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U. S. OF L. The regular meeting of Owosso Lodge, No. 44, United Sons of Industry, are held on the 2d and 4th Thursday evenings in each month, at Odd Fellow's Hall, corner of Washington and Main Streets. Brothers in good standing in the Order cordially invited. C. McCORMICK, Master. June 21 '91

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OWOSSO, MICH. JUNE 25, 1886.

WHOLE NO. 319

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THE BAPTIST CHURCH BY REV. THOS.
STALKER, OF THE M. E. CHURCH, SUN-
DAY EVENING, JUNE 20.

TEXT:—I Cor. 16:13.

If you had been with Paul when he wrote this letter to the church at Corinth, and asked him what the world needed most, he would, I think, have answered: *great thought and great men.* And is not this still the world's great need? What constitutes the darkness of the world? The absence of strong thought. And what constitutes the weakness of the world? The absence of strong men. We have some strong thought and some strong men but not enough of either to burden. Paul, in his day, was an example of both. By the authority that belongs to a noble, heroic, self-sacrificing man, he had a right to say to his fellow laborers and soldiers, "Quit you like men, be strong." It is a good thing for common soldiers when their officers set them examples of courage, endurance and patriotism. It is a good thing when pupils see in their teachers what they ought to strive after, both intellectually and morally. It is a bad thing for pupils, when their teachers are either intellectually incompetent, or loose in their morals. Paul was not only a successful minister and teacher, but one of the noblest examples of his age, of what men ought to be and do. Paganism had its Socrates who, rather than violate his convictions, drank the cup of poison; and its Regulus, who, rather than violate his promise, returned to Carthage to endure torture and death. But Paul has given to the world the grandest example of the highest type of moral heroism. He was thirty-five years a martyr. Bora in the land of the sun and of the palm, dowered with magnificent powers, educated at two great centers of thought, one philosophic, the other religious; converted to christianity while attempting to destroy it, then, after three years of preparation for his work, he filled his life with labors, heroic conflicts and sacrifices for the good of his race and the glory of God. Such a man had a right to say, not only to Corinthians, but to men of all ages and all climes: "*Quit you like men, be strong.*" That is, "*be strong men.*" Be strong in faith, in love, in thought, in will. The church and the world need such men—men of culture, with the Heavenly unction of apostolic men resting upon them. These words, "*be strong men,*" have a meaning for this age, for this great Nation, for the men of this city, for the graduates of our High School. Success will crown the efforts of all who heed the injunction.

Some one has said: "There are three commencement days of human existence—the day of birth, when we begin to be children; the day of graduation, when we begin to be men, and the day of death, when we begin to be devils or angels." All of us have passed through the first commencement, a few the second, and soon we shall all pass through the third. When that time comes, may we rise, not to be angels, but *glorified men.* But this is impossible in the absence of thought and manly effort. Life is full of conflicts; difficulties beset us on every hand, whether we are in the wilderness, or city, on the vast prairie, or rocky mountains, amid the palms and orange groves of the South, or the snows and solitudes of the North, we cannot escape them. No age or clime is without them. Emerson says: "Times of heroism, are generally times of terror, but the day never shines in which this element may not work. Human nature demands her champions and martyrs, and the trial of persecution *always proceeds.*" Do we ask why we cannot have men of strong thought, disciplined powers and lofty character, without conflicts? The answer is, because there is a kingdom of bad powers, a kingdom that must be fought and conquered, or life's great purpose will be defeated. Paul knew this, and he says: "Be strong men," then you shall succeed. But how can you be strong men? By battling with difficulties, resisting temptations, overcoming obstacles, and marching toward the city that hath foundations, whose maker and builder is God. Who are the men of strong thought? The men who think, think, THINK. The pupil who works out his own problems, strengthens his intellect by the process. He who spends his school days in intellectual indolence, weakens his intellect. At least, he fails to elevate, expand and solidify it. He may have a rich uncle, a fine coach, a noble horse, clothes cut in the latest style, elegant shoes, a beautiful Franchised mustache, and white gloves, sweetened with the perfumes of Arabia, but he will also have a weak intellect. This uncle cannot buy him deeply convoluted brains, as he can buy him a fine silk hat. These come to those only who have solved their own problems. No disrespect is meant to the rich uncle, but a strong intellect is the

