

PULPIT ELOQUENCE

OF

The Nineteenth Century:

BEING SUPPLEMENTARY TO THE HISTORY AND REPOSITORY  
OF PULPIT ELOQUENCE, DECEASED DIVINES;

AND CONTAINING DISCOURSES OF

EMINENT LIVING MINISTERS

IN

EUROPE AND AMERICA,

WITH

SKETCHES BIOGRAPHICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE

BY

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WITH AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY,

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## DISCOURSE XXVIII.

ELIPHALET NOTT, D. D., LL. D.

THE venerable President of Union College was born of poor parents in Ashford, Connecticut, in June, 1773. He lost both his parents while yet a boy. It is said that a thirst for learning was suffered to prey upon him in secret until he had reached the age of nine or ten years; when, upon perceiving one day a neighboring physician ride past the field where he was at work, his feelings were too powerfully excited to be longer restrained. He dropped the hoe with which he was laboring, resolved that his life as a farmer should end there; and going to the residence of the physician, requested to be received as a student. He was advised by the physician to devote himself to the acquisition of knowledge, if his friends favored it; and he soon after this went to live with his elder brother, the Rev. Samuel Nott, pastor of a Congregational church, at Franklin, Connecticut. Here he was enabled to gratify his desire for learning, and acquired some knowledge of Greek, Latin, and mathematics, at the same time teaching district school in the winter, in order to obtain the means of support. At the age of seventeen he took charge of a school at Plainfield; and two years later, obtained his bachelor's degree at Brown University. Young Nott then turned his attention to the ministry, and when twenty-two years of age was licensed to preach. The first year of his ministry he labored as a missionary at Cherry Valley, in the double relation of pastor and principal of the academy; and in the latter capacity he soon gathered around him quite a large number of pupils. He remained there but for two years, however, and in 1798 he became the pastor of the Presbyterian church in Albany, where he preached for six years with great success. While here, he preached his celebrated sermon on the Fall of Hamilton; and very soon afterward, in 1804, was elected to the presidency of Union College. He has been to this institution, ever since, its financier, its president, and its most liberal pecuniary benefactor.

When Dr. Nott took charge of the college, it had but fourteen students; its buildings were unfinished, its funds exhausted, and its prospects generally gloomy. He obtained grants of land from the State, endowed professorships, built libraries, furnished apparatus, and raised the institution to the rank which it now holds. Dr. Nott has also claims to notice by his labors in the field of practical mechanics. By his experiments in heat, and the improvements he introduced, he effected an entire revolution in the mode of warming buildings. Nott's stoves have had quite a reputation. Although Dr. Nott is said to have written much, he has published but little. As a pulpit orator, he is said to have had, in his prime, but few equals. He still continues in the active discharge of his duties, at the very great age of eighty-four years. His ecclesiastical connection is with the Old School Presbyterians,

The leading characteristics of Dr. Nott are candor, discrimination, and versatility, joined with wonderful power of application. As a speaker and writer, his power consists not so much in the logical as the imaginative. His mind is naturally poetic and descriptive. One of his students says: "We have seen him, while lecturing on Kames's Elements of Criticism, draw a picture so touching and life-like that half of the class would be in tears." It is impossible to escape the charms of his eloquence. One has said of his writings: "In Dr. Nott's prose there is more genuine poetry than in two-thirds of the volumes named such on title-pages." It is believed that some of the finest specimens of English literature in the language, lie locked up in his desk.

The famous discourse here furnished, by permission of Dr. Nott, was occasioned by the death of General Alexander Hamilton, who was killed, in a duel, by Aaron Burr, at Hoboken, N. J., July 11th, 1804. It was delivered in the North Dutch Church, Albany, on the 29th of that month; and passages of it have been incorporated into our literature as specimens of singular and thrilling eloquence. Dr. Nott expressed himself as the more willing that we should reproduce it, from the fact that the false "code of honor" seems of late to be somewhat revived.

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## THE FALL OF HAMILTON.

"How are the mighty fallen!"—2 SAMUEL, i 19.

THE occasion explains the choice of my subject—a subject on which I enter in obedience to your request. You have assembled to express your elegiac sorrows, and sad and solemn weeds cover you. Before such an audience, and on such an occasion, I enter on the duty assigned me with trembling. Do not mistake my meaning. I tremble, indeed—not, however, through fear of failing to merit your applause; for what have I to do with that, when addressing the dying and treading on the ashes of the dead?—not through fear of failing justly to portray the character of that great man, who is at once the theme of my encomium and regret. He needs not eulogy. His work is finished, and death has removed him beyond my censure, and I would fondly hope, through grace, above my praise.

