

THE  
PRESBYTERIAN  
QUARTERLY REVIEW.

DECEMBER, 1852.

---

No. III.

---

ARTICLE I.\*

*Daniel Webster and his Contemporaries*, by CHARLES W. MARCH.  
Fourth Edition. New York, 1852. pp. 295.

BEFORE God no man is great. When the sun rises all stars are hidden, but in the absence of the sun, one star differeth from another star in glory. So it is with man. While none measured by the infinite is great, yet relatively one may so rise above his race as in their estimation to claim the appellation of greatness.

Abner, the son of Ner, was great in war; and when he died David said, "Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel." In his character, martial skill and courage seem not to have been allied to moral virtue, and therefore he was only great as a military chieftain. As David needed his services and admired his prowess, it was natural that he should celebrate his renown, and bewail his tragic death.

\* The author shrunk from a title so imposing as that of this article. It is not designed as a deliberate discussion of the qualities and merits of the great statesman, but as the expression of the heart in view of his death. The entire purpose of the author, he wishes us to say, will be attained if it meets a response in the heart of this great nation.

VOL. I.—23

But we must beware whom we make great. When fame is awarded to splendid profligacy it becomes a premium for moral corruption, gilded and burnished and handed down from generation to generation. The greatness ascribed by the world to the names and deeds of Alexander and Napoleon, becomes a lure to lead unprincipled ambition to seek fame in fields wet with human blood. When we see such men seated by public acclamation in the temple of fame, we think of Milton's Pandemonium, where

"On a throne that far  
Outshone the wealth of Ormus and of Ind,  
*Satan* exalted sat."

In the deeds of such men, the revolutions they have wrought in empires, and the effects their genius and perverted activity have inscribed on human affairs, we may mark the hand of God chastising nations; we may admire their lofty courage and marvelous achievements; we may recognize a sublimity in the track of wasting and blood which follows their footsteps; we may record their deeds as we chronicle in history the death-march of the tornado, the avalanche and the earthquake, but we will not award them the meed of true greatness. Their birth was a frown of Heaven, their life an anathema, and their fall a triumph to mankind. While they live the world may weep, but when by the course of nature and the grace of God they die, widows and orphans may dry their tears and earth hold a jubilee.

God, the only and perfect model of true greatness, combines strength with purity, power with benevolence. Man, made in his Maker's image, only approximates real greatness, as imitating his Maker, he unites talents with virtue, genius with philanthropy. Great power, prostituted to selfish and evil deeds, is the mirror of man's least littleness, like the ocean labouring to bring forth "mire and dirt." We will then lament no man, simply because he has been endowed with extraordinary talents; we will bewail the loss to earth of no greatness, because it has wrought great effects; we will echo no popular acclamations to lives of brilliant selfishness and profligacy. Especially will we not desecrate our pages

to sanctify the memory of men who have trampled on the virtue and happiness of God's own image in their fellow men. It is time that mere hero-worship should cease. If we are called to weave garlands, we will wreath them for genius consecrated to patriotism or piety. If men will worship at any human shrine, they should ask from their idols some token of a benevolent Divinity.

With this limitation of the idea of human greatness, we may find that the truly great men of earth are "few and far between." In some sense indeed, every village, city and state has its great men, its popular idols; but when we demand in real greatness, the rare combination of genius which shall attract the gaze of the world, united with philanthropy and virtue really to benefit their race, the responses are infrequent.

The world is indulgent on this subject. Such is human weakness in general, and so prevalent the tendency of human nature to be satisfied with the attainments and progress of the mass, that when an individual has genius to rise above the ordinary level in any department, he is at once styled great. As absolute human perfection is an impossibility, as the division of thought, responsibility and labour is the law of society, it is proper to dignify such as excel in any gifts or attainments. We like, however to see the hand of Providence recognized in all events, whoever or whatever may be the subordinate instruments. With this apprehension we shall perceive, that although the smooth current of ordinary affairs may be moved forward by ordinary agents, yet when great events are to be wrought, great men are raised up to perform them. These master spirits of the world for the time being, are the visible hands by which an unseen Providence is working its will in human affairs. They are invested providentially with the genius, talents, learning, courage, skill and opportunities demanded by the work to which they are called. They are often insensible of their high behest. They are often governed by low, sordid and selfish motives, like the king of Assyria. They are often aiming at results, the very opposite of those which God uses their agency to produce. The world may owe them no gratitude and Heaven avouch them no reward, but they are no less the moral hinges

on which turn the destiny of ages and empires. To us there is a moral sublimity in contemplating the master minds of earth, often like Polyphemus blind as well as strong, working out for good or evil, for human reward or penalty, the grand designs of an Almighty God.

