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Washington



M^{rs} Margaret Smith
AN *Washington.*

ADDRESS,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

Washington Benevolent Societies

OF

Princeton & Cranbury,

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IN THE STATE OF N. JERSEY,

ON MONDAY,

THE TWENTY-SECOND DAY OF FEBRUARY,

1813,

IN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AT PRINCETON,

IN COMMEMORATION OF THE BIRTH-DAY OF

WASHINGTON.

BY SAMUEL BAYARD.



New-Brunswick :

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY LEWIS DEARE.

1813.

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Imperfect. pp 3-6 missing

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*Extract from the Minutes of the NEW-JERSEY WASHINGTON BENEVOLENT
SOCIETY IN THE TOWN OF PRINCETON, February 22, 1813.*

*“ Resolved, That the thanks of the Society be presented to the first Vice-
President, for his appropriate Address delivered before the Society this day,
and that he be requested to furnish a copy for publication.”*

True Extract from the Minutes.

JOS. H. SKELTON, *Sec'y.*

to review with sentiments of filial veneration his pre-emi-
nent services to his country, and to hold up to the admir-
ing world and for the imitation of his successors, his
endeared, his splendid and august character. Into a mi-
nute detail of his public services and his private virtues,
our time on the present occasion will not allow us to en-
ter. A selection of a few of the most prominent features
in the character of this illustrious man, calculated at
once to renew our recollection of his merits, and to excite
us to an imitation of his example, will best comport with
the design of the present meeting.

One of the first qualities which strikes the attentive
observer in the character of WASHINGTON, is that of a
predominant and disinterested love of country. Although
blessed with an ample fortune, though possessing in the
bosom of his own family and immediate neighbourhood
all that gives value to life, ease, respect, confidence and
affection, "progressive virtue and approving heaven,"
when his country's voice called him to the tented field,
to the unequal and hazardous contest with the veteran
legions of Britain, that voice he obeyed without a
murmur, though at the eminent risque of character,
of property and of life. In assuming this great and per-
ilous undertaking, no selfish or mercenary views actuated
the mind of the American chief. He refused all remunera-
tion for his services. He consented to receive only a
reimbursement of his actual and unavoidable expen-
ses. He loved his country not merely beyond his fami-
ly, his personal ease and property, but what is infinitely
more rare, beyond *fame* itself. Often has he put *this* to
hazard when his country's welfare demanded the expo-
sure. No narrow views, no local attachments, no party
feelings ever warped his enlarged mind. To secure

the independence, the safety and welfare of his native land occupied the unremitted and concentrated efforts of every faculty of his mind. So pure and so elevated was his patriotism, that it controuled and crushed every low and rival feeling. It subdued ambition and envy, jealousy and avarice, the love of praise, and the pursuit of pleasure. On this subject suffer me to present you with the testimony of a surviving revolutionary hero, who shared his confidence and his perils. The celebrated General Henry Lee, whose life a few months since had nearly fallen a sacrifice to the ferocity of an infuriate mob, in a neighbouring state, describing the circumstances attending the surrender of Lord Cornwallis, concludes with the following just eulogium on the American chief.*

“ This wide acclaim of joy and confidence, as rare as sincere, sprung not only from the conviction that our signal success would bring in its train the blessings of peace so much wanted by our wasted country and from the splendor with which it encircled our national name, but from the endearing reflection that the mighty exploit had been achieved by our faithful, our beloved WASHINGTON. We had seen him struggling through the war, with inferior force, against the best troops of England, assisted by her powerful navy :—surrounded with difficulties—oppressed by want ; never dismayed—never appalled ; never despairing of the commonwealth. We have seen him renouncing his own fame as a soldier, his safety as a man, in his unalloyed love of country, weakening his own immediate force to strengthen that of his lieutenants ; submitting with equanimity to his own consequent inability to act, and rejoicing in *their* triumphs, because best

* See Lee's Memoirs of the American war in the Southern States, 2 Vol. p. 372.

calculated to uphold the great cause entrusted to his care, at length by one great and final exploit, under the benign influence of providence, lifted to the pinnacle of glory—the merited reward of his toils, his heroism, his patience and his virtue.—Wonderful man! rendering it most difficult by his conduct throughout life to decide, whether he most excelled in goodness or in greatness.”

