

I deeply regret, Mr. Chairman, and gentlemen of the Lyceum, that the humble response, which I now attempt to make to your very kind invitation, must be somewhat meagre, in interest, owing to the extraordinary number of my private and professional engagements, for the last week. I have been obliged to speak ten times on as many different subjects within a week, besides travelling some considerable distances. All of this, be sure, would be but a sportive feat, for a man of large capacity, but it is such a tax upon my very small modicum of power, as to make me feel much more like resting than laboring. If you will excuse this poor inefficient effort, and forget it, in consideration of my honest willingness to serve you, and in recollection of the better instructions to which you have listened, from the gentlemen who have preceded me, and in anticipation of what you shall hereafter be entertained with, you may find patience enough, to hear me.

Youth, is emphatically, the season of hope. Standing mid-way, betwixt childhood and maturity, it is buoyant with the joyous recollections of the former, while unacquainted with the experience of the latter. The lights and shades, the joys and sorrows, which are interspersed amid the scenes ; the thorns and flowers, which are scattered along the pathway of manhood, are, those in this interesting stage of life,

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like a terra in cognita. And, as we are in our youth, unacquainted with what lies before us, in the next stage of life, so, we are too apt to pay but little attention to what shall prepare us to act the part of men. All our prospects are painted upon the retina of our immaginious eye, in the grandest and most fascinating colors. We see our future selves, in the full enjoyment of all that is desirable, in human relations and positions. If letters be our chosen pursuit, we fancy that we shall not only enjoy all the rights, immunities and privileges of *citizens* of the Republic of letters, but we persuade ourselves that we shall be chosen *Umpires* in, and over that Republic, wearing upon our vestments, the insignia of its highest honors. If our attention be turned to the acquisition of wealth, we feel perfectly confident of success, and we suffer ourselves to entertain no other ideas, than those connected with pomp and state, honor and obeisance, as the earning and homage of such a distinguished position, as we shall occupy among our fellows.

Now, the steps by which we shall reach these towery ascents, the obstacles to be overcome, the rugged toil to which we shall be obliged to submit, the frowning face of Adversity, which we shall have to encounter, are matters, not very intimately connected with, much less are they fruits

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and parcels of the manhood, described in the poetry of our youth. Yet, and important, an immensely important stage of our existence is youth – youth with its inexperience, its flowers, its fancies, its day-dreams and its facility of giving to,

“Airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.”

with all its faults and follies, *incalculably* important in this budding, blooming, hopeful season of youth.

For in youth we lay the foundation of our future weal or woe. Not only the unreal and imaginary is entertained in the youthful mind. Solid and substantial acquisitions, are now and here made, which from their nature must be among the elements, if indeed they are not the chief elements of the future man. I mean not, that youth is the season allotted to the acquirement, wealth, for as a general thing this is not true ; nor do I refer simply to what is more important the acquisition of learning ; but I speak of what is most important of all, the purposes to which youth is naturally devoted, the Formation of character.

As was intimated at an early day, I solicit your attention [...]is, as the subject for this evening’s contemplation. My arrangement includes the following points, viz ; CHARACTER—ITS ELEMENTS—ITS IMPORTANCE, AND ITS TRUE STANDARD.

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I. Of course I allude alone to good correct, upright character. That which is worthy of the approval of the good, and which indeed like Pollacks, virtue, in the midst of Hell, challenges the admiration of the most depraved. That which maintains its virgin like purity when surrounded and offended by the vicious as well as when associated with the chosen and the faithful of the earth. That which can afford to repose on its own consciousness of rectitude, whether it meets the smiles or the powers of the multitude, that which can feel itself supported alike, when arising to the surface of the social circle, or when depressed beneath it, brilliant alike in the rough and homely garb of poverty, or arrayed in the "purple and fine linen" of some modern diers.

Character so defined and described, may be said to be, but a rare plant among us. This point I do not purpose to discuss. — Sufficient it is for me not to repeat that the beautiful and interesting season of life, which is *yours*, gentleman of the Lyceum, is the season when more is done to form acquire and develope character, than at any other, and that what is now done, and well done, will leave indelible traces upon your future selves not only, but lay broad and deep the basis of your happiness, in this life, and that beyond the grave. At the same time, if from thoughtlessness or

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whatever cause, this stage of your existence be so neglected or perverted, as that an unhappy inclination be given you, now and lasting in time, and ceaseless beyond time must be the fruits – the better fruits thereof.

What are among the most essential elements of upright character?