result of intellectual toil. The feeble minds of most of the graduates of our High Schools and Colleges, are more the sad results of intellectual indolence, than the unequal distribution of gifts by the Almighty. Intellectual weakness, in those who have had the opportunities for improvement, is more frequently a *fault* than an infirmity. Is it not true that the intellectual status of our Republic, our State, and even this city, is below what it ought to be? Where is the difficulty? I have two sources: First, in the intellectual indolence common to man. Second, in the sad fact that parents allow their children to abandon school life before graduating. In some cases it may be necessary, but in the many it is not so. Children are too anxious to begin life without an adequate preparation, and parents give their consent. Years enough are not given to laying a good foundation for life's momentous structure. This is a sad, and in many instances, a fatal mistake. Life is robbed of its grandest possibilities, because *mind-power* has not been sufficiently developed and disciplined. Young people say very often, and parents give their assent: "We want to be doing something for ourselves." Such forget that the *best* thing they can do for themselves is, not to leave school "to earn a little money," but to learn how to think, how to restrain themselves, and thus learn how to make the best of their powers. There is too much of what is called "cramming," in our schools, and too little time given for digestion, appropriation and thoroughness, not because the methods of the teacher are defective and "rutty," but because parents are in a hurry to rush their children through school. The result is, an abnormal mental growth, tenderness, and dyspepsia. A pupil who has to spread himself over too large a field of thought, will find himself doing as imperfect work as an ambitious hen, who spreads herself over thirty eggs, when she only possesses power enough to incubate fifteen. This is *one* of the reasons why so few of those who enter the High School, graduate. More is put into the mind than it can digest and appropriate, and the result is, it becomes glutted, cloyed, satiated, and asks that the process be stopped. And fond parents say: "Our children don't like to study; can't endure study," and so school life is abandoned, and the children are deprived of a much needed culture and discipline for the solemn responsibilities of life. And the main reason for this sad phase of youthful life is, the blustering American haste, to rush children through school so they can begin money-making. No wonder that so many of our scholars lack strong thought, manliness, strong character, and fail to rise to positions of eminence in the world of intellect. What is needed?

First: Every child should be taught as soon as possible, to form a plan of life. Some might ask: "What is the use; is not every life a plan of God? And if so, will He not execute His plan in spite of ours? Is there not a divinity that shapes our ends, rough hew them as we will?" These are pertinent and important questions and a candid, and, if possible, a correct answer should be given. Let me say, then, that God has no plan of anyone's life that is in conflict with the best possibilities of being and doing, wrapped up in his intellectual and moral natures. In fact, you may read His intentions—His plan, as it is written, on those possibilities. Study your powers, capabilities, tastes, circumstances and opportunities, in conjunction with the Bible, prayerfully, earnestly, continuously, then you will find out *God's* plan of life. The knowledge may come to you gradually, or it may come as a revelation; never mind, it will be sure to come, it will not tarry when it is needed. It always comes to those who look, and wait.

There need here be no conflict between your plan and God's. Bear in mind that if Divinity shapes your life, you furnish the materials. Then, by a *plan* of life, is not meant a program, gotten up to be carried out in detail, as if life was a concert, or convention; but simply this, the formation of a *noble purpose* to be, and do, what is worthy of a *man*, and nothing more. Surely, here is a plan of life that is in exact agreement with God's. *Be a man and act the man.* Such a life cannot be a loose, purposeless, life. Yonder is a majestic ship, her timbers are solid, they are solidly, skillfully, and artistically put together. She is loaded with a joyous company that is reckless of sun, winds and waves. Ask the captain, "whither bound?" "Nowhere in particular," he replies. What think you of such an answer? There are neat sails, compass and helm, all fitted to sail to some fair haven, but there is no definite purpose on board. Possibly, fair winds may drift them to some beautiful, golden shore, but there is a terrible risk, a fearful uncertainty! Yet, this is but a faint representation of many young men, who are *now* on life's rough sea. They have no intelligent, noble purpose, nothing toward which their mighty

energies are directed. They are not sailing toward some fair haven, but drifting they know not whither. Is it a marvel that such aimless lives are so often stranded on the hot, blistering shores of scepticism, or engulfed in the maelstrom of worldliness and licentiousness?

"The wise man, says the Bible, walks with God, surveys, far on, the endless line of life; Values his soul; thinks of eternity; Both worlds considers, and provides for both."

