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*THE LITERARY FOUNTAINS HEALED:*

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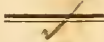
**SERMON,**

PREACHED

IN THE CHAPEL OF THE

**COLLEGE OF NEW-JERSEY,**

March 9th, 1823.



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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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THE circumstances which led to the preparation and delivery of the following Discourse, were these. A circular communication having been received, by an individual in *Princeton*, from a distant and highly respected Brother, announcing that a number of persons, in different parts of the *United States*, had agreed to set apart Thursday the 27th of February, last, as a day of special Prayer and Fasting, for the particular purpose of imploring a Revival of Religion in the Colleges of our Country;—the Faculty and a large number of the Students of *Nassau-Hall*, together with the Professors and Students of the Theological Seminary in *Princeton*, promptly resolved to unite in the observance. The day was observed accordingly. As a variety of considerations prevented the delivery of an appropriate discourse at that time; and as the author happened to be the first of the preachers stately ministering in the College-Chapel, who occupied that pulpit, after the day alluded to; he deemed it proper to embrace the opportunity afforded him, of endeavouring to revive and deepen the impression made by the preceding solemnities. Whether he did right in complying with a request to print what he delivered, the reader must judge. His prayer is, that it may be useful.

PRINCETON. *March 13th*, 1823.

*THE LITERARY FOUNTAINS HEALED:*

**A SERMON.**

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**II. KINGS II. 21.**

*And he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death.*

**WHEN** we see a spring of water rising from the earth, and pouring along its gentle stream, we are apt to regard it as a very unimportant object. And so, indeed, considered in itself, it often really is. But when we see a fountain of this kind in the midst of a populous neighbourhood; when we see many families depending upon it for their daily supply of an indispensable article of life; when we find the young and the old, the rich and the poor, constantly resorting to it, to slake their thirst, and every hour bearing away its waters for the use of their households; then such a spring appears truly valuable; and, above all, if it be the only one in the neighbourhood, we view it as important, to a degree not easily overrated.

What should we think, then, of a person so malicious as to *poison* such a spring, or to counsel and aid in poisoning it; and thus rendering it productive of disease and death to a whole community—to all who should partake of its waters? Surely he would act a part, the baseness, the cruelty of which it would be difficult to express? Accordingly, all moral writers of any name, have taught, that it is highly censurable, even in an *enemy*, to make war on the lives of his adversaries, by poisoning springs and fountains. They pronounce it, at once, dishonourable and inhuman.

In the case of the Springs in or near the city of *Jericho*, in *Palestine*, to which the words of our text refer, there is, indeed, no reason to suppose that they had been poisoned *by design*; but they were poisoned *in fact*; probably in consequence of that curse which had rested upon the place from the time of *Joshua*, near six hundred years before. Whatever might have been the reason, however, their waters were bad; unwholesome; nay, destructive of health, and, as it would seem, of life. And we find, as might have been expected, that this was considered by the inhabitants as a great calamity: for the men of the city came to *Elisha*, the prophet, lamenting the fact, and probably hoping that they might engage him to attempt something for their relief. There was an important Seminary established in *Jericho* at this time; and some com-

mentators have been of the opinion, that, although a curse had been pronounced on the place a number of centuries before, it was now mercifully removed, in consequence of the favour and liberality which the people had manifested toward that Seminary. However this may have been, certain it is that God was pleased, by the prophet *Elisha*, to send relief from this particular distress under which they laboured. For when they came to the Prophet, and made known their calamity, he said—“*Bring me a new cruise, and put salt therein; and they brought it to him. And he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death.*”

I purpose, to-day, my friends, to accommodate these words to the METAPHORICAL FOUNTAINS of our land—I mean our LITERARY INSTITUTIONS—particularly our COLLEGES.

Some of you, no doubt, remember, that, a little more than a week since, a particular day was, by agreement, set apart, by a number of the friends of learning and piety, in different parts of the *United States*, as a day of special Prayer and Fasting, for the effusion of the Holy Spirit, and the revival of Religion, in our Colleges. A goodly number of persons in this place, attended with seriousness, and I hope with sincerity, to

the appointment.—I wish, now, to follow up that observance with some remarks and exhortations, which are intended to harmonize with it, and, by the blessing of God, to promote the same great object.

My design is to shew—

I. That our COLLEGES may, with propriety, be called the FOUNTAINS OF OUR COUNTRY; the Fountains whence all its best interests, under God, must flow. And

II. That it is of the utmost importance that THE SALT OF GOOD PRINCIPLES BE CAST INTO THESE FOUNTAINS; and that for this we ought all to labour and pray without ceasing.

I. That the Colleges of our Country, may, with propriety, be considered as its FOUNTAINS—THE FOUNTAINS OF ITS INTELLECTUAL, SOCIAL, AND MORAL CHARACTER—is so obvious, that I hope formal proof of it, especially before this audience, is not necessary. But it may, perhaps, the better prepare the way for what is to follow, if I spend a moment or two in endeavouring to illustrate this position.

And here, it will not, I presume, be denied, that *talents* and *learning* generally bear sway in every community in which they exist; that strong minds will always, directly or indirectly, govern the weak; and

that knowledge, every where, is power. That this is, universally, the stated course of human affairs, is too plain to be doubted or proved. It is true, there are communities in which we sometimes see the chief power in the hands of the weak and the ignorant. But this, I take it, forms no exception to the general rule. For the immediate depositaries of power, in such cases, are almost always, the mere puppets of more able and knowing men, who make them dupes and ministers to their ambition, and often employ them to accomplish that which they would be ashamed to perform themselves. So that, after all, the strongest minds really govern; and the best educated seldom fail to exert an influence which is paramount and acknowledged.

