

AN
ORATION,

PRONOUNCED ON THE EVENING OF THE 5th FEBRUARY,

BEFORE THE

ALUMNI OF YALE COLLEGE,

RESIDENT IN THE CITY OF NEW-YORK,

IN COMMEMORATION OF

THEIR LATE PRESIDENT,

TIMOTHY DWIGHT, D.D. LL.D.

—
BY GARDINER SPRING, A.M.

PASTOR OF THE BRICK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE CITY OF
NEW-YORK.

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NEW-YORK:

PUBLISHED BY DODGE & SAYRE, 86 BROADWAY.

J. SEYMOUR, PRINTER.

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At a meeting of the Graduates of Yale College resident in the City of New-York, convened pursuant to public notice at the Lecture Room of the Brick Church, January 15, 1817, for the purpose of making arrangements for paying a suitable tribute of respect to the memory of the Rev. Timothy Dwight, D.D. L.L.D. the late President of Yale College, George Griffin, Esq. was called to the chair, and Isaac M. Ely appointed Secretary :

The object of the meeting having been explained, the following resolutions were adopted :—

Deeply lamenting the death of the Rev. Dr. DWIGHT, the highly esteemed President of our Alma Mater, sympathising with the relatives of the deceased under their afflictive bereavements—with the numerous students, who, in the midst of their collegiate course, have been deprived of their distinguished and revered instructor ; and with society at large, in the loss of one of its brightest ornaments—

Resolved, That we deem it our duty to make a public expression of our respect and veneration for the memory of that great and good man.

Resolved, That we will wear the usual badge of mourning, for the space of thirty days.

Resolved, That Z. Lewis, G. Griffin, S. B. Strong, E. H. Ely, S. Stephens, and P. Perit, be a committee to select some one of the Graduates of Yale College residing in the city of New-York, to deliver an appropriate Oration, and that this Committee make the requisite arrangements to carry these resolutions into effect.

Resolved, That these resolutions be signed by the Chairman and Secretary of this meeting, and be published.

GEORGE GRIFFIN, *Chairman.*

ISAAC M. ELY, *Secretary.*

At a meeting of the Committee of Arrangements of the Graduates of Yale College, on the 6th of February, 1817—

Resolved, That the thanks of this Committee be tendered to the Rev. Mr. SPRING, for the able and appropriate Oration, delivered by him on the 5th instant, in commemoration of the late Rev. Dr. Dwight, and that a copy be requested for publication.

S. B. STRONG, *Secretary.*

Z. LEWIS, *Chairman.*

DEAR SIR,

Beckman-street, 10th March, 1817.

I regret to have given the Committee so much delay. With many acknowledgments for their civility, I shall no longer withhold the Oration from their disposal.

With much respect,

I am, Sir,

Your obed't Serv't,

SELAN B. STRONG, *Esq.*

GARDINER SPRING.

TO MRS. MARY DWIGHT.

MADAM,

I know I express the sentiments of the Alumni of Yale College in the city of New-York, when I dedicate the following pages to you. Very few considerations would have constrained me to turn aside from the pressing avocations of my charge, to the duty imposed on me by the preceding resolutions, but for the unfeigned respect and ardent attachment I have ever felt for the character of your deceased husband; and very few inducements would have prevailed with me to have given this sketch of his character to the public, but for my unabated obligations to his bereaved family, and this opportunity to subscribe myself,

With grateful affection,

Madam,

Your obedient servant,

GARDINER SPRING.

New-York, March, 1817.

AN ORATION, &c.

THESE badges of mourning, Fellow-Alumni! speak a language, alas! too full of import. DWIGHT is gone. The light of Yale is extinguished. The vital fire is fled. Like some clear planet, it has left behind its lucid track, and darted to Eternity.

Here and there a favoured few are distinguished by those great and amiable qualities, that attract the admiration of mankind. There is a combination of intellectual and moral excellence, that proclaims them to be of exalted lineage. There is a ray within them that is an emanation from the Fountain of light, and is itself the radiatory point of light to the world. Some more than human pencil has retraced the miniature of Deity upon their bosoms. Their royal vestment is from the wardrobe of the skies; their entire panoply from the armoury of the "Captain of their salvation."

Other things being equal, men are great only as they are good. The secret power that sets the august machine in motion, is a flame enkindled at the shrine of gospel grace. Mere intellectual greatness is adapted to the sphere which real excellence disdains. Great achievements belong only to a bright and glowing genius, inspired by the ardour, the energy of moral virtue. The ornament, the dignity, the perfection of human greatness is *true religion*.

Perhaps it may be thought hazardous to aver, that the tendency of moral virtue is to advance and elevate

the intellectual character; though it will be conceded that the voluntary affections of the soul have a powerful influence on all its faculties. The human mind is progressive, from the impressions it receives of surrounding objects. In a world filled with the exhibitions of divine power, wisdom, and goodness, every object of the senses is calculated to enlarge and improve the intelligent faculties, and does actually make impressions which will never be erased. Though many of them may, for a time be forgotten, yet the real progress of the mind continues without cessation. Not a thought, idea, or affection, which once exists, but will have its influence in enlarging the capacity of the soul through its interminable being. But some of the noblest objects that ever address the understanding, and are the means of its rapid and exalted progression, exert but little agency upon a mind destitute of moral virtue. Though it is not at the option of such a mind to exclude their agency, yet while it views them with aversion, it will keep them at a distance, and for ever neglect to cultivate their intimacy. ~~The~~ ^{Two} sister spirits, commencing and continuing their existence under opposite moral influence, though from their progressive nature, both would rise, would rise very unequally in the scale of mental greatness. The one would be defiled, debased, and enslaved; the other, purified, exalted, and free. The one would be constrained, at every step, to struggle with its own conclusions; the other would proceed with ardour and with transport in the search of truth. In the one case, the perpetual conflict between the heart and the understanding would afford little opportunity for mental enterprise; in the other, this generous spirit would be

