

and Sermons :: "Sober-Mindedness Pressed Upon Youth" Matthew Henry sermon modernized and in installments

"Sober-Mindedness Pressed Upon Youth" Matthew Henry sermon modernized and in installments - posted by PaulWes

Dear saints, I've had a burden to make the sermons of Matthew Henry more accessible to youth and people who otherwise wouldn't read Puritan literature. Henry's Bible commentary needs no introduction or fanfare, as most everyone I know has heard of it, or owns it, or at the very least is vaguely familiar with it. Matthew Henry's actual sermons, on the other hand, are quite obscure. They are all but completely unknown to our generation. This is unfortunate, as I find his writings infused with godly wisdom and cleanliness, the epitome of Puritanic holiness and sobriety.

Well, I was recently digging through the ponderous mass of miscellaneous sermons he wrote and came across a gem for youth. In typical Puritanic form, the paragraphs are quite verbose and antiquated in sentence structure and punctuation. I thought I would clean it up a bit - contemporize it with reverence - and make it more accommodating to the average reader. I'm "translating" it step-by-step, point-by-point, and I'll post new sections here in installments. I think it's a wonderful discourse; every bit as comparable to J.C. Ryle's monumental "Thoughts for Young Men". I pray it blesses you as much as it has blessed me.

- Brother Paul

Sober-Mindedness Pressed Upon Young People

A discourse by the Reverend Matthew Henry. Delivered on Jan. 3, 1712

"Young men likewise exhort to be sober-minded" (Titus 2:6)

It is the great duty of all young people to be sober-minded. In this discourse I shall endeavor to show you, (1) what this sober-mindedness is; (2) what considerations should engage you to be sober-minded, and; (3) how to make such applications in your life. So, to begin, let us see what it is to be sober-minded. This exhortation is proper for both sexes, and all that are within hearing; I beseech you suffer this word and receive it at your peril, for if it come from God, it is at your utmost peril to refuse it. Give this exhortation its full latitude:

(1) You must be considerate and thoughtful, and not rash and heedless. To be sober-minded is to make use of our reason, in reasoning with ourselves and in communing with our own hearts. It is to employ those noble powers and capacities by which we are distinguished from and dignified above the beasts. We learned to walk when we were children; when will we learn to think, to think seriously, to think to the purpose? Our heads are full of floating thoughts, foreign and impertinent. When will we be brought to close and fixed thoughts, to think with concern and application of the great things that belong to our everlasting peace and welfare? We were endued with reason and heart-communion for those great ends, that we might not receive the grace of God in vain, but being rational creatures, we might act as behoves us, as becomes us.

Some have recommended the study of mathematics to fix the minds of young people, but I would much rather it were done by a deep concern about the soul and another world. If such prevailed, it would eventually fix their thoughts to the best purpose; for when we come to see the greatness of that God with whom we have to do, and the weight of eternity we are standing on the brink of, we will see it is time to think, and high time to look about us.

We must learn to think not only of what is just before us, of what merely strikes the senses and affects the imagination, but of the causes and consequences and reasons of things. We should discover truths and compare them with one another, to argue them and finally apply them to ourselves. We should beware of fastening upon thoughts that first pop into our minds, instead of fastening upon those that should come first and which deserve to be first considered.

Multitudes are undone because they are unthinking; inconsideration is the ruin of thousands, and many a precious soul has perished through mere carelessness. The Lord would have us "consider our ways", and retire into our own souls and begin an acquaintance with them. Assuredly, it would be the most profitable acquaintance we could fall into! While we covet to see the world, we are strangers at home. Take time to think! Desire to be alone now and then, and let not solitude and retirement be an uneasiness to you; you have a heart of your own you may talk to, and a God nigh with whom you may have pleasing communion.

Learn to think freely, for God invites you to do so: "Come now, and let us reason together." I encourage you to inquire and think impartially, as the noble Bereans did, searching the scriptures daily to see whether those things which the apostles told them were true. Pure Christianity does not fear the scrutiny of a free thought, but it despises the impotent malice of a prejudiced one. There are certain men, I find, who, under the pretense of being "free-thinkers", endeavour to shock young people's belief of the divine authority of Holy Scripture. By sly insinuation, they try to undermine religion by turning sacred things into jest and ridicule, and by doing so, usurp the honourable character of free-thinkers. They are as far from the freedom they pretend to exercise as they are from the sincerity they protest against. The pride of singularity and a spirit of opposition and contradiction enslave their thoughts as much as implicit thoughts of faith and obedience enslave the minds of righteous men. While they promise men liberty, they do but deceive them, and, under the pretense of reason, ridicule all that agree not with them. They as arbitrarily impose their own will upon men's credulity as ever the church of Rome did, while cursing all that differ from them.

So, beloved, learn to think for yourselves. Think of what you are, of what you are capable of, think of who made you and what you were made for. Think of why you were endued with the powers of reason. Think of what you have been doing since you came into this world. Think of the great work you were sent into the world for; think of the vanity of childhood and youth - of how unavoidably those years are passing away - and determine whether or not it be high time for the youngest of you to begin to be religious and enter in at the strait gate.

As to your particular actions, do not walk after every adventure as do those that despise their own ways, but consider what you do before you do it that you may not have occasion to repent of it afterwards. Do nothing rashly. Always speak and act under the government of the great law of consideration. Ponder the path of your feet, that it may be a strait path. Some people take pride in being careless, and they glory in their shame. But you are not to be thus negligent; set your hearts to all those things that are testified, and think on them with the reason of men. Give them the concern they deserve.

** point (2) coming soon

Re: "Sober-Mindedness Pressed Upon Youth" Matthew Henry sermon modernized a - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/11/22 17:36

Quote:

Do nothing rashly. Always speak and act under the government of the great law of consideration. Ponder the path of your feet, that it may be a strait path.

Looking forward to next section, this is a wonderful thing you are doing brother!

Re:, on: 2007/11/22 17:36

Wonderful, wonderful, wonderful! Thank you, brother for doing this. :)

~Joy

Re: section (2) - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2007/11/22 18:36

(2) You must be cautious and prudent, and not wilful and heady.

You must not only think rationally, but when you have done so, you must act wisely. Walk circumspectly, look before you, look about you; look under your feet and pick your way, not as fools, but as wise. King David said, "I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way," and his prayer was, "Lord, when wilt thou come onto me?" Accordingly, we find that his purpose was performed and prayer answered, as "...he behaved himself wisely in all his ways, and the Lord was with him." Those that govern themselves will God guide, but those that love to wander, God will leave to wander endlessly.

