

AN
ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE COMMENCEMENT HELD IN

QUEEN'S COLLEGE

IN

NEW-JERSEY,

SEPTEMBER 25, 1810.

BY J. H. LIVINGSTON, D.D.

**PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY, AND PRESIDENT OF QUEEN'S
COLLEGE.**

NEW-BRUNSWICK:

PRINTED BY ABRAHAM BLAUVELT

1810.

*At a meeting of the Trustees of Queen's College in New-Jersey,
September 25th, 1810.*

RESOLVED, That the thanks of this Board be presented to the Rev. Doct. John H. Livingston, President of the College, for his excellent address this day delivered—and that a copy thereof be requested for publication.

Extract from the minutes

WM. P. DEARE, *Clerk*

**.* The printer judges it necessary to apologize for a delay in this publication. The copy was put into his hands in due time, but a number of concurring circumstances, among which, the death of an aged parent is the chief, have prevented him from accomplishing the work as soon as he intended.*

AN ADDRESS, &c.

BEFORE we close the solemnities of the day, a short address to the young Gentlemen, who have just received the honours of this College, is expected ; and I rise with cheerfulness to fulfill the pleasing task. But the peculiar circumstances which distinguish this day and render it in some respects different from any other ever celebrated here before, make it proper for me first to turn to the **TRUSTEES** of the College, and from a view of the former and present state of this Institution, endeavour to excite an increasing zeal to promote its growing and important interests.

GENTLEMEN ! In the course of events which mark both private and public works, it is often found, that after many fruitless

efforts, it pleases the great disposer of all things to crown the perseverance of his servants, and make the triumph of success to follow a long train of discouragements and despondency. What we have lately experienced will justify the application of this, in some measure to ourselves, and we cannot be charged with extravagant anticipation, when we look forward and firmly hope to find it realized in its whole extent.

The Charter for this College was obtained in the year 1770. The men who devised the plan, who solicited and obtained the royal grant, under the Government which then prevailed, were pious and distinguished ministers of the Reformed Dutch Church. They were the decided friends of science, and wished in common with others who promoted literary attainments, to advance the education of youth; but this was not their primary object. At that time an unhappy difference in sentiment prevailed in the Dutch Churches. Many able and learned ministers who were born and educated in Europe, considered the

state of society then in America, as inadequate to afford an education sufficiently solid and enlarged for the work of the ministry, and therefore strenuously insisted upon a subordination of the Dutch Churches in this country to those of Holland, from whence alone, they supposed a well qualified ministry could be obtained. In opposition to these, a respectable number of ministers, who were sensible of the vast difficulties, expences, and risks which accompany such a dependence upon a foreign and distant nation, judged that if ever the interest of the reformed Church in America were to prosper, her ministers must be trained up for her service at home. Both parties were firmly united in the same principle; both were fully convinced, that no Church can be expected to thrive, without a well educated as well as pious ministry. They differed only in the means for obtaining this desirable object. While the former imagined it could only be found in Europe, the latter were convinced it was attainable then in America, and that sowing

the seed upon the same field which was to be reaped, would produce the safest and most valuable harvest. It was under this impression they determined to erect a College for the immediate purpose of promoting the interests of religion, and preparing young men for the ministry of the gospel. It was for this they applied for a charter, and the words of the instrument expressly recognise this to be the professed and precise object.

Had unanimity then prevailed in the Dutch Churches, the number and wealth of its members would, under the divine blessing, have immediately founded and completed the Institution upon a liberal scale. But the difference of sentiment unhappily grew into discord; opposition and disputes daily widened the breach; and the very existence of the reformed Dutch Church in America was at stake. In this unhappy state, a College intended to provide a ministry for the Church, could not fail of sharing the fatal consequences. Patronage was withheld; the greatest portion

of the members of the Church refused their aid ; the College was considered as a badge of party, and as such remained friendless and forsaken.

