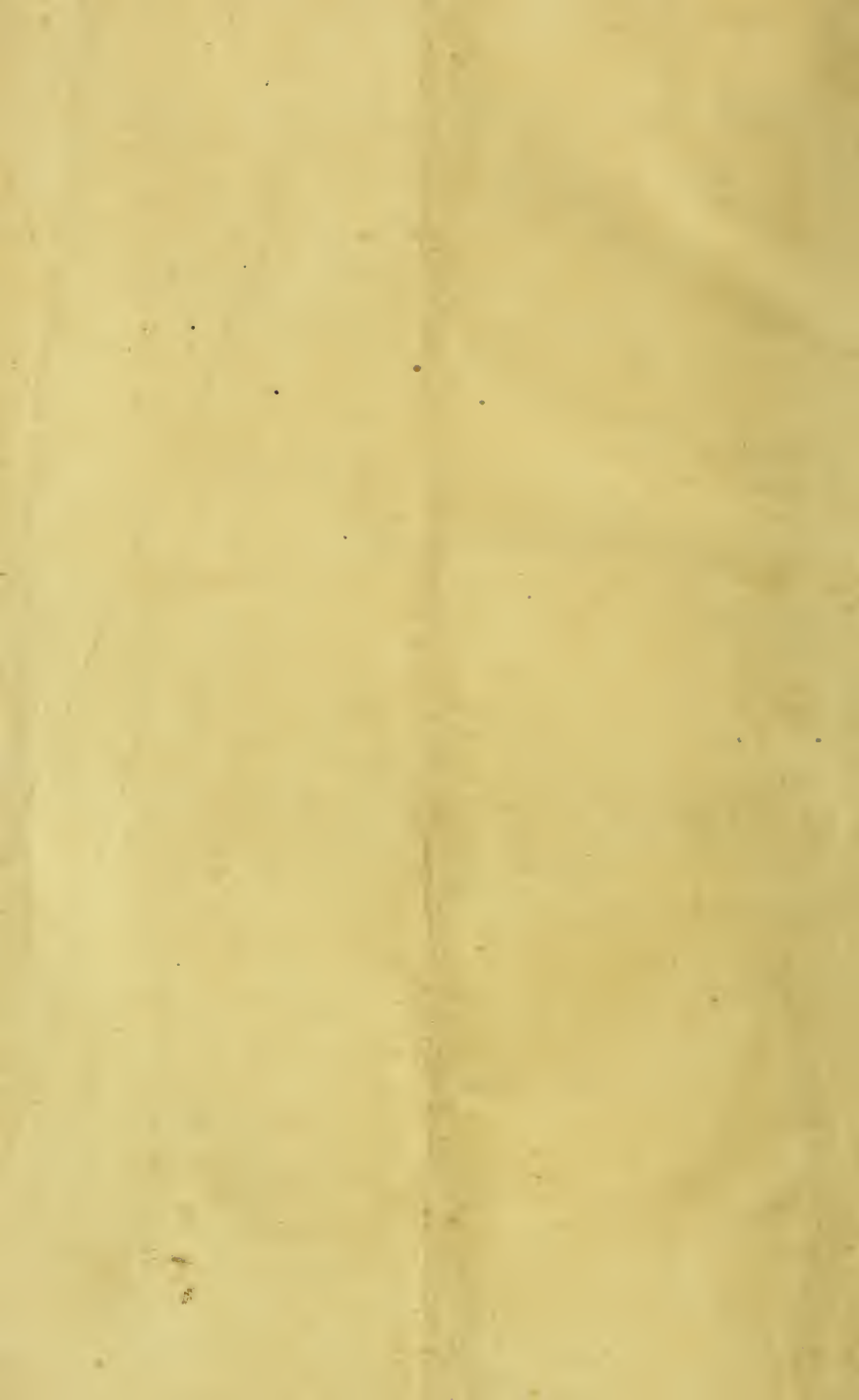
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ANNUAL SERMON,

DELIVERED BY

Rev'd ADAM GILCHRIST,

IN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, BEFORE THE STUDENTS OF THE

FAYETTEVILLE

FEMALE HIGH SCHOOL,

ON TUESDAY EVENING, JULY 15. 1856.

FAYETTEVILLE:

PRINTED BY EDWARD J. HALE & SON.