You will ask, then, why I tremble? I tremble to think that I am called to attack from this place a crime, the very idea of which almost freezes one with horror—a crime, too, which exists among the polite and polished orders of society, and which is accompanied with every aggravation—committed with cool deliberation, and openly in the face of day! But I have a duty to perform; and difficult and awful as that duty is, I will not shrink from it. Would to God my talents were adequate to the occasion; but such as they are, I devoutly proffer them to unfold the nature and counteract the influence of that barbarous custom, which, like a resistless torrent, is undermining the foundations of civil govern-

ment, breaking down the barriers of social happiness, and sweeping away virtue, talents, and domestic felicity, in its desolating course. Another and an illustrious character—a father, a general, a statesman—the very man who stood on an eminence, and without a rival among sages and heroes, the future hope of his country in danger—this man, yielding to the influence of a custom which deserves our eternal reprobation, has been brought to an untimely end!

That the deaths of great and useful men should be particularly noticed, is equally the dictate of reason and revelation. The tears of Israel flowed at the decease of good Josiah, and to his memory the funeral women chanted the solemn dirge. But neither examples nor arguments are necessary to wake the sympathies of a grateful people on such occasions. The death of public benefactors surcharges the heart, and it spontaneously disburdens itself by a flow of sorrows. Such was the death of Washington, to embalm whose memory, and perpetuate whose deathless fame, we lent our feeble, but unnecessary services. Such, also, and more peculiarly so, has been the death of Hamilton. The tidings of the former moved us—mournfully moved us—and we wept. The account of the latter chilled our hopes and curdled our blood. The former died in a good old age; the latter was cut off in the midst of his usefulness. The former was a customary providence: we saw in it, if I may speak so, the finger of God, and rested in his sovereignty. The latter is not attended with this soothing circumstance.

The fall of Hamilton owes its existence to mad deliberation, and is marked by violence. The time, the place, the circumstances, are arranged with barbarous coolness. The instrument of death is leveled in daylight, and with well-directed skill pointed at his heart. Alas! the event has proven that it was but too well directed. Wounded, mortally wounded, on the very spot which still smoked with the blood of a favorite son, into the arms of his indiscreet and cruel friend, the father fell. Ah! had he fallen in the course of nature, or jeopardizing his life in defense of his country; had he fallen—But he did not. He fell in single combat. Pardon my mistake—he did not fall in single combat: his noble nature refused to endanger the life of his antagonist. But he exposed his own life. This was his crime; and the sacredness of my office forbids that I should hesitate explicitly to declare it so. He did not hesitate to declare it so himself: “My religious and moral principles are strongly opposed to dueling.” These are his words before he ventured to the field of death, “I view the late transaction with sorrow and contrition.” These are his words after his return. Humiliating end of illustrious greatness! *How are the mighty fallen!* And shall the mighty thus fall? Thus shall the noblest lives be sacrificed and the richest blood be spilt! *Tell it not in Gath; publish it not in the streets of Ascalon.*

Think not that the fatal issue of the late inhuman interview was fortuitous. No: the hand that guides unseen the arrow of the archer,

steadied and directed the arm of the duellist. And why did it thus direct it? As a solemn *memento*—as a loud and awful warning to a community where justice has slumbered, and slumbered, and slumbered—while the wife has been robbed of her partner, the mother of her hopes, and life after life rashly, and with an air of triumph, sported away. And was there, O my God! no other sacrifice valuable enough? Would the cry of no other blood reach the place of retribution, and wake justice, dozing over her awful seat? But though justice should still slumber and retribution be delayed, we, who are the ministers of that God who will judge the judges of the world, and whose malediction rests on him who does his work unfaithfully—we will not keep silence.

I feel, my brethren, how incongruous my subject is with the place I occupy. It is humiliating, it is distressing, in a Christian country, and in churches consecrated to the religion of Jesus, to be obliged to attack a crime which outstrips barbarism, and would even sink the character of a generous savage. But humiliating as it is, it is necessary. And must we, then, even for a moment, forget the elevation on which grace hath placed us, and the light which the gospel sheds around us? Must we place ourselves back in the midst of barbarism? And instead of hearers softened to forgiveness by the love of Jesus, filled with noble sentiments toward enemies, and waiting for occasions, after the example of divinity, to do them good—instead of such hearers, must we suppose ourselves addressing hearts petrified to goodness, incapable of mercy, and boiling with revenge? Must we, O my God! instead of exhorting those who hear us, to go on unto perfection, adding to *virtue charity, and to charity, brotherly kindness*; must we, as if surrounded by an auditory just emerging out of darkness, and still cruel and ferocious, reason to convince them that revenge is improper, and that to commit deliberate murder is sin? Yes, we must do this. Repeated violations of the law, and the sanctuary which the guilty find in public sentiment, prove that it is necessary.

Withdraw, therefore, for a moment, ye celestial spirits, ye holy angels, accustomed to hover round these altars, and listen to those strains of grace which heretofore have filled this house of God. Other subjects occupy us. Withdraw, therefore, and leave us; leave us to exhort Christian parents to restrain their vengeance, and at least to keep back their hands from blood—to exhort youth nurtured in Christian families, not rashly to sport with life, nor lightly to wring the widow's heart with sorrows, and fill the orphan's eye with tears.