eagerly cherished, and habitually and insensibly blended with the most refined enjoyment. The one, welcoming no other impressions than those whose moral tendency is assimilated to its own, would receive no undivided impulse, elevating it to its proper standard, or directing it to its proper destiny; the other, inviting the influence of all that is holy, and disgusted at the intrusion of all that is profane, would advance to higher and higher degrees of progression, without interruption and without end. There can be little doubt, that were there no counteracting agency, in the same proportion that sin prevails, genius withers, exertion languishes, hopes and honours perish.

The characters of men are formed by action. Nor are there any principles of action that operate more powerfully or habitually, than those of a religious or irreligious tendency. While there is every thing in the principles of impiety to debase and degrade, there is every thing in the principles of piety to dignify and exalt. A firm and affectionate belief in the being and all-pervading presence of the Deity—the high sanctions of moral obligation—the habitual influence of that communicative goodness, which is the basis and the evidence of all that is worth the name of moral virtue have done more for the intellectual melioration of mankind, and the real elevation of the human character, than all other principles combined.

There must be something low and grovelling in the sentiments of a man who never acts under the consciousness of a present God. It is not easy to conceive of a deeper chasm in the mind, than where this inciting power is wanting. To limit the attention to sensible objects, without regard to the great invisible

Cause ; to repel and banish the conviction of the omnipresent Spirit ; to give place to the delusion, that we are screened from his eye, and beyond the reach of his power ; to feel habitually that we have no concern with him, nor he with us ; are motives of action which never usurp, without debasing the mind. But there are affections and habits that are formed with the sweet consciousness that they are formed under the eye of the unseen, yet all-seeing God. Inspired with the awe and encouragement of this inspection, whose sentiments will not be lofty and aspiring ? Whose holy emulation will not steadfastly pursue a course that promises the approbation of his Witness and Judge ? With the prize of his “ high calling ” glistening in his eye, who would not form his plans and regulate his conduct upon the model of real greatness ?

The sanctions of moral obligation never want their appropriate efficiency upon the human character, without discovering the symptoms of deterioration. Freed from the salutary restraint and the sacred impulse of future rewards and punishments, men are destitute of those noblest principles of extended action which constitute the elements of greatness. A mind that never looks beyond this diminutive world, and which is never suffered to travel into the regions of futurity, loses sight of the great end of its own existence, neglects the obvious course dictated by its original frame and constitution, and degenerates below its proper level. Alexander the Great, after having subdued one world, would not have set down and wept that there was not another to subdue, had his capacious mind comprehended a system of operations, extensive and noble enough to reach beyond the narrow precincts of

of time. If man is born for a deathless existence, is it by depreciating his destiny, and leaving out of view the immensity of his being, that he is to reach the grandeur and attain the greatness for which he is designed? If his true dignity consists in his immortal destination, can it be an evidence of greatness to forget that he is immortal? Or are the general views and habitual deportment which evince a permanent solicitude for his final destiny, the conclusive evidence of greatness which an observer, alike competent and impartial, would be disappointed not to find?

Present to the view of a great man is an eternity. There are comparatively few seasons in which he does not act in view of a world of everlasting retribution. In her leading movements, his "mind is awake to an extended survey of her whole course." Other expedients than those adapted to the present state, other sanctions than those arising from the prospects of the present scene, other objects than those within the circumscriptions of time, form the great incitement to action. And who does not see that the character issuing from the plastic virtue of such principles, with equal intellectual power, must surpass the pigmy form of worldly dignity, and cast into the shade the glimmering of mere terrestrial grandeur? What must have been the emotions of the attending seraph, as he eyed the pen of the immortal *Edwards*, when it drew the following resolution: "Resolved, That I will do whatsoever I think to be most to God's glory and my own good, profit, and pleasure, *on the whole*; without any consideration of the time whether now, or never so many myriads of ages hence." Would he have hesitated to admit the claim to kindred greatness?

But the genuine effect of evangelical virtue in the formation of character, is no where more palpable, than in the nature and results of that communicative goodness, which it is the prerogative of such virtue solely to inspire. Without this, there is no motive to impel to disinterested exertion; and without disinterested exertion, whatever there may be of imperishable infamy, we have the common consent of mankind while we say, there is no true greatness. Its subserviency to the laws which conserve the welfare of the whole system, is not more essential to the individual utility of a planet, than is holiness in the soul of man to his authorized claims of genuine excellence. Divested of that grand standard of Christian feeling, and grand principle of Christian conduct, *communicative goodness*, the sphere of human agency is contracted to the circle of which supreme selfishness is the centre;—not indeed of a system which it warms and enlightens, but of a system which it gradually and irresistibly attracts within its own consuming fires. Of a mind formed upon such a model, self is the origin and end. Self is the object toward which every emotion and every act maintains an invariable tendency. In its more alluring attitudes, the ruling passion may take a wider circuit, and appear to project a nobler aim; but the paramount principle is still unaltered, and cannot fail to have the effect of damping every noble effort, depressing every lofty sentiment, and impairing the elevated faculties of the mind. You look in vain for generous principles of action, to the man whose hopes and fears are all suspended upon the accomplishment of schemes of personal aggrandizement. He who has never soared above himself, is yet to learn not only what it is to be good,

but what it is to be great. The movements of a great mind are at an awful distance from that little, that abject spirit, which, in all its variations, regards but one interest, and that its own.