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THE FLOWERS COLLECTION

FAYETTEVILLE, N. C., July 17, 1856.

REV'D SIR:--In compliance with the wishes of the Faculty and Students of the "Fayetteville Female High School," and the general desire expressed by the community, we ask a copy of the very appropriate and able Discourse delivered by yourself before the Students, in the Presbyterian Church on Tuesday evening last.

Hoping nothing will prevent your compliance with the request,

We remain yours, &c.

J. H. COOK,
A. W. STEEL,
J. G. SHEPHERD,
S. J. HINSDALE,
E. J. LILLY,
Ex. Committee.

GENTLEMEN:--In consenting to grant your request, so kindly and politely conveyed, I am well aware that Addresses which appear well at the time of delivery, seem flat upon an after perusal: but having yielded myself to your entire service on this occasion, I conquer the repugnance I have always entertained to appearing in print, and surrender my manuscript, with but a faint hope that the public on the outside, who were not present at its delivery, will echo your very flattering commendation.

With respect, gentlemen,

I am yours, &c.

A. GILCHRIST.

Messrs. J. H. COOK, J. G. SHEPHERD, AUG. W. STEEL, S. J.
HINSDALE, E. J. LILLY.

1870

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SERMON.

Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.—Proverbs xxxi, 30.

Women were made neither to be flattered nor despised. The sex are not angels, but specimens of fallen humanity: nevertheless, the man who underrates them shows plainly that his associations have been with the worst of the sex, or that he is too dull, or too degraded, to perceive and acknowledge the qualities which belong to the best. Facts prove that men have always been benefitted when they have had right notions of the worth of woman; but when the sex has been depreciated, man himself has been the sufferer: for he has sunk proportionally low with the object of his contempt.

Where will you find woman in her right position but in lands where the gospel has had its sway? Woman owes everything to the power of true religion, and it is only in christian lands that she endeavors conscientiously to pay her debt. That man is raised to a high standard of character, that he is filled with pure sentiments, that he aims at holy objects, that he is nerved with energy to the pursuit of what is right, that he is urged to the cultivation of humane dispositions, and exhibits the courtesy which throws its charm around social life, is very much if not entirely owing to christianity having placed woman in a sphere where she can operate to advantage. For example, consider the influence of a christian mother, as contrasted with the training that a man receives who comes forth from female hands in countries which are semi-civilized or barbarous. We are far from underrating other influences, which are concerned more direct-

ly in the full *development* of character, nor could we deny but that after discipline may correct the defects or errors of a bad early training. It seems necessary to form a man in the *noblest* sense, that there should be an office faithfully performed by tutors and governors, that there should be the wear and tear of trial, that he should learn something by experience, that his faculties should be called into vigorous exercise, that a broad field of honest rivalry should be spread before him, where success shall be commensurate with talent, industry, and moral force; and that these should all be sanctified by the blessings of heaven. But who is it that first draws the outline of that character, which after influence brought to bear upon it, is to complete? We answer, the christian mother. Gentleness and skill are united in her hands, lest a rude stroke at the beginning may so mar the work, as thereafter to be irreparable. It is her hands that endeavor to mould what is before her after a divine pattern, and those hands are guided by a heart, which hopes and prays that that on which she operates may become a specimen of man at his *best estate*. A sense of fitness seems to resign to woman the training of the infant mind. Her great tenderness adapts her for the work, and she endures patiently its trials. *She* possesses a greater degree of that yearning instinct over offspring, for which our language has no appropriate term, but which the Greeks thought worthy of a special name. These qualities are conceded to the sex, and therefore the formation of habits, and the earliest lessons imparted to budding intellect, are regarded as the province of woman. But christianity, which views all matters in the light of responsibility, asks the question, how shall this influence be exerted so as to accomplish the best results? Shall it suffer the seeds of depravity to shoot unchecked: that afterwards the bitter fruit may curse the world? Or must the attempt be made to nip the evil as soon as seen? Shall that tender heart, inviting suitable occupation, not be planted

with heavenly truth, which, watered from on high, may ripen into holiness of purpose, beneficence of act, and a glorious reward? Is the tender child a mere nursling to be cast on destiny to encounter its fate, or is it an immortal being, whom heaven commits to a mother's hands with a similar instruction to that given to Moses' mother by Pharaoh's daughter; "take this child away, and nurse it for *me*, and I will give thee thy wages." The simple question submitted is, whether man under woman's training is to be shaped so as to become the dunce, the monster, or the saint?