Here is a grand and lofty purpose of life, to provide for two worlds, the seen, and the unseen, the temporal and the eternal, and the earlier this becomes the settled, enthroned purpose of every youthful heart, the better the chances will be for greatness in thought, character, and destiny. The young man who constantly says to his Maker, "*Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory,*" has before him the most rational and noble purpose of life. Not a set of circumstances, or the blind forces of nature, but God is the best guide over life's treacherous, perilous sea. The flower which opens most beautifully is the one that has lived in the clearest sunlight, and breathed the purest atmosphere. And the development of the most beautiful, youthful life, is that which has taken place in the atmosphere of prayer, and under the clear shining of the Sun of righteousness.

Many young men have visions of successful and glorious life, that are as unsubstantial as the day dreams of golden shores, enchanted isles, honors, and untold wealth. Life, however, is no day dream, but something made up of stern realities, fierce struggles, and blessed is the young man or young woman who resolves early and constantly to build out of its rough materials, a pure, solid, lofty character. When the heart becomes the home of pure thoughts, holy aspirations, and a fixed purpose to be a man or woman, of the better, nobler sort, greatness and strength will be sure to come. This is to quit one's self like a man. Rise then, to the highest planes of thought and action, or you will loose ground. Do not cease to grow in knowledge and strength when your school life ends. You have formed habits of study and discipline, press forward with a firm and steady step. Work is the law of life and nature. From Him who said, "My Father worketh, hitherto, and I work," to the lowest form of life, labor, is the beneficent law of their being. From the archangel to the microscopic coral insect, the universe of living creatures is one vast workshop. The mind must be cultivated, or there can be no health, progress or happiness. The stagnant pool breeds malaria and pestilence, the indolent mind becomes feeble. Mental, physical, and moral work clears the intellect, arouses the conscience, enlarges the memory, strengthens the will. Labor is health and life, inactivity is disease and death. Highways of knowledge and usefulness are now, and will be, open before you, walk in them as long as you live, then intellectual energy, beauty, dignity and maturity will be your rich inheritance in old age. But you say, "That means labor, incessant labor, and there are so many difficulties along the path of greatness, honor and usefulness." Of course there are, but grappling with difficulties gives tone, health and vigor to the soul. It is an essential condition of strength and greatness. Love becomes wild, daring, restless and romantic while battling with difficulties. Christian character becomes solid, firm and beautiful by perpetual conflict. You know the old aphorism—"necessity is the mother of invention." Think how she has leveled forests, built bridges, tunneled mountains, laid iron pathways from sea to sea, called the lightning from the skies and sent it with messages to the ends of the earth. It was the fierce armies of Gaul and Britain that developed in Caesar his skill. It was the snow clad Alps that made Hannibal fertile in expedients. Do not, dear young friends, shrink from difficulties. Cross the Rubicon, bid your souls with the strong cord of obligations, then meet them, and thus "*quit you like men,*" This is the only way to attain greatness of intellect and moral character. You cannot jump into either. Great results, whether physical, intellectual or moral, are seldom the products of giant powers; but of ordinary powers well developed and trained by exercise. The lamp lit cave, and sea-side declamations, preceded the omnipotent eloquence of Demosthenes that thrilled the Athenian Senate and summoned a nation to arms. Genius that is not accompanied with earnest, persistent labor, is more frequently a curse than a blessing. Rest not on mere possession, but on the best use of your powers, then your talents will multiply, and you will rejoice in consciously increasing power for good.

Again, and again, we are reminded that the present age is the grandest of all ages. But, to arrive at such a conclusion, we have to look at the best educated specimens of physical, intellectual and moral manhood. It is said that London, England, is a city of large benevolences and large vices. So, the present age is made up of the grandest and meanest specimens of humanity. What makes the difference between these radically different classes? "Inherited tendencies and environments," says materialistic and Godless science. This answer cannot be correct, as it reduces man to an automaton, and makes him a slave. It robs him of his will, the grandest and most God-like element of his personality; and thus destroys the foundation on which rests the majestic fabric of moral being. In one word, such an answer transforms a free, responsible being into a mere thing. The true answer is, Divine grace and education have made the difference between the sublimest and meanest specimens of humanity. Let me

(Continued on fourth page.)