But there were blessings in store for this respectable branch of that Church which had from the reformation been so conspicuous and pure among the Churches in Europe. The dawnings of these blessings opened upon us in the year 1771, which will ever be considered as a memorable and auspicious period. A convention was then held. The Ministers and Elders of both parties attended, and all past animosities were happily terminated. An union was effected upon just and liberal principles, and the acts of that convention are the foundation of our present Constitution and prosperity. Peace indeed was then restored, but prudence dictated the impropriety of bringing forward any thing, which had before been the subject of contention, or bore the mark of previous party. Among these was Queen's College, which was accordingly suffered to remain unno-

ticed ; and for want of support, languished, and gradually sunk into oblivion. In that forlorn situation this Institution remained until the close of our revolutionary war, when the Trustees made some exertions to revive it, and called the Reverend Doct. Hardenbergh to be the president. That great and good man, in his zeal for religion and attachment to the reformed Dutch Church, accepted the invitation. He devoted his distinguished talents and precious life to the arduous task of bringing the Institution, still destitute of patronage, into public notice and successful operation. But the task was too severe. Under the additional weight of parochial duties, which at the same time, he sustained in this Church, he evidently wasted his strength and sunk under a burden, too heavy for one man, however fortified with genius and industry to sustain. His unsuccessful efforts confirmed the fact, that no Institution can be supported by the energy of an individual, but must be cherished and maintained by the joint exertions of numbers. Upon the

decease of Dr. Hardenbergh a call was made upon another, who by imperious circumstances was then prevented from accepting it ; the College again declined into its former state, every species of instruction at length ceased, and nothing but the name remained. And even its name and existence would have been obliterated, had it not pleased the Lord to put it into the hearts of the Trustees to revert to the first principles of the Charter, and recollect that this College was to be built upon a foundation in some respects different from all others. That it was not merely a literary institution, but was designed principally to be a Theological Seminary. They therefore wisely determined to appeal to the Reformed Dutch Churches, and accordingly made a spirited and pious overture upon this interesting subject. The moment proved propitious. The General Synod was at that very juncture earnestly contemplating a plan for accomplishing their favourite object of opening a Divinity Hall, and establishing a

Theological professorship. The overture was readily accepted; and the Churches and the Trustees, entered into a mutual covenant which has given a new form, and we trust, new life and energy to the institution.

This covenant is the basis upon which the College and the Theological establishment now rest. Upon this, both departments, if well understood and prudently conducted, may rise to eminence, by mutually supporting and strengthening each other. A system is now formed which blends the interests of both. A system singular in its kind, yet in its constituent parts, simple and intelligible, and which we expect in its operation will be found easy and pleasant.

The two departments are maintained wholly by different funds, and are amenable in every respect to different tribunals. The ecclesiastical has no control whatever over the literary, nor has the latter the least interference with the former. Distinct in their natures, objects, and progress, they are never to be mixed or confounded.

These are the principles. An experiment remains to be made in executing a covenant thus founded and ratified.

But there is nothing in these two institutions, either in their peculiar constitution or distinct judicatures, which forbids an union to a certain extent. **LOCALLY** they certainly are united. Both boards have determined to open their respective halls, and erect their standards in this good City of **NEW-BRUNSWICK**. A spot in many respects most eligible ; a place where the religion, the morals, the hospitality, and acceptable manners of its worthy citizens give the most assured pledge that those who teach, as well as the youth who may come here to be taught, will be received with cordial benevolence, and always experience affectionate attention. But there is more than a local union. The two institutions, as we have observed, are **FEDERALLY** connected. They are by compact reciprocally engaged to assist each other and form one common interest. By fixing their professorship here, the General Synod have,