There are three conditions which meet in Christian woman, which are to be found in none other; these are mental cultivation, self discipline, and the power to command the respect of the other sex. If you look to lands not Christian, for your example of the training of man by woman, you will rarely find such a combination.

In the days of ancient Paganism woman was often a heroine, and whilst the names of Portia and Cornelia remain, we cannot say that instances of true wives, or true mothers, are wanting. Yet the habits of the times prove, that then, woman was either not allowed her true position, or else fell herself beneath it. The Greeks were at no pains to educate the female portion of their families. The educated woman was one who assumed the qualities of the male sex to disgrace her own, and the young man, who was to be formed and polished by female society, shaped his manners, and acquired his ideas, not from an illiterate mother, but from an accomplished woman, whom social propriety deemed an unfit companion for his sisters. During the purest days of the Roman Republic woman had honor paid her, and she ennobled herself. Then it was that mothers could point to their sons as their brightest ornaments. But in the declining days of the empire, the most astounding instances of moral corruption which blot the historian's page, and present biting themes for satirists, are drawn from woman. And what was the con-

sequence? The race of noble men became extinct. A mightier ruin, than that presented by the fallen pillar and overturned temple, showed itself in the unnerving, and debasement of a nation, which had once conquered the world. In all savage nations woman is degraded—man is the master, woman the slave. At the birth of one of her own sex, the mother laments that her misery is to descend by inheritance to her daughter; but can she rejoice at the birth of a son? In him she sees another tyrant arrived, who, when his strength is equal to the task, will beat her; who will revile her, as soon as his organs of speech are fashioned to articulate sounds; and by his exactions of service will add to the burdens, which are already crushing out her life.

What can such an abject thing do towards mitigating another's ferocity, or how inspire with noble sentiments, when they are unknown to herself!

In the half-civilized portion of Asia, we find woman improved above the brutality of savage life, but here again the consequences of underrating the sex are visited on man. The wife of an Oriental is an uneducated child, with nothing to call forth the powers of her mind; her existence a listless seclusion, her only stimulation amusement; *she* can never rise to the dignity of woman. The pampered favorite, not the trusted companion of her husband, with limited ideas, bound to good conduct by the restraint of her surroundings, but a stranger to self discipline, we cannot regard her as likely to form the character of a son, who, in distinguishing himself, shall point to his mother, as owing to her guidance the start or direction of his path to eminence. We repeat: it is only in lands where the religion of the Bible prevails, that we find woman disposed to improve the understanding God has given her. There only it is, that the graces of the heart are brought out in their adaptation, and fitted in such symmetrical proportion, as at once to proclaim the usefulness of her station, and to elicit praise for the delicacy and efficiency of

her performance. There alone it is, that the dignified respect, which is paid her, is not paid back in the return of trashy compliment, but in the solid coin of lasting advantage. There it is, that some of those stern attributes of manliness, which raise the individual to the height of fame, are to be traced to gentle teachings, and to the generous ardor excited by noble examples, discoursed of by one who hopes that there is before her a copy, who, if possible, shall surpass the original *she* presents.

It is a mistake often made, that of supposing that female influence, exerted on the other sex, will give to character a softness incompatible with the daring of manly enterprises. Whether it be, that the weakness of woman would seek for support from a strong arm, or whether that female ambition is limited to shining through the distinction acquired by her male relations, every sensible mother will seek, in training her son, to cultivate those habits, and those alone, which are consistent with manliness. She will endeavor to bring him to reason on consequences, to make up his mind to a just determination, and when made up, to conquer difficulties, by never acknowledging defeat; but if an obstacle is in the way, and his foot trips, he shall fall forward, not backward; he shall rise to advance, not retrograde. She knows the vocation of her boy is to be different from his sister's, who is smiling at his side, and with energy, her own good sense leads her often to repeat the lesson, My son, "show thyself to be a man." But in teaching this lesson of manliness, has woman ever permitted herself to escape from the responsibility of her mission? She can never forget that her office is to minister to the kindlier feelings of humanity. The steel which she would temper, and not soften, she would polish; the young man whom she wishes to be strong, she exhorts to be forbearing to weakness; while contending for right, she would have him generous to the conquered. She charges him to be not arrogant in his deportment to the lowly, not

assuming to the lofty, nor encroaching on those who stand on the same platform with him. In short, while she desires her son to be a man in point of strength, she adds another wish, to-wit: that he may be, not in the sense of bows, and scrapes, and conventional graces, but in her own instructive apprehension of the word, a gentleman.