As we have before said, we cannot concede to all such the meed of true greatness. Sometimes, intellectually, they are devoid of all symmetry and proportion. Their prominence and power may result from some one faculty unusually endowed, and developed into massive strength by the dwarfing of all the rest. Or some opportunity may have occurred to them, denied to all others, by which they have risen to power and fame.

But while we are not compelled to call truly great all who have wrought great results and imprinted their name and influence on after times, we can admire all as the agents of an unseen God, who by them has worked his will among the inhabitants of earth. The point of what we are saying is this: God's great works on earth demand what the world calls great men, and such are provided to meet emergencies as they rise. It is often said, that emergencies make *men*. Is it not also true that men are made for *emergencies*?

" God gives to every man  
The virtue, temper, understanding, taste,  
That lifts him into life; and lets him fall  
Just in the *niche* he was ordained to fill."

No miracles are wrought in the creation of such master minds, but by the administration of Providence, they rise when and where their work is to be done. Certain combinations of events develop controlling minds, who in turn, mould the events of their age. These master minds are infinitely diversified in natural endowments, in attainments, character and the field of their influence. Some of them only rise above the horizon of mediocrity, and some soar to their zenith and blaze over nations and centuries. Some only influence a village or a single city, and some rock a nation or a continent. An inferior class of these moulding spirits rise frequently, and are found in every city or state. Another class, of the highest

order, appear once perhaps on a continent, and once in three centuries. The fame of the inferior class may be limited to a city or a commonwealth, but the memory of the other class is written on the recollections of a race, and will not be let die till the race itself is annihilated. To the inferior class belong the ordinary political, theological and literary idols of the multitude. To the other belong the intrinsically great in any department, who have comprehended the world in their sympathies and plans, and originated the far-reaching causes, whose effects will bear their names from generation to generation. But, whatever position they hold in regard to each other and to the mass of society, and whatever their character, they must be regarded but as agents of a mightier mind still, which weaves all their achievements into the mysterious web of Divine Providence.

It would be interesting to glance, and we certainly can only glance, along these mountain tops, on which, far above the ordinary level, have sat the intellectual giants of our race, catching the early rays of a light yet hidden to dwellers in the vales, and enacting deeds that seemed miracles of human power.

When Divine mercy designed to break in upon the idolatry of our race, and set up the church as a pillar of light in earth's darkness, Abraham, great in faith, was selected as an agent, to whose far-reaching vision and trusting heart, centuries far distant became present, and blessings covenanted in future ages, a reality.

When those blessings are about to be realized, by the transfer of Israel, a nation of slaves, from the bondage of Egypt to the freedom of "the land flowing with milk and honey," who shall be the leader in the grand enterprize? By his Hebrew birth and perils; by his royal adoption and training in the learning of Egypt; by his musing forty years in the lone desert of Midian; by his piety, meekness, courage and wisdom, Moses stands ready to be Israel's Ambassador to Pharaoh, and her leader, lawgiver, and judge.

When man is to be taught to bear, as well as to do the will of his Maker; to suffer, yet meekly endure life's great evils, the man of Uz rises on the stage of God's Providence, be-

rest of wealth and health, honour, friendship and kindred, bleeding at every pore, yet brave and confiding, gazing up to Heaven and crying, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."

When Heaven's music is to be trilled on earth, and human lips permitted to echo back Heaven's melodies, no angel is selected to impart the lesson. David, the shepherd-boy and the king, the monarch-poet and saint; whose heart, tried in every human condition, has been thrilled by every human passion; whose poetic genius is equalled only by his lofty courage and humble faith, is Heaven's Minstrel.

"The harp the monarch minstrel swept,  
The king of men, the loved of Heaven,  
Which music hallowed while she wept  
O'er tones her heart of hearts had given.

\* \* \* \* \*

It softened men of iron mould,  
It gave them virtues not their own;  
No ear so dull, no soul so cold,  
That felt not, fired not to the tone,  
Till David's lyre grew mightier than his throne."

When the veil of Jewish seclusion and special privilege was to be rent asunder, when the beams of the risen sun of righteousness were to be allowed to blaze over the earth, who is the destined agent to carry the Gospel to the Gentiles? As precursors, great Cæsars have been raised up to subdue the known world under one empire, while a man equally great in genius, enterprize and courage, and made still greater by the grace of God, has been imbued with learning at the feet of Gamaliel and commissioned by Heaven, to bear in the face of peril, shipwreck, persecution and death, the lamp of truth over the earth.

When the world is to be illuminated by the printed page, and the Bible wrested from the cobwebs of convents to give its lessons to mankind, a priest of Germany translates the book, while an artist of Germany invents the magic art of printing, and transmits his name, with his invention, to all after times.

When the emancipation of the Bible, and the reformation of the church, and the invention of printing, have made the intel-

lectual and moral instruction of the human race feasible, then, and not till then, another genius rises in Genoa, the unconscious agent of Heaven, to lift the curtain from the broad ocean, and disclose to Europe a new and glorious world in the West. Is it visionary thus to recognize the existence of great men in the place and time when and where they are needed, as the designed instruments of the great God?