on their part thus far adopted the College, and they publicly announce the relation. It is no longer an orphan. A respectable portion of their Churches is to assist in the immediate support of the literary department, while the remainder is pledged to find funds for the maintenance of the theological. And if animated with the same generous and noble spirit, which prompts our brethren of every denomination around us, to exert themselves in forming expensive and useful institutions, we surely need not dread a disappointment. Those who have not yet been solicited, will, as soon as they are requested, contribute largely ; and such as have already given, will double or fourfold their gifts, before they will suffer an institution, so near their hearts, to fail of success. Yonder edifice must not become a reproach to its patrons ; it must never permit an humiliating taunt, or give occasion to those who pass by to say, "These men began to build, and were not able to finish."—The professoral fund must also not continue insufficient for the establishment. A gen-

erous people will assuredly never see with indifference, those individuals who have risked largely upon the public faith, and ventured to commence their operations before a competent supply was obtained, to sustain losses, which without great and speedy exertions, will be inevitable. The respective portions of the Churches will therefore make spirited efforts, each for their peculiar object. Strangers, pious and benevolent strangers, will also cheerfully assist, for strangers are interested in this common cause. We shall not repent our confidence. We shall soon receive good measure, pressed down and running over.

On the part of the Board, the Trustees promise to receive, preserve, and faithfully manage the funds which may be obtained for the professorship, and punctually apply them agreeably to the direction of the General Synod, and to consider the College as a nursery of students, a faithful helpmeet in preparing pupils for the Divinity Hall.

These are the arrangements we have made ; yet these arrangements are not cal-

culated to constitute a partial institution or fix a seminary upon a narrow foundation. Justice to ourselves and to the public requires it to be unequivocally declared, that while an acquisition highly important and desirable to the immediate patrons of the institution is contemplated as their principal object, still it is not their intention or wish to have this College solely devoted to the Divinity Hall; much less to promote exclusively their own denomination. We therefore explicitly announce and firmly engage, that the literary department will be equally open to all students, without any discrimination in regard to their religious persuasions, or any inquiry respecting the profession or future employment to which they are destined. A vigilant eye upon their moral conduct, and strenuous endeavours to render them good scholars, comprise the whole that will or can be exercised on the part of the College. From the Theological fountain the streams will also freely flow to all who thirst for the salutary doctrines of grace. Every applicant of

every denomination will be affectionately received, upon equal terms with our own, and always treated with the same attention and care. Our doors are ever open to them, and they shall be welcome to participate in all the advantages of the ecclesiastical department.

Permit me then, GENTLEMEN, to congratulate you upon these prospects. The avenues are now opened in a right direction, and this College is at length devoted to the very object for which it was at first intended. It never did prosper before, and it never could, until this was fixed. Now the union of both departments augurs prosperity to each. Alone they would remain feeble ; combined, they are strong, and embrace interests, worthy the aim and pursuit of wise and good men. Let all these concurring circumstances encourage your hopes and animate your zeal. A wide field is before you, and Providence your guide. We stand not in the way of other seminaries. We oppose no other institution. There are not too many Colleges. We

shall be no hindrance to the reputation or prosperity of any. We create no inimical rivalry, we form no collision of interests. While we strive to promote our own, we shall sincerely rejoice in the success of others, and cheerfully march in fraternal love with all the institutions around us. There is indeed one feature happily in our constitution, which distinguishes us from the rest, and will, we trust, preclude the possibility of invidious or unfriendly competition. We stand alone in being a Theological College, inseparably connected with a divinity school. This is our peculiar banner, our sufficient defence. Under this we are insulated and safe. Protected by this, we hope under the divine concurrence and benediction, we shall with uninterrupted harmony and good will make successful progress and become extensively useful.

Indulge then Gentlemen, cheerfully indulge in the expectation that your renewed labours will not be in vain, your plan will not prove abortive.—The system is wisely

framed, but it is not yet completed. The several parts are in motion, but it requires time to bring them to their proper place. Your patience must still be exercised. Yet a little while, and you will see your most fervent wishes realized. Yet a little while, and you will confess it has not been in vain to wait for the issues of Providence and follow its auspicious leadings. While your zeal unites with duty, you will obtain the testimony of an approving conscience, and the blessing of your approving God. You possess the confidence of an enlightened public. The Churches who have entered into covenant with you rest satisfied in your prudence, honour, and fidelity. And suffer me to add with deep humility, that whenever a good Providence shall bring me to reside here, you shall have whatever I can add to your prosperity ; and your kind attention, your respect and confidence shall always meet with the returns of a warm heart and affectionate gratitude. Gentlemen, I bless you.