Put away childish follies with other childish things, and do not speak and think like children all your days. Espouse principles of wisdom. Fix to yourselves rules of wisdom, and be ruled by those rules, and acted by those principles. It is the wisdom of the prudent to understand his own way, his own business, and not to censure other people's. Such wisdom will be profitable to direct your measures and steps in all cases. Youth is apt to be bold and venturesome, and therefore resolute and peremptory, to its great prejudice. But you are not to be so. Let the place of reason and conscience give check to the violence of appetite and passion, let them rectify the mistakes and overrule the hasty dictates of humor and fancy. L

et them reduce the arbitrary and exorbitant power of those tyrants.

How often did Solomon press it upon the young man under his tuition to get wisdom? Recall this: "My son, be wise; wisdom is the principle thing, therefore get wisdom, get understanding." You that are launching out into the world must take wisdom to be your pilot, or you are in danger of splitting upon some rock. The conduct of wisdom must be your pillar of cloud and fire as you travel through this wilderness.

Be diffident of your own judgments, and jealous of yourselves. Be careful not to take all things right and entire lest your resolutions resulting from your faulty considerations be proved wrong. Do not say, "I will do so-and so..." or "I am resolved to do such-and-such regardless of what may be said to the contrary..." or "I will walk in the way of my heart, and in the sight of my eyes, whatsoever it may cost me..." Never have any will but what is guided by wisdom. Be willing to be advised by your friends in every case of moment and difficulty, and depend more upon the judgment of those who have more experience in the world than you. Consult with those who are wise and good. Ask them what they would do if they were in your case, and you will find that "in the multitude of counsellors there is safety." And if such advice does not prove well, you shall then have comfort knowing you acted in mature deliberation, for as the thing appeared at the time, you did it for the best.

What brighter character can be given of a young man, than to say, "He is wise"? Or what blacker than to say, "He is wilful"? But would you be wise - not only regarded as wise - but be really wise?

Study the scriptures. By them you will get more understanding than the ancients, more than all your teachers. Make your observations upon the fortune and misfortune of others, taking a pattern by those who do well and a warning by those who do ill. Beloved, look upon both, and receive instruction. But be especially earnest with God in prayer, for wisdom, as Solomon was, for such prayer is both pleasing and prevailing in heaven. "If any man" (if any young man) "lack wisdom" (if he is sensible that he lacks wisdom, his way to it is plain:) "let him ask of God" (and he is encouraged to do it) "for the Lord giveth wisdom". The Lord delights to give wisdom, he gives it liberally, and he has a particular eye to young people in the dispensing of this gift. His word was written "to give to the young man knowledge and discretion."

For those who are willing, but do not care to be scolded, we are told that God gives and upbraids not, and yet if this were not enough to encourage the beggar at Wisdom's gate, there is an express promise to everyone who seeks aright: he shall not seek in vain. This is not a promise with a peradventure, but one with the greatest assurance: "It shall be given him" (James 1:5). To all true believers, Christ is, and shall be made of God wisdom himself.

*** point (3) coming soon

Re: - posted by TaylorOtwell (), on: 2007/11/22 19:00

Thank you dear brother Paul.

Re: section (3) - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2007/11/23 11:40

(3) You must be humble and modest, and not proud and conceited. Sober-mindedness is the same as lowly-mindedness. It is that same poverty of spirit on which Christ pronounced his first blessing (Matthew 5:3), and what is recommended to the younger when Peter writes to be "clothed with humility" (I Peter 1:5).

I have seen more young people ruined by pride than perhaps by any other lust. Therefore let me press this upon you with all earnestness; it is a caution introduced with more than ordinary solemnity. It is this: "Let no man think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but think soberly." Let him think unto sobriety, let him think himself into a sober mind, and always keep in that good mind.

Keep low thoughts of yourselves, of your endeavours both outward and inward, of your attainments and improvements, of all your performances, and all the things you call merits and excellencies. Boast not of a false gift, of what you have not, nor be puffed-up with what you have. Whatever you may have in you that is commendable, treat it as people would their own faults and diminish it, and look much at that in others which is more commendable.

If you are handsome, do not glory in it, nor in your beauty, nor in your ingenious wit. Does your face shine in any respect? Be as Moses was; as soon as he perceived it, he placed a vail over it, not wishing the people to see. Delight more to say and do what is praiseworthy than to be praised for it. Remember: "What hast thou that thou hast not received?" And

what have you received that you have not abused? Why then should you boast?

Keep up a quick and constant sense of your manifold defects and infirmities, of how much there is in you, and how much is said and done by you every day. Keep in mind that which you have reason to be ashamed of, and humbled for, think of how many things you fall short in, and in how many more you come short of the rule. You will soon find no reason to be proud of what you know when you begin to see how much you are ignorant of, and you will see how ungood you are when you see how much you do amiss. Dwell much upon humbling considerations, and upon those that tend to take down your high opinion of yourselves. Keep up a humble sense of your necessary and constant dependance upon Christ and his grace, without which you are nothing, and will soon be worse than nothing.

Think not yourself too wise, too good, or too old to be reprov'd and taught to do better. When you are double and triple the age you are now, even then think not yourself too old to learn, and increase in learning. "If any man thinks that he knows anything" (if he thinks he knows "everything", so that he needs no more instruction) "he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know it" (I Corinthians 8:2). If you deem yourselves wise, become fools that you may be wise. Be sensible of your own folly that you may be quicken'd to the means of wisdom, and prepared to receive the grace of wisdom.

Have no confidence in your own judgment, nor be opinionative, nor look upon those with contempt that do not think as you do. Be not forward to say, "I hold to so-and-so..." for as a grave divine once told a novice who was laying down the law with great assurance: "It best becomes you to hold your peace." Take heed of thinking yourselves above your business. You that are apprentices, think not yourselves above your service. Humility will make the yoke you are under easy to carry. Think it no disparagement to confine yourselves to your business. Be ashamed of nothing but sin.

It will be yet much worse if you think yourselves above your religion, above the restraints of it, as if it were a thing below you to be afraid of sin, or to make it a thing of conscience concerning your words and actions. But there cannot be a greater disgrace to you than loose walking. Nor think yourselves above the exercises of your religion, as if it were a thing below you to pray, and hear the word of God, and join in acts of devotion, for the greatest honour you can do yourselves is to honour God.

Beloved, let this branch of sober-mindedness appear in your looks and behaviour. Let the show of your countenances be a witness for you, that you are not confident and conceited. Always keep up a due diffidence of yourselves, and a due deference to all about you - and especially to those above you. Be not pert in the way you carry yourselves nor fantastic in your dress. Humility and modesty reigning in the heart are the best ornaments, in the sight of God, and all wise men. These are of great price, and you will find that "better it is to be of a humble spirit with the lowly than to divide the spoil with the proud," for when "men's pride shall bring them low, honour shall uphold the humble in spirit." Yes, they shall be upheld, borne up, and borne out in that honour.