In accomplishing the object which is before me, it will not be expected, as it is not necessary, that I should give a history of dueling. You need not be informed that it originated in a dark and barbarous age. The polished Greek knew nothing of it; the noble Roman was above it. Rome held in equal detestation the man who exposed his life unnecessarily, and him who refused to expose it when the public good

required it.\* Her heroes were superior to private contests. They indulged no vengeance, except against the enemies of their country. Their swords were not drawn, unless her honor was in danger; which honor they defended with their swords not only, but shielded with their bosoms also, and were then prodigal of their blood. But though Greece and Rome knew nothing of dueling, it exists. It exists among us; and it exists at once the most RASH, the most ABSURD and GUILTY practice that ever disgraced a Christian nation.

**GUILTY**—Because it is a violation of the law. What law? The law of GOD: THOU SHALT NOT KILL. This prohibition was delivered by God himself, at Sinai to the Jews. And, that it is of universal and perpetual obligation, is manifest from the nature of the crime prohibited, not only, but also from the express declaration of the Christian lawgiver, who hath recognized its justice and added to it the sanction of his own authority.

“Thou shalt not kill.” Who? Thou, creature. I, the Creator, have given life, and thou shalt not take it away! When, and under what circumstances may I not take away life? Never, and under no circumstances, without my permission. It is obvious that no discretion whatever is here given. The prohibition is addressed to every individual where the law of God is promulgated, and the terms made use of are express and unequivocal. So that life can not be taken under any pretext, without incurring guilt, unless by a permission sanctioned by the same authority which sanctions the general law prohibiting it. From this law, it is granted, there are exceptions. These exceptions, however, do not result from any sovereignty which one creature has over the existence of another; but from the positive appointment of that eternal being, whose “is the world and the fullness thereof. In whose hand is the soul of every living creature, and the breath of all mankind.” Even the authority which we claim over the lives of animals is not founded on a natural right, but on a positive grant made by the Deity himself, to Noah and his sons. This grant contains our warrant for taking the life of animals. But if we may not take the life of animals without permission from God, much less may we the life of man made in his image.

In what cases, then, has the sovereign of life given this permission? **IN RIGHTFUL WAR; BY THE CIVIL MAGISTRATE, and IN NECESSARY SELF-DEFENSE.** Besides these, I do not hesitate to declare, that in the oracles of God there are no other.

He, therefore, who takes life in any other case, under whatever pretext, takes it unwarrantably—is guilty of what the Scriptures call murder, and exposes himself to the malediction of that God who is an avenger of blood, and who hath said, “At the hand of every man’s brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed. The duelist contravenes the law of God not only, but the law of man also. To the prohibition of the former have

\* Sallust, de Bell. Catil, ix.

been added the sanctions of the latter. Life taken in a duel by the common law is murder. And where this is not the case, the giving and receiving of a challenge only, is by statute considered a high misdemeanor, for which the principal and his second are declared infamous and disfranchised for twenty years.

Under what accumulated circumstances of aggravation does the duelist jeopardize his own life, or take the life of his antagonist. I am sensible, that in a licentious age, and when laws are made to yield to the vices of those who move in the *higher circles*, this crime is called by I know not what mild and accommodating name. But, before these altars—in this house of God—what is it? It is MURDER—*deliberate aggravated murder!* If the duelist deny this, let him produce his warrant from the author of life for taking away from his creature the life which had been sovereignly given. If he can not do this, beyond all controversy he is a murderer; for murder consists in taking away life without the permission, and contrary to the prohibition of him who gave it.

Who is it, then, that calls the duelist to the dangerous and deadly combat? Is it GOD? No: on the contrary, he forbids it. Is it, then, his country? No: she also utters her prohibitory voice. Who is it, then? A man of honor! And who is the man of honor? A man, perhaps, whose honor is a name; who prates with polluted lips about the sacredness of character, when his own is stained with crimes, and needs but the single shade of murder to complete the dismal and sickly picture. Every transgression of the divine law implies great guilt, because it is the transgression of infinite authority. But the crime of deliberately and lightly taking life has peculiar aggravations. It is a crime committed against written law not only, but also against the dictates of reason, the remonstrances of conscience, and every tender and amiable feeling of the heart. To the unfortunate sufferer, it is the wanton violation of his most sacred rights. It snatches him from his friends and his comforts; terminates his state of trial, and precipitates him, uncalled for, and perhaps unprepared, into the presence of his judge.

