

A
DISCOURSE

ON THE
CHARACTER AND VIRTUES

OF

General George Washington :

DELIVERED

ON THE TWENTY-SECOND OF FEBRUARY, 1800 :

THE DAY

OF

NATIONAL MOURNING

FOR HIS

DEATH.

BY DANIEL DANA,

MINISTER OF A CHURCH IN NEWBURYPORT.

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A

DISCOURSE

ON THE

DEATH OF WASHINGTON.

THE day, Fathers and Friends, which we have so often delighted to hail and to celebrate, as one of the most illustriously auspicious in the annals of our country and of mankind—again returns. But, sad reverse! no mutual gratulations, no heart-cheering recollections, no gladsome festivities return with it. The dear MAN who has long lived to God, to his country, and to glory, shall ever live, in our tenderest affections—in the best recesses of our hearts. But WASHINGTON was mortal! The anniversary of his birth we shall no more celebrate, but in memory of “joys that are past.” Alas! it is superseded, in our country’s calendar, by the fatal *fourteenth of December!*—a day, the recollection of which,

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which, will long agonize the heart, and sadden the countenance of every virtuous American.

Still there is left us the mournful pleasure of paying to distinguished excellence its merited honors, and of pouring our filial tears to the dear memory of our deceased Father. Blessed be God! we are not forbidden to weep. On such an occasion, it is a precious privilege. It will give some relief from the mighty burden of our sorrow. And our hearts when softened may receive a deeper impression of the virtues we thus honor.

Our country mourns. The breach, wide as the sea, with which her God, awful though just in his displeasure, has afflicted her, is felt, is tenderly lamented through all her tribes. Her widely distant shores echo and reecho the voice of undissembled mourning. This day exhibits a scene probably new to the world—a numerous and far extended nation inspired by one all-attracting, all-cementing principle of sentimental sorrow, and spontaneously pouring forth a flood of heart-felt grief at the tomb of a Man universally acknowledged its chief support and its brightest ornament.

Come then, let us mingle our sympathetic sorrows with the sorrows of our bleeding Country. Let us resign our souls to the soft sentiments which the occasion so powerfully inspires. Let our hearts respond

respond to the accents of mourning conveyed to us by every passing gale; while every tongue, in unison with the language of millions is ready to adopt the tender exclamation: MY FATHER! MY FATHER! THE CHARIOT OF ISRAEL, AND THE HORSEMEN THEREOF! (2 Kings, 2. 12.)

Such was the short, but comprehensive and pathetic eulogy which, on the miraculous translation of the prophet Elijah, in a chariot of fire, flowed warm from the heart of the afflicted Elisha. His own particular loss was great. He was bereaved of the Instructor and Guide of his youth. He was suddenly deprived of one who by his tenderness and watchful care, added to his superior age, authority and knowledge, had attracted his filial reverence and affection. But his personal affliction, deep and distressing as it was, did not absorb his sense of the public calamity. He mourned for his country. He mourned that her strength, that the principal instrument of her protection and safety was removed—for in this light he viewed the exemplary character, the pious counsels, the faithful warnings and the prevalent intercessions of the now departed prophet. These were the *chariot of Israel, and its horsemen*: far superior indeed to all its martial instruments, preparations, and achievements.

Unspeakably important and beneficial to a community is every pious person it contains. Such

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are truly the pillars of its strength and the shield of
of its defence. But peculiarly entitled to this de-
scription are those whose unfulled purity of char-
acter and acknowledged superiority of wisdom,
joined to eminence of station, have acquired for
them an extensive sphere of influence. Such a com-
bination of qualities and advantages falls to the lot
of few. But these few are precious. Their upright-
ness, their sagacity, their influence, their prayers, are
better than weapons of war. And though they should
never enter the martial field, nor personally con-
verse with the toils and dangers of war, still they
are their country's champions and protectors.

How preeminent then in this sublime office and
employment is he who to all which has been al-
ready described, adds the skill, the bravery, the for-
titude, the experience of the finished Soldier and
General!