When this western world is to be subdued and settled, and made the home of a high civilization and pure religion, men like Miles Standish of Plymouth, William Penn of Pennsylvania and Captain John Smith of Jamestown, are here to act their parts in the great drama of Providence.

The conflict of our Revolution involved great difficulties and specially demanded great men; and God, in his mercy, raised up for us such a constellation of men of genius, talent, courage, practical wisdom, prudence, fortitude and self-sacrificing patriotism, as never before or since beamed on the world. He hath not dealt so with other nations. A few such men as sat in the Continental Congress, diffused through France, Germany, Austria and Italy in 1848, would have established liberty with law, over the whole South of Europe. The eloquence of Patrick Henry; the financial skill of Robert Morris; the diplomatic sagacity of Franklin; the combination of almost every element of true human greatness, as a man, a soldier, statesman and patriot, in George Washington—in short the surpassing wisdom and devoted prudence of our revolutionary fathers—what were these but the providential miracles by which God's mercy wrought out our national salvation?

When we see that at every hour of our peril in the past, great men have arisen equal to the emergency whatever it might be, who can fail to see in it the finger of God? Those great men we admire, and cherish their memories. The greater God, who gave them to our perils and prayers, we bless and adore. And while we bless we can trust. If the existence of great statesmen depended on accident, the race might become extinct, and the hopes of our country set in darkness. But if our great men are Heaven's gifts to our land, they are never to fail until Divine Mercy abandons us. As well might we fear the sea would fail to give us great waves, the forest fail to give us

great trees, or the Heavens fail to give us great showers. Regarding our distinguished men but as channels of Divine mercy to our land, they cannot fail us unless the Great Fountain itself shall be obstructed by our sins.

When these great men of our Revolution passed away—when Franklin, and Adams, and Washington died—with their cherished dust, we almost stood ready to bury also our hopes for our country. As these brilliant stars faded from our political horizon, to our untrusting apprehensions a pall of midnight seemed ready to enshroud our land. But thanks be to God, his mercy towards us failed not. As one star set another rose. As our Davids, mighty men of war, ceased from earth, in their places rose Solomons, mighty in wisdom, to build and beautify the temple of peace, and their country's prosperity.

Is it not rational, as well as filial, to regard it as high evidence of Heaven's favour, that when our country has needed peculiar and difficult service, God has always raised up for us at the right time and place, the man or the men equal to that service? We might refer here to a long catalogue of events and men to illustrate this fact. We are not deciding on the actions, motives or the merits of the men, when we ask: Who but De Witt Clinton could have roused our country to its system of internal improvements? Who but Andrew Jackson could have tranquillized our western border, and put down incipient treason in the South? Who but Taylor could have protected our little army at Buena Vista? Who but Scott could have led our soldiers to the walls of Mexico? And may we not also be allowed to ask: What administration but that of James K. Polk would have spread the broad wings of our national eagle over Texas, New Mexico, and California, and thus thrown at once Anglo-Saxon civilization and energy with Protestant Christianity across a continent, and in direct contact with the Paganism of all Eastern Asia? Who but John C. Calhoun, ardent as his own burning summers, brave, chivalrous, indomitable and reckless, could have battled for the rights of States, and even by his errors so defined the limitations of our Constitution, that centralized usurpation with its revolutionary reaction, will be hereafter an impossibility? Who but Henry Clay could have taught the growing millions of

the mighty West to love, and in weal or woe to abide by, the East and the South? While we revere his memory, may we not also regard it as providential, that for near half a century, with a perception of the right almost intuitive, with a love of his country, his whole country, never transcended, with a courage and zeal sometimes bordering on moral martyrdom, the clarion notes of Clay's eloquence have roused his countrymen to stand by their country's welfare, to protect our union, our commercial independence and our national integrity and honor?

We may be in error, but it seems to us that our country and the world, needed another statesman of a better mould still. Calhoun and his class, breathe fire in their patriotism, burning the good as well as the evil. The eloquence of Clay was too much for the ear and the hour. Like gathered dew drops, his speeches retain their elements, and they are rare and noble elements, but on paper they lose their brilliant attraction. With Clay's ardent temperament, instant persuasion was above permanent conviction. No man ever inspired more popular enthusiasm, or wielded greater personal influence. He was a man to meet cases as they rose, and apply present remedies. He looked at proximate more than at remote causes. He was the orator rather than the philosopher. He was eminently fitted to appeal to the judgments of men, and he did thus often most efficiently appeal, but this was not his great strength. His warm, generous, impulsive, patriotic heart so throbbed in his own bosom, and its outgoings, with all the fascinations of his oratory and personal address so thrilled and led captive his hearers, that deep philosophy and cold clear logic seemed too sluggish for his purposes. He imprinted himself on the hearts of his cotemporaries, rather than his principles on the intellect of the nation. In patriotism and popular eloquence, in honesty of purpose and moral courage, he has had no superior. In the higher gifts of comprehensive statesmanship, in all that marks and ennobles the highest type of a great statesman, he was second to only one man, to whom to be second was, in our judgment, to transcend all others of his cotemporaries.