You say, the duelist feels no malice. Be it so. Malice, indeed, is murder in principle. But there may be murder in reason, and in fact, where there is no malice. Some other unwarrantable passion or principle may lead to the unlawful taking of human life. The highwayman, who cuts the throat and rifles the pocket of the passing traveler, feels no malice. And could he, with equal ease and no greater danger of detection, have secured his booty without taking life, he would have stayed his arm over the palpitating bosom of his victim, and let the plundered suppliant pass. Would the imputation of cowardice have been inevitable to the duelist, if a challenge had not been given or accepted? The imputation of want had been no less inevitable to the robber, if the money of the passing traveler had not been secured. Would the duelist have been willing to have spared the life of his antagonist, if the point of honor



could otherwise have been gained? So would the robber, if the point of property could have been. Who can say that the motives of the one are not as urgent as the motives of the other, and the means by which both obtain the object of their wishes are the same? Thus, according to the dictates of reason, as well as the law of God, the highwayman and the duelist stand on ground equally untenable; and support their guilty havoc of the human race by arguments equally fallacious.

Is dueling guilty? So it is **ABSURD**. It is absurd as a punishment, for it admits of no proportion to crimes: and besides, virtue and vice, guilt and innocence, are equally exposed by it to death or suffering. As a reparation it is still more absurd, for it makes the injured liable to still greater injury. And as the vindication of personal character, it is absurd even beyond madness. One man of honor, by some inadvertence, or perhaps with design, injures the sensibility of another man of honor. In perfect character, the injured gentleman resents it. He challenges the offender. The offender accepts the challenge. The time is fixed. The place is agreed upon. The circumstances, with an air of solemn mania, are arranged; and the principals, with their seconds and surgeons, retire under the covert of some solitary hill, or upon the margin of some unfrequented beach, to settle this important question of honor by stabbing or shooting at each other. One or the other or both the parties fall in this polite and gentlemanlike contest. And what does this prove? It proves that one or the other, or both of them, as the case may be, are marksmen. But it affords no evidence that either of them possesses honor, probity, or talents. It is true, that he who falls in single combat has the honor of being murdered: and he who takes his life the honor of a murderer. Besides this, I know not of any glory which can redound to the infatuated combatants, except it be what results from having extended the circle of wretched widows, and added to the number of hapless orphans.

And yet, terminate as it will, this frantic meeting, by a kind of magic influence, entirely varnishes over a defective and smutty character; transforms vice to virtue, cowardice to courage; makes falsehood truth, guilt innocence. In one word, it gives a new complexion to the whole state of things. The Ethiopian changes his skin, the leopard his spot; and the debauched and treacherous, having shot away the infamy of a sorry life, comes back from the field of **PERFECTIBILITY** quite regenerated, and in the fullest sense an honorable man. He is now fit for the company of gentlemen. He is admitted to that company, and should he again by acts of violence stain this purity of character so nobly acquired, and should any one have the effrontery to say that he has done so, again he stands ready to vindicate his honor, and by another act of homicide to wipe away the stain which has been attached to it.

I might illustrate this article by example. I might produce instances of this mysterious transformation of character, in the sublime circles of

moral refinement, furnished by the higher orders of the fashionable world, which the mere firing of pistols has produced. But the occasion is too awful for irony.

Absurd as dueling is, were it absurd only, though we might smile at the weakness and pity the folly of its abettors, there would be no occasion for seriously attacking them. But, to what has been said, I add, that dueling is RASH and PRESUMPTUOUS. Life is the gift of God, and it was never bestowed to be sported with. To each, the sovereign of the universe has marked out a sphere to move in, and assigned a part to act. This part respects ourselves not only, but others also. Each lives for the benefit of all. As in the system of nature the sun shines, not to display its own brightness, and answer its own convenience, but to warm, enlighten, and bless the world; so in the system of animated beings, there is a dependence, a correspondence and a relation through an infinitely extended, dying, and reviving universe, *in which no man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself*. Friend is related to friend; the father to his family; the individual to community. To every member of which, having fixed his station and assigned his duty, the God of nature says, "Keep this trust—defend this post." For whom? For thy friends—thy family—thy country. And having received such a charge, and for such a purpose, to desert it is rashness and temerity.

Since the opinions of men are as they are, do you ask, how you shall avoid the imputation of cowardice, if you do not fight when you are injured? Ask your family how you will avoid the imputation of cruelty—ask your conscience how you will avoid the imputation of guilt—ask God how you will avoid his malediction if you do. These are previous questions. Let these first be answered, and it will be easy to reply to any which may follow them. If you only accept a challenge, when you believe in your conscience that dueling is wrong, you act the coward. The dastardly fear of the world governs you. Awed by its menaces, you conceal your sentiments, appear in disguise, and act in guilty conformity to principles not your own, and that, too, in the most solemn moment, and when engaged in an act which exposes you to death.

But if it be rashness to accept, how passing rashness is it, in a sinner, to *give* a challenge? Does it become him, whose life is measured out by crimes, to be extreme to mark, and punctilious to resent whatever is amiss in others? Must the duelist, who now, disdainingly to forgive, so imperiously demands satisfaction to the uttermost—must this man, himself trembling at the recollection of his offenses, presently appear a suppliant before the mercy-seat of God? Imagine this, and the case is not imaginary, and you can not conceive an instance of greater inconsistency or of more presumptuous arrogance. Wherefore, *avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath; for vengeance is mine, I will repay it, saith the LORD*.