I perceive, my mourning friends, you already an-
ticipate the application of this affecting passage to
the occasion of our present grief; to the Man who
may *now* emphatically and with the most undisput-
ed propriety be styled *immortal*—the revered and
beloved WASHINGTON. And do not your full
hearts declare that you have never seen nor heard
of the man, nor, excepting in the sacred records,
ever met with the delineation of the character, to
whom such a eulogy so justly belongs?

WASHINGTON

WASHINGTON was our *Father*. For his country, he felt *more* than the affection, the tenderness, the care and solicitude of a parent. Her interest, her happiness seemed ever uppermost in his heart, in his wishes and in his prayers. To her protection and comfort he gave the sprightly energy of his youth, the matured vigor and wisdom of his manhood, the cares and counsels of his age : and all with a cheerfulness which imparted a double value to the gift. Recollect the costly sacrifices he has made and the imminent hazards he has encountered ; recollect his nights of watching and his days of toil ; recollect especially the precious Legacy he has left you, drawn from the rich stores of his fertile mind and extensive observation ; breathing too the tenderest affection of his heart—and own that he was indeed your Father.—But the tender confession has long since been made by an affectionate people. Millions of tongues, the faithful interpreters of millions of hearts, have united in it. And this day, while it solemnly seals, indelibly records it. For what means the universal assembling of this day ? What mean the solemn rites this moment celebrated in every part of our country ? Is this the cold, formal homage of ceremony ? Is it the abject, reluctant tribute of vassal submission, extorted to grace the exit of some despot, who has lived without affection, and died without regret ? No. It is the spontaneous effusion of feelings too strong to be suppressed, and almost too overwhelming to be supported.

ported. It is a nation of freemen, animated with one soul, heaving one sigh, prest with one sorrow, mourning a *common Father*, and seeking relief and consolation in the temple of God.

WASHINGTON was likewise, in an important sense, our *strength* and *protection*. Let this be recognised, not by way of servilely flattering or impiously idolizing a creature, but in grateful commemoration of distinguished excellence and usefulness, and in humble honor to that merciful Being who has indulged us, in one of our own feeble race, such an illustrious instrument of His beneficence and guardian care. It was His transcendent favor to our Nation which raised us up such a Hero, such a Sage, such a Man : which enriched him with an understanding so capacious, and with a heart still more large and expansive ; which inspired his bosom with the sublime ambition to serve and save his country, and which crowned this first, last, and favorite wish of his soul with the most singular success.

It were easy to illustrate this point, and to shew, in distinct and regular detail, how eminently he was the safeguard and strength of our country, by his great *achievements*, by his sage *counsels*, by his illustrious *example*, by his unparalleled *influence*, and (blessed be God ! we may add) by his devout *prayers*. But on an occasion so tender, the task of formal discussion

tion and the rigid restraints of method would but ill accord with your feelings or my own. Let us then in a more desultory way, range this capacious field, and fix our minds for a moment on some of the most conspicuous objects it presents. Let us indulge some brief contemplations calculated to impress us with a lively idea of the rich treasure, the comprehensive blessing which once was ours. If there is pain in the employment, it is a pain nearly allied to pleasure. Instruction too, and benefit, of great importance may be the result.

At a very early period of life did the future Guardian of his country give some intimation of that sagacity and comprehension of mind, that correctness of judgment, that force of genius and dignity of character which have long since been the admiration of the world. Commissioned, about the age of twenty-one, to examine the encroachments made by the French on the western frontiers of these then British colonies, and to remonstrate against them, he more than justified so singular an appointment by executing its important duties with an accuracy and address far beyond his years. A scene which opened not long after, was perilous and distressful indeed. But it signalized the more conspicuously the military talents of our youthful Hero, now commanding a regiment * under General Braddock. In a con-

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* Such is the current of accounts. By some, however, it has

test with the Indians equally ill-judged and disastrous, that brave but too rash and pertinacious officer fell, with great part of his army. The honor of saving the remainder was allotted to WASHINGTON, who with a most remarkable intrepidity, skill and success, conducted their retreat.†

Heaven that enriched him with such rare endowments, prepared in due time a theatre adequate to their complete display. Nor is it surely one of the smallest glories of our late Revolution, that it had such a share in developing and displaying to mankind a character which has irresistible claims to be loved, and the love of which is closely connected with every virtue.