With this heartfelt tribute to one whom this land will long lament, may we be permitted to say that, in moulding our free institutions for ages, and for the final adoption, as we hope, of

the world, God saw our need of a nobler statesman, one not only of the "first three" but the first of the "three." And in due time this brightest star in the constellation of our country arose. Its steady beams have illuminated our counsels for nearly forty years. It has lately sunk beneath the horizon

"But, like a sun, seemed largest in its setting."

It is not enough that the Constitution of the United States is founded in justice, wisdom and the rights of man. It is not enough that this Constitution is written and sworn to by our public officers, and enforced by law. To have a moral force it must be analyzed, scrutinized, understood; to bind in harmony mighty states, over a continent, and for ages, its obligations must be distinctly and universally recognised; to tranquillize our growing millions, with all their various and conflicting interests, it must be demonstrated to be just and equal and right, and worthy to be immutable. This office was entrusted, in Providence, to the great *Daniel Webster*. How he fulfilled it his countrymen well know. When we reflect on what has been the ordinary civil condition of the mass of mankind for six thousand years; when we turn our vision to the present degradation, not only of all Asia and Africa, but of the greater part, and the fairest part, of Europe itself; when we remember the unusual and almost miraculous combination of circumstances, which rendered the freedom of this Western continent a possibility; when we bear in mind the cost of our Revolution, in anxiety, toil, suffering and the sacrifice of treasure and human life; when we think of the carnival of blood likely to result from severing this great Bond of our national brotherhood; that on its links are suspended not only the well-being of a continent, soon to be peopled with one hundred millions, but the last, lingering hopes of human nature itself in all lands and for all time; with all this in view, whom ought we to honor in life, and bewail in death, more than him to whom this country—this entire country—has conceded the title of "*Defender of the Constitution?*" The eulogies of poets and orators, of the press and the forum, pale before the magic of this simple title, which by the acclamation of millions, has been conceded to *Daniel Webster*.

We submit to this popular verdict. To show how it was gained, and in detail, why it was deserved, would require a volume; while our purpose, in what remains of this article, is rather an obituary than a biography. We shall not attempt at this time, any analysis of his career as a citizen, lawyer or statesman. We may do this deliberately at a future season.

As his memory has been most wantonly assailed by the semi-Deistical, semi-Unitarian pen of the *Rev. Theodore Parker*, it may be proper for us to give our impression that no party can claim Daniel Webster, for with him patriotism was above party; and even his enemies being judges, his greatest errors were on the side of constitutional authority and the perpetuated Union, at all hazards, of these United States. Webster's great crime, in the estimation of Theodore Parker, was an unwillingness to risk the wreck of the Union to prevent the return to bondage of fugitive slaves. But the crushing of the Union would have emancipated no southern slave, while it would have annihilated the last hope of the freedom not only of the world at large, but of the slaves themselves. Is the sun to be extinguished in the heavens on account of its spots? With some it was the fault of Daniel Webster—with us it marks his excellence—that he was no ultraist nor political fanatic, ambitious of notoriety, and like the eccentric and baleful comet, making the nation pale by fear of change. He was justly proud of his country. He regarded our civil institutions as greatly in advance of all others, ancient or modern; not perfect, but as near perfection as human skill could frame them. Hence he devoted the powers of his vast intellect and the energy of his eloquence to protect and consolidate existing institutions. He felt the propriety of pertinence as to time and mode even in “plucking up tares,” lest the wheat should also be destroyed. Instead of rebuking his prudence, his enemies might profit by his example.

His efforts were successful. His prayer was: “When my eyes shall be turned to behold, for the last time, the sun in heaven, may I not see him shining on the broken and dishonored fragments of a once glorious Union; on States dis-severed, discordant, belligerent! on a land rent with civil feuds, or drenched, it may be, in fraternal blood! Let their last feeble and lingering glance rather behold the gorgeous ensign

of the Republic, now known and honored throughout the earth, still full high advanced,\* its arms and trophies streaming in their original lustre, not a stripe erased or polluted, not a single star obscured, bearing for its motto no such miserable interrogatory as "What is all this worth?" Nor those other words of delusion and folly, Liberty first and Union afterwards; but everywhere, spread all over in characters of living light, blazing on all its ample folds, as they float over the sea and over the land, and in every wind under the whole heavens, that other sentiment, dear to every American heart, LIBERTY AND UNION, NOW AND FOREVER, ONE AND INSEPARABLE!" It was well for him—it is well for us, that this prayer was answered.

