

The following is a copy of a letter from Col. John Page to his son Matthew:

"TO MY LOVING SON, CAPT. MATTHEW PAGE.

SON MATTHEW: I herewith present you a New Year's gift, wherein you may observe the excellency of Scripture learning, which I desire that you may read, mark, and learn, that you may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life which God hath given you in the Gospel of our Saviour Jesus Christ. You will in this little book see what you are by nature—born in sin, having in you an original pravity, indisposition to do good, and proneness to evil. There is also taught you that Christ by His death vanquished death as Himself saith (John xi., 25), 'I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.' Therefore endeavor that Christ's death may become effectual to your soul, that you may rise from the death of sin to righteousness of life. Keep yourself from sin, and pray for God's Spirit to establish faith and sanctification in your heart, that you may live an heavenly conversation on earth; that, after death, eternal glory may be your portion. Set not lightly by my gift, but esteem those fatherly instructions above earthly riches. Consider the dignity of your soul, and let no time slip whereby you may, with God's assistance, work out your salvation with fear and trembling. I pray God bless you and give His blessing to what I have written for your everlasting happiness, which is the prayer of your truly loving father,

JOHN PAGE."

January 1st, 1688.

The little book referred to in this letter, and presented by Col. John Page to his son Matthew, on the first day of January, 1688, as a New Year's gift, was a MS. in Col. Page's handwriting. It contained practical instructions of a religious nature, together with quotations from the Bible. Though perhaps it was never intended for the press, yet it was so much esteemed by the late Bishop William Meade, of Virginia, that in the year 1856 he had it published. It was printed by Henry B. Ashmead, George St., above Eleventh, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. There are a limited number of copies. These are distributed chiefly among Col. Page's descendants, by whom the book is known as The Deed of Gift.

Bishop Meade, in his preface to this book, states that Col. John Page died 23d January, 1691-2, aged 60. This is an evident mistake, since, according to the inscriptions on his tombstone, he died at that time, aged 65.