A very striking proof of Washington's transcendent love of country, (and the only additional one we shall now mention), occurred at the close of our revolutionary struggle, just as the regular force of the confederation was on the point of being disbanded. “The war,” (says an eye witness, and who is at this time one of our most distinguished representatives in Congress), “was now brought to a close, and its great object obtained. The pay of the army was greatly in arrears, and that which had been furnished was of little value. A separation of the troops, without some good prospect of redress to the soldier appeared to be the loss of all. At this critical moment the proposal was made *not to lay down their arms until their grievances were redressed*. Nor could such a measure fail to find advocates. While the flame spread with rapidity through the camp and the efforts of some of our best officers failed to check the impetuous torrent, the father and defender of his country, and the friend of the soldier, now interposed and threw himself in the breach. Here stood the man who had so often led this veteran band to victory and to glory; conjuring these companions of his toils not to tarnish the splendor of their achievements *by perpetrating the paracidal deed*. The triumph was glorious and complete. Order and harmony were restored, and the anonymous author of these incendiary addresses retired from the field ashamed.

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ed and confounded." "I have uniformly believed," continues this eloquent soldier, "that it was not too much to say, that to the unbounded popularity and influence of that illustrious chief, *who now sleeps in his humble tomb at Mount-Vernon* was the army then saved from disgrace—and perhaps the country from bloodshed and ruin."*

With a mind so elevated by an ardent love of country it is natural to infer that WASHINGTON must have been distinguished by other admirable qualities. That he was *brave* none will venture to deny. In no instance was he ever known to shrink from *any hazard* to which duty called him, and what is essential to a great general, with bravery he ever associated prudence and forethought. Ever ready for the boldest enterprize, he was cool, cautious and inflexible in executing his plans. Of these qualities he gave a memorable proof in the eventful battle in the vicinity of this place. After eluding the vigilance of the British general, who merely deferred till the morning the execution of a plan intended to crush the only effective force of the union, behold at the dawn of day the enterprising Washington in the rear of his enemy, and on the ground where we are now † assembled, turning the tide of war, reviving the drooping hopes of his country, and rescuing the liberties of America from impending destruction. WASHINGTON has often been called the American *Fabius*, for his prudence and supe-

* Extract from a speech delivered by the hon. Benjamin Talmage Esq. in the house of Representatives, January 7, 1803, against the act for raising an additional force of 20,000 men.

† The battle of Princeton is considered as the crisis of the American revolution.

riority to popular clamour ; but when occasions justified the change of system, we see him displaying the intrepidity of a *Conde* and the perseverance of a *Frederick the great*.

With those great and heroic qualities which are calculated to excite our admiration, he united others which attracted confidence and affection. He possessed unspotted integrity. No one could ever justly charge him with insincerity or an intentional departure from truth.—He was also by nature and principle *humane*—his enemy in the whole course of the war, could never with the semblance of justice complain of one act of cruelty attributable to his agency. He was kind and compassionate to the prisoner and the captive, and softened, wherever he was able, the unavoidable calamities of war. To his own army he was a father and a friend—he watched over their health, their safety and their comfort. He shared their privations, he studied their interests, he supplied their wants and redressed their grievances. Hence under every change of fortune he enjoyed their confidence, and secured their zealous and prompt obedience. Such was the illustrious chief of the American army—patriotic, disinterested, brave, prudent, enterprising, and humane.

Having resigned his military command, he retired to private life, hoping there to enjoy in common with his fellow citizens the fruits of his anxious cares and his incessant toils, through an eight year's arduous contest. But providence had otherwise ordained. Renewed trials of his wisdom, his fortitude and his enlightened zeal for the public good still awaited him. He had a government to organize, to administer, and to settle on the firm ba-

sis of sound morality and practical wisdom; and with what admirable prudence did he conduct the affairs of his country through a period of peace hardly less stormy than a state of war.