Never

has been asserted that Col. Washington had previously resigned his commission, in consequence of some arrangements respecting rank, which he viewed as degrading to the *colonial* officers; and that he was now attending Gen. Braddock as a volunteer and an extraordinary Aid.

† This memorable retreat was particularly noticed by the pious and excellent Mr. Davies, afterwards President of New-Jersey College; who took occasion from it to “point out to the public that heroic youth, Col. Washington—whom,” he adds, “I cannot but hope Providence has hitherto preserved in so signal a manner, for some important service to his Country;”—a remark which when we consider the early period at which it was made, and the singular verification it afterwards received, appears little less than prophetic.

Never can this momentous Revolution be contemplated by a feeling American, but with mingled sentiments of gratitude and astonishment. The grandeur and boldness of its design could be equalled by nothing but the wonders which marked every step of its progress, and the triumphant success with which it was finally crowned. Well may its recollection excite the humble yet exulting acknowledgment: *If it had not been the LORD who was on our side, when men rose up against us: then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us. Then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul. Our help was in the name of the LORD, who made heaven and earth.** He graciously inspired us with a love of liberty, equal to every exertion, and superior to every danger. His kindly influence transfused the sacred flame from heart to heart, till this whole nation resolved to vindicate its violated rights, or perish in the attempt. He revealed, in various ways, his mighty and merciful arm for our help and salvation. He gave us a WASHINGTON—the man we wanted—and perhaps the only man on earth capable of meeting the high and extensive demands of so awful a crisis. The voice of his Country calling him to the command of her armies, he obeyed with promptness, yet with a self-diffidence which forms a beautiful counterpart to the ability, the vigor and success of his following exertions.—Many of you, my hearers, recollect what a general and

* Psalm 124.

and animating confidence was inspired by his first appearance at Cambridge : and you know how faithful was the correspondence between an increasing display of his character, and the increased confidence, love and veneration of his countrymen. His virtues and talents, his character and influence, seemed the chief support, the very vital principle of our Revolution ; and for many an anxious year did we consider the political salvation of our country as depending on him, so far as it could be dependent on a mortal man.

Wonderful indeed were the perplexities, the distresses, the perils and discouragements which assailed him during a hard and doubtful contest of eight years. But far more wonderful the resources of his mighty mind which they called forth, and the unshrinking courage, the determination, the perseverance by which they were encountered and finally overcome. With an army imperfectly disciplined, incessantly supplied, and every moment, as it were, trembling to its dissolution, he confronted and vanquished the forces of one of the most potent and formidable nations on earth, and obtained, with the acknowledgment of our independence, a peace far more advantageous than at the beginning of the struggle we dared hope. Who sees not that a greater than WASHINGTON was here ?—that a just and gracious GOD supported our cause, and gave to our feeble exertions his own resistless energy ?

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The distinguished Minister of his beneficence dismisses with his paternal blessing an army which he might have easily made the instrument of ambition and aggrandizement, commits his dear delivered country to the care of Heaven, and retires to his beloved Vernon, crowned with glory, pursued by the prayers and blessings of an affectionate people, rewarded by their gratitude, and happy in their happiness.

