

enjoyment which knowledge opens to the human mind, of a far more noble and refined kind than any dependent upon animal nature. A ninth makes its most important use to consist in its bearings upon religion, both natural and revealed.

Now, in my opinion, this ninth man has the right of the matter most decidedly ; and yet I fear that his opinion is not the most common, or the most popular. But to my conviction, the religious applications of learning are by far its most important use ; and the occasion seems to be a fit one to defend and illustrate this opinion. It needs, I believe, both defence and illustration. For though the belief is general that religion may derive some benefit from particular branches of learning, there is still an impression lingering on many minds, that some sciences are unfriendly in their bearings upon religion, and that others have no relations to religion. Much less is it generally believed that the strongest reason why we should sustain common schools, academies, and colleges, is, that we are thus promoting the cause of true religion. But if this be indeed true, then, when we give our property, our influence, or ourselves, to the cause of learning, we shall do it with a heartier good will and a more entire consecration ; and we shall the more cheerfully bear up under the trials, fatigues, disappointments, and perplexities that lie in our path.

I would not, indeed, undervalue the secular advantages of learning. They are so obvious and so important, that I could not do it if I would. Those whose experience reaches back fifty, or forty, or even thirty years, have evidence in their own consciousness of the economical value of learning, too strong to be overcome by any speculative argument depreciating its importance. When we compare the present condition of the world, and our own condition, with what they were in