A sensible *christian* mother has still a higher mark in the moulding of her son. She wants to see him reach the highest style of man: amid the grades of an excellence stamped by heaven on human character, her conception of the front rank, which she prays her son may attain, is made up of the endurance of the martyr, the enterprise of the hero, and the benevolence of the philanthropist. It is not merely a piety which shall be without reproach in the church, and which shall fit for Heaven, but it is a manly piety, which is the object of her aspirings. She prays that in her son a cherub's light may shine, with the glowing warmth of a seraph's love; that like John a Saviour's bosom may be his familiar resting place; like Peter he may never tire in his work, but be earnest till he put off his tabernacle; that he may feel like Paul that he owes the world a debt which he must be constantly paying in his Master's name. With prayer she reads the annals of the Church, and says if her son must fall in youth, may he fall like McCheyne and Summerfield, with his armor on; if he die in his maturity, may he be found fully ripe for the heavenly garner, and the fruits which fell from him by the way, may they remain upon the earth long to be gathered—if he sink into the grave after a long and useful life, may the last memento of him be, that he still brought forth fruit in old age. Thus prayed the mothers of a Wesley, a President Davis, and a Judson. Thus holy women in every age of the Church have stamped upon the character of their sons an immortality—known to earthly fame, but “shining brighter in the skies.”

Gentlemen, Guardians and Supporters of the Fayetteville

Female High School, you have done a great work in commencing an institution, for which we sincerely hope that after generations will bless your names. Already have you been, in part, recompensed by the benefit received, for the pains you have taken, and it cannot but be, that a proper training bestowed upon your daughters will be felt by your and their descendants.

But whilst I shall endeavor not to transcend modesty, in taking advantage of my position to address you too plainly, the station I occupy enjoins me to remind you, that it is not the amount of intellectual culture, not the polish imparted to the manners, nor the waking up of the perceptions of taste, valuable as all these are, that constitute the glory of woman. You have shown that you did not despise the female understanding. You have adopted a scheme of study calculated to furnish and strengthen the mind. As the institution grows older, you will doubtless afford every means and facility for raising the standard of education in this community; but it ought never to be forgotten how essential it is to the performance of woman's mission, that the *heart* should be cultivated as well as the *intellect*. Should a Seminary for the education of females ignore this fact, though it may turn out from time to time such as are fitted to adorn a drawing room—such as by the grace of their deportment, and the brilliancy of their accomplishments, will awaken admiration—such as will attract the other sex to their company by the sprightliness of their conversation—even though to these be added a knowledge of the details of practical life, it will fail in making the training imparted subserve the highest end of education. For remember, “Favor is deceitful, beauty is vain, but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.”

You have set out with the determination to avoid sectarianism in the pursuit of your scheme. This is right and proper for an institution designed for inviting the patronage of every Christian denomination. I know not a source of great-

er bitterness than a sectarian spirit; mingling with social charities, it poisons all that is pleasant in intercourse. The man who is capable of abusing his position while training another's child, and employs his office for the purpose of instilling contempt for a parent's creed, and of cutting the cord which binds to the parent's holiest associations, is one of the greatest enemies known to domestic peace. He is the most artful plotter against the harmonies that liken earth to heaven, and it is worst of all when this is done under the pretence of enlarged Christian charity. I know there are some who affect to think, that the end of all evangelical sects being the same, provided a child becomes truly pious, the matter of joining a particular church is of little consequence. But is it so? Is there not a pathos in the language of a youthful female to her mother: "Entreat me not to leave thee, nor to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go; where thou lodgest, I will lodge; *thy people* shall be *my people*, and *thy God* shall be *my God*." We need but appeal to the distressing feelings which have often been engendered, when a child, on returning home from school, is seen going to a different church, mingling with different religious society; and perhaps is led to think it to be a duty to oppose, resist, and destroy, what the parent is attempting to build up. What is thus unpleasant, is rendered *bitter* by the fact, that in the doings of that child there is illustrated, not the strength of a reasoning conviction, but the evidence of a dupery practised by a heartless proselytism.