When that dreadful volcano, the French revolution, bursting from its crater, poured its destructive lava over the countries of Europe; while in its course it threatened even this distant happy land with its desolating rage, Washington opposed the mighty mound of his high character and deep founded popularity to the inundating torrent, arrested its fury, and saved his country. Combating with firmness the secret intrigues and the open attempts of the agents of France, to embroil us in a war with Great Britain, he inflexibly maintained his pacific system, and had the satisfaction to witness in the increased confidence and affection of his fellow-citizens, a rich reward for his labours to promote their welfare.

Although a considerable portion of his life was passed in the bustle and parade of camps; war, with him, was no favorite pursuit. He was the decided friend and advocate of peace. "*Observe,*" says he in his parting address to his fellow-citizens, "*good faith and justice toward all nations—cultivate peace and harmony with all.*"

At the commencement of his administration he found his country involved in wars with several Indian tribes on our frontiers, and with the piratical states of Barbary. With several of the European powers we also had unsettled disputes which threatened to lead to acts of hostility. All these he brought to an advantageous close by the vigour of his measures, or by amicable negotiation.

It was his invariable policy to husband the resources of his country, to extinguish the debt of the revolution, to fortify our harbours and coasts, to fill the public ar-

senals, to replenish the treasury, to organize the militia, and to provide an efficient navy adequate to the protection of a lucrative and increasing commerce. On these subjects how different were his just and liberal views, from the false and visionary theories which have controuled the policy and depressed the character of our government for the last twelve years.*

We have now contemplated our beloved WASHINGTON as a military chief, and as the first magistrate of our republic. Let us farther view him in the retirement of private life, practising those useful and amiable virtues, which have given a finish to his exalted character.

“A christian is the highest style of man,” and Washington was a real christian.—Too sincere to profess

* “To an active external commerce the *protection of a naval force is indispensable*. This is manifest with regard to wars in which a state is itself a party: but besides this, it is in our own experience that the most sincere neutrality is not a sufficient guard against the depredations of nations at war. To secure respect to a neutral flag requires a naval force organized and ready to vindicate it from insult or aggression. This may even prevent the necessity of going to war by discouraging belligerent powers from committing such violation of the rights of the neutral party as may first or last have no other option. From the best information I have been able to obtain, it would seem as if our trade to the Mediterranean, without a protecting force will always be insecure, and our citizens exposed to the calamities from which numbers of them have but just been relieved.

“These considerations invite the United States to look to means and to set about the gradual creation of a navy. The increasing progress of their navigation promises them at no distant period, the requisite supply of seamen, and their means in other respects favour the undertaking. It is an encouragement likewise that their particular situation will give weight and influence to a moderate naval force in their hands. Will it not then be adviseable to begin without delay, to lay up the materials for the building and equipping of ships of war, and to proceed in the work by degrees in proportion as our resources shall render it practicable without inconvenience; so that a future war of Europe may not find our commerce in the same unprotected state in which it was found by the present.” See president Washington’s last speech to Congress, on the 7th December, 1796.

what he did *not* believe, and too great to be ashamed of what he *did* believe, he never hesitated to avow, by an open profession, his decided attachment to the religion of the cross.* How constant and regular was his attendance on the duties of public worship, and how solemn and devout was his deportment while thus engaged! On entering on any important trust, with what reverence and humility did he look up to the Father of Light for his guidance and favour; and never did he announce any signal public blessing to his country, without gratefully ascribing it to the merciful interposition of an Almighty Benefactor.

