

*Piety the Foundation of Good Morals.*

Impress your minds with reverence for every thing that is sacred. Let no wantonness of youthful spirits, no compliance with the intemperate mirth of others, ever betray you into profane sallies. Beside the guilt which is thereby incurred, nothing gives a more odious appearance of petulance and presumption to youth than the affectation of treating religion with levity. Instead of being an evidence of superior understanding, it discovers a pert and shallow mind, which, vain of the first smatterings of knowledge, presumes to make light of what the rest of mankind revere.

At the same time you are not to imagine that, when exhorted to be religious, you are called upon to become more formal and solemn in your manners than others of the same years, or to erect yourselves into supercilious reprovers of those around you. The spirit of true religion breathes gentleness and affability. It gives a native unaffected ease to the behaviour. It is social, kind, and cheerful; far removed from that gloomy and illiberal superstition, which clouds the brow, sharpens the temper, dejects the spirit, and teaches men to fit themselves for another world by neglecting the concerns of this. Let your religion, on the contrary, connect preparation for heaven with an honorable discharge of the duties of active life.—Of such religion discover, on every proper occasion, that you are not ashamed; but avoid making any unnecessary ostentation of it before the world.—BLAIR.