

**FRIENDLY ADVICE
TO A YOUNG MAN**

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Friendly advice to a young man by Edward Berens

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EDWARD BERENS

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TO

A YOUNG MAN,

BY THE

REV. EDWARD BERENS, M.A.

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FRIENDLY ADVICE

TO

A YOUNG MAN.

ON THE HABITUAL REMEMBRANCE OF GOD.

My young friend,

You are now just entering a world, where you will be exposed to many temptations, to which your natural appetites and passions will too often dispose you to yield. As the most effectual preservation from these temptations, let me beg of you to comply with the advice of Scripture, and always to REMEMBER THY CREATOR IN THE DAYS OF THY YOUTH*. Try to maintain constantly in your heart a deep sense of the *relation* which you bear to God, and of the *duties* which you consequently owe to him: Try to keep the principal truths and obligations of religion deeply impressed upon your mind.

Remember God as your *Creator*. Consider that you were made by him, and that you owe to him, not only your life, but every comfort which you enjoy. You cannot but acknowledge, that he has a clear and undoubted right to the services of that being which he has himself made. You *belong* to him; and consequently are in justice bound to make his will, his precepts and commandments, the rule, the governing principle, of your conduct.

* Eccles. xii. 1.

Remember God as your *Redeemer*. When you, together with all the rest of mankind, were in a lost state through sin, God was mercifully pleased to *redeem*—to save—you from that state, by giving his Son Jesus Christ to die for your sake. *He tasted death for every man*. It is in him that *we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sin*. Remember, therefore, that being thus redeemed—thus *bought with a price*—even the blood of the Son of God, *you are no longer your own*, are no longer at liberty to live according to your own will, according to your own appetites and desires, but are bound by every tie, both of justice and of gratitude, to live according to the will of him who has thus bought you.

Remember God as your *Sanctifier*. So weak and corrupt is the nature of man in consequence of the transgression of our first parents, that we cannot serve God acceptably without his grace, without the assistance of his Spirit. That assistance is freely offered to you if you will ask for it—if you will seek it in fervent prayer. *Ask and ye shall have, says our Lord, seek and ye shall find*^b; and he assures us, that his *heavenly Father will give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him*. Remember, then, that it is the Holy Spirit alone who can effectually *help your infirmities*. Implore his aid to enlighten your understanding, to give strength to your good resolutions, to correct and purify your heart and affections.

Lastly, remember God as your *Judge*. Never for a moment forget that *God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness*^c; that *God shall bring every work into judgment, and every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil*^d; and ever remember, that he who will judge you is a Being from whom nothing can be hidden. *All things are naked and open to the eyes of him with whom we*

^b Luke xi. 9.^c Acts xvii. 3.^d Eccles. xii. 14.

have to do^e. *He is about our path, and about our bed, and spieth out all our ways*^f. *There is not a word in our tongue, but God knoweth it altogether. He even spieth out the secret thoughts and intents of the heart.* Young people sometimes venture to yield to temptations to sin, in the hope of concealment: but there is no possibility of concealing any thing from God. *If I say, peradventure the darkness shall cover me, then shall my night be turned into day; yea, the darkness is no darkness with God, but the night is as clear as the day, the darkness and light to him are both alike.* Remember therefore that there is no possibility of escaping the observation of an all-seeing Judge. If, in the high spirits of youth, you are tempted to *walk after the way of your own heart, according to your own appetites and desires, and after the sight of your own eyes, yet be assured that for all these things God will bring you into judgment.*

The keeping upon your mind of this habitual remembrance of God, will require some attention and watchfulness on your part. Both from the distractions, the cares, and the pleasures of the world, and from the waywardness of your own heart, you will be in no small danger of *forgetting* him. But reflect, that though you may forget God, God will not forget you; and think both on the ingratitude, and on the awful danger of forgetting him. *The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the people that forget God*^g. *O consider this, ye that forget God, lest he pluck you away, and there be none to deliver you.*

Make use therefore of every means in your power for maintaining the habitual remembrance of God upon your minds. Often employ yourself in reading religious books, and especially in studying the holy Scriptures. It was to his early knowledge of the Scriptures, that the early piety of Timothy appears

^e Heb. iv. 13.^f Ps. cxxxix.^g Ps. ix. 17.

to be attributed by St. Paul; and the Psalmist speaks of the study of the word of God as being the most likely means of preserving the young and inexperienced from the temptations to which they are exposed; *Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? Even by ruling himself according to thy word.* Let the Scriptures then, especially the New Testament, be often in your hand. Read them *attentively*. Read them with an earnest desire to understand them, and with a real resolution to regulate your faith and practice by what you read. When, for instance, you find any sin forbidden, reflect whether you have ever been guilty of that sin, and if you have been guilty of it, implore the forgiveness of God through the merits of Jesus Christ; and resolve in humble reliance upon the aid of the Holy Spirit, that you will be guilty of it no more. If you find any duty commanded, any moral grace of character recommended and enforced, consider how far you have been diligent in the performance of such duty, or in the cultivation of such grace or virtue, or how far you have fallen short of it. Implore the divine blessing upon what you read. Beseech God to enlighten your understanding, so that you may see and know what things you ought to do, and also to give you grace and power faithfully to fulfil the same.

To preserve the remembrance of God upon your mind, nothing will contribute more than the habit of private devotion. Be regular and constant in addressing yourself in prayer to the Author and Giver of all good things. Every morning when you rise to your daily occupations, and every night when you return to rest, remember to fall on your knees before God, to implore the forgiveness of your manifold transgressions, to beg of Him protection and support, the strengthening of your weakness, and the supply of your wants. And besides your more re-