But there is something in genuine goodness that awakes the soul to the finest sentiments, and puts in requisition its noblest powers. True benevolence, fortified by decision of character and vigour of intellect, is too restless and enterprising not to be great. The soil is mellowed with more than Castalian dews, and prolific in genuine excellence. That high-born "charity, that seeketh not her own," touches nothing she does not transform. Every impress is vivid and luminous; every vestige is divinely radiant. It is in such a mould, that human greatness receives its sublimest form. It is under no other than such influence, that men are nurtured for those services, which re-act upon their constancy and vigour, and elicit those expressions of real greatness which excite and perpetuate the plaudits of the world. It is under no other than such influence, that the powers and faculties of the mind are sublimated to their pristine grandeur, or approximate their divine original. God is great, because he is good. Almighty power and unerring wisdom would be more to be dreaded than revered, were they not energized by infinite goodness.

It would be disingenuous to deny, that men destitute of true religion, have been justly esteemed great in certain spheres of action. Here and there, there has been one, like Cyrus and Cincinnatus, whose penetrating genius and mental refinement, whose affability of temper and whose power and influence have diffused a lustre around every stage of their progress, that has eclipsed the fading splendours of other luminaries, and whose

benignant beams seemed like the refracted rays of the Sun of Righteousness. There have also been those, like Sesostris and Alexander, whose capacious mind and heroic magnanimity have employed the pens of historians and poets, and whose learning and influence, instead of enlightening the world, have extended the despotism of darkness, and multiplied the victims of misery; and who, instead of arresting the progress of degeneracy, have only given additional currency to established errors, and additional authority to practised crimes.

It is a common prejudice, to disparage things that are present and near, and over-estimate those that are past and remote. No small portion of this prejudice enters into the judgment we form of human character, and the admiration we feel of heroic ages and renowned men. There is a halo around the constellations of antiquity, that presents to the eye a more august image than would be distinctly perceived in a clear horizon. But the splendour, though dazzling, is delusive and momentary. The colouring that decorates false greatness, soon fades away. Men and things are yet to be viewed through a different medium. Names that have been long transmitted from age to age, in all the sweetness of classic song, and that have owed so much of their fame to the enchantment of the lyre, are yet to be sung and heard with cold indifference, and in languid and discordant strains, to die away upon the breeze. The exploits of valour which have gilded so many pages of antiquity, are yet to be considered as "pre-eminent in nothing but guilt." The actors in those scenes of terror and amazement, that

have reflected their dismal light down the descent of time, and at “ whose colossal stature the world has trembled ;” are yet to “ fall to the size of common men.”

It ought not to pass unnoticed, that the world has seen what many a vigorous and sprightly intellect has been without religion ; but it has not seen what these very prodigies of genius might and would have been with it. If Demosthenes and Cicero ~~were~~ great, what would Demosthenes and Cicero have been with minds expanded by the principles, and impelled by the motives of piety ? If native talent, unaided by a ray of virtue, can shine amid all the mire and rubbish of groveling impiety, what streams of light will it not issue, when extricated from moral impurity, and raised above the crudeness of unhallowed affection ? What might not the Hannibals, the Pompeys, and the Cæsars of our world have been, had they been elevated to christians, and urged to great achievements in a good cause ? Plato had been a Paul, Charles an Alfred, Hume an Edwards, had they inhaled a purer air and grown upon a consecrated soil. But Paul had degenerated to a Plato, Alfred to Charles, Edwards to a Hume, and the world have been filled with deeds of “ disastrous lustre,” rather than exploits of real greatness, had their characters been formed upon any other model than Gospel excellence. It is easy to see what Voltaire and Helvetius, Nelson and Napoleon were, and delightful to imagine what they might have been. Under a different moral influence, an Eden had bloomed beneath their feet. The lamp of truth had superseded the torch of error ; the mild and steady emanations of benevolence had taken place of the volcanic eruptions of

pride and ambition; the exploits of naval and martial had been raised to those of moral greatness; and instead of here and there a monument to genius, they would have left behind them the trophies of everlasting fame.

It is pleasant to contemplate the honour which the providence of God has ever put upon the truly great. There is a principle in his wise and holy government, that is as permanent as it is delightful: "The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance, but the name of the wicked shall rot." The man whom God has made great, is never forgotten. While the honours of multitudes around him scarcely survive the incidents and the age which gave them birth, his are destined to remain, long after the incidents and the age which gave them birth have slept in oblivion. His name is enstamped upon the enrolments of fame in characters that are deep and indelible. His memory descends to future ages embalmed in all the savour of grateful affection. The withering hand of time passes lightly over the ashes of the illustrious dead. At whose sepulchre lights that fair form, to water the laurel with her tears, and as she re-ascends, proclaims from her silver clarion, "The memory of the just is blessed!" His honours were thickening around him. He had just closed his career in glory. His last blow was upon the field. He put off the armour to receive the crown.—Go, sons of Yale! and see that hoary head lie low! Silence and darkness shroud the venerable clay, but 'tis crowned with glory;—the head of DWIGHT is crowned with glory even in the tomb.