Do you ask, then, how you shall conduct toward your enemy who hath lightly done you wrong? If he be hungry, feed him; if naked, clothe him; if thirsty, give him drink. Such, had you preferred your question to JESUS CHRIST, is the answer he had given you; by observing which, you will usually subdue, and always act more honorably than your enemy. I feel, my brethren, as a minister of JESUS, and a teacher of his gospel, a noble elevation on this article. Compare the conduct of the Christian, acting in conformity to the principles of religion, and of the duelist acting in conformity to the principles of honor, and let reason say which bears the marks of the most exalted greatness. Compare them, and let reason say which enjoys the most calm serenity of mind in time, and which is likely to receive the plaudit of his Judge in immortality. GOD, from his throne, beholds not a nobler object on his footstool, than the man who loves his enemies, pities their errors, and forgives the injuries they do him. This is, indeed, the very spirit of the heavens; it is the image of HIS benignity whose glory fills them.

To return to the subject before us: GUILTY, ABSURD, and RASH as dueling is, it has its advocates. And, had it not had its advocates—had not a strange preponderance of opinion been in favor of it, never, O, lamented HAMILTON! hadst thou thus fallen, in the midst of thy days, and before thou hadst reached the zenith of thy glory! O, that I possessed the talent of eulogy, and that I might be permitted to indulge the tenderness of friendship, in paying the last tribute to his memory. O, that I were capable of placing this great man before you. Could I do this, I should furnish you with an argument, the most practical, the most plain, the most convincing, except that drawn from the mandate of GOD, that was ever furnished against dueling—that horrid practice, which has, in an awful moment, robbed the world of such exalted worth. But I can not do this; I can only hint at the variety and exuberance of his excellence.

The MAN, on whom nature seems originally to have impressed the stamp of greatness; whose genius beamed from the retirement of collegiate life, with a radiance which dazzled, and a loveliness which charmed the eye of sages. The HERO, called from his sequestered retreat, whose first appearance in the field, though a stripling, conciliated the esteem of WASHINGTON, our good old father; moving by whose side, during all the perils of the Revolution, our young chieftain was a contributor to the veteran's glory, the guardian of his person, and the compartner of his toils. The CONQUEROR, who, sparing of human blood, when victory favored, stayed the uplifted arm, and nobly said to the vanquished enemy, "LIVE!" The STATESMAN, the correctness of whose principles, and the strength of whose mind, are inscribed on the records of Congress, and on the annals of the council-chamber; whose genius impressed itself upon the CONSTITUTION of his country, and whose memory, the government—ILLUSTRIOUS FABRIC—resting on this basis, will perpetuate while it lasts; and, shaken by the violence of party,

should it fall (which may heaven avert!) his prophetic declarations will be found inscribed on its ruins. The COUNSELLOR, who was at once the pride of the bar, and the admiration of the court; whose apprehensions were quick as lightning, and whose development of truth was luminous as its path; whose argument no change of circumstances could embarrass; whose knowledge appeared intuitive, and who, by a single glance, and with as much facility as the eye of the eagle passes over the landscape, surveyed the whole field of controversy—saw in what way truth might be most successfully defended, and how error must be approached. And who, without ever stopping, ever hesitating, by a rapid and manly march, led the listening judge and the fascinated juror, step by step, through a delightful region, brightening as he advanced, till his argument rose to demonstration, and eloquence was rendered useless by conviction; whose talents were employed on the side of righteousness; whose voice, whether in the council-chamber, or at the bar of justice, was virtue's consolation, at whose approach oppressed humanity felt a secret rapture, and the heart of injured innocence leapt for joy.

Where HAMILTON was—in whatever sphere he moved—the friendless had a friend, the fatherless a father, and the poor man, though unable to reward his kindness, found an advocate. It was when the rich oppressed the poor—when the powerful menaced the defenceless—when truth was disregarded, or the eternal principles of justice violated—it was on these occasions that he exerted all his strength. It was on these occasions that he sometime soared so high, and shone with a radiance so transcendent, I had almost said, so “heavenly as filled those around him with awe, and gave to him the force and authority of a prophet.”

The PATRIOT, whose integrity baffled the scrutiny of inquisition; whose manly virtue never shaped itself to circumstances; who, always great, always himself, stood amid the varying tides of party, *firm*, like the rock, which, far from land, lifts its majestic top above the waves, and remains unshaken by the storms which agitate the ocean. The FRIEND, who knew no guile; whose bosom was transparent, and deep in the bottom of whose heart was rooted every tender and sympathetic virtue; whose various worth opposing parties acknowledged while alive, and on whose tomb they unite with equal sympathy and grief to heap their honors.

I know he had his failings. I see on the picture of his life, a picture rendered awful by greatness, and luminous by virtue, some dark shades. On these let the tear that pities human weakness fall: on these let the veil which covers human frailty rest. As a Hero, as a Statesman, as a Patriot, he lived nobly; and would to God, I could add, he nobly fell.