But if a school should be founded, not with a view of becoming a manufactory of Methodists, Baptists, Episcopalians, or Presbyterians, it is nevertheless bound to bring to bear on the conscience, those principles which are common to every church worthy of being considered Christian. Shall the plan of study meet the wants of every faculty, but that of conscience? Shall the beauties of human authors be enlarged on, and the "book of books" receive no attention? Shall the sci-

ence of numbers be taught, but the mind never be turned to calculate the worth of the soul? Shall the lips, which would check impropriety of conduct by admonition, and direct the erring to the consideration of grieving parents, and to the self reproach to be encountered when society will condemn—never suggest that duty is based on still higher motives than these? Shall the praise of man, and not the fear of God, be urged as the chief thing to be regarded in the conduct to be pursued? Shall a child, who leaves a religious home, find in school what will lead her to forget the lesson which a pious Father or Mother has taught; and on her return to the parental dwelling, show that though her mind is stored and her manners formed, but that she has forgotten God, and that his fear is not before her eyes?

Gentlemen, in speaking thus, I believe you have had your eyes set on these two things. You would not willingly wound the conscientious preferences of any of your patrons with regard to religion, and you would not have your school taught on any other than religious principles. I congratulate you in having placed the institution in hands, which have hitherto carefully avoided the occasion for denominational jealousy, and which have not been unmindful of a responsibility due to one higher than yourselves, in setting before the minds of these children the fear of God, as the great incentive of human action.

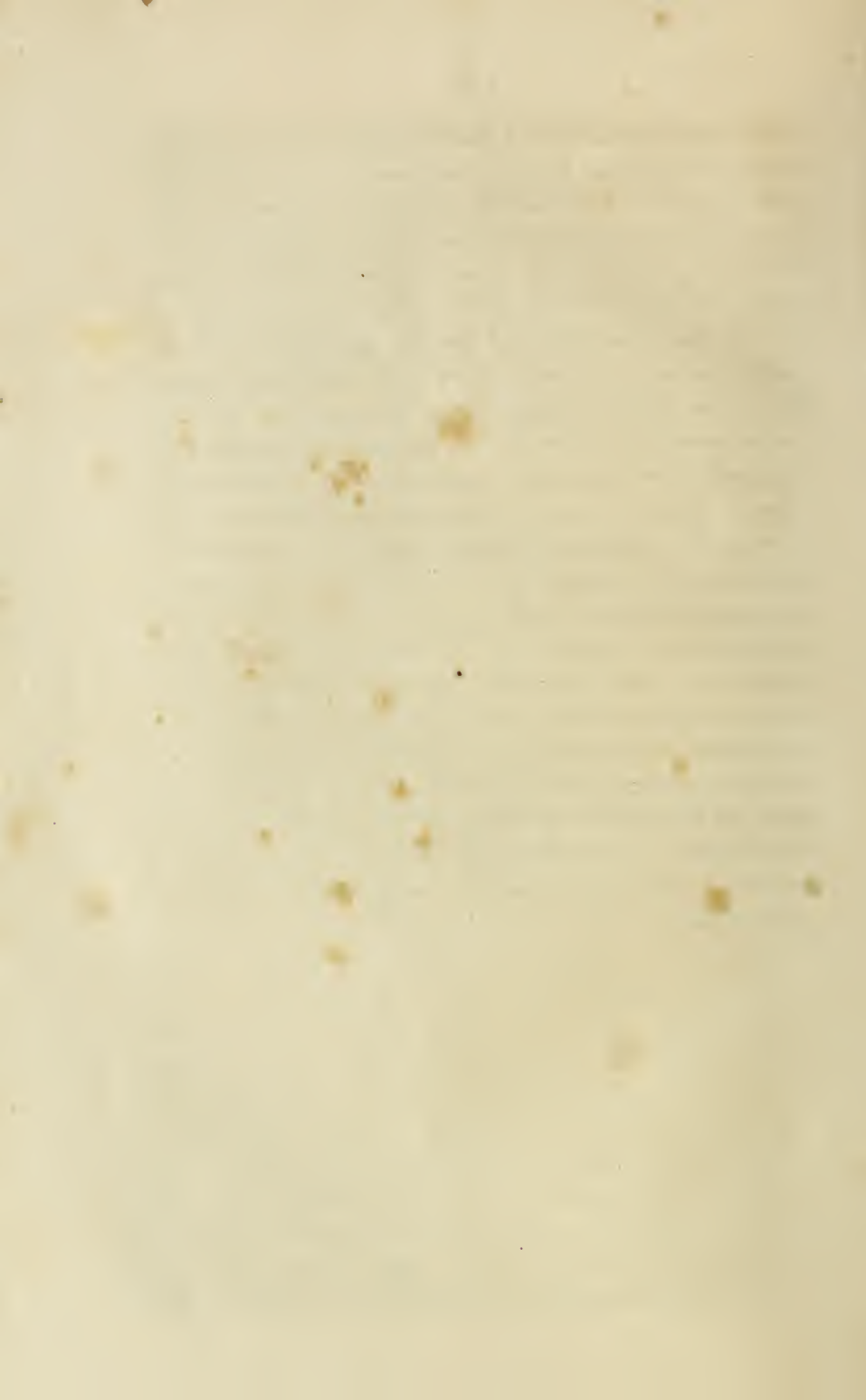
A large patronage, promising to increase, has been at once your reward, and a testimonial of public confidence in the fidelity of your Principal to the trust committed.