I need not inform my audience of the object of this evening's exercise. The Alumni of Yale do not gather

around the grave of their departed President, to give immortality to a name so pre-eminently distinguished as that of DWIGHT. Oppressed with the magnitude of the loss, they ask the relief of mingling their sympathies with the tears of the bereaved widow and family, with the griefs of their Alma Mater, and with the deep regret of all the friends of yirtue, learning, and mankind.

TIMOTHY DWIGHT was born at Northampton, in the county of Hampshire, Massachusetts, May 14th, 1752. His father, *Timothy Dwight*, was descended in the eldest male line from *John Dwight*, who came from Dedham in England, and settled in Dedham, Massachusetts, about 1637. His mother was the third daughter of that master spirit of the age, President Edwards the elder, and was a woman of uncommon powers of mind, and distinguished attainments.

Dr. Dwight was himself the eldest of thirteen children. Before second causes had much time to operate on his mind, it was perceived that he was destined to fill an important sphere. In his childhood, and especially in his youth, he impressed on all who saw him the conviction of his future eminence. At the age of eleven years, he was sent to the grammar school in Middletown, Connecticut, and was considered as a youth of an uncommonly active, brilliant, and solid mind. At the age of thirteen, he entered Yale College with uncommon reputation; was always viewed as one of the most accurate and profound scholars in his class; and at the age of seventeen, received the honours of that seminary with distinguished applause.

It will not be questioned that the natural capacity of Dr. Dwight was of the first order. Though there have been men of surpassing eminence in some one trait of mental excellence, yet very few men combined such vigour and vivacity of intellect, such native good sense and inexhaustible invention. The original traits of his mind, when cultivated by education and purified by grace, qualified him in a peculiar manner to be great. Very rarely has he been seen in the company of intelligent men, where he was not felt to be the first man in it. He saw almost by intuition. To those especially who were conversant with the efforts of his mind, in its most free and familiar operations, the process of his thoughts seemed like the rapid passage of light from the sun. Few men had more perfect command of the powers they possessed, whether of argument, persuasion, wit, or fancy. The quickness and variety of his perceptions, the fluency of correct and eloquent expression, together with the prodigious compass of thought, of which the public have had so many specimens, furnish a splendid proof of bright and glowing genius.

With such original talent, invigorated by unwearied application, he was familiar with the resources of science. Nothing was beyond the force of his genius, and the reach of his industry. He was early a favourite in the republic of letters. The first steps of his literary career were greeted with an enthusiasm as ardent, as were its more advanced stages with profound admiration and reverence. As more immediately tributary to his profession, Oriental Literature, the Learned Languages, Biblical Criticism and Exegesis, History, Rhetoric, and Oratory, were the prominent excellencies

of his literary and scientific character. In these he stood upon an eminence which made him visible on both sides of the Atlantic, and one of the brightest ornaments of American literature. While he was a tutor at Yale College, it is well known that he pursued his researches in Rhetoric, in company with Trumbull* and Howe†, to an extent then unknown in our country, and with a success that produced a revolution in the literature of New-England. His Oration on "The History, Eloquence, and Poetry of the Bible," which has been often published, and which was delivered when he received the degree of A. M., and when he was but twenty years of age, affords evidence of the proficiency he himself had made in this branch of science at that early period.

The extent and correctness of his taste did not fall behind those of the most accomplished scholars in our country. His capacity of deriving pleasure from the beauties of nature and art, and of discovering those beauties, and describing them, as it has been the source of delight to himself, has also been the source of great entertainment and instruction to the world. As a writer of travels, the purity of his taste and the extent of his information appear pre-eminent. His View of New-England and New-York, which is shortly to be presented to the public, has been read with deep interest, by some of the most intelligent of his friends, and is thought to give far the best exhibition of these important portions of our country, that has yet been seen. As a poet, Dr. Dwight was distinguished for sublimity of thought,

* *The Hon. Judge Trumbull*, now of the Supreme Court of the State of Connecticut, and the celebrated author of "*McFingal*."

† A distinguished clergyman in New-England, who died in early life.

brilliancy of imagination, and purity of sentiment. His descriptions are rich and strong, his versification sweet and harmonious. His great work, the "Conquest of Canaan," was written before he was twenty-four years of age. Whatever difference of opinion may exist as to the merit of this work, as an Epic poem, it is believed that the English language can produce but few composed at so early an age, in which are to be found higher specimens of poetical talent. The "Conquest of Canaan," is a scriptural subject, and from the character of the age in which it made its appearance, might be supposed to provoke some degree of censure. Had it been the lot of this Poem to have been ushered into the world in the "Age of Bibles," rather than the "Age of Reason," it would have received no usual expressions of high admiration. His "Greenfield Hill," the greatest part of which is said to have been composed by Dr. Dwight in his walks to and from his Academy, and written on such scraps of paper as he had at the time in his pocket, is of a different character, and contains an uncommon variety of poetical excellence. It is descriptive, narrative, and didactic. The "Clergyman's Advice to the Villagers," and the "Farmer's Advice to the Villagers," are full of the soundest maxims of moral and religious instruction, as well as lessons of practical utility. In his revision of the Psalms of David, there are a considerable number of original versions, of high poetical embellishment, which do honour to the pen of any country and any age. Many other smaller poems have been published by Dr. Dwight; and it is not too much to say, that the efforts of his pen in this department of literature, as well as every other in which he was engaged, were uniformly

devoted to the cause of good morals and evangelical religion. One peculiarity marks all his writings, in prose and verse: not the slightest indelicacy of expression, or thought, can be found in his works—a remark that can justly be made of the works of few men, who have written as much, and on as great a variety of subjects. A very slight survey of Dr. Dwight's literary and scientific attainments, will convince all who knew him, that during the whole course of his life, he appears to have acted like a man who had early set before him the standard of an accomplished character in every department of science.