Now, is it not evident, that the great majority of our able and educated men, are the sons of our colleges; and that from these institutions, of consequence, commonly arise those who bear sway in society? Not that I mean to intimate, that every graduate of a college is destined, as a matter of course, to be a light and a leader in the community. Far from it. Many a diplomaed blockhead, who never had the capacity to learn, and who, of course, never could be taught, has gone forth, as if only to evince how much time, and pains, and money may be thrown away, in rendering one, who would have been a dunce at all events, a more conspicuous and contemptible dunce. And many more,

to the credit of society be it spoken, who were by no means deficient either in talents or acquirements, with all their boasted collegiate honours, have been consigned by a discerning publick, on account of their perverse tempers, or their gross vices, to lives of neglect and obscurity: thus proclaiming the instructive lesson, that mere genius or learning, even in their highest degrees, will ensure the elevation of no man. But my meaning is, that we are, in general, to look among the Sons of our Universities and Colleges, for those controulers of publick sentiment, and directors of publick affairs, from which society must and will receive its predominant character; and that the greater the amount of their talents and learning, the greater, ordinarily, will be the extent and the potency of their influence, whether bad or good, in the community.

It is true, the celebrated M. *Rousseau*, that singular votary of paradox and of scepticism, wished there were no Colleges, as he thought them far more injurious than useful, on the plan upon which they were usually conducted. He also thought, that one of the most important secrets of education was, “not to *gain* time, but to *lose* it.”\* And, indeed, if education must necessarily consist in inculcating the principles which seem to have governed the life and the pen of that anomalous man, and those of his school, then I should

\* *Emilius* I. 9, 80, 128. II. 100.



certainly agree with him, that the fewer *such* Colleges, the better; and that the *later* the work of enlightening the mind of a youth was begun, the happier for himself. But that the earlier ENLIGHTENED CHRISTIAN EDUCATION is begun, the better, I have no doubt: and that Colleges, as they actually exist in our Country, with all the disadvantages under which the most of them labour, from their infancy and poverty, and also making a large allowance for occasional mismanagement, are, on the whole, a source of rich blessing to the nation, I can doubt as little. They are sources from which important benefits have been already, and are daily, derived; and that incomparably greater benefits will, under the Divine blessing, be derived from them in future, it is delightful to anticipate.

Colleges are the Fountains from which CIVIL SOCIETY draws its most important supplies, and receives the formation of its intellectual, social, and moral character. Thence are sent forth, from year to year, those *Legislators*, on whose wisdom, integrity and prudence, the character of our laws must depend; those *Judges* and *Magistrates*, on whose knowledge and probity the administration of publick justice must rest; those *Lawyers*, to whom the rights and property of their fellow citizens are, every day, necessarily committed, and who have it continually in their power to influence, in the most vital manner, the social and moral interests

of men; those *Physicians*, to whom we daily entrust our health and lives, and who, by skill and uprightness, or by ignorance and profligacy, may become, to an extent that no tongue can tell, the benefactors or the scourges of those around them; and, finally, those *Instructors of Youth*, to whom we commit our beloved offspring, and who are to impress upon the rising generation the principles and habits which may, perhaps, characterize them through life, and even cleave to them as long as they exist.

Again; Colleges are the Fountains from which the CHRISTIAN CHURCH is commonly supplied with her Ministry. There are, ordinarily, trained up those Heralds of the Cross, on whose piety, orthodoxy, and zeal, the salvation of millions may, under God, depend. And, as long as the union of piety and learning shall be deemed necessary to prepare Ministers of the Gospel for the proper discharge of the duties of their office, this must continue to be the case. How much, then, in this respect, depends upon the character of our seats of learning! On the one hand, if, on account of the low state of religion in them, they either cannot furnish an adequate number of candidates for the sacred office, or send out such as will be a curse to the church, instead of a blessing: if their supply should be so scanty, as to leave the greater part of our population "*as sheep without shepherds,*" or of so corrupt

and corrupting a character as to be far worse than a deficiency; in either case, the vital interests of the church must deeply suffer. On the other hand, if our Colleges be fountains of truth, virtue, sound learning, and genuine piety, and be continually pouring out corresponding streams; they will “*make glad the city of our God;*” and many a barren field, and many a desolate wilderness will be converted into a “*garden of the Lord.*”

Nor is it merely in reference to the character of her Ministry, but in a variety of other ways, that the influence of our Colleges is daily extended to the Church of Christ. The Church needs pious and well-informed lay-members, as well as pious and learned pastors. Nay, there are peculiar kinds of service, which none can so well render to the cause of the Redeemer, as enlightened and pious *laymen*. When, therefore, evangelical principles and practice reign in our higher Seminaries of learning; when the hearts of many ingenuous youth, who might have been otherwise lost to the community, are turned into the right channel, and zealously devoted to the cause of truth and righteousness; even if a number of them make choice of secular professions, still they may all contribute, and largely contribute, to the advancement of that kingdom, in which the pious of every name have an interest, and which is destined, ultimately, to fill the world.