But half the purpose for which he was indulged to his country and to the world—perhaps the greater half—was yet unaccomplished. In the memorable Convention of 1787, WASHINGTON appeared and presided. There we find him, in union with the assembled sages of the land, laying plans for the security and perpetuation of that liberty which his valor had defended; forming and maturing a scheme of government of which his sagacious mind had long since perceived the necessity, and his masterly hand almost traced the outlines.*

The excellence of this constitution, its benign aspect on all the most precious interests of our country, its effects, incalculably important and beneficial, have long since been realized and generally confessed. Yet so various and powerful was the opposition it encountered, so pernicious were the jealousies and divisions of that most alarming period, that had it
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* See his Circular Letter to the Governors of the several States.

not been sheltered and recommended by the name of WASHINGTON, its blessings might have been forever lost to us. All thanks to that beneficent Providence which sent us this second national salvation by the same beloved hand which brought the first!

And what mingled sentiments of delight, gratitude and veneration were excited in our hearts by the auspicious news that he who had defended us in war, was about to rule us in peace!—that again *summoned by a country whose voice he could never bear but with veneration and love*, he had condescended to give the evening of his days to the promotion of her happiness! Yet who dared consider it as within the sphere of probability that his preeminence in the cabinet could equal his glory in the field?

The event, however, disappointed every fear, and more than realized our most sanguine hopes. WASHINGTON was in a new sphere: but he was still the same. The same correctness and penetration of mind, the same calmness in deliberation, promptitude of decision and energy of action, the same eagle-eyed vigilance and invincible perseverance, the same stern integrity and glowing love of country, which had rendered his military life so glorious, attended him to the cabinet.

How well, how successfully he discharged the arduous and complicated duties of a first and second
 Presidency,

Presidency, needs not now be told. It has been clearly read in the flourishing state of our country, in the stability of our public credit, in the rapid increase of our commerce and wealth during those periods, and in our remarkable preservation from the most awful dangers threatening us both from within and without. It has been loudly proclaimed by the plaudits of the wise and good throughout the world. It has been strikingly manifested by the general satisfaction and happiness of this favored people during his administration, and by their pungent regret at his retirement from office, and from this mortal scene.

From the political sphere, however, he did not retire, without leaving us his fatherly benediction. Nor from the world, until he had given the crowning evidence how near to his heart was his country's happiness. Will it be thought the dictate of a fanciful singularity to suggest that the most glorious act even of WASHINGTON, was his acceptance of his last appointment to the command of our armies?—When we saw him voluntarily retire, loaded with honors, from the highest office in his country's gift, we naturally judged it impossible that a character so exalted should attain any additional elevation. But his great soul discovered a way. He rose by *descending*. Nor can it be doubted that this unparalleled instance of condescension was the result of that disinterestedness of virtue which is its highest glory. For what
private

private advantage could there be to allure to the martial field him who had already gathered all the laurels it could bestow, and had long since been reposing under their shade? None, my brethren. Nor can you surely contemplate his venerable form again exposing itself to the perils of war, his breast again bared to receive the weapons aimed at his country's peace, without the most unutterable emotions of affectionate reverence.

But we are come to a scene still more affecting. The exit of a good man is surely one of the most animating, though awful spectacles which the world can present. That of WASHINGTON was sudden—But let me retract the thought—

“No death is sudden to a soul prepar'd,

“When God's own hour brings always God's reward”—

—And his life appeared to be a scene of constant preparation for death; of uninterrupted, vigorous devotion to the service of God and his fellow-creatures. Approach then, if you can sustain the thought, and contemplate a moment the dying bed of WASHINGTON! Behold him calm—undismayed—self-collected—sustaining the most agonizing distress without a groan—submissively yielding his spirit to his God—*not afraid to die*—majestic in death. —But the scene is too overwhelming. Let us retire. And while its impression is recent, let us briefly rumin-

minate

minate on some of the many virtues of this wonderful man.