Greatness without goodness is more to be dreaded than admired. With such a mind and such acquisitions, Dwight might have filled the world with terror. He might have been as subtle and as philosophical as the most distinguished abettors of infidelity; he might have astonished and allured to his standard as many as the most dexterous champions of atheism; had he not been destined for scenes and services of a widely different character. But he was the offspring of prayer. He was the son of many vows. He was a plant "whose living root was watered by the hand of God." Faithfully instructed in the principles of the Christian religion, his mind was early awake to the concerns of a future world. Vivid as was his youthful march, and dazzling as were his earthly prospects, there were seasons, when he was arrested in his career by the thought that he had "fallen by his iniquity," and when his prospects were overshadowed by the dark peradventure that he might fail of the "great salvation." At a period of life, when every thing within urged him to be gay, and at an age of the world when every thing

without forbid him to be serious, young Dwight was not ashamed to hang his head under the appalling consciousness that he was a ruined sinner. When about twenty years of age, he hopefully experienced the saving grace of God upon his heart. It was while a tutor at College, that that aspiring mind was first humbled to the earth and made to bow before the cross of Jesus of Nazareth.

The combined influence of a cultivated mind and sanctified heart, was delightfully developed in some of the general traits of Dr. Dwight's more retired character. - Strong in his attachments, affable and sweet in his manners, he appeared uncommonly excellent in the various relations of life. As a son, he was always affectionate and dutiful; as a husband, a father, a master, his family regarded him with the highest affection, reverence and delight. I cannot here withhold the remark, that it was one of the privileges of the students of Yale College, to have exhibited before them in the family of their President, one of the most alluring examples of domestic wisdom, regularity, industry, and kindness. As a friend, the number, the select character, and the steadfastness of his friends, are the highest evidence of his worth. As the friend of young men, his character was almost without a parallel. As the friend of the poor, he will not soon be forgotten. His charities were as extensive as those of almost any man with the same means. His generosity of feeling was like sunshine. No proper object of munificence ever went from his door without relief. He was "not forgetful to entertain strangers." Thousands are witnesses of his hospitality. His knowledge and love of what was right inspired him with an

unusual degree of decision of character. Though he was not incapable of profiting by the lessons of his own experience, and the recollection of his own errors, yet there are very few instances in which the perseverance and decision which characterise human efforts are more distinguished. I do not know but it may be safely said, that no instance can be named in which he ever deserted the post of duty, or gave up any point, from fear, or favour, or the love of applause.

If from his more private character, we follow him to the scenes of public duty, we find increasing evidence of real greatness. We trust he was one of those who "sought not his own, but the things which are Jesus Christ's." His time, his talents, his learning, his reputation, appear to have been consecrated to the single object of "doing good." Ever diligent, from the period in which he hopefully became a good man, he felt a new and continued impulse to active exertion. Under the guidance of more enlarged views, he began to aim at the accomplishment of important and exalted purposes. His head, his hand, his pen, were rarely idle. In the promotion of those Institutions for the gratuitous dissemination of the Gospel, and the improvement of the morals and happiness of men, which have distinguished the last thirty years of the age in which we live, he manifested a readiness to co-operate to almost any extent. In the organization and subsequent management of the Connecticut Missionary Society,—the Theological Seminary at Andover,—and the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, his zeal and enterprise will be long remembered. The Connecticut Society for the education of young men—the American Bible Society,—and the

School for the education of Heathen Youth, owe much of their rapid advancement to his early counsels and vigorous influence. If his plans were sometimes thought too large, they appeared so only to minds less comprehensive, and benevolence less ardent and efficient than his own. If they sometimes failed of success, they were plans which it was honourable to attempt, and in which it was not dishonourable to fail. Wherever you follow him, you find a great mind, and a purified heart, consecrated with high success, to the greatest and best ends.

Some of the best efforts of Dr. Dwight were directed to the education of youth. It was a darling object with him to advance the literature of his country. As the most successful method of accomplishing it, he early assumed the honourable and responsible province of a Teacher. He entered upon this duty immediately upon finishing his public education, and continued two years in a school at New-Haven. At the close of this period, he accepted the appointment of tutor in Yale College, and remained in that office six years. On his return to Northampton, he established an Academy, which was numerous and highly respectable. In the parish of Greenfield also, in the State of Connecticut, where he was settled for twelve years in the ministry, he founded a similar Institution, which, while in his hands, was the most extensive in its reputation of any in the State.

But the celebrity of Dr. Dwight as a man of learning and a Teacher, had designated him for a more exalted sphere and more eminent usefulness. The suffrages of an enlightened public had very early elevated him to the Presidential chair in some one of our Universities. Even while he was a tutor, and but twenty-

five years of age, the students of the College circulated a petition signed by most of them, requesting the Corporation to appoint him President of the Institution; and it was only through his own interference that the application was never formally made. While at Greenfield, he received an invitation to the Presidency of Union College, in Schenectady, in the State of New-York, which he felt to be his duty peremptorily to decline. It was the privilege of his own Alma Mater to reserve a claim which he could not resist. In the year 1795, with the unanimous approbation of the State, he was called to the superintendence of Yale College.