Now, lay all these things together. Recollect that it has been computed, that there are, at least, THREE THOUSAND YOUNG MEN constantly in a course of education in the Colleges in the *United States*. Of these, a fourth part, or between seven and eight hundred, we may calculate, are annually sent forth into the community, decorated with the first Degree in the Arts, and prepared to enter on their professional studies. Suppose only half of these to possess talents and attainments equal to the point of mediocrity, and what a flood of active influence may we consider as poured from these Fountains, every year, into the community! Surely he must be under the controul of a singular scepticism, who can doubt that the power, constantly brought from this source, to bear upon all the great interests of society, is incalculable and growing!

We may well, indeed, wonder, my friends, that a sovereign God is pleased to make poor worms of the dust, in themselves so mean and unworthy, of so much importance in society; instruments of accomplishing so much good, or so much evil, among those around them. With what a singular feeling does it impress the mind, at first view, when we see a train of gowned Youth attending in a Seminary of learning, to recollect that THESE, and SUCH AS THESE, are, in a little while, to have all the most precious interests of society in their hands; without any other pledge of wise

management than their own principles and character;—without any other controul than the holy Providence of God! But so it is! In these infinitely momentous and interesting circumstances, has God been pleased to place every successive generation of the Young. Your Maker, my young friends, has assigned you, “*as hirelings,*” your place, and your day. You have entered on your career. That career is to be productive of infinitely important consequences, not only to yourselves, but to mankind. The period now opening upon us, shall be of such character as YOU, and those who are similarly situated with yourselves, shall stamp upon it. Surely, then, the literary Institutions of our Country, may, with the utmost propriety, be styled, emphatically, the FOUNTAINS of its life, and order, and happiness.

From this consideration, it obviously follows—

II. That it is of the utmost importance that the SALT OF GOOD PRINCIPLES BE CAST INTO THESE FOUNTAINS; and that for this, we ought all to labour and pray without ceasing.

The word *Salt* is frequently employed by the inspired writers to express *purity*, or rather that which has a tendency to *make* and to *keep pure*. “*Ye are the salt of the earth,*” said the Saviour to his disciples—“*but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith*

*shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men."*—Again; "*Let your speech,*" says the Apostle, "*be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.*" And, accordingly, under the ceremonial economy, it was directed, that every offering to God should be "*seasoned with salt;*" to intimate the necessity of their being offered up with sincerity and purity of mind; and as a token, also, of unfeigned friendship, on the part of the offerer, to his God; for it is well known that, among the ancients, and especially among the Orientals, *eating salt together* was considered as a pledge of friendship, which must never, under any circumstances, be forfeited. Hence we read of a "*covenant of salt*"—that is, a covenant never to be broken or forgotten.

Now, that of which I wish to convince my hearers, is, that it is of the utmost importance that THE SALT OF SOUND MORAL AND RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLES, in their practical influence;—or, to express all in a word,—THE SALT OF GENUINE PIETY, be cast into our Literary Fountains, as the only means of preserving them from putrefaction, and making them sources of life, health, and happiness to the community.

And here my friends, does it demand formal reasoning to shew, that he who drinks poison will probably be injured by it; that when a fountain is poisoned,

those who resort to it must sicken and die? Would any of you advise a friend, unless, indeed, you wished to destroy him, to drink at such a fountain? You certainly would not, if you were in your right mind. Equally plain is it, that, if the Literary Fountains, whence are derived the great mass of the instructors and guides of society, are poisoned, the mischief of such a state of things to the community must be beyond all calculation; that all patriots, as well as all pious men, ought to regard such Institutions with grief and abhorrence; and that all who love human happiness ought daily and fervently to pray that they may be "*healed.*"

Picture to your imaginations, for a moment, a College thus corrupt; thus abounding with moral poison. Suppose the Instructors to be able, diligent and faithful; the Laws to be excellent; and the endeavours to execute them to be of the most vigilant and paternal character. But suppose, amidst all this, a large number of the pupils to be, as far as they dare to be, licentious in principle, and profligate in practice. Suppose them to be constantly contriving how far they can go, in eluding the vigilance, and trampling on the authority of their Teachers. Suppose their midnight orgies to be marked with profaneness, with blasphemy, with drunkenness, with gambling, and with every species of immoral practice, to which they are pre-

sented with an opportunity and a temptation. In short, suppose a large number of the members of the Institution to be in the habit of regarding every act of dissipation and profligacy in which they can indulge, without falling under the lash of discipline, as so much clear gain, and as indicating genius and spirit.—Suppose such habits to be *prevalent* in a College—and, I will appeal to every hearer—nay, I will confidently appeal to the gayest and most licentious of you all—whether you would be willing—whether in *judgment* and in *conscience* you *could* be willing to send a tenderly beloved relative to such an Institution? No! I am confident you could not. The veriest youth would be thought a demon, who should wish or advise it.

Now, having distinctly imaged to your minds a College of this character, place yourselves again, for a moment, in the situation of some fond, anxious, and virtuous *Parents*, who were about to select a place of education for a beloved and ingenuous son;—a son trained up in the most regular habits, imbued with excellent principles, and whom they regarded with sanguine hope, as the comfort and stay of their old age. They look round with anxiety—an anxiety which none but a Parent's heart can know, on all the Colleges within their reach or knowledge. In all, as in every thing human, they see something which they



regret; in all they find difficulties and objections. They select, however, in evil hour, the Institution which I have just described. With a trembling heart, they send their son forward. He enters it, with fine talents; with delicate and virtuous sentiments; abhorring the wickedness, as well as the beastly and contemptible character of vice; and promising to be all that those who love him can reasonably desire.