*** section (4) coming soon

Re: "Sober-Mindedness Pressed Upon Youth" Matthew Henry sermon modernized a - posted by crsschk (), on: 2007/11

This is just outstanding brother, thank you so much.

This exhortation is proper for both sexes, and all that are within hearing;

Quote:
-----Multitudes are undone because they are unthinking; inconsideration is the ruin of thousands, and many a precious soul has perished through mere carelessness. The Lord would have us "consider our ways", and retire into our own souls and begin an acquaintance with them. Assuredly, it would be the most profitable acquaintance we could fall into! While we covet to see the world, we are strangers at home. Take time to think! Desire to be alone now and then, and let not solitude and retirement be an uneasiness to you; you have a heart of your own you may talk to, and a God nigh with whom you may have pleasing communion.

Learn to think freely, for God invites you to do so: "Come now, and let us reason together." I encourage you to inquire and think impartially, as the noble Bereans did, searching the scriptures daily to see whether those things which the apostles told them were true. Pure Christianity does not fear the scrutiny of a free thought, but it despises the impotent malice of a prejudiced one.

"Think impartially" ...

Think!

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2007/11/24 8:46

Quote:

-----This is just outstanding brother, thank you so much.

You're welcome, Mike, Joy, Taylor, Christian. I'm just as blessed as you are when I type these out and see them on the screen, knowing the entire world is reading such godly exhortation. Should it please the Lord, I would like to have these printed in small booklet form one day, a section per chapter, and give them out freely to youth groups. I think they'd make a great companion along with the gospel of John for young Christians just learning to walk. I wish I had heard this wisdom when I started out. Instead of being coaxed into going to Christian rock concerts (to get pumped up) and taught that Jesus wanted to give me an awesome life, I should have been fed these principles. A person just starting out in God can have quite the uninspired sense of what the word "awesome" really means, especially as it pertains to new life in Christ.

Exhortations on piety and humility and sobriety as becoming youth in Christ did not enter my spiritual life until years later, after much upset and confusion and defeat and vanity in church. Where are these teachings today? Why are they buried in dusty crypts between old, mildewed pages and found in the bargain bins at second-hand *secular* bookstores? I mention secular, because, for the most part, Christian bookstores won't even carry them at all.

Brother Paul

Re: section (4) - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2007/11/24 10:35

(4) You must be temperate and self-denying, and not indulgent of your appetites. Let me now warn young men to dread the sin of drunkenness, to keep a distance from it, to avoid all appearances of it, and all approaches to it. It has slain its thousands - nay, its tens of thousands of young people, it has ruined their health, brought diseases upon them, and cut them off in the flower of their days. How many fall as unpitied sacrifices to this base lust!

Take heed of the beginnings of this sin, for the way of it is downhill, and many, under the pretense of innocent entertainment and passing the evening in pleasant conversation are drawn to drink in excess and make beasts of themselves. You should tremble to think how fatal the consequences are, how unfit it renders you for the service of God at night, yes, and for your own job in the morning. How many are thus besotted and sunk into a drowsiness that clothes a man with rags, and yet that is not the worst: it also extinguishes convictions and the spark of devotion and provokes the Spirit of grace to withdraw. It will be the sinner's eternal ruin if it be not repented of, and forsaken in time. The word of God hath said it: "Drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God" and "Look not upon the wine when it is red, when it gives its colour in the cup," (when it is charming and tempting; do not be overcome with its allurements, for it shall) "...bite like a serpent and sting like an adder."

If you saw the devil putting the cup of drunkenness in your hand, I dare say you would not take it. You may be sure this temptation comes from him, and therefore you ought to dread it as much as if you saw him offering it to you. If you saw poison enter the glass, you would not drink it. If strong drink be provoking to God and to the ruining of your souls, such then is much worse than poison! It is even worse than death: there is hell in the cup. I am sorry we cannot urge this more strongly against you, so much as gladly we would the scandal of it, for drinking has grown so fashionable. But whether you will hear or whether you will forbear, we will insist upon the sin of it, and its prejudice to the soul both here and forever, and beg of you to consider these things and frighten yourselves from it. We will insist likewise upon the real disgrace drunkenness is to a reasonable creature, to one who is hereby spoiled of his crown, and levelled with the brutes. We would convince you to shame yourselves out of it before God and your own conscience.

Drunkenness is a sin that is in a special manner shameful and hurtful to those who profess religion. You that have been well-educated and bred-up in sober families have had examples of sobriety set before you. You have known the honours and pleasures of sober conversation; what a reproach it will be to you if you take up the regimen of a drunkard! What a degeneracy! What a fall from your first love! Tell me, where will it all stop? Perhaps you have already given your name to the Lord Jesus, and dare to sit at his table, partaking of his cup and cup of devils. Let Christians that are made kings and

priests by God take a lesson which Solomon's mother taught him: "It is not for kings, oh Lemuel, it is not for kings" (so it is not for Christians) "to drink wine" (but with great moderation) "lest they drink and forget the law" (forget the gospel). And yet this is not all I have to warn you of.

Young people should not be solicitous to have all the delights of their senses wound up to the height of pleasureableness. Be not "desirous of dainties, for they are deceitful meat" (Proverbs 23:3). It is true that although the use of them is lawful, the love of them is dangerous. The indulging of the appetites of the body is oft injurious and prejudicial to the soul. Learn instead to relish the delights that are rational and spiritual, causing your mouths to be out of taste to that which is brutal and belong only to animal life. Be afraid lest by indulging the body and the lusts of it you come by degrees to the black character of those that were "lovers of pleasure more than the lovers of God" (II Timothy 3:4).

The body is made to be a servant to the soul, and it must be treated accordingly. We must give to it as we would give to a servant: that which is just and equal. Let the body have what is fitting, but let it not be suffered to domineer, for nothing is so insufferable as "a servant when he reigneth" (Proverbs 30:22). Be also careful not to pamper it, for "he that delicately brings up his servant from a child, shall have him become his son at the length" (Proverbs 29:21).

Be dead therefore to the delights of sense, and mortify the love of ease and pleasure. Learn to endure hardness, learn to deny yourselves and you will then make it easy to bear the common calamities of human life, as well as sufferings for the sake of righteousness. Those that would approve themselves good soldiers of Jesus Christ must endure hardness, and they must inure themselves to it (II Timothy 2:3).

***** section (5) coming soon

Re: - posted by hmmm (), on: 2007/11/24 12:28

Quote:
-----and many, under the pretense of innocent entertainment and passing the evening in pleasant conversation are drawn to drink in excess and make beasts of themselves

and we probably have multitudes of more entertainment and different kinds of drugs and ways to get high. So I feel as this word is for our generation especially

Quote:
-----The body is made to be a servant to the soul, and it must be treated accordingly. We must give to it as we would give to a servant: that which is just and equal. Let the body have what is fitting, but let it not be suffered to domineer, for nothing is so insufferable as "a servant when he reigneth" (Proverbs 30:22). Be also careful not to pamper it, for "he that delicately brings up his servant from a child, shall have him become his son at the length" (Proverbs 29:21).