It was as the President of this College, that he shone, and continued to shine as a star of the first magnitude. Many of my audience know his manners, his personal appearance, his extent of information, his mildness and tenderness, his talent for governing and instructing, his power over the minds of young men, his love of letters, which so happily qualified him for this high station. It is a fact not to be denied, that at the time Dr. Dwight entered upon this official charge, the College was in a state of lamentable declension. Its funds were low, its policy not the most happy, its numbers small, and its morals corrupt. But from the day of his inauguration as her President, Yale began to rise to an eminence as high in the rank of literary Institutions, as her venerable head in the rank of literary men. While at that Seminary, he regularly discharged the duties of President, Professor of Divinity, Professor of Rhetoric, Professor of Logic and Metaphysics, and Professor of Ethics. He was always entitled, by the offer and vote of the Corporation, to the salaries of President and Professor of Divinity. But to increase the funds of

the College, he regularly relinquished from one half to two thirds of the salary of the Professor of Divinity. There are those who ought to be acquainted with the fact, that this relinquishment amounted to more than \$10,000, and that, notwithstanding Dr. Dwight had very little property, and has died poor. During the last thirteen years also, he was offered an increase of Presidential salary, to comport with that of the Professors, but he generously declined it. The public have been ignorant of the amount of his efforts for the advancement of Yale College. When he entered upon this responsible station, there was but one Professorship; there are now four:—there was a small library; but it has been threefolded:—there was a very imperfect philosophical apparatus; but it has been more than doubled. A complete chymical apparatus has been procured, superior to any in the United States; a noble mineralogical cabinet has been added; a Medical College of high reputation instituted and endowed, and four Medical Professors appointed. All this, I am informed from the best authority, has been done with scarcely a single donation of the least value, and very little aid from the Legislature of Connecticut*, and with no funds worth being named, when Dr. Dwight was inducted to the office of President. Nothing lay nearer his heart than the extended interests of this Seminary. If there was one object for which he lived more than another, it was this Institution. No pressure of duty was too heavy, no fatigue too severe, no watchfulness too incessant, no tenderness too paternal, to secure and perpetuate its welfare. In the mere article

* A donation of 20,000 dollars has recently been given to the Medical Institution by the State, together with 2000 dollars by a private individual.

of government, Dr. Dwight has done more for that College than could have been done perhaps by any other man. As a disciplinarian, we do not know that he had his equal. Far from the rigour and severity of a master, he exhibited all the kindness, and affection, and courtesy of a father; and yet of a father whom all knew they must obey, and whose good opinion each one was solicitous to secure. Nor were his persevering efforts for the improvement of this College without the most flattering success. At his induction into office, education began to assume a vigorous and manly form. In none of our Institutions, has the course of instruction been more thorough and useful. The regency of Dwight has been the period of literary refinement and solid science:—it has been the Augustan age of this venerable Seminary. In defiance of the darkness that hung over her, *Yale* burst from the cloud, and travelled in all the brightness of her course toward the perfect day.

The Alumni of Yale College know more of this illustrious man than the world can ever know. There is one spot to which they can never turn their thoughts, without the recollection of his full orb'd excellence. I know every mind anticipates me, my friends, when I say, this is the *Recitation Room of the Senior Class*. I am persuaded that I shall ever account it one of the highest privileges of my life, that my youthful allotment was to listen to the instructions of that memorable chamber.

But the influence of Dr. Dwight as the President of Yale College, was felt through the land. The city of New-Haven perhaps has yet to learn, how much the purity of her morals, the decency of her habits, and the extent of her information, were owing to him. The literary character of the State of Connecticut revolved

around him as the centre of that circle of intelligence and excellence. Her "Academy of Arts and Sciences" was of his sole projection. That noble monument of human wisdom and benevolence, the systematic, legislative provision for the support of common schools, owes much of its excellence and permanency to him. If Connecticut is the "Athens of America," Dwight was the Solon of Athens.

But there is another department of excellence in which my audience will contemplate the character of Dr. Dwight with peculiar pleasure: I mean his character as a Christian Minister. Very flattering proposals were made to him in early life to enter upon a political career. On his return to Northampton from his tutorship at College, he was chosen to represent that town in the General Court of Massachusetts. Here he formed friendships that were valuable and permanent. Understanding that he thought of the desk as the scene of his professional duties, a number of gentlemen in the State waited on him, and informed him that if he would continue in civil life, they would assure him of their friendship and influence in advancing him to stations of profit and honour, as rapidly as he himself could wish. But his affections were too firmly riveted to his favourite profession, to relinquish it for any prospect of political distinction or eminence. His heart was fixed on consecrating his talents to the service of the Church. It was not long after he ventured to cherish the hope of his personal interest in the Redeemer, that he made a public profession of his faith, and entered upon a course of studies with a view to the Christian Ministry. During the early part of his ministerial labours, when the ardour of our revolutiona-

ry struggle called forth the co-operation of the most respectable clergymen in our country, he was induced to enter the army as chaplain to General Parsons' brigade. While in this service, he preached and published a sermon on the capture of Burgoyne, which gained him extensive reputation. From this situation he was called by the sudden death of his father, (who died in 1777, at Natchez,) to return to Northampton to the charge of his father's family. On his return, he preached to the congregations in the vicinity of Northampton, and during his residence there, received several invitations to settle in the ministry, particularly from Charlestown and Beverly, Massachusetts, from Albany in this State, and from Greenfield in Connecticut, where he was finally established as the stated pastor of that people. From the great debility of his eyes, most of his sermons to this people were extemporaneous, or without having been written. He lived in Greenfield, most happily both with the Church and congregation, nearly twelve years, and till he removed to Yale College. The church here, before he accepted the charge of it, had adopted the leading tenets of Arminianism, and had practised on what is sometimes called in New-England, the "half-way covenant" plan of baptism. This lax habit of discipline he felt it to be his duty to oppose, and was happy enough to break down at once; and he had the pleasure of seeing these mischievous tenets gradually eradicated, and superseded by the sound and wholesome principles of consistent Calvinism.

