

**AN ADDRESS TO THE
YOUNG, ON
THE IMPORTANCE OF
RELIGION**

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An Address to the Young, on the Importance of Religion by John Foster

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JOHN FOSTER

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ADDRESS TO THE YOUNG,
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IMPORTANCE OF RELIGION.

BY JOHN FOSTER,
AUTHOR OF ESSAYS ON DECISION OF CHARACTER,
&c. &c.

Philadelphia:
KEY & BIDDLE—23 MINOR STREET.

1833.

2 Nov. 1898

**From the Library of
Prof. A. F. PEABODY S 2**

PREFACE
TO THE
AMERICAN EDITION.

AMONG the variety of excellent religious books that have appeared, few have been particularly addressed to the higher and educated classes in society. The following pages from the pen of one of the most powerful writers of the age, will, to a certain extent, supply the desideratum. They will be found admirably adapted to such intelligent and educated young persons as have not given to religion that attention which its importance demands. By placing this little work in their hands, the Christian may be the means, under God, of making them 'wise unto salvation.'

PHILADELPHIA, May 8, 1833.

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AN
ADDRESS TO THE YOUNG.

CHAPTER I.

DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,—

Will you be persuaded, (if it possible to induce you, to make a short effort with your mind, to constrain it to serious reflection? Would you have me, or not, to regard you as capable of thinking and judging, as in possession of a share of good sense, and as admitting that there really may be a just call for its exercise, even at your age? You are not willing to be accounted the reverse of this. Well then, prove that you can think, and that you can perceive when there is a subject before you which has peculiar

claims that you should think. And is there any thing which can urge a more peremptory claim than the questions, What manner of being it is that you possess, to what end possess it, and how it should be occupied in order to the attainment of that end? Is your own nature a thing of such little account with you, that you are quite satisfied with the mere fact of its being an existence; and that you have no doubt whether you may give away all its faculties, without care or accountability, to whatever pleases them and invites them into action? Does every consciousness you feel of what there is in that nature, agree to your living as a gay bird of the spring; as a creature made for the play and revel of mere life and sensation; or at most, fitted for some little schemes of transient interest, confined to a span of

existence, and liable to be broken up and given to the winds at any hour? Is this all you find in the endowments of your nature; is this the amount of its capabilities and dignity? No, you would say; you believe that you possess, for you have been taught that all of us do, a spirit, of noble quality and important destination. Do you indeed believe any such thing? what, while I see the whole vigour of your being, animal and mental, at some times dissipated in levity, spirited off in effusions of mirth; or at other times consumed in earnest protracted assiduity to accomplish some contrivance for personal display, some little feat of competition, or some scheme, (a grand one, you think,) of creating for yourself a happiness for a few years, from materials which every day must diminish, and any day may annihilate? Is it im-