What a word! wisdom...

Re:, on: 2007/11/24 13:09

Quote:

from section 3..

Keep up a quick and constant sense of your manifold defects and infirmities, of how much there is in you, and how much is said and done by you every day. Keep in mind that which you have reason to be ashamed of, and humbled for, think of how many things you fall short in, and in how many more you come short of the rule. You will soon find no reason to be proud of what you know when you begin to see how much you are ignorant of, and you will see how ungood you are when you see how much you do amiss. Dwell much upon humbling considerations, and upon those that tend to take down your high opinion of yourselves. Keep up a humble sense of your necessary and constant dependance upon Christ and his grace, without which you are nothing, and will soon be worse than nothing.

The section on humility was so wonderful.

*You will soon find **no reason** to be proud of what you know when you begin to see **how much you are ignorant of**, and you will see how ungood you are when you see how much you do amiss.*

...Constant dependence upon Christ and his grace...

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2007/11/24 13:31

Quote:

-----The section on humility was so wonderful.

Yes, amen. This discourse is exceedingly rich and precious, and there's more profitable wisdom to be gleaned here than in 1,000 years of seminary school. But what I find the most strikingly amazing is that this wisdom Henry exhorts the youth with is almost the *exact antithesis* of what is being taught today from the pulpit.

Kids today aren't exhorted with these same godly principles. They're rather told to have confidence in themselves and to seek experiences. If you or I were to earnestly preach these things from the pulpit, it wouldn't be very long before we got a call from an angry parent. I know this from experience. To exhort true godliness and pious wisdom from the pulpit these days is tantamount to being labeled legalistic and intolerantly wrong. It is to be accused of totally missing the mind of Christ and spreading error. But this is the true wisdom of God! As preachers of the gospel of grace, how can we *not* mince words and instruct otherwise? Like Micaiah, we must hold fast to the mindset of "as the Lord liveth, whatsoever the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak" (1 Kings 22:14) - even if it means a slap in the face from a Zedekiah.

Re:, on: 2008/6/5 15:15

Brother Paul, is there any way you could put this in another format when you are finished so I could make a copy of it for my kids? Thanks.

Re:, on: 2008/6/5 15:40

Quote:

----- I encourage you to inquire and think impartially, as the noble Bereans did, searching the scriptures daily to see whether those things which the apostles told them were true.

This is something that I try and impress upon the minds of my children each day. If they ask me a question I usually re

ply with "We'll what do you think?" Jesus always answered a question with a question. The Pharasees taught the young men of their day in the same way from what I have learned. They would have these debates like they had with Jesus and go back and forth until they came to the conclusion of the matter. That's why in scripture you see this kind of discourse between Jesus and the Pharasees. They wouldn't say "Your disciples are doing this!" They would say "WHY are your di sciples doing this?" and Jesus would reply in the same manner, "I will tell you when you tell me_____" ect...

Re: Professional Copies in Pamphlet Form - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2008/6/5 17:30

Quote:
-----Brother Paul, is their any way you could put this in another format when you are finished so I could make a copy of it for my kids?

Yes, sister. I am about half-way through with the message; it's been put on the proverbial backburner for now, but since you've expressed interest in it for your kids, I certainly intend to finish it this month. What format were you thinking of? Pdf?

Ideally, I'd like to print out a couple dozen copies in pamphlet form, and handle all expenses myself. Would you be willing to wait a month or so for them? :)

P.S. This goes for anyone else in the forum who would like a copy. I strongly believe this type of good, clean puritan material is ideal for youth pastors and parents alike.

Brother Paul

Re:, on: 2008/6/5 17:37

Quote:

PaulWest wrote:
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Brother Paul

No hurry, take your time. Any format is fine. Thanks. :-)

Re: - posted by TaylorOtwell (), on: 2008/6/5 20:04

Amen. Thanks again for working on this brother Paul.

Quote:
-----Yes, amen. This discourse is exceedingly rich and precious, and there's more profitable wisdom to be gleaned here than in 1,000 years of seminary school. But what I find the most strikingly amazing is that this wisdom Henry exhorts the youth with is almost the exact antithesis of what is being taught today from the pulpit.

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Re:, on: 2008/6/5 21:17

Quote:

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Brother Paul

I'm interested in obtaining some copies for people at my church... :-D

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2008/6/5 22:28

Quote:
-----I'm interested in obtaining some copies for people at my church...

Maranatha Baptist is at the top of the list :) This sermon would also be great to read at a meeting and just interpolate as the Spirit leads. God can wonderfully use it to impact lives - if the reader is already living the sermon in his/her private life before God.

Re:, on: 2008/6/6 4:33

Quote:

Rebecca_LF wrote:

Quote:
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I had to edit the above. I meant to say "...answered a question with another question..." :-)

Amen, thanks for doing this.

Re: For our learning - posted by crsschk (), on: 2008/6/6 8:22

Quote:
-----Keep up a quick and constant sense of your manifold defects and infirmities, of how much there is in you, and how much is said and done by you every day. Keep in mind that which you have reason to be ashamed of, and humbled for ...

Recent and timely.

Quote:
-----I strongly believe this type of good, clean puritan material is ideal for youth pastors and parents alike.

If I might emphasize *For*, that is, not just for those under their care, but for the pastors, parents ... *themselves*.

Anyone, regardless of age. Something about going back over those things we tend to forget ... or is it those that we think we have yet mastered ...

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2008/12/2 22:26

(5) You must be mild and gentle, and not indulgent of your passions. This signifies moderation, a soundness of mind that is opposed to frenzy and violence. We have need of sobriety to restrain and repress not only our inordinate appetites towards those things that are pleasing to our senses, but also to our irregular resentment of those things that are displeasing; for such a vexatious knowledge of good and evil mankind got by eating of the forbidden tree.

Young people are especially apt to be hot and furious, to resent rebukes and correction, and to study revenge like Simon and Levi, whose fierce anger was cursed along with their cruel wrath. Their passions were ungoverned because their pride was unmortified.

Young people are fond of liberty and therefore cannot bear control, they are wedded to their own opinions and therefore cannot bear contradiction, but are all in a flame presently if crossed. They reckon it to their honor (when really it is a shame) to lay the reins on the neck of their passions and not care what indecencies they are being transporting into by them, nor do they consider how mischievous the consequences may be.