He was fitted in Providence for the work entrusted to his hands. Born in a rural district, a farmer's boy, his heart mellowed and permanently impressed by the pathos of nature and associations of a country home, invigorated by early toil, and taught the burdens of mankind at large by sharing the labors of an honest and toil-worn father, compelled to battle for an education as schoolmaster and clerk, he was by this prepared to estimate the real condition of the multitude, to sympathize with man as made by God, and to breast obstacles that lay in his path. Gifted, doubtless, with surpassing genius, he presumed nothing on his endowments, but from youth to age, by hard study and careful preparation, worked out, under God, his high destiny.

But though he never presumed on his great powers, we must remind ourselves, that for his surpassing greatness we are indebted to God alone. Others, among statesmen, have been as laborious, as patriotic, as richly gifted in persuasive eloquence;

\* "Mr. Webster may have had in his mind, when speaking of the gorgeous ensign of the Republic, Milton's description of the imperial banner in the lower regions, floating across the immensity of space:

" ' Who forthwith from the glittering staff unfurl'd  
The imperial ensign; which, *full high advanced*,  
Shone like a meteor streaming to the wind,  
With gems and golden lustre rich imblaz'd,  
Seraphic arms and trophies: all the while  
Sonorous metal blowing martial sounds.' "

"And this in its turn is borrowed from, or suggested by, Tasso's description of the banner of the Crusades, when first unfolded in Palestine—which the inquisitive reader may find, if he choose, in 'Jerusalem Delivered.' " *March*, p. 147.

but in massive strength of intellect, in grasp, penetration and comprehension of mind, he stood alone—the man of centuries. His intellect, clear as the sunlight on his own snow-capt mountains, and solid as the granite of his native hills, was equal to any subject or any occasion. This noble intellect, encased in a frame of manly strength and symmetry, this mind, winged by a vigorous imagination, enriched by almost inexhaustible attainments, warmed by a great earnest heart, impelled by a resolute will, and guided by a sense of justice and a lofty patriotism;—armed with a voice, and eye, and air, and power of language befitting the man—this made *Daniel Webster*. We heard him often in his early manhood, when his raven locks were all unbleached and his noble form unbent; we have often heard him in the Senate and at the bar; and never expect to behold his like again. What seems almost incredible, his intellectual breadth was equal to his depth and strength. He united in himself a threefold greatness. His efforts at the bar were only matched in our land by his own equal efforts in the Senate or the popular hall.

It is said that genius alone can estimate genius, and happily we have at hand Rufus Choate's opinion of Daniel Webster. "There presents itself," he says, "on the first, to any observation of Mr. Webster's life and character, a two-fold eminence—eminence of the very highest rank in a two-fold field of intellectual public display, the profession of the law, and the profession of statesmanship—of which it would not be easy to recall any parallel in the biography of illustrious men.

\* \* \* \* \*

"It is common and it is easy, in the case of all in such position, to point out other lawyers here and there, as possessing some special qualification or attainment more remarkably, perhaps, because more exclusively; to say of one that he has more cases in his recollection at any given moment; or that he was earlier grounded in equity; or has gathered more black-letter or civil law, or knowledge of Spanish or Western titles: and these comparisons were sometimes made with him. But when you sought a counsel of the first rate for the great cause, who would most surely discern and most powerfully expound the exact law required for the controversy, in season for use; who

could most skilfully encounter the opposing law; under whose power of analysis, persuasion and display the asserted right would assume the most forcible aspect before the intelligence of the Judge; who, if the inquiry became loaded with or resolved into facts, could most completely develop and most irresistibly expose them; one "the law's whole thunder born to wield,"—when you sought such a counsel, and could have the choice, I think the universal profession would have turned to him. And this would be so in nearly every description of causes. In any department some able men wield civil inquiries with a peculiar ability; some criminal. How lucidly and how deeply he unfolded a question of property, you all know. But then with what address, feeling and pathos he defended; with what dignity and crushing power, *accusatorio spiritu*, he prosecuted the accused of crime, few have seen; but none who have seen can ever forget it.

\* \* \* \* \*

"But when you consider that, side by side with this, there was growing up that other reputation—that of the first American statesman—that for thirty-three years—those embracing his most herculean works at the bar—he was engaged as a member of either House, or in the highest of the Executive Departments, in the conduct of the largest national affairs; in the treatment of the largest national questions; in the debate with the highest abilities of American public life; conducting diplomatic intercourse in delicate relations with all classes of foreign powers; investigating whole classes of truths, totally unlike the truths of the law, and resting on principles totally distinct; and that here, too, he was wise, safe, controlling, trusted, the foremost man; that Europe had come to see in his life a guaranty for justice, for peace, for the best hopes of civilization; and America to feel sure of her glory, her safety, as a great arm enfolded her—you see how rare, how solitary almost, was the actual greatness! Who anywhere else has been seen wearing the double wreath of MURRAY and CHATHAM; or of DUNNING and FOX; or of ERSKINE and PITT; or of WILLIAM PINKNEY and RUFUS KING, in one transcendent superiority!

