ADDRESS DELIVERED IN COMMONS HALL, AT RALEIGH, ON THE OCCASION OF LAYING THE CORNER STONE OF THE NORTH CAROLINA INSTITUTION FOR THE INSTRUCTION OF THE DEAF AND DUMB, APRIL 14TH, 1848

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Address delivered in Commons Hall, at Raleigh, on the occasion of laying the corner stone of the North Carolina Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb, April 14th, 1848 by Harvey P. Peet

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HARVEY P. PEET

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NORTH CAROLINA INSTITUTION FOR THE INSTRUCTION

OF THE

DEAF AND DUMB,

APRIL 14th, 1848,

BY HARVEY P. PEET, M. A.,

PRESIDENT OF THE NEW-YORK INSTITUTION FOR THE INSTRUCTION OF THE DEAF AND DUMB.

NEW-YORK:

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1848.

OFFICE OF THE LITERARY FUND,
RALEIGH, April 15, 1848.

AT a meeting of the President and Directors of the Literary Fund, held this day, on motion, it was

Resolved unanimously, that the thanks of this Board are due, and are hereby tendered to HARVEY P. PEET, Esq. President of the New-York Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb, for the very learned, able and instructive Address, delivered by him last evening, on their invitation.

Resolved further, that Mr. Peet be respectfully requested to furnish this Board with a copy of said Address for publication, believing, as they do, that its circulation will greatly subserve the cause of the Institution under their control.

A true copy from Journal,
W. W. MORRISON,
Secretary of the Board.

INSTITUTION FOR THE DEAF AND DUMB,
NEW-YORK, May 29, 1848.

SIR,

I have the pleasure to acknowledge the receipt of a copy of the Resolutions, passed at a meeting of the President and Directors of the Literary Fund, on the 15th of April. I am happy if I have been so fortunate as to meet the wishes of the Board, and, grateful for the favorable opinion expressed of the merits of the Address prepared, in great haste, under the pressure of professional duty, I herewith submit the manuscript to your disposal, in the hope that its circulation may not disappoint the expectations which you entertain.

With the highest respect,
Your obedient servant,
H. P. PEET.

W. W. MORRISON,
Secretary of the Board.

ADDRESS.

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Mr. President and Gentlemen
of the Literary Board:

The cause of enlightened philanthropy has made such rapid progress during the last half century, that the generous and sanguine, almost forgetting that injustice and violence, still, at times, desolate the earth, might well dream of the approach of the millenium. For what can more strongly mark the moral condition of that happy period, than to see the tree of knowledge bearing the fruit of good unmixed with evil? To see the researches of science devoted to the discovery of means for the relief of affliction? To lift the degraded, to comfort the afflicted, to enlighten the ignorant, to supply eyes to the blind, ears to the deaf, and a tongue to the dumb, are tasks worthy of the highest ambition: tasks which those who would humbly follow in the footsteps of the Redeemer, and do what is given them to do in preparing the way for his second coming, are encouraged to undertake by many precious promises. No one can read the rapt visions of the prophet, figuring the blessedness that is to overspread the earth under the Gospel dispensation, without being struck by the prominence given to the relief of the blind and of the deaf and dumb. We cannot doubt that these prophecies looked beyond the literal fulfillment in comparatively few cases during the life-time of the Savior, and are now receiving a more general, though less literal, accomplishment, in the success and rapid increase of institutions of benevolence.

Of all the children of affliction, there are none whose lot

appeals more strongly to our feelings of humanity, than that of the uninstructed deaf and dumb. Though bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, eating at our tables, sitting at our firesides, and even kneeling at our family altars; bearing the image of the Creator, gifted with faculties for intellectual and moral excellence, and possessing souls that must live, think and feel forever,—they have been, for almost countless generations, shut out of the pale of social and religious privileges. We may, without exaggeration, pronounce them less fortunate than the lower animals, for they had few or no enjoyments beyond those common to the latter, and the faculties that lay dormant within them, served but to show them glimpses of the higher enjoyments of the intellectual and spiritual world, beaming from the eyes of their more fortunate kindred, and awakening in themselves desires doomed to rest ever unsatisfied. Such was the life of the deaf mute, passed in mental and moral darkness, and deeper and more hopeless darkness rested on its closing hour.

But the light has dawned at last. The prophecy that *the deaf shall hear the word*,[1] has been in part fulfilled, and, the *good tidings of great joy to all people*, are, in our day, proclaimed to those, who, of all men most needing the promises and consolations of the Gospel, had been, for centuries upon centuries, alone of all men, cut off from those promises and consolations. Surely if there is any act which we may reverently suppose to be acceptable to the God of Love, it is the act of taking by the hand our poor, ignorant and afflicted deaf and dumb brother, and leading him to the blessed fountains of knowledge—of the knowledge that brightens the otherwise cheerless scenes of life—and of that higher knowledge that takes the sting from death.

[1] Isaiah, xxix. 18.