Unwilling to admit his error in this respect, I go back to the period of discussion. I see him resisting the threatened interview. I imagine myself present in his chamber. Various reasons, for a time, seem to hold his determination in arrest. Various and moving objects pass be-

fore him, and speak a dissuasive language. His country, which may need his counsels to guide and his arm to defend, utters her *veto*. The partner of his youth, already covered with weeds, and whose tears flow down into her bosom, intercedes! His babes, stretching out their little hands and pointing to a weeping mother, with lisping eloquence, but eloquence which reaches a parent's heart, cry out, "Stay, stay, dear father, and live for us!" In the mean time, the specter of a fallen son, pale and ghastly, approaches, opens his bleeding bosom, and as the harbinger of death, points to the yawning tomb, and forewarns a hesitating father of the issue. He pauses; reviews these sad objects, and reasons on the subject. I admire his magnanimity; I approve his reasoning, and I wait to hear him reject with indignation the murderous proposition, and to see him spurn from his presence the presumptuous bearer of it.

But I wait in vain. It was a moment in which his great wisdom forsook him; a moment in which HAMILTON was not himself. He yielded to the force of an imperious custom; and yielding, he sacrificed a life in which all had an interest; and he is lost—lost to his country—lost to his family—lost to us! For this act, because he disclaimed it, and was penitent, I forgive him. But there are those whom I can not forgive. I mean not his antagonist, over whose erring steps, if there be tears in heaven, a pious mother looks down and weeps. If he be capable of feeling, he suffers already all that humanity can suffer. Suffers, and wherever he may fly will suffer with the poignant recollection of having taken the life of one who was too magnanimous in return to attempt his own. Had he have known this, it must have paralyzed his arm while it pointed, at so incorruptible a bosom, the instrument of death. Does he know this now, his heart, if it be not adamant, must soften—if it be not ice, it must melt.

But on this article I forbear. Stained with blood as he is, if he be penitent, I forgive him; and if he be not, before these altars, where all of us appear as suppliants, I wish not to excite your vengeance, but rather, in behalf of an object rendered wretched and pitiable by crime, to wake your prayers.

But I have said, and I repeat it, there are those whom I can not forgive. I can not forgive that minister at the altar, who has hitherto forborne to remonstrate on this subject. I can not forgive that public prosecutor, who, intrusted with the duty of avenging his country's wrongs, has seen those wrongs, and taken no measures to avenge them. I can not forgive that judge upon the bench, or that governor in the chair of State, who has lightly passed over such offenses. I can not forgive the public, in whose opinion the duelist finds a sanctuary. I can not forgive you, my brethren, who, till this late hour, have been silent, while successive murders were committed. No, I can not forgive you, that you have not, in common with the freemen of this State, raised your

voice to the *powers that be*, and loudly and explicitly demanded an execution of your laws. Demanded this in a manner, which if it did not reach the ear of government, would at least have reached the heavens, and plead your excuse before the God that filled them. In whose presence, as I stand, I should not feel myself innocent of the blood which crieth against us, had I been silent. But I have not been silent. Many of you who hear me are my witnesses—the walls of yonder temple, where I have heretofore addressed you, are my witnesses, how freely I have animadverted on this subject, in the presence both of those who have violated the laws, and of those whose indispensable duty it is to see the laws executed on those who violate them.

I enjoy another opportunity; and would to God I might be permitted to approach for once the late scene of death. Would to God, I could there assemble, on the one side, the disconsolate mother with her seven fatherless children, and on the other those who administer the justice of my country. Could I do this, I would point them to these sad objects. I would intreat them, by the agonies of bereaved fondness, to listen to the widow's heartfelt groans; to mark the orphans' sighs and tears. And having done this, I would uncover the breathless corpse of HAMILTON—I would lift from his gaping wound his bloody MANTLE—I would hold it up to heaven before them, and I would ask, in the name of God, I would ask, whether at the sight of it they felt no compunction.

You will ask, perhaps, what can be done to arrest the progress of a practice which has yet so many advocates? I answer, *nothing*—if it be the deliberate intention to do NOTHING. But if otherwise, much is within our power. Let, then, the governor see that the laws are executed—let the council displace the man who offends against their majesty. Let courts of justice frown from their bar, as unworthy to appear before them, the murderer and his accomplices. Let the people declare him unworthy of their confidence who engages in such sanguinary contests. Let this be done; and should life still be taken in single combat, then the governor, the council, the court, the people, looking up to the Avenger of sin, may say, “we are innocent—we are innocent.” Do you ask how proof can be obtained? How can it be avoided? The parties return, hold up before our eyes the instruments of death, publish to the world the circumstances of their interview, and even, with an air of insulting triumph, boast how coolly and how deliberately they proceeded in violating one of the most sacred laws of earth and heaven.