"With the peace of 1815 his more cherished public labors began; and thenceforward has he devoted himself—the ardor of

his civil youth; the energies of his maturest manhood; the autumnal wisdom of the ripened year—to the offices of legislation and diplomacy; of preserving the peace, keeping the honor, establishing the boundaries, and vindicating the neutral rights of his country; restoring a sound currency, and laying its foundation sure and deep; in upholding public credit; in promoting foreign commerce and domestic industry; in developing our uncounted material resources; giving the lake and the river to trade; and vindicating and interpreting the Constitution and the Law. On all these subjects; on all measures practically in any degree affecting them; he has inscribed his opinions and left the traces of his hand. Everywhere the philosophical and patriotic statesman and thinker will find that he has been before him; lighting the way; sounding the abyss. His weighty language, his sagacious warnings, his great maxims of empire; will be raised to view, and live to be deciphered, when the final catastrophe shall lift the granite foundation in fragments from its bed.

“In this connection I cannot but remark, to how extraordinary an extent had Mr. Webster, by his acts, words, thoughts, or the events of his life, associated himself forever in the memory of all of us with every historical incident, or at least with every historical epoch; with every policy, with every glory, with every great name and fundamental institution, and grand or beautiful image, which are peculiarly and properly American. Look backwards to the planting of Plymouth and Jamestown, to the various scenes of Colonial life in peace and war; to the opening, and march and close of the Revolutionary drama; to the age of the Constitution; to WASHINGTON, and FRANKLIN, and ADAMS, and JEFFERSON; to the whole train of causes from the Reformation downwards, which prepared us to be Republicans; to that other train of causes which led us to be Unionists; look around on field, workshop and deck, and hear the music of labor rewarded, fed and protected; look on the bright sisterhood of the States, each singing as a seraph in her motion, yet blending in a common beam and swelling a common harmony—and there is nothing which does not bring him by some tie to the memory of America. We seem to see his form and hear his deep, grave speech everywhere. By some felicity of

his personal life; by some wise, deep or beautiful word spoken or written; by some service of his own, or some commemoration of the services of others, it has come to pass that "our granite hills, our inland seas, and prairies, and fresh, unbounded, magnificent wilderness;" our encircling ocean; the rock of the Pilgrims; our new-born sister of the Pacific; our popular assemblies; our free schools; all our cherished doctrines of education, and of the influence of religion, and material policy and law, and the Constitution, give us back his name. What American landscape will you look on—what subject of American interest will you study—what source of hope or of anxiety, as an American, will you acknowledge, that it does not recall him?

"I shall not venture, in this rapid and general recollection of Mr. WEBSTER, to attempt to analyze that intellectual power which all admit to have been so extraordinary, or to compare or contrast it with the mental greatness of others—in variety or degree—of the living or the dead; or even to attempt to appreciate exactly, and in reference to canons of art, his single attribute of eloquence. Consider, however, the remarkable phenomenon of excellence in three unkindred, one might have thought, impracticable forms of public speech—that of the forum, with its double audience of bench and jury—of the halls of legislation—and of the most thronged and tumultuous assemblies of the people."

This is Rufus Choate's opinion of Mr. Webster. Is it overdone?

Webster was above the arts of the mere demagogue. He threw aside the mere *claptraps* of party; he hunted after principles; he appealed to the understandings of men; he based his well compacted logic and his earnest appeals, on sound, immutable truth. Indeed, he was too elevated for general popularity. His political associates were too much below him to love him. He preferred to instruct rather than to amuse the multitude; he sought truth more than huzzas, and preferred "being *right* to being President."

Happily his speeches are almost as eloquent on paper as from his lips. They will lose nothing by time. In all future ages they will not only furnish themes for school-boy declamation, but the profound maxims of truth and justice for patriots,

jurists and statesmen. It is a rich boon from Heaven that such powers for forty years were devoted to his country. The wreck of such an intellect by disease—the perishing of such powers—the fall of such a statesman—is one of the saddest tokens of man's frailty, and one of the proudest of death's triumphs.

“The first mourner to-day  
Is the nation whose watchman is taken away ;  
Wife, children and neighbors may mourn at his knell—  
He was ‘lover and friend’ to his country as well.”

His countrymen had learned to lean upon him in hours of peril, and hence a wail for him has been heard from all parties and from every part of our land. Many have been disposed to say,

“Hadst thou but lived, though stripped of power,  
A watchman on the lonely tower,  
Thy thrilling trump had roused the land  
When fraud or danger were at hand.  
By thee, as by a beacon light,  
Our pilots had kept course aright.  
As some proud column, still elate,  
Thy strength had propped the tottering State.  
Now is the stately column broke,  
The beacon light is quenched in smoke,  
The trumpet's silver sound is still,  
The warder silent on the hill.”