Learn, therefore, to bridle your anger, and to guard against the sparks of provocation, that they may not fall into the tinder. If the fire be already kindled, put it out presently by commanding peace in your own souls and setting a watch before the door of your lips. And when at any time you are affronted, or think yourselves so, aim not at the wit of a sharp answer (which will only stir up more anger) but at the wisdom and grace of a soft answer (which will turn away wrath - Prov. 15:1).

You are setting out in the world now, and would have your passage through it be comfortable. Nothing will contribute more to that than a quiet spirit. "The meek shall inherit the earth" was God's promise, by David first (Ps. 37:11), and then after by the Son of David (Matt. 5:5). By the good government of your passions, you will make yourselves easy, and easy to those about you. A great deal of mischief both to others and to yourselves will be prevented.

The moral philosophers valued themselves very much upon the power which their instructions had upon young people -

to soften and sweeten their temper and teach them to govern their passions and keep a strict hand upon them. And shall Christianity, by adding the authority of God and forbidding rash anger as heart-murder and the example of the Lord Jesus Christ that bought us and bid us learn of Him to be meek and lowly of heart, and with the consolations of the Holy Spirit which have a direct tendency to make us pleasant to ourselves and others along with the experiences of God's grace and mercy forbearing and forgiving us - shall this divine and heavenly institution come short of moral philosophy in plucking up this root of bitterness which bears gall and wormwood to make us peaceful and gentle and easy to be entreated, which are the bright and blessed characters of the wisdom from above? (Jas 3:17)

If you let your passions control you now while you are young, they will be in danger of growing more and more headstrong as you get older, and of making you perpetually uneasy. But if you get dominion over them now, you will easily keep this dominion and so keep the peace in your hearts and houses, and through the grace of God it will not be in the power of even sickness or old age to make you peevish, sour your temper or embitter your spirit. Put on therefore among the ornaments of your youth "as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness and long-suffering".

Your age is made for love; let holy love therefore be a law unto you.

- Matthew Henry

** section (6) coming soon.

Re: "Sober-Mindedness Pressed Upon Youth" Matthew Henry sermon modernized a - posted by BlazedbyGod, on: 2008/12/2 22:49

Where can I find this sermon at?

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2008/12/2 22:49

You can't find these sermons on their own; they're part of Henry's complete writings that I acquired in 8 volumes when my wife bought me his unabridged commentary. Along with the commentary, I have his complete sermons, catechisms, prayers, hymns and biographies. I'm having to type this sermon out manually, section by section, but it's worth it.

Henry's sermons and discourses are absolute pure gold. You can search the entire internet and not find them printed individually. I think this is the first effort to actually break one down and slightly modernize it to reach a wider audience. I know this because when I do a google search on "Sober-mindedness Pressed Upon Youth" I always end up back here, to SermonIndex where I've been featuring it.

My vision is to edit these even more and to get them into pamphlet form to disseminate among youth groups and adults.

Brother Paul

Re: "Sober-Mindedness Pressed Upon Youth" - posted by crsschk (), on: 2008/12/3 0:02

Learn, therefore, to bridle your anger, and to guard against the sparks of provocation, that they may not fall into the tinder. If the fire be already kindled, put it out presently by commanding peace in your own souls and setting a watch before the door of your lips. And when at any time you are affronted, or think yourselves so, aim not at the wit of a sharp answer (which will only stir up more anger) but at the wisdom and grace of a soft answer (which will turn away wrath - Prov. 15:1).

If you let your passions control you now while you are young, they will be in danger of growing more and more headstrong as you get older, and of making you perpetually uneasy.

And irritable

But if you get dominion over them now, you will easily keep this dominion and so keep the peace in your hearts and houses, and through the grace of God it will not be in the power of even sickness or old age to make you peevish, sour your temper or embitter your spirit. Put on therefore among the ornaments of your youth "as the elect of God, holy and beloved,

d, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness and long-suffering".

Remarkable that this is geared towards the youth. I still marvel at how slow to grasp these known things I am.

..if you get dominion over them now, you will easily keep this dominion and so keep the peace in your hearts and houses

...

Re: (6) - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2008/12/3 10:17

(6) You must be chaste and reserved, and not wanton and impure. The lusts of the flesh which are manifest - adultery, fornication, uncleanness and lasciviousness (Gal.5:19) - are particularly called youthful lusts. And against those, in Christ's name, I am here to warn all you that are young.

For God's sake, and for your own precious soul's sake, flee these youthful lusts; dread them as you would a devouring fire, or a destroying plague, and keep at a distance from them. Abstain from all appearances of these sins, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh, even the attire of a harlot. Covet not to know these depths of Satan, but take pride in being ignorant of the way of the adulterous woman. See all temptations to uncleanness as coming from the unclean spirit, that roaring lion who goes about continually, thus seeking to devour young people. O that you would conceive a detestation and abhorrence of this sin and put on a firm and steady resolution in the strength of the grace of Jesus Christ to never defile yourselves with it; remember what the apostle prescribes, as that which ought to be the constant care of the unmarried, to be holy in both body and spirit, and so to please the Lord (1 Cor. 7:34).

Take heed of the beginnings of this sin, lest Satan get an advantage against you and the little thief who insensibly breaks in through the window, goes on to open the door for the strong man to enter. How earnestly doth Solomon warn the young man to take heed of the baits, lest he be taken in the snares of the evil woman! "Remove thy way far from her," saith he, for he that would be kept from harm, must keep out of harm's way. "Come not nigh to the door of her house," but go on the other side of the street, as though it were a house infected; lest you mourn at last when your flesh and body are consumed. Pray earnestly to God for the grace to keep you from this sin, that the grace may be sufficient for you, that the temptation never be so sudden, that it may find you awake and aware of it, and that you may not be surprised by it. Pray that it never be so strong as to find you unarmed against it; but put on the whole armor of God that you may not be overpowered and overcome by it.

Get your hearts purified by the Word of God, and sanctified by divine love, for how else shall young people cleanse their way, but by taking heed thereto, according to the Word? Keep up the authority of conscience, and keep it always tender and void of offence. Make a covenant with your eyes, that they may not be the inlets of any impure thoughts, or the outlets of any impure desires; and pray David's prayer: "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity," that you may never look and lust. Modesty is the hedge of chastity, and the ornament of your age, so be sure to let your dress and demeanor exemplify modesty, and as such to speak a chaste communication coupled with fear. Make it so that you know how to be pleasant and cheerful without transgressing even the strictest rules of modesty - and that you are ignorant of being anything but modest.

I would especially charge you that are young to take heed that no corrupt filthy communication proceed out of your mouth. Never dare speak nor delight to hear anything that is immodest. "Fornication, and all uncleanness, let it not be once named among you"; indeed, foolish talking and jesting "which is not convenient" is very unbecoming for professors of such a pure and undefiled religion as Christianity. It is "evil communication" which corrupts good manners, and for which our Savior saith we must give account on the great day. Think therefore what a great dishonor lascivious talk is to God, what a reproach it is to yourselves, and what mischief it does to those you converse with. Think of how great a matter a spark of this fire from hell may kindle, and how much the sin and ruin of souls you may have to answer for. God turns those to a pure language whom he brings to call upon his name (Zeph. 3:9).