Ah, ye tragic shores of Hoboken! crimsoned with the richest blood, I tremble at the crimes you record against us—the annual register of murders which you keep and send up to God! Place of inhuman cruelty! beyond the limits of reason, of duty, and of religion, where man assumes a more barbarous nature, and ceases to be man. What poignant, lingering sorrows do thy lawless combats occasion to surviving relatives. Ye who have hearts of pity—ye who have experienced the

anguish of dissolving friendship—who have wept, and still weep, over the moldering ruins of departed kindred, ye can enter into this reflection.

O, thou disconsolate widow! robbed, so cruelly robbed, and in so short a time, both of a husband and a son, what must be the plenitude of thy sufferings! Could we approach thee, gladly would we drop the tear of sympathy, and pour into thy bleeding bosom the balm of consolation. But how could we comfort her whom God hath not comforted! To his throne, let us lift up our voice and weep. O, God! if thou art still the widow's husband, and the father of the fatherless—if in the fullness of thy goodness there be yet mercies in store for miserable mortals, pity, O pity this afflicted mother, and grant that her hapless orphans may find a friend, a benefactor, a father in **THEE!**

On this article I have done: and may God add his blessing. But I have still a claim upon your patience. I can not here repress my feelings, and thus let pass the present opportunity.

*How are the mighty fallen!* And regardless as we are of vulgar deaths, shall not the fall of the mighty affect us? A short time since, and he who is the occasion of our sorrows, was the ornament of his country. He stood on an eminence; and glory covered him. From that eminence he has fallen—suddenly, forever fallen. His intercourse with the living world is now ended; and those who would hereafter find him must seek him in the grave. There, cold and lifeless, is the heart which just now was the seat of friendship. There, dim and sightless, is the eye, whose radiant and enlivening orb beamed with intelligence; and there, closed forever, are those lips on whose persuasive accents we have so often and so lately hung with transport.

From the darkness which rests upon his tomb there proceeds, methinks, a light in which it is clearly seen that those gaudy objects which men pursue are only phantoms. In this light how dimly shines the splendor of victory—how humble appears the majesty of grandeur. The bubble which seemed to have so much solidity has burst; and we again see that all below the sun is vanity. True, the funeral eulogy has been pronounced. The sad and solemn procession has moved. The badge of mourning has already been decreed, and presently the sculptured marble will lift up its front, proud to perpetuate the name of **HAMILTON**, and rehearse to the passing traveler his virtues. Just attributes of respect! And to the living useful. But to him, moldering in his narrow and humble habitation, what are they? How vain! how unavailing.

Approach and behold—while I lift from his sepulcher its covering. Ye admirers of his greatness, ye emulous of his talents and his fame, approach, and behold him now. How pale! How silent! No martial bands admire the adroitness of his movements. No fascinating throng weep, and melt, and tremble at his eloquence. Amazing change! A

shroud! a coffin! a narrow subterraneous cabin! This is all that now remains of HAMILTON! And is this all that remains of HIM? During a life so transitory, what lasting monument, then, can our fondest hopes erect?

My brethren, we stand on the borders of an AWFUL GULF, which is swallowing up all things human. And is there, amid this universal wreck, nothing stable, nothing abiding, nothing immortal, on which poor, frail, dying man can fasten? Ask the hero, ask the statesman, whose wisdom you have been accustomed to revere, and he will tell you. He will tell you, did I say? He has already told you, from his death-bed, and his illumined spirit still whispers from the heavens, with well-known eloquence, the solemn admonition, "Mortals, hastening to the tomb, and once the companions of my pilgrimage, take warning, and avoid my errors. Cultivate the virtues I have recommended. Choose the Saviour I have chosen. Live disinterestedly. Live for immortality; and would you rescue any thing from final dissolution, lay it up in God."

Thus speaks, methinks, our deceased benefactor; and thus he acted during his last sad hours. To the exclusion of every other concern, religion now claims all his thoughts. JESUS! JESUS is now his only hope. The friends of JESUS are his friends. The ministers of the altar his companions. While these intercede he listens in awful silence, or in profound submission whispers his assent. Sensible, deeply sensible of his sins, he pleads no merit of his own. He repairs to the mercy-seat, and there pours out his penitential sorrows—there he solicits pardon. Heaven, it should seem, heard and pitied the suppliant's cries. Disburdened of his sorrows, and looking up to God, he exclaims, "Grace, rich grace!" "I have," said he, clasping his dying hands, and with a faltering tongue, "I HAVE A TENDER RELIANCE ON THE MERCY OF GOD IN CHRIST." In token of this reliance, and as an expression of his faith, he receives the holy sacrament. And having done this, his mind becomes tranquil and serene. Thus he remains, thoughtful indeed, but unruffled to the last, and meets death with an air of dignified composure, and with an eye directed to the heavens.