This is not the time nor place for eulogy on the character of Webster. We set him forth as no model of Christian piety. Tried by the high claims of God's law, he was, like all of us, an erring and sinful man. Moreover, we must express our fears that on the giddy height which he trod in the highest circles of social and political life, he was sometimes swept from the paths of moral rectitude by temptations of appetite and evil example. The city of Washington, to many is a Potter's-field, in which politicians bury their moral virtues. We have no evidence to impeach Mr. Webster's morality ; but in some respects he may have been no better than his cotemporaries. But truth will allow us to affirm here, that in the admiration of virtue he never wavered. His principles were drawn from the Bible. They were lofty, pure, immutable. His moral judgment was sound, elevated and evangelical. If you search the entire records of

his eloquence where will you find an immoral maxim, a corrupt sentiment, or an impious expression? Where will you fail to find the highest reverence for truth, for duty and for God? His moral aims were upward. Like the oak of the forest, sometimes bent by the tempest, but its boughs still reaching towards the sky; like the mighty river, sometimes turned aside by jutting rocks or rising bluffs, yet forcing its way to the sea; like the eagle swept aside by the tornado, yet still rising with eye fixed on the sun; so the aims and endeavors of Daniel Webster, with all his imperfections, seem to have been towards truth, duty and eternal life.

Webster united with the Orthodox Congregational Church, in Salisbury, N. H., at about twenty years of age. For nine years, he was a regular communicant and consistent member of the church of Portsmouth, N. H. In 1816, on his removal to Boston, he worshipped in Brattle street (Unitarian) Church, in winter, and in Rev. Dr. Codman's (Orthodox) Church at Dorchester, in summer. His alliance with a Unitarian church, that body then embracing the wealth, literature and fashionable aristocracy of Boston, we regard as one great mistake of his life. It promoted his popularity, but diluted his piety. It elevated his social position, but unsettled his religious life; and it appears to be a kind of retribution, that *Theodore Parker*, a semi-Unitarian, should invade his grave to gloat on the moral weaknesses which seem to have resulted from Webster's want of fidelity to the principles of his fathers.

When, at Dorchester, he first united with Dr. Codman's church, he said to the pastor, "I am come to be one of your parishioners; not one of your fashionable ones, but you will find me in my seat both in the morning and in the afternoon." He was as good as his word. At Washington he has recently worshipped in the Rev. Dr. Butler's (Episcopal) Church, the pastor of which is alike eminent for evangelical doctrine, fervent piety and ministerial fidelity.

Webster always vindicated the truthfulness and Divine authority of the Bible. He read it through, it is said, once a year. He *profoundly* revered its truth, and admired its literary treasures. While some half-educated literary fops suppose they display unusual originality by doubting and sneering

at God's word, the great intellect of Daniel Webster found truth, interest and instruction on the sacred page. He studied the Bible daily. He studied it as a critic, a scholar, a philosopher. Like a lawyer, he collated facts and weighed testimony, and was about to write a work on its truthfulness when he fell by death. He found in the Bible a Calvinistic Theology. He attended various churches, but nothing ever shook his faith in the evangelical creed of the Church of his fathers.

As to his personal interest in religion, we must rely on the testimony of others. The world, no more than the church, will allow that any human life is complete without the evidence of piety. Hence the eagerness with which testimony is sought that a great man has died in hope. That the Rev. Mr. Alden, an Orthodox clergyman, could make the following statement in presence of thousands at Webster's grave, is a source of satisfaction to the great statesman's friends, as well as to the friends of Christ:

"Vividly impressed upon the memory of the speaker is the instruction once received as to the fitting way of presenting divine truth from the sacred desk. Would that its force might be felt by those who are called to minister in divine things. Mr. Webster said, 'When I attend upon the preaching of the Gospel, I wish to have it made a personal matter, a *personal matter*, A PERSONAL MATTER.' It is to present him as enforcing these divine lessons of wisdom and consolation, that we have recalled to your minds these precious recollections.

\* \* \* \* \*

"I am bound to say, that in the course of my life I never met with an individual, in any profession or condition, who always spoke and always thought with such awful reverence of the power and presence of God. No irreverence, no lightness, even no too familiar allusion to God and His attributes ever escaped his lips. The very notion of a Supreme Being was, with him, made up of awe and solemnity. It filled the whole of his great mind with the strongest emotions.