***** section (7) coming soon

Re: - posted by Fuegodedios (), on: 2008/12/3 10:29

Paul I must say that these words from Mr. Henry are very much needed today. He speaks with such clarity and authority bringing us to the great word of God that we may gaze upon it and be changed and confirmed to the image of christ. I really enjoy the practical nature of these teachings and how the text he uses are extremely relevant to the nature of the topics he addresses. I wish I could spend the day in your library my friend as you have the same love for the word of God and the puritans that I have. Continue to feed us with this rich and foundational teaching that will cause us by the grace of God to stand in his power. Thanks brother paul

Re: - posted by Fuegodedios (), on: 2008/12/3 10:52

This quote is just awesome. it is from the the section titled:(5) You must be mild and gentle, and not indulgent of your passions.

"Learn, therefore, to bridle your anger, and to guard against the sparks of provocation, that they may not fall into the tinder. If the fire be already kindled, put it out presently by commanding peace in your own souls and setting a watch before the door of your lips. And when at any time you are affronted, or think yourselves so, aim not at the wit of a sharp answer (which will only stir up more anger) but at the wisdom and grace of a soft answer (which will turn away wrath - Prov. 15: 1)."

By the grace of God may we remember these sober words from Matthew Henry. May we remember that we are right now standing in the omnipresence of God with his ever watchful eye upon us seeing every deed and action, discerning the thoughts and intents of the Heart Hebrews 4:12.

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2008/12/3 11:24

Quote:
-----Paul I must say that these words from Mr. Henry are very much needed today. He speaks with such clarity and authority bringing us to the great word of God that we may gaze upon it and be changed and confirmed to the image of christ. I really enjoy the practical nature of these teachings and how the text he uses are extremely relevant to the nature of the topics he addresses.

Amen. As I type these sections out, I am overcome with just a sense of wholesomeness and purity and soundness of doctrine that makes my eyes well up with tears. It's the epitome of exegetical cleanliness. It really causes you to look around with sadness and say, "O God where is this type of preaching today, where are the preachers who can lay it out so Biblically plain and simple and unashamedly clean and pure?"

It's almost taboo to talk about some of these things from the pulpit today, especially for the youth, because no one wants to run the risk of driving a kid from the meeting by listing a bunch of religious cans and cannots. But this is precisely the reason why our churches and youth groups are compromised - they've been infected by the world's vanity due to the lack of soundness and hygiene in the preaching. It's not what we preach, as much as *what we don't preach and exemplify by our lives*.

We leave out the the antibiotics of purity in scripture exegesis, and the strains proliferate right before our eyes. The aspirin and tylenol and Flintstone chewables of the sermons being offered today only alleviate the pain and bolster an already-compromised immune system, but we need something greater: we need to kill the bug that causes the pain and sickness - we need the antibiotic of pure preaching and the wholesome, righteous dividing of the Word by ministers whose lives are pure and consciences before God undefiled.

Re: - posted by Fuegodedios (), on: 2008/12/3 11:56

I agree with you brother paul. I had a gentleman confront me about the puritans and he stated that he could not read them because they took the scriptures seriously. I was very shocked at that statement, but this lets me know that men do not love sound doctrine, they do not hold as precious Gods word and the theology it relays to us. So many have turned to fables,feelings,and superficial knowledge and boast that they have all things and have need of nothing being, but in fact they are in spiritual poverty.

This Neglect of the truth will eventually lead to a disdain and hatred for the truth and when that happens men don't realize that they build a foundation in which deception can sit. Matter of fact this very hatred of biblical truth gives way to the

Antichrist system.

2 Thess 2:8-12

8Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming;

9that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders,

10and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.

11For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false,

12in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.

These very people are taken by deception because they did not stand upon the truth or neither did they Love or believe the truth. John 17:17 says thy word is truth. I was very guilty of this myself but by the grace of God I am what I am today and I thank, praise and glorify my lord for his Grace working in me to save me from the talons of deception. To God be the glory

Re: - posted by TaylorOtwell (), on: 2008/12/3 13:28

Quote:

-----Make it so that you know how to be pleasant and cheerful without transgressing even the strictest rules of modesty

I find this difficult. Have you brothers had any progress in this? I find that when I am striving to walk in godliness and purity, I often can come across morose or sad, and I don't want this to be the case. I want to have a cheerful holiness.

Advice or counsel?

Grace to you,
Taylor

Re: "Sober-Mindedness Pressed Upon Youth" Matthew Henry sermon modernized and in installments - posted by boG

I don't know brother Taylor. I have a tendency to be "serious" all the time, though it is not my intention. I am simply not interested in the gaiety of the world. If you want to see me excited then let us speak of Jesus and our Heavenly Father and the blessed Holy Spirit. I don't know how many people get excited to speak of the wrath of God :-P not in a morbid or sadistic sense but in magnifying the glory and holiness and goodness of God.

So, I would say, when I am not preaching to people in earnestness and sincerity of heart for their salvation, I am cheerful. Not always with a smile but with peace of heart and mind. In part it is indeed my personality to be introverted but I am always open to speak of Christ. And without a doubt I probably come across as very morose and sad when people only wish to speak of carnal things. Sometimes it simply cannot be helped but I also, as you, try to keep this very thing in mind.

And to be honest, it is probably best that we should be morose and sad when others are so fixated to speak of carnal things. I have no pleasure in the hearing of it and I don't want to encourage them to continue in it (at the very least not to continue with me).

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2008/12/3 15:16

Quote:
-----I find this difficult. Have you brothers had any progress in this? I find that when I am striving to walk in godliness and purity, I often c
an come across morose or sad, and I don't want this to be the case.

This is a very legit concern. When I stive to live for Christ, I too only end up falling flat on my face and losing my temper. I think the secret here is to not try to be modest, but to instead let modesty happen to us by absorbing ourselves in the Word of God and by beginning each day with a time of quietude and prayer for God's grace. When we do this, miracles begin to happen.

It is when I am not trying to be holy, but just living ordinary life continuously trusting that Christ is my sanctifier, that God will open doors and people will come to me and confide their problems and express observations that totally befuddle me (because I know what I am without God's grace and Christ's blood). The unsaved are very observant; they look at true believers through the microscope, but if one is walking in the sanctifying grace through the power of God by faith, they will soon see someone whom you may not even be conscious you are magnifying: namely, Jesus Christ.