See this promising and precious young man taking his place in the Institution supposed, with raised expectations of what he is to find in a band of ingenuous and honourable youth, and with many resolutions, that he will strive to equal the best of them in all that is praiseworthy. He casts an eye around him, with a view to the selection of his particular associates. He sees, perhaps, some, who appear, at first view, among the most polished, amiable, and attractive of the whole number; and he trusts to appearances and first impressions. He sees not that they are "*whited sepulchres.*" He sees not that, with all their high pretensions to gentility and honourable feeling, they can lie, and deceive, and cheat, and indulge, covertly, in the most degrading vices. He sees not, that, after pledging their truth and honour to obey every law, they are ready to break every one, with as little hesitation or misgiving as the most abandoned highwayman demands a purse: and yet, that, all this notwithstanding, they expect to be regarded

as “gentlemen,” and young “men of honour,” and are ready to pursue with the utmost vengeance, the slightest whisper of suspicion to the contrary. This, he sees not, at first. He is taken with their plausible appearance and manners, and seeks their society. Like the Harpies, in fabled story, they fasten upon him, with greater voracity, but with less of disgusting exterior, than those obscene birds. He becomes their captive; secretly thinking, that he shall gain from them, at any rate, a knowledge of the world; and that, if he find their deportment otherwise than he could wish, it will be in his power to withdraw from their society at any moment. He frequents their company. He goes freely into their apartments. Here they begin to disclose their true character. Their language and habits at first shock him: but in a little while he becomes familiar with both;—next a partaker in them;—and, at length, as corrupt and shameless as any of their number.—After a few months, perhaps, his Parents come to see their beloved son, or he goes home to spend a vacation.—But, O how changed! He is no longer the pleasant and docile youth, whom they lately dismissed from their anxious and tender embrace. He no longer meets them with the frank, fearless and affectionate countenance which formerly marked all his approaches. On the contrary, his downcast eye, his inflamed visage, his love of the intoxicating glass, his impatience of controul, his readiness to “*make a mock*

*at sin,*” and perhaps his unblushing profaneness and profligacy—but too plainly inform them that the principles of his education have fled, and that, without a miracle, he is a lost youth; lost to them, and lost to his country.

Put yourselves, for a moment, my hearers, in the place of the parents and friends of such a young man. Suppose a beloved relative of your own to be thus corrupted and ruined, at a Seat of Science, to which he had been sent for his improvement. What would be your feelings? What would you think of the tendency of such a College, as to its influence on the community? Above all, what would you think of the demons in human shape who had been the immediate authors of the mischief? Would you not execrate and abhor them? Would not your hearts be torn with alternate emotions of anguish and indignation? O, my young friends! I must say, for one, that I would not lie under the guilt and the infamy of having thus destroyed an amiable, inexperienced, unoffending youth, for time and eternity; and of having inflicted wounds in the hearts of tender and virtuous Parents, which no time can heal;—I repeat—I would not subject myself to the guilt, and the just execration of such a diabolical achievement, for all the sinful pleasures that the sons of sensuality have ever enjoyed, from the fall of man to the present hour.

But, on the other hand, figure to yourselves a College of a different character. Figure to your minds a College, in which, besides all the advantages of able Instructors, wise Laws, and a happy Administration;—the great body of the Students are sober, studious, orderly, and disposed to treat with filial respect and affection, those who are set over them, and who are daily labouring and toiling to promote their benefit. Suppose regularity, diligence, laudable emulation in study, correct morals, and a cordial reverence for the religion of Jesus Christ to pervade the house. Suppose, now, among the many who resort to such a seat of learning (for many *would* resort to it) there are numbers of young men from families habitually heathenish and profane; from families in which no Bible was ever read; no Sabbath ever observed; no fear of God ever inculcated or known:—where all that they had ever been taught, on the subject of Religion, was to laugh at it, as superstition; and where sensual pleasure was pursued as the chief good. In accordance with their training, I will suppose the character of these youth to be, when they enter this virtuous, healthful and happy Society.—Before they are aware, they catch its spirit. They perceive, without reasoning, the folly of their former course, and the wisdom of that which they now see daily exemplified. They gradually imbibe the correct sentiments, and fall in with the laudable habits which

surround them. They become sober-minded, regular, serious, and, eventually, pious; and go forth into the world, prepared to act their part in life, in a manner worthy of rational and immortal beings; prepared to be the delight of their relatives, and to adorn every walk of social, domestick, civil, and professional life to which they may be called.

And is this a small blessing? In the case before supposed, we saw GOLD TURNED INTO DROSS; but in that now before us, we hail a more happy transformation. We see DROSS TURNED INTO GOLD. And is this, I ask again, a small blessing? Is a College, the state of which is adapted to MULTIPLY EXAMPLES OF THIS KIND, a small benefit to the community? Once more I appeal to the ingenuous feelings of the most unthinking youth present.—Does not your heart spontaneously answer—“Let the lot of me and mine be cast in such a Seminary!”

Imagine not, my friends, that the pictures which I have drawn, are mere fanciful representations. I can assure you that—to my knowledge—they have both been REALITIES, and that WITHIN THESE WALLS, at different periods of our history. God, of his infinite mercy, grant that, in time to come, the favourable side of the picture may alone be realized, in the experience of our beloved College!