Dr. Dwight was called to the active scenes of the ministerial office at an age of increasing degeneracy and licentiousness. Infidel Philosophy had marshalled

her ablest champions, and gone far in her death-like career. Her voice, her pen, her pestiferous influence had "thrown Europe into an uproar, and the world into confusion." No system was too subtle, no dogmas too unnatural and monstrous to be propagated with an activity, a zeal, an enthusiasm almost unrivalled in the history of man. Unhappily for us, the effervescence of Transatlantic philanthropy had begun to diffuse its poison throughout the presses and bosoms of this young and flourishing Republic. The love of sin and the pride of talent did not leave the most heaven-daring and heaven-damning speculations of atheism without their abettors among the American people. The Lethæan waters issued in torrents from the mouth of the Dragon, and began to sweep away in its course, every land-mark which had given stability to the opinions and hopes of men. In his systematic and vigorous opposition to this flood of error and iniquity, Dwight was the man and the hero. The general spirit of his poetical works—several fugitive pieces that have been attributed to his pen—his official labours as the President of Yale College—two sermons on the "Nature and Danger of Infidel Philosophy," preached to the candidates for the Baccalaureate in 1797, and a sermon on the "Commencement of the last Century," must be numbered among the boldest efforts against the tide of Modern Philosophy. With an ardour and intrepidity equalled only by the motives that inspired them, he leaped forward to stem the desolating torrent with almost unrivalled success. I had almost said, he seemed commissioned by Omnipotence to say to the tumultuous waves, "Peace; be still!"

But his excellence as a Christian Minister was of

wider extent. Dr. Dwight was one of the ablest defenders of "the faith once delivered to the saints." A firm believer in the great "doctrines of the Reformation," it was his glory to tread in the steps of Calvin, and the Edwardses, in their characteristic attachment to the pure truths of the Gospel, and their characteristic opposition to Arminian, Socinian, and Antinomian error. His "System of Divinity," delivered in the course of his professional duties to the students of Yale College, it is believed, comprises more theological research and profound learning, than any other system extant, and deserves a place in the library of every divine, on the shelf of every scholar, and in the family of every good man. His more practical sermons are to be regarded as some of the most unequivocal productions of a powerful and accomplished mind, and as some of the finest specimens of earnest, substantial reasoning, and masterly eloquence. It was almost impossible for Dr. Dwight to be cold and dull. With views as clear, and emotions as strong, and powers to convey them to the minds of his audience as perfect as his, he could not be uninteresting as a preacher. I have seen an audience dazzled by his splendour; enkindled to enthusiasm by his zeal; melted into tenderness by his affection; and moved as the trees of the forest are shaken by a mighty wind, by the divine influence accompanying his labours. If as a preacher, he had a fault, it was that he was too familiar with the decorations of human eloquence—too often suffered his pen to rove amid scenes of enchantment—too often pleased the taste and imagination of his audience at the expense of probing their consciences, and therefore sometimes failed in the *pungency* of his discourses. I need not say,

that it is in the character of a Christian Minister, that the Alumni of Yale will never forget Dr. Dwight. He unfolded a system of truth, opposed indeed by the world, but between the distinguishing features of which and the efficient operation of the Holy Spirit upon the heart, the Father of mercies has instituted a happy connexion. Under his preaching, it pleased the great Head of the Church to visit Yale College with five seasons of the special out-pourings of the Spirit of God. Three of these revivals of religion were of inconsiderable extent, each adding not more than twenty-five or thirty to the College Church. The two others, one in 1802, and the other in 1815, were more deep and general. During the former, about one half the College, during the latter, about fifty of their number made a public profession of religion. No inconsiderable portion of the youthful ministry of reconciliation in our country, and especially in New-England and the western parts of the State of New-York, are the fruit of these revivals.

Who, that is not ashamed to value the soul; who that is "not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ;" as he looks back to those memorable seasons, does not consider his Alma Mater as the favoured spot, where, "as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion, the Lord commanded his blessing, even life for ever more!" Some of *your* hopes, my young friends, will never cease to recall these seasons of mercy with grateful fondness. Far from *this* bosom be the thankless hour, when the remembrance of these solemn and tender scenes shall be unwelcome. Yale! "If I forget thee, let my right hand forget her cunning; let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth."

" I was a stricken deer that left the herd
 " Long since ; with many an arrow deep inft
 " My panting side was charged, when I withdrew
 " To seek a tranquil death in distant shades.
 " There I was found by One who had himself
 " Been hurt by th' archers. In his side he bore
 " And in his hands and feet the cruel scars.
 " With gentle force soliciting the darts,
 " He drew them forth, and heal'd, and bade me live."