So learn now that emotions are often beguiling; the fact that you *feel* miserable on the inside while trying to live for God doesn't necessarily carry over to the perceptions of others. If you've been with Christ, people will take notice...even if they won't make a mention of it. But if we try to *force* a holy lifestyle with the hopes that the outer show will impact others, it will go sour fast. God will not endorse it, and the first slip of immodesty will clang loudly like a hypocritical gong.

Re: - posted by TaylorOtwell (), on: 2008/12/3 18:15

Thanks for the insight, brothers.

Re: (7) - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2008/12/8 21:46

(7) You must be steady and composed, and not giddy and unsettled. In contrast to a roving and wandering heart, and a heart divided, this we commonly take to be signified by a mind that acts and moves steadily and is one with itself. Be therefore sober-minded, and let your hearts be fixed.

Stablish them, and be not like Reuben who was "unstable as water", for those who are so will never excell. Fix now serious godliness in your youth; fix heaven as your end and holiness as your way. Halt no longer, hover no longer between the two, but be at a point. You have been bid to choose whom you will serve; stand no longer deliberating, but bring this matter finally at length to the issue you will abide by, and abide by it. Fix to whatever you were designed for in this world. Whatever it is that you are employed in, let your application to it be close and constant, and do not divert from it upon every slight and trivial pretense.

Learn to fix your thoughts, and be not wandering; let them not run from one thing to another, as a bird in flight - for thus thy thoughts run at length with fool's eyes to the ends of the earth. What thy hand finds to do and heart finds to think - which is to God's purpose - do it and think it with all your might and pursue it till thou bring it to an issue. Learn to fix your goals and act with a single eye, for the double-minded man - who is far from being sober-minded - cannot but be unstable in all his ways, and turns himself as the wind, and "he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea" (James 1:6,8).

Act consistently with yourselves; understand your own ways. Do not have your ear open to every whisper and suggestion that would turn you from it. Be no more children tossed to and fro with every bait (Eph. 4:14), but in understanding become men, be ye fixed, let your foot stand in an even place, and let your hearts be stablished. Be not moved - and be not moved.

*** section (8) coming soon

Re: sober-mindedness - posted by boG (), on: 2009/1/20 15:49

Brother West,

If I may ask, I have been waiting for the completion of the Sober-mindedness series and was wondering when it might be fully posted. I realize you are likely a busy man but I just wanted to let you know that your labor in this are not unnoticed. And I wanted to thank you for the 7 that are currently available.

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2009/1/20 16:05

Quote:

-----And I wanted to thank you for the 7 that are currently available.

:~)

God bless you, dear brother. I have been busy, you are right, but never too busy to post edifying material. Especially if it involves anything by Henry. Thanks for the saintly push; I needed it.

Give me a few days. I'll complete the next segment.

Brother Paul

Re: - posted by TaylorOtwell (), on: 2009/12/30 9:07

8. You must be content and easy, and not ambitious and aspiring. Some make the word to signify, *animi demissio* — the bringing of the mind down to the condition, when the condition will not in every thing be brought up to the mind. A sober mind is that which accommodates itself to every estate of life, and every event of Providence, so that whatever changes happen, it preserves the possession and enjoyment of itself.

You who are young must learn to reconcile yourselves to your current situation, and make the best of it, because it is the will of God it should be as it is, and what pleases him should please us; for he knows what is fit to be done, and fit for us to have, better than we do. Let this challenge all troubling and discontented thoughts. Should it be according to your mind? Shall you who are but of yesterday control him, argue with him, or prescribe to him, whose counsels were of old from everlasting? It is folly to direct the divine disposals, but wisdom to delight in them.

He who determines the times before appointed, and the bounds of men's habitation, ordered what our rank and stations should be in the world, what parents we should be born of, what lot we should be born to, and what our make and capacity of mind and body should be; and in these respects there is a great variety ordained by Providence between some and others, who yet are made of one blood; some are born to wealth and honor, others to poverty and obscurity. Some seem made and marked by nature (that is, the God of nature) to be great and esteemed, while others seem doomed to be all their days little and low; you see many above you, who make a name for themselves in the world, and are likely to do so yet more, while you are of little importance; yet do not envy them, nor fret at the place God's providence has put you in, but make yourselves easy in it, and make the best of it, as those who are satisfied — not only in general, that all is well that God does; but in particular, all is well that he does with you.

Possess your minds while you are young with a reverence for the divine Providence, its sovereignty, wisdom, and goodness; and bring your minds unto a cheerful submission of yourselves to all its determinations; Here I am, let the Lord do with me, and all my affairs, as seems good in his sight. This would have a mighty influence upon the conduct of your affairs, and the evenness of your spirits, all your days. Whatever earthly things are taken from you, or you lose the enjoyment of, resolve to be easy, not because you cannot help it, "This is an evil, and I must bear it," that is but a poor reason; but because it is the will of God, whose will is his wisdom, "This is an evil, but it is designed for my good, and I will bear it"

Lay your expectations low from this world, and promise not yourselves great wealth or esteem in it. It is God's command, (Rom. xii. 16.) Do not covet the riches of this world, do not set your eyes and hearts upon them, as if they were the best

things, and as if they would make you happy, and you could not be happy without them; but condescend to them of low estate, and take as much pleasure in conversation with them, as if they were company for princes and peers; or, as the margin reads it, Be content with modest things, with a modest habitation, modest diet, modest clothes, modest employments, if such be your lot, and instead of blaming it, bless God for it, that it is not worse, and believe that it is best for you.

Not that I would have young people mean-spirited, or cramped in their aims and endeavors; whatever your business is, strive to be excellent and eminent in it; whatever your livelihood is, be diligent, that by the blessing of God upon it, it may, like Job's, be increased in the land. A good man leaves an inheritance, honestly got, to his children's children. But I would not have you ambitious of great things; do not covet to add cubits to your stature; let it suffice to thrive by inches, with the increases of the sober-minded; who do not make haste to be rich, for "Soft and fair goes far."

We commonly say of you who are young, that you are upon your preferment; shall I persuade you to reckon it your best preferment to be eminently pious, and serviceable to the glory of God, and the interests of his kingdom in the world? That is the way to have the best reputation among men, which wise men reckon no despicable preferment, for a good name is better than precious ointment. Aim at advancing yourselves, not that you may live in more pomp and ease, but that you may be in so much the better capacity to do good, and that is true preferment.

We commonly say of you who are young, that now is your time to make your fortune; it is a heathenish expression, for it is not blind fortune, but an all seeing Providence, that we are governed by; but that is not all; it is not in your power to make your own lot; Every man's judgment proceeds from the Lord, every creature is that to you, and no more, than he makes it to be; and, therefore, you must seek his favor; and reckon your lot best made when you have the Lord to be the portion of your inheritance and your cup, and then say, The lines are fallen to you in pleasant places; that is best for you, which is best for your souls, and in that you must soberly rest satisfied.