But what is that *Salt* which we ought to wish and pray might be cast into these Fountains? What is that life-giving and healthful influence, which is adapted to render seminaries of learning a real blessing to society? I repeat, what was before suggested—it is SOUND MORAL AND CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLE;—it is RELIGION—GENUINE, PRACTICAL RELIGION. In other words, it is the Holy Spirit of God, poured out upon the students;—inspiring them with wisdom; controlling their passions; purifying their hearts and lives; working in them the fear and the love of God; and disposing them, in their studies, and in all their intercourse, to make his will the sovereign guide of their conduct, and his glory the great end of their pursuits.—Nothing less than this, rely on it, my friends, will answer the purpose. We may speculate and philosophize as we please about other remedies for the corrupt tendencies of human nature; but they will all be in vain. The “*strong man armed,*” can never be cast out, until One stronger than he comes and takes up his abode in the soul. Nothing less than the Religion of Jesus Christ, cordially embraced, and practically obeyed, is of sufficient potency to make such a society as this, what it ought to be,—a scene of order, purity, diligence, harmony, and high-minded, fraternal emulation. We may *tell* young men, every day that we live, of the wisdom and happiness of virtue. We may *prove* to them, with all the force

of demonstration, and with all the impressiveness of the most perfect eloquence, that the path of temperance, industry and undeviating regularity, is, in every respect, the wisest course. We may *assure* them, that it is as much their happiness and their honour, as it is their duty, to be all that their instructors ought to require or wish. We may tell them all this. And they will fully believe us. They know that it is so. Their judgments and their consciences are decisively in favour of all that we say. But, ah! the heart is not gained. When, therefore, passion pleads; when the syren voice of pleasure calls—away they hasten, “*as an ox goeth to the slaughter.*” The monitions of conscience are either not heard at all, or, if heard, speedily drowned in the overflowing tide of youthful feeling. Alas! how many young men, whose sober convictions, when consulted, are strongly on the side of virtue, have, notwithstanding, from the mere influence of appetite and passion, plunged irretrievably into opposite courses, and destroyed themselves, soul and body, for ever?

We are all, by nature, dreadfully depraved, my young friends. This depravity reigns in the heart as well as in the life. The remedy must, of course, be commensurate with the disease. And I know of no such remedy, but the grace of that God who made the heart, and who alone can turn it “*as the rivers of wa-*

*ters are turned."* Not that I am disposed to deny, that there are some young persons, as well as some in more advanced life, who are sober and blameless in their lives, although they have no genuine piety. There *are*, doubtless, such cases. But they are comparatively few; and when they do occur, it is commonly either from peculiar physical temperament; or from the restraining influence of early education; or from such a predominant thirst after knowledge, or worldly aggrandizement, as triumphs over every other propensity. And, even in such cases, we have no security that this sober and exemplary course will last. Some unexpected change of circumstances, or some new temptation, may draw aside the most regular to their final ruin. There is no security—I say again—to any one, young or old, but in Religion. We are all navigating the ocean of life. None of us can tell what storms and tempests may fall upon our frail bark, the next hour. "*Pure religion and undefiled,*" in its governing and consoling power, is the only effectual "*anchor of the soul.*" THAT can and will hold us, even in mid-ocean. But, without it, we are liable, at every age, and especially in the morning of life, when passion and appetite are strong, and experience small;—liable, every moment, to be dashed upon the rocks, or swallowed up in the merciless waves.

But, even if tolerably decent and sober characters *could* be formed, and formed every day, without the



aid of Religion; yet, after all, of what real value are they, in most cases, to society? Suppose our Colleges could contrive to manufacture, and to send out, every year, swarms of such men as *Hobbes*, and *Shaftsbury*, and *Bolingbroke*, and *Hume*, and *Voltaire*, and *Rousseau*, and *Buffon*, and *Byron*;—what benefit would they confer on the community? Allowing them as much decorum of moral character as their most partial friends can ask, (although, in this respect, the claims of some of them are far from being undoubted) and passing also entirely, for the present, the pestiferous influence of their opinions on thousands;—what benefits, I ask, did they ever confer on mankind? Did their cold-blooded, miserable selfishness ever contrive or execute a plan for promoting human happiness; for alleviating the sufferings, or elevating the character of their species? Was it ever heard, that any of them made any important sacrifice for the benefit of others? Never! What would society be, if it were entirely made up of such men? Men who seemed to think that they did enough, when they gratified their own appetites, sought supremely their own glory, and satirized and despised all the rest of mankind. — One *Boyle*, or *Howard*, or *Edwards*, or *Thornton*, or *More*,\* is

\* The author hopes that no one will consider him as here referring to a living Poet, who certainly has no claim to a place in any list of *moral* or *useful* writers; and who will probably be forgotten, or remembered only to be execrated, by the wise and good of the next generation. It is hardly necessary to add, that the reference is to Mrs. HANNAH MORE, one of the

worth myriads of such philosophical unbelievers, who literally “*lived to themselves;*” and who, if they were ever betrayed into a beneficent action, seemed rather to have been led to it by that animal sympathy, which prompts many of the brutal tribes to help their kind, than by any real principle of love to their fellow men. And, accordingly, look over the world, in every age, and see whether even a decent proportion of the great plans and exertions in behalf of human happiness, have been achieved by infidels, or by those systematic neglecters of all religion, who are little, if any, better than infidels? Have not the great mass of them, in all christian countries, been the work of the friends of religion, who were either really pious, or had a tone of thinking, of acting, and of general character, produced by habitual reverence for the Gospel of Christ?