In a most conspicuous position among them stands – indeed, at the very basis of them lies – that bright, rare, precious cornerstone *integrity* a happier trait than which neer adorned the character of an Angel. It is on almost every page of the inspired volume ascribed to the Deity, as the grand and glorious resting ground of the christians faith. It is a trait, too, as indispensable as it is brilliant in the character of any earthly or celestial intelligence. It is that unswerving, immovable appreciation and choice of the *rights*, which causes the *wrong* to be seen, in all its hideous monstrosity which makes it impossible for vice to array herself in a garb so attractive to utter words so suasive, in sounds so musical as to captivate and seduce. If this be regarded as saying too much, sure I am, that even profane history furnishes most admirable examples of it. It was this incorruptible trait, which has made the moral firmness in the character of a Roman proverbial down to this day.

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vast possessions, bereft of his children, and subjected to the evil counsels, of the wife of his bosom, while about his hearth-stone were friends – pseudo-friends – who in their infatuation, or misanthropy or both, loaded him with reproaches unswerved by the astounding suddenness of his reverses, undismayed at the

“Selfish counsel of those hangers on,” “unshaken” in the near face-to-face view, into which he had been thrown with stern visaged Adversity – unseduced by the appeal made to his impatient impulses, by his wife, and unterrified by the fierce assaults of Satan like a bold rock in the mid ocean which defies the surge, yields nought to the wave and says aha! to the billow – he stands erect and looking his God in the face exclaims “until I die, mine *integrity* shall not depart from me!

Behold it in this bright star of Israel-
itish integrity, the young Daniel at the court of Nebbuchadnezzar ; Daniel whom no place, power, threats or what not could swerve from his principles, but who, in spite of all these opened his windows towards Jerusalem, and poured forth his aborations to Israel’s God. Nor could the starved lion, into whose dreadful den he was thrown, awe him unto a dishonoring of himself as the price of the Royal fawn. his *integrity* he must maintain, and his integrity he *did* maintain, and the God

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whom he honored thus, closed the voracious jaws of the terrible beast, and made him as harmless as a suckling lamb.

I might mention that splendid constellation of young men, whose names and deeds are furnished to our hands by the inspired writers, beginning with Abel, pausing to admire Joseph, paying a merited tribute to the three Hebrew children, and so sweeping along the moral heavens, we might take in the range of our view Saul and Timothy, and a host of others, of equal glory and brilliancy.

But above them all the great central Son of our moral system, shines in infinite splendor and effulgence, JESUS *the model Man*. And shall I attempt to tell you how amid reproach, and scorn, and hate, and contumely subject to poverty and all its long train of inconveniences, privations and exposures ! He bore himself aloft above the incidents of His condition, how he puts his enemies to the pains and expense of exhausting their very malice, in the invention of plots, plans and pretexts for his destruction, and the overthrow of his system of atonement? No gentlemen, I will content myself with pointing you to the simple and ample story of his life and character and death, as written by his immediate friends and followers. There shall you learn what is more valuable, more reliable, more exemplary in respect to in-

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tegrity of character, than is it to be found in all the biographies of all the men of whom pens have ever written.

Another, and an analagous element of good character is decision. No appreciation of the virtuous and the commendable, however high-toned and thorough—no more approval of the right—no more preference for that which is intrinsically good, *can* be of very great importance, if it be not stable. A man needs not only to choose goodness, for its own sake, but he needs the moral nerve, to abide his choice in the storm as well as in the sun shine, under frowns and reproaches, as well as when met by bland smiles, and saluted by courteous homage.

Not unfrequently, in these times are we called upon to embrace truths emanating from God's own heart, of whose origin and character, we have no more doubt, than we have of the being of Jehovah, or the authenticity of his word. And yet the very recognition of the divine authority, which we find in such truths, will expose us to circumstances, any thing else than pleasant or desireable. Now the acknowledgment and embracement of truth is one of the lowest conditions upon which we can maintain our integrity. Nay more, the avowal and the defense of truth is not unfrequently altogether vital to one's maintenance of integrity ; and if integrity be

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wanting, good character cannot exist.—
When one is placed, where he must conceal, disavow, or deny his principles, (which is but another name for denying his God,) or lose the favor of some powerful benefactor, and incur the reproaches of those, whose opinions are generally esteemed, he must make his election, as to which course he shall pursue. If he lacks the decision to lead the path, in which, [.....]
character is the best ground, the only true ground of MORAL INFLUENCE.

But, gentlemen, there is one more method of estimating the value of character, to which I will now ask your attention. It is a view of what God *does* to *promote* it, and a consideration of the *rewards* which He confers upon it. That we may form a correct character, He places before us the best possible model, the highest possible standard, and the most moving inducements and the happiest facilities. The model He gives us is himself, the standard is his word, as contained in the Law and the Gospel. The inducements, are the internal satisfaction arising from doing right, and the good influences we may exert upon our fellow-men; and the rewards of an everlasting life, in which is to be enjoyed the completest, most perfect felicity. The facilities referred to, are the aids and encouragements He, in infinite grace, be

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