

**ADVICE TO A YOUNG  
CHRISTIAN, ON THE  
IMPORTANCE OF AIMING AT AN  
ELEVATED STANDARD OF PIETY**

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Advice to a young Christian, on the importance of aiming at an elevated standard of piety by  
Anonymous

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TO  
A YOUNG CHRISTIAN,  
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IMPORTANCE OF AIMING  
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AN ELEVATED STANDARD OF PIETY.

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BY A VILLAGE PASTOR.

*Jared<sup>r</sup> Watrous D.D.*

WITH

AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY,

BY THE REV. DR. ALEXANDER, OF PRINCETON, N. J.

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"Feed my Lambs."

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## PREFACE.

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To the Lambs of Christ's flock, whom Peter was enjoined by the Good Shepherd to feed, I dedicate this little book. The letters which compose it, were written to instruct one of their number, the daughter of an highly valued friend. Since they are now made public, it is the ardent prayer of the Author, that they may comfort and edify many more.

As revivals of Religion have become so frequent, and have embraced in their sanctifying influence, so many youth of both sexes: these letters are given to the public, with the hope, that under God, they may stimulate such youth to activity in the cause of Christ; and awaken a desire for those exalted spiritual attainments, which it is their object to recommend.

The age in which we live, demands a high

standard of Christian character. Any thing which contributes to elevate it, must be useful.

In presenting this little volume, the Author has no apologies to offer. Not that he supposes it free from defects, or impervious to the shafts of criticism; but because, if it is calculated to be useful, apologies are unnecessary; if it is not, none, however laboured or eloquent, can atone for so grand and radical a defect.



## ESSAY

ON THE NATURE OF VITAL PIETY;—ITS SAMENESS IN ALL AGES AND COUNTRIES—AND ITS VARIOUS ASPECTS IN DIFFERENT CIRCUMSTANCES.

TRUE religion not only enlightens the understanding, but rectifies the affections of the heart. All genuine feelings of piety are the effects of divine truth. The variety and intensity of these feelings depend on the different kinds of truth, and the various aspects in which the same truth is viewed; and also, on the distinctness and clearness with which it is presented to the mind. In a state of moral perfection, truth would uniformly produce all those emotions and affections which correspond with its nature, without the aid of any superadded influence. That these effects are not experienced, by all who have the opportunity of knowing the truth, is a strong evidence of human depravity. In a state of moral depravity, the mind is incapable alike, of perceiving and feeling the beauty and excellence of divine truth. The dead neither see nor feel, and man is by nature "dead in trespasses and sins." Hence

the necessity of the agency of the Holy Spirit to illuminate and regenerate the mind. The nature of divine agency, in every case, is inscrutable by mortals. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." We know, however, that the work of the Spirit, in the regeneration of the heart, is adapted to the rational nature of man. The thing to be accomplished is not the creation of some new faculty; it is a moral renovation; and all moral changes must be effected by understanding and choice. To put the soul, therefore, in that state in which it will rightly understand the truth, and cordially choose the highest good, is the end of regeneration. Truth, therefore, must be the means by which actual conversion to God takes place. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth." "Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth." Although piety in the heart is the effect of a divine operation, yet all its exercises take place agreeably to the common laws of

our rational nature. The understanding is enlightened, the judgment is convinced, motives operate on the will, and conscience approves or disapproves. That the soul, in the exercises of piety, is under the renovating influences of the Holy Spirit, is not known by any consciousness which it has of these divine operations, but by the effects produced in a change of views and feelings; and this change is ascribed to God, because no other is able to produce it; and his word assures us that he is its author.

Now, as all men are endowed with the same natural susceptibilities, and as all Christians contemplate the same fundamental truths, the work of grace in the hearts of all, must be substantially the same. All have, by the knowledge of the law, been convinced of sin; have been made to feel sorrow, shame, and compunction, upon the recollection of their transgressions; and to submit to the justice of the sentence of condemnation, which the law denounces against them. All have been made sensible of their own inability to save themselves, and under the influence of these humbling and penitent feelings, have been led to seek refuge in Jesus Christ, as the only hope of their souls. This plan of salvation appears glorious and suitable