NOR is the MORAL influence of Religion, the only consideration which renders its presence and power so important in Seminaries of learning; although it must be acknowledged that this is its most direct and precious influence. It accomplishes much for man, also, as an INTELLECTUAL BEING. It enlarges and strengthens the mind; imparts to it a new and benign

most illustrious ornaments of her nation and age; who is entitled to a place among the most EMINENTLY USEFUL,—I will not say, of *female* writers,—but of *any* writers now living; and whose life has been as happily adapted as her writings, to do good, and to recommend the Religion which she professed.

impulse; fixes the thoughts; begets habits of close attention, and sober reflection; leads the individual who is under its influence to turn his views inward; to converse with himself; to examine his own exercises, and, in short, to subject to a more regular discipline than before, all his mental powers. How incalculably important is this influence to the mind of man at any period of his course! But, especially, how important at that period, and in those situations, in which the intellectual faculties are evolving, and receiving that culture and direction, and forming those habits, which are likely to reach through life! I will venture to say, that, wherever real religion exists in its purity and power, the mind of its possessor is more enlarged, more vigorous, and better disciplined, than it could possibly have been, without this precious gift of God. And, if there be any truth in this assertion, then it is plain, that he who should propose to conduct a band of Youth through a course of liberal education, without the aid of religion, would neglect one of the most potent and precious auxiliaries to which he could resort, even putting entirely out of view its power as a principle of sanctification, and its essential connexion with everlasting happiness.

If any of my youthful hearers still imagine that I make more of the importance of Religion in Colleges, —as the ONE THING NEEDFUL—as THE GRAND REGU-

LATOR, HARMONIZER, and PURIFIER of academical society,—for which nothing else can serve as an adequate substitute;—I say, if any of my young hearers are still disposed to think, that I lay more stress upon it than I ought; let me entreat them to bring the matter to the test of EXPERIMENT. Let those who are not under the power of religious principle, shew that some other influence is capable of producing the same effects. Let them shew, in any College whatever, that there is an equal amount of blameless submission to law, of diligence in study, of social inoffensiveness and order, and of unimpeachable attention to every prescribed duty, among a given number of the neglecters of all religion, as among a corresponding number of its cordial friends. But if this will not be attempted, as I confidently believe it will not, the inference is irresistible, that the influence of genuine Religion, on Literary Institutions, is, in every respect, incalculably beneficial to its immediate subjects, and to society.

If any rational man, then, wishes to see our Colleges so many salubrious Fountains, sending out pure and fertilizing streams, to enrich and “*make glad the city of our God:*”—If he really wishes to see them nurseries of genuine virtue, as well as of sound learning:—If he desires to see them annually sending forth bands of well-trained youth, fitted to adorn and bless their country, in all the walks of publick and private

life;—let him pray, that the “*salt*” of divine grace may be plentifully cast into them. Let him pray, that the Holy Spirit may be poured out, from year to year, upon them. If he be a Christian, I am sure he *will* pray thus. But, even if he be *not* a Christian, still he *ought* to pray thus; for, as you have seen, the true prosperity and happiness of our country, are as essentially involved in it as those of the Church of God. It as much becomes the *patriot* as the *saint* to cry without ceasing, in reference to these Institutions,—“*O Lord, revive thy work; in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy!*”

1. The first application of this subject will be naturally addressed to the respected and beloved STUDENTS OF THE COLLEGE in which we are now assembled.

My young friends, your parents and guardians have sent you to this place, for acquiring that education, and those literary honours, which it is the prerogative of a College to bestow. They have incurred, and are daily incurring, great expense for your sakes; and often, no doubt, deny themselves comforts, that you may enjoy them. Toward these walls, their eyes and their hearts are often directed, with the tenderest solicitude; and each of them, perhaps, hopes, that every returning visitant to *Princeton*, will bring back with him some gratifying intelligence concerning his beloved son.—You often wonder, it may be, why your parents are so

anxious, and why they express their anxiety so frequently and strongly. Ah! my young friends, they know more than you do. If some of them know less of literature and of science than you can boast, they know far more of life; more of the dangers to which you are exposed; more of the infinite importance of the principles you now imbibe, and the habits you now form, than you can possibly know. *You* are probably looking upon the period of your collegiate course, as a fairy scene, which will, beyond a doubt, shine brightly to the end, and which can hardly fail of being introductory to a brighter and happier one. But *their* greater experience compels them to look upon it with a more serious and distrustful eye. They have seen the brilliant rise, and the ignominious fall, of many a splendid youth. They know that your PRESENT COURSE may give a colouring, and a character, to all your future prospects. They remember, that, upon your conduct and your acquirements HERE, it may depend, whether you are to comfort them, or to plant daggers in their hearts; whether you are to be blessings or curses to society. Can you wonder, then, that they are anxious? Can you wonder that they pass many a sleepless night in solicitude and prayer for you? Truly they have reason enough to be anxious. Alas! the only wonder is, that, in these circumstances, you can pass an hour without being deeply anxious for yourselves!

But your parents, and other near relatives, my young friends, are by no means the only persons who feel a tender interest in your welfare. If the representation made in the former part of this discourse be correct, then we, ALL OF US,—nay, not only all of us who are here present, but the WHOLE COMMUNITY, have an interest in your talents, your attainments, and your character, of the deepest kind. You see, then, the REASON why you are the objects of so much solicitude, and of so many prayers. You see the reason why your faithful INSTRUCTORS cease not to urge upon you an immediate choice of the Saviour and his service: why WE, who occupy this pulpit from sabbath to sabbath, join with equal earnestness in the same entreaty: nay, why the pious, in every part of the *United States*, think it their duty to unite in special prayer to God, that he would visit and bless you with his grace. Can you, after what you have heard, wonder at this? Surely you cannot! When we see so much of the comfort, and of all the most precious interests, of your families, of society, and of the Church of God, depending upon the course you take, and the characters you form, can we avoid the most anxious feelings respecting you? If we love our Country; if we love the Church which the Redeemer has purchased with his own blood; if we love our God; nay, if we love ourselves, can we ever approach the throne of grace, without remembering You,—I had almost

said, whatever else we forget? If, in these circumstances, we could cease to feel, or cease to plead, we should, indeed, be more than brutally obdurate.