The *ruling passion* of his soul, if we may judge from a review of every part of his life—I had almost said, of its every action and circumstance, was Patriotism. He seemed to live only for his country. To her happiness he delighted to subordinate every other consideration. The sacrifices he made to this favorite object were innumerable and immense. His refusal of any compensation for his public services, and this uniformly persisted in, rare as the instance is, and worthy commemoration, seems yet in WASHINGTON to have been among the smaller expressions of patriotism. Sacrifices far more costly to a soul like his, he continually made. The sweets of retirement, to which he was peculiarly attached, and the satisfactions of domestic life, he habitually resigned at the call of his country. And there were periods when his character and popularity seemed at stake: when the hasty decisions and temporary clamors of injudicious or unprincipled men came directly in competition with his own sense of the public good. In these cases, he coolly held on his way, leaving to time and reason the justification of his conduct. Nay, ingratitude itself, and calumny could not extinguish nor confine the sacred flame which glowed in his breast.

Nor did this fire consume any of those more expansive sensibilities which should live in the human bosom. His patriotism was connected with the most enlarged Philanthropy, and the kindest sentiments of Humanity. He felt for the distresses of man. He mitigated, so far as in his power, the severities of war. He sympathized in the distresses of the prisoner cast by Providence on his care. And while his firm hand has executed the dictates of justice, the tear of mercy has trembled in his eye. To his slaves, whom he was under a partial necessity of detaining, he was rather a Father than a Master, as appears from his late Will. And bear witness, you who feel—*exquisitely* feel—yet for none but yourselves—you who never made a sacrifice to the comfort of an inferior domestic, bear witness—that the precious life of WASHINGTON was probably sacrificed to his reluctance to disturb the repose of a menial servant.

There was in this man a Delicacy of mind which never forsook him : a certain instinctive and exquisite sense of the fit, the proper, the decorous—*independent of reasoning*—more correct than the nicest rules of art—prompting him in all circumstances and on every occasion, to say and do the very thing he should—and often no less conspicuous to the discerning mind in what he left *undone* and *unsaid*. Doubtless this natural elegance of mind received
much

much additional refinement from the moral and Christian sentiments so familiar to him.

In his character, nothing perhaps was more remarkable than a genuine and most exemplary Humility. And surely never was the humility of a mortal more frequently or more thoroughly put to the test than his—raised, as he was, to the highest dignities his country could bestow, and constantly presented not only with the tribute of just encomium, but the incense of extreme adulation. But amid all, he never appeared to forget himself, nor to grow giddy with fancied elevation. While his admiring Country thought that no attentions, no honors, fit to be bestowed on a mortal, were too much to offer, scarcely any thing of this kind appeared to him too little. Most of us remember his visit to these parts, soon after his election to the Presidency—how his presence gladdened every heart, cheered every face and drew from all descriptions of persons the strongest possible testimonials of respect and veneration. But the scene seemed evidently rather to depress than to elevate him. A crowning evidence of the same humble spirit is exhibited in his last Testament, in which he declares his express desire that his corpse “may be interred in a private manner, without parade, or funeral oration.”

His self-government in other respects was scarcely less extraordinary. His mind seemed always on the throne,

throne, swaying an absolute sceptre over his appetites and passions. What to some appeared extreme reserve and even austerity in his deportment, was probably the dictate of principle; the fruit of a just conviction that to his character and station there was necessary a dignity not compatible with the most unreserved communication. And remarkably on all occasions was this dignity supported. It had indeed a firm and solid basis. It was built not on pride and arrogance, but on preeminent worth and unaffected modesty.

He possessed a Magnanimity which, as it rendered him superior to ingratitude and injury, saved him likewise from undue elation in prosperity, and from despondency in trial. "I have seen him," says his great compatriot ADAMS, "in the days of adversity, in some of the scenes of his deepest distress and most trying perplexities—I have also attended him in his highest elevation and most prosperous felicity—with uniform admiration of his wisdom, moderation and constancy." Scarcely could a higher eulogium be pronounced on a mortal, or a more unequivocal evidence suggested of a truly great and well-balanced mind.