In his first official act as President of the United States, he addressed "his fervent supplications" (these are his own words) "to that Almighty being who rules over the

* The friends of infidelity have sometimes affected to question whether after all the recognitions made by Washington of the providence of God, he was really a believer in divine revelation. Let them be answered and silenced by the following quotations from his circular letter to the governors of the several states on resigning his command of the American army.—"The free cultivation of letters—the unbounded extension of commerce—the progressive refinement of manners—the growing liberality of sentiment, and above all, the *pure and benign light of revelation* have had a meliorating influence on mankind and increased the blessings of society."

"I now make it my earnest prayer that God would have you, and the state over which you preside, in his holy protection; and that he would incline the hearts of the citizens to cultivate a spirit of subordination, and obedience to government, to entertain a brotherly affection and love for one another, for their fellow-citizens of the United States at large, and particularly for their brethren who have served in the field, and finally that he would most graciously be pleased to dispose us all to do justice—to love mercy—and to demean ourselves with that charity, humility, and pacific temper of mind which were the characteristics of the *divine author of our blessed religion*, without an humble imitation of whose example in these things, we can never hope to be a happy nation.

I have the honour to be, with much esteem and respect, Sir,

Your excellency's most obedient servant,

GEO. WASHINGTON,

Head-Quarters, Newburgh, June 18, 1783."

universe, and who presides in the councils of nations, and whose providential aid can supply every human defect, for his benediction on the government of the United States, that every instrument employed in its administration, might execute with success the functions allotted to his charge."—And after having imparted to Congress his sentiments on the important occasion, which then brought them together, he would not "take his leave of them without once more resorting to the benign parent of the human race, in humble supplication that his divine blessing might be rendered conspicuous in the temperate consultations, and the wise measures on which the success of the government must depend."

Oh my country! when this immortal man resigned the robe of civil authority—could he with his mantle, but have left to his different successors in office a "portion" of his pure and pious spirit, what an unspeakable benefit would have resulted to the American people.

But Washington as a private character was not only devout—he was charitable—he was generous—he was hospitable.—As a friend and neighbour he was just and kind.—To institutions of learning and benevolence, he was a liberal patron.*—Of agriculture, commerce and the useful arts he was a decided friend; while in all the relations of domestic and social life, he was exemplary and consistent.

A character so distinguished, so far above that of ordinary men, could not fail to excite the corrosion of envy and the attacks of slander. Pure as were his motives, and cautious as he had ever been in his speech and conduct, ambitious men, whose desires he *could not* gratify,

* He endowed a college in his native state in his last will.

or wicked men, whom he *would not* countenance, misrepresented his views, and traduced his character. Cherishing, as he ought, a just and proper respect for his high station and character, he would not stoop to make apologies or explanations to men whom he could not hope to reconcile; yet he was not insensible to the shafts of malignant calumny. On one occasion, after receiving much cruel and unmerited censure, he could not forbear uttering this indignant complaint. **“That while I am using my utmost exertions (I repeat his own words) to establish a national character of our own, independent as far as our obligations and justice would permit, of every nation on earth, and wish, by steering a steady course, to preserve this country from a desolating war, I should be accused of being an enemy to one nation, and subject to the influence of another: and to prove it, that every act of my administration should be tortured, and the grossest and most insidious representations made, by giving one side only of a subject, and that too in such exaggerated and indecent terms as could scarcely be applied to a Nero, to a notorious public defaulter, or even a common pick-pocket.”* And against whom was this unjust and severe censure directed? Who were concerned in thus cruelly calumniating the father of his country? Federal Republicans, were *you* the authors of these slanders? No: and let the sentiment be forever cherished with honest exultation, *you* were ever the zealous defenders of your WASHINGTON’S fame.

