

Lament thy thirst of boundless power too late.
 Proceed, great chief, with virtue on thy side,
 40 Thy every action let the goddess guide.
 A crown, a mansion, and a throne that shine,
 With gold unfading, WASHINGTON! be thine.

1775-76

1776, 1834

To the University of Cambridge, in New England¹

While an intrinsic ardor prompts to write,
 The muses² promise to assist my pen;
 'Twas not long since I left my native shore
 The land of errors, and Egyptian gloom:³
 5 Father of mercy, 'twas Thy gracious hand
 Brought me in safety from those dark abodes.

Students, to you 'tis given to scan the heights
 Above, to traverse the ethereal space,
 And mark the systems of revolving worlds.
 10 Still more, ye sons of science⁴ ye receive
 The blissful news by messengers from Heav'n,
 How Jesus' blood for your redemption flows.
 See Him with hands outstretched upon the cross;
 Immense compassion in His bosom glows;
 15 He hears revilers, nor resents their scorn:
 What matchless mercy in the Son of God!
 When the whole human race by sin had fall'n,
 He deigned to die that they might rise again,
 And share with Him in the sublimest skies,
 20 Life without death, and glory without end.

Improve⁵ your privileges while they stay,
 Ye pupils, and each hour redeem, that bears
 Or⁶ good or bad report of you to Heav'n.
 Let sin, that baneful evil to the soul,
 25 By you be shunned, nor once remit your guard;
 Suppress the deadly serpent in its egg.
 Ye blooming plants of human race divine,
 An Ethiop⁷ tells you 'tis your greatest foe;
 Its transient sweetness turns to endless pain,
 30 And in immense perdition sinks the soul.

1773

1. Harvard.

2. In Greek mythology, nine daughters of Memory who preside over the arts and all intellectual pursuits.

3. Cf. Exodus 10.21-23, which describes "thick darkness" as one of the plagues inflicted by God

on the Egyptians. "Errors": theological errors, because the Africans are not Christian.

4. Knowledge.

5. Take advantage of.

6. Either.

7. Ethiopian; i.e., a black person.