In short, there appeared in WASHINGTON a purity of heart and a uniformity of character, which placed him alone among the great ones of the earth; or rather which caused their greatness to

to dwindle into insignificance. His soul was superior to the thousand arts and littleneffes which have disgraced the characters of most of the celebrated politicians of Europe. Nay more, he attained an immense superiority over those generals and statesmen who have been considered in the world as men of virtue. And if the *cause* of this be enquired for, I confess, my brethren, there appears to me but one which is at all sufficient; and this, when maturely weighed, will be found thoroughly adequate to the effect. He was, as there are the most cogent reasons to believe, a CHRISTIAN—a man of prayer—eminently so—one who lived and acted in the fear of GOD, and under an impressive sense of his heart-searching eye—one who humbly prostrated his soul at the feet of the divine SAVIOR—who derived his best sentiments from His gospel—and exhibited a bright illustration of His blessed and heavenly spirit. Can it be supposed, that a man who appeared at the farthest possible distance from dissimulation; who never spoke nor acted without a meaning; whose profession of Christianity was yet so explicit, whose attendance on its institutions so constant and uniform; so full apparently of reverence and affection; whose temper and life were likewise so strikingly correspondent—was not at heart a Christian? This, this appears at once the foundation and the crown of all his greatness and glory. In this point of view principally, he was a mighty bulwark to our country. His *prayers* made an important part of our national

tional defence. His excellent spirit and pious example were calculated to flash conviction in the face of all the proud infidels in our land. The humble yet sublime, the benevolent and godlike principles which actuated this Christian Hero, would raise a blush on the cheeks of the ambitious conquerors and destroyers of nations—if ambition could blush. His character, my brethren, is full of instruction to us all : and He who gave us such a character, He who has placed such a rare assemblage of virtues before our eyes, most justly, most solemnly requires, that we notice it, to His honor and for our own imitation. Nor let it be considered as the hasty effusion of an ill-boding mind—'tis an apprehension sanctioned by my coolest thought—that should the period ever arrive (gracious Heaven forbid it should !) when the name and virtues of WASHINGTON shall excite no lively vibrations of sensibility, no tender feelings of gratitude, in the bosoms of Americans, it will be the period of our country's degradation. It will argue such a depravation of sentiment, such a dereliction of principle, as will but too certainly indicate and seal our national infamy and ruin.

You will not most assuredly consider me as representing the character to be wholly faultless. This is not the lot of humanity. And far be from me such injustice to my own species as to rob it of so bright an ornament, by representing WASHINGTON as an Angel. We claim him as a *Man* : nor will

will we relinquish the claim.—Beside, who could be more ready than he was, to confess and feel his own dependence, frailty, and liability to error? Who more ready than he, on all occasions, to elude the notice and encomiums of a fond Country, and to point its attention and gratitude to an overruling and beneficent Providence:—to depress himself, that he might exalt his God?—Nor probably is there a person living whose ears and heart can be more wounded by those incautious and unhallowed extravagancies which, in too many instances, have been scattered over his grave, than his would be, were he within their reach.

Let us not then think ourselves excused, nor let us be deterred, from rendering to the deceased Savior* and ornament of his country, a *just* tribute of affectionate regard and celebration. Methinks beside his tomb, Virtue weeps, and Religion herself becomes a mourner. The surrounding world takes a lively interest in the scene. Is there an American who can behold it unmoved? Surely, he must be far above, or far below the level of humanity.

For him who is gone, we trust we have no reason to mourn. For ourselves and our country we have much. If, as Inspiration declares, *the righteous are taken*

* The application of this term to a human, instrumental Deliverer, is justified by the literal expressions of holy writ; as may be seen in *Nehemiah* 9. 27, and other passages.

taken away from the evil to come; if pious and patriotic souls are seasonably snatched from those calamities which they would feel less for themselves than for others, what have we not reason to apprehend when such a Friend and Father is called home? My brethren, we have never yet realized—God grant we may not be taught by bitter experience!—how important has been the protection afforded our Country amid the storms of Europe, by the very *name* of WASHINGTON, and by the consciousness, so disheartening to the enemies of our peace, that he lived, that he was ready again to gird on his faithful sword in defence of our rights. Nor have we yet completely made the momentous experiment, how essentially necessary was his life and influence to our federal union and internal tranquillity. And is there not too much reason to fear that vice and infidelity, long so mournfully prevalent among us, will have a new triumph, now such an illustrious champion and ornament of virtue and religion is removed?