Having now taken a rapid view of some of the most prominent features in the character of our American chief, let us pause, and for a moment indulge in that patriotic pride, and in those elevated feelings, which

* See his letter to Mr. Jefferson, in his Life by Marshall. 5 vol. p. 675.

must swell the bosom of every true-hearted American, on a review of the life and virtues of this unequalled man. "Ancient and modern names are diminished in comparison with his. Greatness and guilt have often been allied; but *his* fame is purer than it is brilliant. The destroyers of nations should stand abashed at the majesty of his virtues. It represses the intemperance of their ambition, and darkens the splendor of their victories."*

The trappings of imperial or royal magnificence could have added nothing to the native grandeur of his character. *Their* false and tinsel lustre would have been lost in the unborrowed effulgence of *his* assembled virtues. Justly was it observed by a very eminent and amiable British † advocate, in the hearing of him who now addresses you—That "*if the whole of human excellence were collected into one pyramid—Washington would form the apex.*"

During his administration of our national government, the name of an American was indeed an honourable name. It was a passport in foreign lands to civility and respect. The high character of his government followed the humblest citizen of the United States to the utmost verge of knowledge and civilizations. It threw a lustre round him, which gave him consequence and ensured him attention. It was in general, recommendation enough to have been born and nurtured in the native land of WASHINGTON. Spirit of our departed Chief! If from the mansions of eternity, where, we trust, thou art now enjoying the re-

* Extract from the answer of the Senate of the U. States to President Adams's message, on the death of Gen. Washington.

† Sir John Nicoll, who, next to Sir William Scott, is, perhaps, at present, the first civilian in England.

wards of piety and virtue, thou art permitted to regard the affairs of this wretched world;—if sympathetic sorrow could reach thy present abode of unchangeable felicity—Oh, how would thy pure and benevolent nature be affected with grief, in contemplating the sad and altered state of thy *once* happy country!

Members of the Washington Society! Standing to-day in this place, as the organ of your sentiments, I cannot close the present exercise without addressing a few words particularly to *you*. Professing, as you do, to venerate the character, to admire the wisdom, and to approve the policy of him under the sanction of whose name you are now associated, let your conduct bear testimony to the sincerity of your professions. *Washington loved his country with a pure and unchanging affection.* In this respect let each of us endeavour to imitate our illustrious leader. While we pay a due regard to the rights, and cultivate the most friendly sentiments, towards other nations, we owe a higher and more devoted attachment to the land of our nativity. Here, where we first drew the breath of life—here, where we first imbibed the principles of liberty, and received instruction from the oracles of eternal truth:—here, where our forefathers have dwelt, and where our tenderest relatives still reside—here should our warmest affections pre-eminently centre and rest. Away then with every foreign prejudice and attachment that is incompatible with the true interest and reputation of our own country. Let us be Americans in speech, in heart, and in life. *Let us cherish peace and friendship with all nations,* and while we respect *their* rights, we may justly and successfully insist on a due regard to *our own* Peace, the best friend of Agriculture and Commerce, was the uniform

policy of Washington. It is the true policy of the United States. "Why should we abandon our own to stand on foreign ground."*

What adequate compensation can we ever receive for millions of wasted treasure, for a ruined commerce, for the loss of that high national character we once enjoyed, or for the many, ah, too many, human victims sacrificed at the bloody shrine of Moloch? Had he, who was "*first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen,*" still presided in the councils of America, we should probably at this moment have been in the full enjoyment of peace and prosperity. But, discarding the wise counsels and the solemn admonitions contained in the last parting address of our venerated chief, in a moment of fatal delusion our government has plunged their country into the gulph of an offensive war. For more than eight months have we now been engaged in this unhappy contest;—and what are the mighty benefits it has already produced—a few sanguinary honors on the ocean, purchased by the loss of many valuable lives. But, during the same period, what has been its pernicious effects? A ruined commerce, an exhausted treasury, an unproductive revenue, immense loans, the certain approach of heavy taxes, and worst of all, a horrible waste of human life! Already have three American armies been defeated, or made prisoners of war:—more than 1500 souls have been hurried to the bar of their Sovereign Judge, to receive the irrevocable sentence of eternal justice. Oh, how solemn a reflection this, to the authors and supporters of this rash and unnecessary contest!

* Washington's farewell address.