AND now YOUNG GENTLEMEN, I turn with paternal tenderness to you, and drop a few words of advice, the counsel of friendship; which if recollected and practised, may prove profitable to you through life.

You have finished what is denominated a collegiate education. The defects which inseparably attend an infant institution, have been, as far as possible, compensated by the abilities and care of your worthy teachers, and by your own industry and laudable application. Your conduct has been exemplary, and you leave us, crowned with the approbation and recommendation of those who are best capable of appreciating your character. You have done well. You have drank as copiously of the streams as your limited time, and youthful capacities, could afford. But permit me to remind you, that these are mere scanty sippings, they are only diminutive draughts, compared with what you are yet copiously to imbibe. The rudiments of your education are secured, but remember these are only the first elements, the general princi-

ples of knowledge. You are not yet learned men. It is only by an industrious and well directed perseverance you can attain that illustrious character. The mountain of science is high and steep. Its cloud cap'd summit has never been explored by the most enterprising of the human family; many soaring adventurers have however by arduous struggles gained an elevated station, and overlooked, with extensive prospects the distant travellers below them. Let a bold determination to climb the rugged cliffs inspire you with zeal to excel, and stimulate you to reach a noble height. There are no terminating lines to knowledge, there are no limits to investigation, but what indolence and ignorance create. To finite minds the intellectual system is boundless.

It is not indeed demanded of all who receive collegiate honours that their acquisitions in every branch of knowledge shall be extensive and accurate. This is beyond the ordinary powers of men, and there have been but few distinguished individuals in

the world, who could be justly called universal scholars. But it is expected of every well educated student that his range in the regions of literature will not be narrowly confined. To meet this expectation, young Gentlemen, you must read much, and endeavour to understand and remember what you read. There are authors in various languages of such celebrity, there are prominent branches of arts and sciences so grateful to the understanding, there are productions of taste and genius so sublime and elegant, that it is a reflection upon a man of letters to be wholly ignorant of them. It constitutes an essential requisite in the character of an accomplished gentleman, and distinguishes him from the fop and pedant, to be acquainted with these authors, and feel himself at home when conversing upon the subjects of which they treat, and the style in which they excel.

But this accomplishment must be connected with some distinct branch of knowledge, or it may dissipate into mere intellectual luxury, and perhaps prove useless

to the individual as well as the public. You are each of you destined, we presume, to one or other of what is called the learned professions. Too young yet to determine, too little acquainted with your own talents and bias, you have probably not yet made the choice. What will it be! Are you to ascend the pulpit, lead the worship of adoring assemblies, and announce with authority and persuasive eloquence the sublime doctrines of the gospel? Are you to stand the ornaments of the bar, to plead for oppressed innocence before the august tribunals where justice is administered with an equal scale? Or are you to visit the chambers of the sick and wounded, select the most efficacious remedies, and relieve the victims of pain and disease? Which ever of these you may prefer, it will claim your severe study, deep meditation, and close attention. In whatever else a man may be deficient, it is a shame to be ignorant of what appertains to his own proper profession. It is therefore expected, it is absolutely requisite for a minister of the gospel,

to know the foundation and principles of natural and revealed religion; to be familiarly and critically conversant with the Bible; and always prepared and able to teach, to detect error, and bear a powerful and faithful testimony to the truth. The Lawyer must be acquainted with the whole system of jurisprudence; he must understand the principles of civil society, the nature and extent of the social compact, the various rights of all the members of the community, through all the relations in which these rights originate, and all the channels, modes and forms by which they are administered and vindicated. He must be able to determine what is law and equity, and by convincing and eloquent addresses, pour light upon his cause and successfully plead the claims of the injured. A physician and surgeon must examine and intimately learn the wonderful and fearful structure of the human body; the evils to which it is exposed, and the rise, the progress and influence of those evils upon this delicate and complicate machine. He must know how to