Still let us implicitly submit to the sovereignty of Him whose *pavilion is darkness*, whose *way is in the sea*, whose *judgments are unsearchable*, whose holy displeasure at our national sins, and especially our ungrateful abuse of the most signal mercies, is yet but too conspicuous in this distressing dispensation.

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Shall we not likewise on this occasion, mournful as it is, endeavor to realize anew our multiplied reasons to be *thankful*, that such an illustrious character has been raised up, has been so long lent to our unworthy land, has been made such an instrument of mercy and such an instructive example to this people, has continued gloriously uniform to the last? Let us bless God that we have had a WASHINGTON to mourn over; for ages and centuries might not have afforded us the precious privilege.

Let us never cease to bear on our hearts and in our prayers his eminently virtuous Relict, whose late *Letter*, the expression of her soul, proves her a kindred and congenial spirit—worthy the heart of the first of men. May that power and mercy which knows no confinement, give her support, great as her loss, and heartfelt as her affliction!

And shall not the venerable ADAMS, who now *feels himself alone, bereaved of his last brother*, be remembered by us with new tenderness and solicitude? While we are permitted to contemplate the *mantle* and the *spirit*, with the *office* of his ascended predecessor, as resting on him (as did those of Elijah on Elisha) let us be thankful that a loss which we were ready (perhaps *too* ready) to consider as irreparable, has been so munificently supplied. And let us ardently supplicate the continuance of his life, his energies and usefulness.

Does not the mournful event we now contemplate, call on us in loud and solemn accents, to *cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils, whose glory is as the flower of grass* ; to beware of an unlimited dependence on a frail mortal, however eminent in virtue, in station and usefulness ? Does it not with a kind of irresistible eloquence plead with us to center our affections, our hope and confidence in the everlasting and unchangeable GOD ; the supreme Beauty and the supreme Good ; the Refuge and Dwelling-place of his people in all calamities, in all generations ?

Is the hoary, the venerable head of WASHINGTON brought down to the dust of death ? Then, my Fathers, prepare to die ! Could not his illustrious character, his exalted virtue, his distinguished usefulness, his unrivalled glory ; could not the wishes and prayers of his country ; could not the admiration and reverence of mankind obtain for him so much as a momentary reprieve from the arrest of the Heaven-commissioned Messenger ? Then where is the favored mortal that can claim it ? Where the thoughtless creature that dares expect it ?

Is it our consoling hope that while earth is so greatly impoverished by the loss of so much excellence, Heaven is proportionably enriched by its accession ? Let this operate as a new and potent attractive of our affections to that blessed place. Thither,

as to its proper region, its only lasting abode, ascends all that is worth our best love and warmest admiration. Let then the man who attracted and possessed our hearts while here, carry them with him to the world of perfect purity and unmingled bliss.

Do we, my dear brethren, feel almost oppressed with a sense of immense obligation to the Benefactor whom God has taken from us? Be it then our endeavor to

“ discharge

“ The gratitude and duty which we owe him,

“ By laying up his counsels in our hearts.”

Read his Legacy. *There* is the wisdom, the counsel, the heart, the soul of your WASHINGTON. There are the precious rules for making our nation wise and great and happy. Treasure it in your memories. Let it live in your hearts. Let it shine in your conduct. And from the moment that your children begin to lip the honored name of their country's Father, endeavor to prepare their minds for the reception of these invaluable maxims; that they may be handed down to the latest posterity,

My youthful friends; if you do not perceive in the character of your deceased Guardian and Father, an infinite superiority to the most accomplished pupil of *Chesterfield*—to the most finished disciple of the
witty

witty but detestable *Voltaire*,* that “brightest, *meanest* of mankind;” your taste must be depraved and compassionate indeed. Let me beseech you to eye and sedulously to imitate the character of this man, so truly accomplished, yet so pure and simple in his manners; so dignified, yet so humble in his mind; so rational a philosopher, and so exemplary a Christian. It will lead you to true glory. It will conduct you, we may confidently hope, to everlasting felicity.