His official and ministerial functions Dr. Dwight was able to discharge till very near the close of his life. He was attacked by the disease which ultimately occasioned his death, in the summer of 1815, and during the autumn and winter, underwent a series of suffering to the last degree intense, with a fortitude and resignation rarely paralleled. Though his disease was of such a character as to have exhausted one of the most vigorous constitutions by the mere force of pain, yet his whole sickness was a season of enviable calmness and serenity of mind. The delight he enjoyed in active duty, he was permitted to enjoy till within a few hours of his exit. His tedious confinement was occupied in dictating a work of about 500 pages, which he has left prepared for the press, and in occasionally writing a Poem, which he was also permitted to finish. But three days before his death, he sewed together and put on file the last of a series of dissertations on " The Evidence in support of Revelation from the writings of St. Paul ;"—and having done it, though he had at the time no unusual premonitions of danger, turned round and said to one who was near him, "*Now my work is done.*"—Yes, he was just about finishing his course. He was on the threshold of heaven. On the following day he was seized with a violent paroxysm of his disorder, which gave no equivocal indications of speedy disso-

lation. For several months it had been remarked by his friends, that he appeared to be rapidly maturing for “the glory which is to be revealed” Never did he seem to live so much above the world; never to take so deep and tender concern in the extending interests of the Redeemer’s kingdom; never to manifest so much of the broken and contrite spirit; never to have so sweet confidence in a covenant-keeping God and Redeemer. The whole period of his confinement afforded a pleasing developement of his more private views, trials, and enjoyments, and was gradually preparing the way for the closing scene. Draw near, my young friends,

“And enter, aw’d, the temple of my theme.

“Is it his death-bed? No; it is his shrine:—

“The chamber where the good man meets his fate,

“Is privileg’d above the common walk

“Of virtuous life, quite on the verge of heav’n.”

’Tis no place of delusion. He had no sudden emotions; no lofty flights; no transports of joy; but every thing was calm and peaceful. Upon being reminded that he had but little remaining time in the present world, “Yes,” said he, “I feel that I am going into Eternity.”—It will be gratifying to your friends, and to the world, said one who stood near him, to know your views in this immediate prospect of death.—“What I can say now will be of little avail. The declarations of a dying man are not the evidence of his piety. The Bible contains great and glorious promises, and I know they are made by a God of truth.”—The evening before he died, his brother inquired, if it would not give him pleasure to hear a chapter in the Bible?—“Yes,” said he, “it would.”—Where shall I read?—

“Read the 8th chapter to the Romans.” Having finished the chapter, he exclaimed, “*O, what glorious truths!*”—“Now,” said he, “read the 17th of John.” Having listened with eager attention to the whole, and having interspersed a number of appropriate observations, he exclaimed again, “*O, what triumphant truths!*”—“Go back,” said he, “and read the 14th.” This being read, “Read,” said he, “the 15th.” Having heard this, “Read,” said he, “the 16th.” While this was reading, his mind evidently wandered. He said little more. After a night of agonizing pain, and apparent intenseness of devotion, he fell asleep in Jesus, in the 22d year of his Presidency, and the 65th of his age.

Thus closed the most useful life of this illustrious man. It is not easy to name the individual whose death would have made a wider chasm; it is not easy to anticipate the shock that would have been more generally and deeply felt. Thousands can testify what they knew before, and thousands can testify what they were reluctant to know till now, that in the death of President Dwight, the world has lost one of the greatest and best of men. Dwight is no more!—no, I recall the words;—Dwight just begins to live! Earth was but his birth place. Time was but his cradle. The hour that closed his career of wisdom, virtue, and glory here, saw him enter upon the immortal career of wisdom, virtue, and glory beyond the skies. Death has closed the long conflict. He has finished his course, and we trust, has gained the prize. He is away from this tempestuous and distracted world, and sweetly at rest in those pure regions where no billows lash the

shore, no tempest gathers in the sky. Yes, he is *at rest* : —“ I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. Yea, saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.” Enjoy thy rest, ransomed prisoner! Sleep on, venerable clay! Precious dust! these tears shall not disturb thy repose!

Fellow-Alumni! this sorrowful scene has brought us to a solemn pause. It is a serious hour, and cannot fail to excite some tender reflections. We are assembled not to converse with the living, but the dead. Death, with all his array of terrors, is before us. Here we realize that the grave is the “ house appointed for all the living.” The season of mercy is passing away. There is but a step between you and death. Yes, fellow-mortals! another moment, and the eye may be closed “ till the heavens are no more.” Another step, and you may be on the boundless ocean. Another gasp, and the impatient spirit may spread the pinions of immortality. Were the present suspended on the future; did time hang on Eternity; there would be some pretence for trifling away this day of grace. But the future is suspended on the present; Eternity on time. Time takes hold on all that is beyond it. In Eternity there is nothing to gain; nothing to lose. All is either gained or lost for ever. In time, there is an Eternity to gain, or an Eternity to lose. Not an instant here, but tells in the account hereafter. Life places you in that pregnant crisis, between a world of mourning and a world of joy. O! could the spirit of Dwight, after having surveyed the glories of the ce-

lestial world, once more behold this collection of his pupils, what would he say?—What *has* he said?

“ This little life, my pupils ! say,
 “ What is it? A departing day ;
 “ An April morn with frost behind ;
 “ A bubble bursting on the wind ;
 “ A dew exhal’d beneath the Sun ;
 “ A tale rehears’d ; a vision gone ;”—
 “ Yet on this little life depend
 “ Blessings and woes, which cannot end.—
 “ Two only paths before you spread,
 “ And long the way your feet must tread.
 “ *This*, strait, and rough, and narrow, lies
 “ The course direct to yonder skies.
 “ Full wide the *other* path extends,
 “ And round and round serpentine bends ;
 “ While peace resigns to blank despair,
 “ And light is chang’d to darkness there.”