pour the healing balm in rankling wounds, to restore to their place the dislocated or mangled limbs, and administer the best medicines for subduing disease and establishing health. But, what reading! what thought! what knowledge! what strength of mind! what judgment! what fortitude! what industry are requisite to grasp any of these systems, and form a professor of reputation, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed! No idle man was ever great, no superficial student was ever eminent in any profession. It is the hand of the diligent that maketh rich. The glare of talents may readily excite the admiration of an illiterate multitude, but without a solid education and correct knowledge, the most brilliant display of a lively imagination, or polished style, make a feeble and transient impression, and are of little worth.

These outlines are not drawn, my dear young Gentlemen, to intimidate, but to arouse you to industry; to convince you that you have as yet scarcely saluted the threshold of literature; to shew you there

is more before you to be conquered, than what you have already vanquished; and to encourage you to build high and strong upon the foundation you have laid. The hopes of your fond parents are excited. Their eyes sparkled with gladness while viewing the exhibition of your opening genius this day. Never let them drop the tear of disappointment and grief. You are shewn to the public from the theatre upon which you now stand; to retreat without disgrace is impracticable; to advance and prosper depend, under the blessing of divine Providence, upon your own future care, your assiduous labour, and faithful perseverance. That you may become conspicuous, stand high in your professions, be great and useful, respected and beloved, is our ardent wish.

But to be great, to be useful, to be respected and beloved, you must possess more than what relates to the mere culture of the understanding. Your hearts must be cultivated, or all your splendid accomplishments may only render you giants in

iniquity, and prove sharpened weapons of destruction. The man of superior endowments, extensive information, and elevated station, who is immoral, ambitious, and profligate, is a dangerous member of society. He has his price for iniquity, oppression, and treason. His acquirements and influence render him more perilous and pernicious.

Let it then deeply impress your minds, that the principles of what is justly denominated strict morality, must ever predominate and influence all your plans, pursuits, and conduct through life—as members of the human family, help to bear the burthens of afflicted humanity—with unaffected humility, be kind and courteous to all, but make the children of poverty and distress the peculiar objects of your benevolent attention,—Be just, be honest, strictly honest in all your dealings—hold truth in whatever you assert, and whatever you promise, inviolably sacred.—In your intercourse with the world, let honour in its genuine spirit, adorn your conversation, and a

due attention to the manners of polished society admit you to the walks of highest rank—For ever be distinguished by a stern hatred of vice in all its alluring and delusive forms. Let a fervent love and practice of virtue, in all its various bearings and amiable exercises, evince without disguise, your ruling principle, and unequivocally mark your decided character.

Young and unexperienced, you may probably before you are aware, meet with dangers where you dreamed of safety. You will certainly find emptiness where you expected fulness. Be not then deceived. 'The world is a troubled ocean. Count on finding little rest upon boisterous waves.—In a conscience void of offence, in an immovable resolution to bear the evils of life with fortitude and resignation, to be good, and to do good, you will erect a wall of defence, and find all the assistance, security, and consolation, the moral system can possibly suggest. Go then, generous youths, go thus fortified, and fulfil our wishes. Be gentlemen, be learned,

be celebrated in your respective professions; become an honour to your families, the boast of this College, an ornament to society, and pillars in the church and state.