Let

* Should any think there is an indecorum in using a style of reprehension so severe, concerning one of the most brilliant geniuses of his age, they are desired to reflect that his uncommon powers of mind were, by a depravity of heart still more uncommon, prostituted to the basest purposes, and that his whole life was little else than a course of inveterate, systematic and too successful hostility against religion. In ordinary cases, it is confessed, humanity enjoins our *silence* concerning the dead, if we cannot speak in their praise. But the name of *Voltaire* can never be forgotten. The ravages his writings have made on human virtue and happiness, the execrations of thousands and millions whose perdition they have effected, must but too effectually secure him from that oblivion to which every benevolent mind would wish to consign him. And humanity itself imperiously claims that such an *illustrious malefactor* of the human race be held up as an object of detestation and horror. Would to Heaven this monition might be regarded by those for whose sakes it is given! Would to Heaven the *last scene* of this hardy champion of infidelity—a scene of terror, anguish and despair scarcely ever paralleled—might prove an antidote against the poisonous influence of his writings!

Let us all remember, that this mournful celebration of the natal day, the life and death of the first of patriots, lays us under new obligations to love our country. What hypocrisy, if after this solemn profession of regard to his character and memory, any of us should be found opposing, or but half befriending the interest so dear to his heart, so uniformly the object of his life! While we muse on the bright example he has set us, shall there not be enkindled in our bosoms a flame of patriotism so pure, so vigorous, as shall consume every meaner affection, and triumph over every opposing interest?

I would close with a thought still more calculated, if possible, to come home to all our bosoms. We have assembled this day to pay honor to distinguished human virtue; to the memory of a deceased earthly Benefactor. Have we ever paid our honors to that Eternal Source of excellence, compared with which all human worth is but as a feeble twinkling ray of light, to the unbounded splendors of the glorious orb of day? Have our souls ever ascended in love and gratitude to Him who is the unfathomable and overflowing ocean whence all our streams of comfort are supplied? While our hearts bless the virtues and memory of WASHINGTON, are their best and tenderest affections given to Him who made him such, and who made him ours?—If this is *not* the case, we are chargeable with inconsistency indeed—inconsistency, the very thought of which should

should be enough to cover our faces with shame, and fill our hearts with sorrow. May God in mercy save us from it ! May He give us hearts to love true goodness, wherever it is found, but chiefly in its *Source* ! May He unite our souls to all that is excellent in his creatures, and render their excellencies instrumental to attract and everlastingly bind us to the glorious CREATOR !

HYMN.

O GOD ! thy darkest ways are just :
 Mute we adore thine awful hand,
 Which lays our glory low in dust,
 And spreads dismay around the land.

Yet O ! indulge our mighty grief ;
 Forgive the sighs that heave our breast ;
 Forgive these tears—a sad relief—
 These tears that will not be repress.

We weep our Father, Guardian, Friend,
 Late from our bleeding bosoms torn.
 Lo ! millions feel the wound, and bend
 In anguish o'er his hallow'd urn.

Nor wilt thou frown while thus we pay
Affection's tribute, Virtue's meed :
When WASHINGTON thou tak'st away,
Thou *bid'st* our hearts with sorrow bleed.

With pity's eye behold our tears ;
Let mercy's balm assuage our woe ;
Becalm the tempest of our fears,
And shield us still from ev'ry foe.

Long may our Father's honours bloom,
His virtues on each heart imprest !
His Country's bosom be his tomb,
And distant nations call him blest !