You will also readily perceive, my young friends, from what has been said, the reason why those who love the welfare of society, are always desirous of seeing our Colleges purged of every unwholesome member. Many of you, perhaps, are sometimes ready to take narrow views of this subject. You are often ready, it may be, to wonder, why there should be so much anxiety manifested to exclude from a Seminary like this, even a small number of students, who are known to be vile and profligate in their habits. It seems a very inconsiderable thing, at first view, that there should be only five or six young men of this character, found amidst an overwhelming majority of seven or eight score, who are entirely, or at least generally, regular in their deportment. You imagine that no evil can possibly result from allowing a few corrupt members to remain in a community, the great mass of which is comparatively pure. But *we*, my young friends, who have somewhat more experience than you can have, see this fact in a very different light. We behold it with heartfelt grief, as an evil of appalling magnitude. We not only see the besotted, infatuated beings belonging to such a group, destroying themselves, and bringing down the gray hairs of their



parents with sorrow to the grave; but we see much more:—we see them to be so much POISON—concentrated, virulent poison, in a PUBLICK FOUNTAIN, to which many others are daily coming to drink; and at which all who come will be in imminent danger of finding death, rather than aliment and life. You forget that half a dozen corrupt, licentious youth, who are so disposed, may make this house a “little hell,” as disgusting as it is dangerous to all others who shall enter it.\* It would be really less distressing to know that the same number of robbers or banditti were lying in wait around our village:—for they could only kill the bodies, or take away the property of the inhabitants. But in the polluted atmosphere, by the diabolical touch, of such profligates as I have supposed, the IMMORTAL SPIRITS of precious youth DIE, and DIE FOR EVER! Would not the guardians of such an Institution, then;—I appeal to your calm and deliberate judgment;—would they not be highly criminal; nay, would they not be accessory to the most deplorable of all MURDER, if they knowingly and willingly allowed

\* Distant readers, may, perhaps, draw the conclusion, from this paragraph, and several others, in the course of the sermon, that the author considers the *College of New-Jersey* as peculiarly corrupt. This is by no means his impression. On the contrary, he verily believes it will bear, as to moral order, a very honourable comparison with the *very best* of those Colleges in the *United States* with which he is acquainted. But he is not satisfied with this. He wishes for far more. He wishes to see it as pre-eminent in this respect, as its venerable Guardians desire and pray that it may become.

even ONE such corrupt member to remain, at the risk of contaminating the whole body placed under their controul? When such a polluting individual is excluded from the College, those who see only a part of the evil done or threatened, and who feel no immediate responsibility, sometimes imagine that the case is a hard one, and suffer the risings of compassion to blind their judgment. But if they only saw the measure in all its relations, they would see it to be as really wise, and even kind, as the amputation of a mortified limb, to save the life of a patient; they would rejoice in the enlightened, parental benevolence which dictated the painful discipline.

I wish it were in my power; my young friends, to impart to you such views of this subject, as I am sure an enlightened knowledge of facts could not fail to give.—Take up a COLLEGE CATALOGUE. O it is a most instructive book! It affords a lively comment on all that I have told you.—Take it up, and look, first, at the melancholy MARK OF DEATH which stands opposite the names of many who have occupied these seats within the last twenty, or even ten years. Ah! how many of the number does this mark tell us are gone! And some of them—if I have not been misinformed—some whom I, and others have often solemnly warned,—died miserably; lamenting their folly; without hope; and, apparently, with all the remorse and

horror of anticipated damnation!—Young man! are you willing so to die? I know you are not.—Then fly from that course which terminated thus!—Look again! Compare the names in the Catalogue with the characters of those of the Sons of *Nassau-Hall*, who have occupied, or now occupy, the highest standing in society; and say whether they are not, generally, those who, while here, were sober, orderly, studious, and great respecters of religion, if not pious? I say, inquire whether they were not GENERALLY SUCH while here. Is the fact as I have stated? And does it not speak volumes? Will you not listen to it, beloved youth! while you may profit by its monitions; before *“the things which belong to your peace are for ever hidden from your eyes?”*

Do you ask me, what is the best, and only certain guarantee, that you will escape the evils into which many of your predecessors have fallen; and obtain the blessings which have been conferred upon others, of a more happy character?—I have already told you.—It is RELIGION—GENUINE RELIGION. Not the narrow peculiarities of a sect;—these, you will do me and others the justice to say, you have never heard inculcated from this pulpit;—but that vital, practical piety, which is common to all the sincere disciples of Christ, of every name; which purifies, as I have said, both the heart and the life; which is the only complete

finish of human character; and which adorns and sanctifies every accomplishment. It is THIS which those who pray for a revival of religion in our Colleges, supremely desire to see every where living and reigning. It is THIS, which, so far as it reigns, will ever be found to form diligent students, good scholars, young men of REAL TRUTH AND HONOUR, emulous of every virtue, and fitted to be the delight of all the wise and good who know them. It is THIS, in short, which will alone effectually lead to that general docility, that moderation in pleasure and expense,\* that filial respect to superiors, and that studious inoffensiveness and benevolence towards all, without which Colleges can never be either tranquil or happy in themselves, or regarded with approbation by any enlightened friend of society.