This last act, more than any other, sheds glory on his character. Every thing else death effaces. Religion alone abides with him on his death-bed. He dies a Christian. This is all which can be enrolled of him among the archives of eternity. This is all that can make his name great in heaven. Let not the sneering infidel persuade you that this last act of homage to the Saviour resulted from an enfeebled state of mental faculties, or from perturbation occasioned by the near approach of death. No; his opinions concerning the divine mission of JESUS CHRIST, and the validity of the holy Scriptures, had long been settled, and settled after laborious investigation and extensive and deep research. These opinions were not concealed. I knew them myself. Some of you who hear me knew them. And had his life been spared, it was his de-



termination to have published them to the world, together with the facts and reasons on which they were founded.

At a time when skepticism, shallow and superficial indeed, but depraved and malignant, is breathing forth its pestilential vapor, and polluting, by its unhallowed touch, every thing divine and sacred, it is consoling to a devout mind to reflect that the great, and the wise, and the good of all ages—those superior geniuses, whose splendid talents have elevated them almost above mortality, and placed them next in order to angelic natures; yes, it is consoling to a devout mind to reflect, that while *dwarfish infidelity* lifts up its deformed head, and mocks these ILLUSTRIOUS PERSONAGES, though living in different ages, inhabiting different countries, nurtured in different schools, destined to different pursuits, and differing on various subjects, should all, as if touched with an impulse from heaven, agree to vindicate the sacredness of revelation, and present, with one accord, their learning, their talents, and their virtue, on the gospel altar, as an offering to Emanuel.

This is not exaggeration. Who was it, that, overleaping the narrow bounds which had hitherto been set to the human mind, ranged abroad through the immensity of space, discovered and illustrated those laws by which the DEITY unites, binds, and governs all things? Who was it, soaring into the sublime of astronomic science, numbered the stars of heaven, measured their spheres, and called them by their names? It was NEWTON. But Newton was a Christian. Newton, great as he was, received instruction from the lips, and laid his honors at the feet of JESUS. Who was it that developed the hidden combination, the component parts of bodies? Who was it that dissected the animal, examined the flower, penetrated the earth, and ranged the extent of organic nature? It was BOYLE. But Boyle was a Christian. Who was it that lifted the vail which had for ages covered the intellectual world, analyzed the human mind, defined its powers, and reduced its operations to certain fixed laws? It was LOCKE. But Locke, too, was a Christian.

What more shall I say? For time would fail me to speak of HALE, learned in the law; of ADDISON, admired in the schools; of MILTON, celebrated among the poets; and of WASHINGTON, immortal in the field and in the cabinet. To this catalogue of professing Christians, from among, if I may speak so, a higher order of beings, may now be added the name of ALEXANDER HAMILTON—a name which raises in the mind the idea of whatever is great, whatever is splendid, whatever is illustrious in human nature; and which is now added to a catalogue which might be lengthened—and lengthened—and lengthened—with the names of illustrious characters, whose lives have blessed society, and whose works form a COLUMN high as heaven—a column of learning, of wisdom, and of greatness, which will stand to future ages, an ETERNAL MONUMENT of the transcendent talents of the advocates of Christianity, when every fugitive leaf from the pen of the canting infidel witslings of the

day, shall be swept by the tide of time from the annals of the world, and buried with the names of their authors in oblivion.

To conclude. *How are the mighty fallen!* Fallen before the desolating hand of death. Alas! the ruins of the tomb! \* \* \* The ruins of the tomb are an emblem of the ruins of the world! When not an individual, but a universe, already marred by sin, and hastening to dissolution, shall agonize and die! Directing your thoughts from the one, fix them for a moment on the other. Anticipate the concluding scene—the final catastrophe of nature. When the sign of the Son of man shall be seen in heaven. When the Son of man himself shall appear in the glory of his Father, and send forth judgment unto victory. The fiery desolation envelops towns, palaces, and fortresses. The heavens pass away! The earth melts! And all those magnificent productions of art, which ages, heaped on ages, have reared up, are in one awful day reduced to ashes!

Against the ruins of that day, as well as the ruins of the tomb which precede it, the gospel in the CROSS of its great HIGH PRIEST, offers you all a sanctuary. A sanctuary secure and abiding. A sanctuary which no lapse of time nor change of circumstances can destroy. No; neither life nor death; no, neither principalities nor powers. Every thing else is fugitive; every thing else is mutable; every thing else will fail you. But this, the CITADEL of the Christian's hopes, will never fail you. Its base is adamant. It is cemented with the richest blood. The ransomed of the Lord crowd its portals. Embosomed in the dust which it incloses, the bodies of the redeemed "rest in hope." On its top dwells the church of the first-born, who, in delightful response with the angels of light, chant redeeming love. Against this citadel the tempest beats, and around it the storm rages and spends its force in vain. Immortal in its nature, and incapable of change, it stands, and stands firm amid the ruins of a moldering world, and endures forever. Thither fly, ye prisoners of hope! that when earth, air, elements, shall have passed away, secure of existence and felicity, you may join with saints in glory to perpetuate the song which lingered on the faltering tongue of HAMILTON, "GRACE, RICH GRACE."

GOD grant us this honor. Then shall the measure of our joy be full, and to his name shall be the glory in CHRIST. AMEN.