And with whom are we associated in this unhappy war? With one of the most sanguinary tyrants that ever was permitted to scourge the world. With an imperial usurper whose ambition is boundless as the earth, and whose cruelty is relentless as the grave; who, in every part of his despotic empire, breaking as under all the tenderest ties of social affection, tears by ~~her~~ ^{his} ruthless and unsparing conscription from the arms of weeping and distracted relatives those wretched youths who were regarded as the hopes of their family and the support of their parents in their declining age!—Ah! see these tender victims, bound with cords, or hand-cuffed like ruffians, dragged away to shed their blood, not in defence of their country, but to gratify the insatiable lust of imperial ambition, and to be converted into military machines for prosecuting schemes of plunder and devastation. What heart must not bleed with pity while contemplating the assembled youth of a civilized empire thus doomed to become the instruments of death or misery to unoffending nations, and the prime of whose life, instead of being devoted to the arts of peace, and the acquisition of useful knowledge, is spent in learning the dreadful art of shedding human blood? But let the friends of peace and humanity rejoice in the hope that the career of this destroyer of nations has at last come to an end. The signal vengeance of Almighty Justice, that so long has slumbered, seems at length to have overtaken him, and by a series of disastrous incidents to have involved his late triumphant host, in one overwhelming and irreparable ruin.

And here let us pause and ask ourselves, against whom are we now engaged in war? Against a nation armed for the destruction of our liberty, our religion and our

laws? Nothing like it. It is against a nation anxious to maintain with us the most friendly relations—and possessing above any other people on earth the means of doing us the *greatest injury in war* and the *greatest good in peace*. Against a nation possessing a revenue more ample than any other on the globe, a navy that exceeds the combined navies of Europe, an army numerous, brave and well disciplined, and what is of still greater importance, against a nation contending under a conviction that her cause is just—under a firm persuasion that on her part the contest is *defensive* and that she has exhausted all the means of conciliation consistent with her vital interests. Under such circumstances, can we reasonably expect to be eventually successful?

But there is one circumstance in this war which must deeply affect every friend to the religion of his country. We profess to be a nation of protestant christians. Yet we are in arms on the side of a power, hostile to the principles of all true religion—and we are wasting our strength in the vain attempt to humble another, that is the chief support of the faith we profess—a people, who by voluntary and almost incredible efforts, have already done, and are still doing more to scatter the benign light of the gospel among the benighted heathen, than all the rest of the earth beside. In this most benevolent work the different societies in Great Britain, have done more within the last 20 years than was accomplished in the two preceding centuries. Until the present unhappy war interrupted our intercourse with Britain and her dependencies, our citizens had begun liberally to co-operate in this noble, this heavenly undertaking; but this combined effort is now checked, and we are left to mourn the loss of those means and opportunities of joining in

this generous work, which we so lately enjoyed, and to console ourselves with barren wishes and sincere prayers for the success of the great effort now making to evangelize the world.

Disciples of Washington! are not these your views and sentiments? Hesitate not then to avow and to spread them. If calumniated by men of discordant opinions, for principles such as we have stated, be not discouraged, but persevere. Great is truth, and she must prevail. Remember that he by whose name you are designated as a society, whose maxims you revere, and whose example you are proud to follow; was also the subject of cruel and malignant slander—that he was censured, and reviled for his efforts to save his country from “*a desolating war,*” with the very power against which we are now arrayed. “The disciple is not greater than his master,” and if factious men, the enemies of peace, have traduced the father of his country, can you, his followers, reasonably expect to escape the shafts of calumny? Let us never shrink from the path of duty, however rugged it may prove—conscious of the purity of our aims—of our attachment to our country—of the accordance of our views with the immutable principles of truth and order; let us resolutely advance, and while we zealously endeavour by every constitutional and prudent measure in our power to bring the present disastrous contest to a speedy and honorable close, let us be encouraged in all our efforts, by the gracious benediction of an *infinitely* greater than Washington, the founder of our religion and pre-eminently the *Prince of Peace*, that “blessed are the *peace-makers* for they shall be called the CHILDREN OF GOD.”

[end.]