Jacob was setting out in the world, and going to take him a wife, when all he desired and aimed at, and, if I may so say, intended for in his marriage articles, was bread to eat, and clothing to put on, to be kept in his way, and brought finally to his father's house in peace; and why should any of the spiritual seed of Jacob look higher in this world, who knows and hopes he has eternal riches in reversion after one life? Let young people be modest and moderate, and sober-minded, in their desires and expectations of temporal good things, as becomes those who see through them, and look above and beyond them, to the things not seen, that are eternal.

Section 9 coming soon...

Re: "Sober-Mindedness Pressed Upon Youth" Matthew Henry sermon modernized a - posted by JS, on: 2009/12/30 14:1

Quote:
-----"Dear saints, I've had a burden to make the sermons of Matthew Henry more accessible to youth and people who otherwise wouldn't read Puritan literature." -PaulWest

Thank you for sharing this, brother Paul! As a young person myself, I will benefit greatly from this. I believe I'll pass this on to some other friends as well. :)

Re: - posted by TaylorOtwell (), on: 2010/1/8 19:53

9. You must be grave and serious, and not frothy and vain. This meaning we commonly give to the word here used. Him that is serious we call a sober man; and I put this last, of the ingredients of this sober-mindedness, because it will have a very great influence upon all the rest; we should gain our point entirely with young people, if we could but prevail with them to be serious. It is serious piety we would bring them to, and to live in good earnest.

Not that we would oblige young people never to be merry, or have any ill-natured design upon them to make them melancholy. No, religion allows them to be cheerful; it is your time, make your best of it. Evil days will come, of which you will say you have no pleasure in them, when the cares and sorrows of this world increase upon you, and we would not have you to anticipate those evil days. It is mentioned as an instance of the promised prosperity, and flourishing state, of Jerusalem, that the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof, Zech. 8:5. No, religion prescribes cheerfulness to all those who are sincere and hearty in it; Go your way, eat your bread with joy, and drink your wine with a merry heart, for God now accepts your works, Eccl. 9:7. God expects to be served by us with joyfulness and gladness of heart, in the abundance of all things, Deut. 28:47.

And it is certain, that none have such good reason to be cheerful as godly people have, none can be so upon better grounds, or with a better grace; so justly or so safely. I have often said, and I must take all occasions to repeat it, that a holy, heavenly life, spent in the service of God, and in communion with him, is without doubt the most pleasant, comfortable life, that any one can live in this world.

But that which I would caution you against under this head, is vain and carnal mirth, that mirth, that laughter of the fool, of which Solomon says, *It is mad*, and *What doeth it?* Innocent mirth is of good use in its time, and place, it will revive the spirit, and fit you for business, a merry heart does good like a medicine; but then it must be used like a medicine, must be taken physically, only when there is occasion for it, and not constantly, like our daily bread; and like medicine, it must be taken by rule; as not too often, so not too much at a time, like opiates, which are taken by drops, and with great caution. When you make use of these medicines, it must be with due correctives, and you must take great care of yourselves, lest that turn to your prejudice, and become a snare and a trap, which was intended for your health and welfare.

Allow yourselves in mirth as far as will consist with sober-mindedness, and no further; be merry and wise; never let your mirth transgress the laws of piety, charity, or modesty, nor encroach upon your time for devotion and the service of God. Wise men will always reckon him over-fond of his mirth, who will rather lose his friend than his jest; much more may he be reckoned so, who will rather lose his God and a good conscience. Never make sport with the Scripture and sacred things, but let that which is serious always be spoken of with seriousness; for it is dangerous playing with sharp tools.

Take heed lest your mirth exceed due bounds, and transport you into any indecencies; that you give not yourselves too great a liberty, and then think to excuse it by saying, 'Am not I in sport.' Prov. 26:19. Set a double guard at such a time before the door of your lips, lest you offend with your tongues; and especially keep your hearts with all diligence. Let the inward thought still be serious; and in the midst of your greatest mirth, retain a disposition habitually serious, and a reigning affection to spiritual and divine things; such as will make you indifferent to all vain mirth and pleasure, and set you above it, and enable you to look upon that with a holy contempt, which many spend so much of their time in with so great a complacency. A serious Christian, though, to relax himself and entertain his friends, he may allow himself a little mirth and recreation, yet he will make it to appear that he is not in his element, that he knows better pleasures, and has given them the preference. A believing foretaste of the milk and honey of Canaan, is enough to put the mouth quite out of taste with the garlic and onions of Egypt.

But while I am pressing you who are young to be always serious, habitually so, always well affected to serious work, what shall we think of those who are never serious? Who are always merry, always jesting, always bantering, so that you never know when they speak in earnest; who are always in pursuit of some sensual pleasure or other, and never know what it is to be one quarter of an hour serious, from the beginning of the year to the end of it? Certainly they forget, that for all these things God shall bring them into judgment, and they know not how soon. O that this laughter might be turned into the mourning of true penitents, and this joy into the heaviness of sincere converts, that it may not be turned, as otherwise it certainly will be, into the weeping and wailing of damned sinners! The same Jesus who said, Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted, has said also, Woe unto you that laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep, Luke 6:25.

Shall I now prevail with you who are young, to value wisdom above wit, and that which helps to make you serious above that which helps to make you merry; and to take as much pleasure in gravity, as others do in vanity? It will be the honor of your youth, will arm you against the temptations you are surrounded with, and will not only mark you for something considerable in this world, but for something infinitely more so in the other world. And, if you understand yourselves aright, I dare say, one hour spent in the employments and enjoyments of a sober, serious mind, will afford you more true comfort in the reflection, than many spent in mirth and gaiety, because it will certainly pass so much better in the account another day.

If you take the world for your guide, you will be bid to "laugh and be fat;" will be told that "an ounce of mirth is worth a pound of sorrow;" but if you will attend to the dictates of the word of God, (and it is fit that the word that must judge us hereafter should rule us now,) that will tell you, that sorrow is better than laughter; and that it is better to go to the house of mourning, than to the house of feasting, for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better; it is made serious

And thus you see what it is to be sober-minded, and how much of your duty it takes in; but are you content that it should take in all this? Can you say, that though in many things you come short, yet you esteem all these precepts, and all the things contained in them, to be right, and, therefore, hate every false way? You will then be very willing to have this sober

-mindedness further pressed upon you.

Section II of the treatise coming soon, Lord willing

Re: - posted by Yeshuasboy (), on: 2010/1/9 2:13

Thankyou very, very much Brother Paul for bringing these Godly exhortations here to SI. I await in great eagerness for more of the writings of Matthew Henry. The Lord greatly bless you & your family sir. richie