These are the lessons, this the language of the moralist; and here we should be obliged to take leave of you, had we not been in the school of CHRIST, and learned there what no philosopher ever taught, what no infidel, ancient or modern, ever understood. The duties we have briefly enumerated are intrinsically excellent and for ever incumbent. The system that enjoins and the arguments which enforce them are indeed the truth, but they are not the whole truth. Another relation which we sustain, another system more sublime and essential to our character must be introduced, or we darken counsel with unmeaning words, and instead of instructing may ensnare unwary minds in a labyrinth of fatal errors. We should betray your dearest interests, were we to leave you under an impression that this system of moral duties,

which would have sufficed if man had never sinned, can now be perfectly fulfilled ; or that their partial observance will be competent to render you happy. The servants of the divine Redeemer must not teach like untutored heathen, nor content themselves with exhibiting the faint discoveries of the religion of nature, when the light of revelation has dispelled the shades, and the oracles of God are open before them. No, my dear children, while we enrol you upon the list of accomplished gentlemen, and inscribe your names among the scholars who are to shine as bright stars in the constellation of the learned ; while we admit you to be moral, decent, and exemplary in your conduct ; and expect you will be the friends of order, and a blessing to your country, we must remind you that you are SINNERS ; that you need a SAVIOUR ; and without his grace will never fulfil those duties from right principles, nor enjoy peace and consolation in your own souls. Your nature is depraved, you have lost the image of God. You must be born a-

gain. You must have new hearts. You must be CHRISTIANS, or all other attainments will prove an empty name, and leave you disappointed and wretched. 'This is that one thing needful which crowns the character of the man who is blessed. This is the only source of substantial comfort in life and death. The guilt of your sins must be pardoned, or you can never be happy. The righteousness of Christ, the blessed surety of the redeemed, must become yours, by being imputed to you for justification, or you cannot be saved.

These are the precious blessings revealed in the gospel. These, with the whole train of mercies they imply and comprehend, are freely offered to sinners. Of these, transgressors of every description are invited and commanded, by repentance and faith, to partake. Let them produce the conviction to which they are intitled, and engage your first and closest attention. Look to the Lord Jesus for repentance; he is an exalted prince and Saviour to bestow this grace. Look to Jesus for

faith ; it is his gift, he is the author
 of faith. Look to him, not only as a
 perfect example of holiness ; but as an
 atoning High Priest, the Lord our right-
 eousness, who *hath given himself for us, an
 offering and a sacrifice to God* ; as the glorious
 head and king of his Church, the king and
 head of all the redeemed. Receive him as
 such, in all his precious offices. He is the
 way, the truth, and the life. No man
 cometh, no sinner can come to the Father,
 but by him. Submit then to his authority,
 believe his word, and take his yoke upon
 you. There, and no where else, you will
 find rest to your souls. You are already
 members of the visible Church and initiated
 as such by baptism. Let it be also your
 ardent desire and fixed resolution to pro-
 fess your faith, and be soon admitted to all
 the privileges which appertain to members
 in full communion. Religion is honourable
 in all. In youth it is peculiarly amiable.
 Real Christians are the noblest work of
 God below. They are the people he has
 formed for himself ; the only people who

actively show forth his glory ; a peculiar people above all others, zealous of good works. Christians, real christians are the excellent in the earth. They are the salt of the earth. They are a blessing to a nation, a blessing to the world. Let it then be your chief concern to become christians. Never be ashamed of Jesus or of his gospel. Be reconciled to his cross and follow him. It must be a cold heart that feels no veneration for a Saviour. It must be a hard, a stupid, and wicked heart that can prefer the pleasures of sin to the beauties of holiness, or grasp after sordid and sensual enjoyments, instead of aspiring to the favour of God, and pressing to attain true glory, honour, and immortality.

Commence then your entrance upon public life as the intrepid disciples and decided friends of our divine Lord and master. Fear not the frowns nor court the smiles of infidels. However sagacious, and accomplished, however high in office or reputation they may stand, yet in what respects revealed religion, their ignorance and enmity ren-

der them the objects of pity and contempt. Choose better company. Associate with those who live by faith and walk with God. Go then as young christians into the world. Let that be your brightest jewel, your highest character. Goodness and mercy will then follow you all your days ; your comforts, your usefulness, and happiness will be for ever secured.

This is the counsel of friendship with which I take leave of you. Receive it as such ; and now my dear children go in peace. Our prayers and benedictions follow you. May God our Saviour bless you. FAREWELL.