"And if these tender remembrances only cause our tears to flow more freely, it may not be improper for us to present the example of the father, when his great heart was rent by the loss of a daughter whom he most dearly loved. Those present

on that occasion well remember when the struggle of mortal agony was over, retiring from the presence of the dead, bowing together before the presence of God, and joining with the afflicted father as he poured forth his soul, pleading for grace and strength from on high. As upon the morning of his death we conversed upon the evident fact that for the last few weeks his mind had been engaged in preparation for an exchange of worlds, one who knew him well remarked, 'His whole life has been that preparation.' The people of this rural neighborhood, among whom he spent the last twenty years of his life, among whom he died, and with whom he is to rest, have been accustomed to regard him with mingled veneration and love. Those who knew him best, can the most truly appreciate the lessons both from his lips and example teaching the sustaining power of the Gospel.

"His last words, 'I STILL LIVE,' we may interpret in a higher sense than that in which they are usually regarded. He has taught us how to attain the life of faith and the life to come. And we need utter no apology. Indeed, we should be inexcusable in letting the present opportunity pass without unveiling the inner sanctuary of the life of the foremost man of all this world; for his most intimate friends are well aware that he had it in mind to prepare a work upon the internal evidences of Christianity, as a testimony of his heartfelt conviction of the 'divine reality' of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. But finding himself rapidly approaching those august scenes of immortality into which he had so often looked, he dictated the most important part of his epitaph. And so long as 'the rock shall guard his rest, and the ocean sound his dirge,' the world shall read upon his monument, not only

"One of the few, the immortal names,  
Which were not born to die,"

but also that Daniel Webster lived and died in the Christian faith."

Who does not rejoice that this could be said—truly said, by his pastor? Taught to pray by a Puritan father and mother, Webster has prayed in his family; he has prayed by the dying bed of a friend in Washington; he has prayed in his home circles

as death was striking down his kindred; and almost his last breath was a prayer that "God for Christ's sake would forgive his sins." Extemporary prayer—heart-felt, pertinent, Puritan—bore to Heaven the lisping wants of his childhood and the agonized supplications of his dying hour. With the simple forms familiar to his infancy, a Puritan minister laid him in his final sepulchre. He revered the memory of the Pilgrims of Plymouth rock, and taxed his eloquence to do them honor. Of a Puritan parentage, (originally Scottish, though he was born in New England,) and Puritan faith—with Puritan prayers he besought Heaven's mercy; with Puritan simplicity he gave his dying counsel to his friends and kindred, and requested that with Puritan services he might be laid down to mingle with Puritan dust. May his soul have found mercy at the hands of his father's God.

He needs no marble for his monument. Men like Demosthenes, Cicero and Webster, become themselves the monuments by which dead empires are remembered. The old Ocean which frets the rock-bound coast of the State he served so long and so well, the Ocean,

"With its wild, profound, eternal bass,"

will oft thunder his dirge in the ears of pilgrims to his sepulchre.

His last words were, "*I still live.*" Yes, he still lives, an evidence, doubtless, that great men are morally weak, and have need "to watch and pray that they enter not into temptation." He still lives in the deep, warm affections of the home circle whom he made so happy. He still lives in the records of his surpassing wisdom, in our courts of justice and halls of legislation. He still lives in the gratitude of the great nation whose principles he vindicated and whose prosperity he advanced. He still lives in the hearts of down-trodden nations whose tyrants he rebuked.

He will live in human memories as a monument of intellectual power, to excite the admiration and aspirations of his race. He will live as a perpetual rebuke of all demagogues, who prefer a temporary popularity, gained by flattering the people, to enduring honor grounded on real ability and honest patriotism.

He will live as a monition to statesmen to trust man less and God more. He will live in all the might of his greatness, and all the eloquence of his lips, as a witness that the Christianity in which he believed is founded upon a rock. Who can detect a fallacy which for forty years escaped the scrutiny of Daniel Webster? Finally, he will live as a witness that no earthly greatness, nor earthly honor, can console the spirit in the dark valley.

Daniel Webster, in dying, developed great fortitude, calmness, dignity and patience. He spoke, however, of the difficulty of the process of dying; when Dr. Jeffries repeated the verse, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me." Mr. Webster said, immediately, "The fact—the fact! That is what I want! Thy rod—thy rod! Thy staff—thy staff!" May his cry to God for help in the dark valley startle us so to live that at death we may hear a voice saying, "Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God."

In his best days, we heard from Daniel Webster's lips the following sentiment, which we commend, in closing, to our readers:

"A sense of duty pursues us ever. It is omnipresent, like the Deity. If we take to ourselves the wings of the morning and dwell in the utmost parts of the sea, duty performed, or duty violated, is still with us, for our happiness or our misery. If we say the darkness shall cover us, in the darkness as in the light, our obligations are yet with us. We cannot escape their power, nor fly from their presence. They are with us in this life, will be with us at its close; and, in that scene of inconceivable solemnity, which lies yet farther onward, we shall still find ourselves surrounded by the consciousness of duty, to pain us wherever it has been violated, and to console us, so far as God may have given us grace to perform it."