And now, my dear young ladies, I turn to you. Although you have not been directly addressed, if you have been attentive, much has been suggested, which you have applied to your present situation, and your future prospects: but more particularly would I now use the words of my text, for the purpose of setting before you the preeminence of personal piety beyond every other qualification. "Favor is deceitful,

beauty is vain, but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised."

By favor is here meant those characteristics, which win the esteem of others; be it ingratiating address, a gentle demeanor, or the attractions which a well stored mind and a ready utterance will supply. The wise man, had he been his own commentator on the text, would not have underrated any of these things abstractly considered, for they are indeed valuable, when properly accompanied, and directed to right objects. We are all so constituted as to desire to please, and so long as there are some things in themselves more pleasing than others, you should, according to the declaration of an inspired Apostle, "Covet earnestly the best gifts." Your opportunities in the High School will give you advantages in society beyond the less favored; but build not too much on them; unsanctified learning has often proved a curse, in the case of both man and woman. The best endowed, if without religious principle, will be the most injurious, because possessed of means for doing the greatest amount of mischief. And there are doubtless many, who, not having your present advantages, will be of more use in the world than you, if you do not employ your talents for the advancement of your Maker's glory. But a reward is before you for doing right in this matter; a woman that feareth the Lord, *she* shall be praised. The favor, with which an intelligent, refined, and Christian circle regards a woman, who is at once pious and accomplished, cannot be deceitful. For wherein society appreciates worth it compliments itself for its discernment, and in the bestowment of countenance on merit, tends to render its object more worthy. But what is the praise, even of the best of mortals, when compared with the approbation of your God? This you surely will have, if you lay yourselves and your acquirements at the Saviour's feet, and whether you do much or little in his cause, you will be rewarded for doing what you could. You will have the testimony of a good con-

science now, and hereafter a plaudit which will be to you a source of blessedness forever. Let, then, the fear of God be before your eyes, and the love of Christ rule within your heart. You will then acquire a knowledge which your teachers cannot give you, to any extent,—the knowledge of yourselves; the daily incidents of the school-room will tend to increase that knowledge, and prepare you for action in a more important field, where your works shall praise you. The girl on whom the beauty of the Lord doth rest, will develop into the lovely woman; she will become the creator of a pleasant home, the centre of a circle which she will both adorn and refine; a star in the constellation of worthies, each of which, absorbing beams from the eternal fountain of light, shall shine when every earthly glory shall fade away. Then, my young friends, be diligent in your studies, watchful over your temper and conduct, both towards your teachers and companions. Read much and meditate carefully on the Scriptures of everlasting truth. Pray frequently and earnestly for the divine blessing in the pardon of your sins, and for the bestowment of the Spirit's aid in your endeavors to honor the Lord in your present pursuits. May He grant all that you need, and more than I fear some of you now desire; and may he crown you at last in his kingdom with his richest favor: Amen.



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