\* It ought to be known to parents and guardians, that the NECESSARY EXPENSES, at *Princeton*, as well as at most of the other Colleges in the *United States*, are much more moderate than the extravagant habits of some students would lead them to suppose. The *College bills*, properly so called, may all be completely satisfied by about \$200 *per annum*. A reasonable sum for clothing, and other incidental expenses, may easily be estimated: and all that is allowed to inexperienced youth beyond this, is so far from being necessary or proper, that it is absolutely a bribe to licentiousness, and seldom fails of producing that effect. The instances in which excessive supplies of money have injured students at College, are as numerous as they are melancholy. The young man who has much money to spend, must have objects on which to spend it. These will not long continue to be innocent. They will first lead to relaxation from study, next to idleness, then to degradation in his class, soon to habitual dissipation, and finally to open profligacy, and, perhaps, to ignominious expulsion. Such is the issue of much of that which is called parental *tenderness*, but which would be much more suitably denominated parental *infatuation*, or rather parental *cruelty*.

SONS OF NASSAU-HALL! arise in the majesty of youthful virtue and piety, and resolve,—in the strength of Him who alone can enable you to fulfil your resolution,—that this Seat of science, so far as depends on *you*, shall, from this hour, be a seat of order, diligence, virtue, and genuine religion. Resolve, that in literary enterprize, in sound learning, and in every thing that is fitted to complete the character of scholars and christians, it shall, as far as in you lies, by the Divine blessing, stand pre-eminent among the Colleges of the *United States*. For this purpose, let each one resolve for himself, that, whatever others may do, as for him, he will make choice of a reconciled God and Father in Christ as his portion. Pray, every day that you live, for a Revival of Religion among you. Those of you who are professors of religion, will not wonder that I call upon *them* to pray for a revival. But I do not call upon them only. I call upon every one of you to pray for it. Pray, thoughtless young man! that the blessing may come to you, as well as to others. Pray that it may spread in every direction, and fill the house. If you love yourselves, pray for it. If you love your Country, pray for it. If you love your *Alma Mater*, pray for it. If you love the Church of God, I know you WILL pray for it. Believe me, you cannot ask for a richer blessing; for it brings all other real blessings in its train. When this blessing is realized, then may it be emphatically said, by the Spirit

of God, “*Behold. I have healed these waters! there shall not be from thence any more death!*”

2. But the subject on which we have been meditating, applies also to those of my audience, who are not immediately connected with the College. It reminds them that they all have an interest in it, an interest of the deepest and most serious kind: and it calls upon them to pray, without ceasing, for a revival of religion in this Seat of learning, and in the Colleges generally of our beloved country. Yes, my friends, while too many, who ought to know and to act better, are deliberately lending themselves to the unhallowed work of endeavouring to corrupt these youth: while too many are ministering to their vices; leading them into temptation; taking the advantage of their rashness and inexperience; and giving them facilities for involving their parents in heavy debts, as unjust in themselves, as they are often fatally injurious to those who are thus aided in contracting them:—while many, I say, are acting a part, in these respects, which ought to expel them from all decent society, and consign them to the execrated ranks of panders and pick-pockets;\*

\* It is to be hoped that some of those who are chargeable with the conduct here referred to, have never considered its real nature and tendency. If they could take the slightest glance at the dreadful, and often irreparable injury, which is frequently inflicted on youth by the means which they furnish, under the pretext of *kindness*, and *accommodation*; and if they could impartially ask themselves, whether they would be willing that oth-

let it be *our* constant endeavour, by an edifying example, and by our daily prayers, to excite them to that which is good, and to draw down blessings upon them.

Many of these youth, probably, never pray for themselves; never ask the God that made them to be their Guide and Protector!—Let us, my christian friends, pray for them. Let us pray, without ceasing, that the “Salt” of divine grace may be cast, speedily and abundantly, into this Fountain; that every youth here present may be preserved unhurt amidst the snares and dangers which surround him, and inspired with that wisdom which cometh down from above; that the renewing and sanctifying grace of God, may take possession of every heart within these walls; that a College so early consecrated by the faith and prayers of its pious Founders, and so happily adorned by a long line of illustrious Presidents, may be made more and more to promote the great purposes for which it was instituted; and that, from this day, a Spirit may be poured out upon it, which will render it more than ever distinguished for the happy union of piety and science: more than ever the chosen resort of those virtuous and high-minded youth, who aspire to the honour of being real ornaments to their generation, and to the Church of God.

ers should treat THEIR CHILDREN in the same manner;—they would surely recede with horror from their present course, if they possessed the least remnant of moral principle.

Blessed era! May the God of all grace speedily realize it to our prayers, and our hopes! Blessed, indeed, would such a day be, not merely to the College itself, but to our Town; to our State; to our Nation!—Let us all, then,—I say once more,—unceasingly and importunately pray for it. Let no delay of the blessing, no difficulty which appears to stand in the way of its vouchsafement, discourage our importunity. The pride, the waywardness, the frivolity, the sensuality of youth, shall all give way, when the enlightening and sanctifying Spirit of God shall be “*poured out from on high.*” Who can tell but that our eyes may yet be blessed with this glorious sight? Who can tell but that our covenant God, in answer to the prayers of his people, may condescend speedily to “*open the windows of heaven, and pour out a blessing upon us, until there shall not be room enough to receive it?*” Amen!