



DOCTOR THACHER'S
S E R M O N
ON THE DEATH,

AND

DOCTOR WELSH'S
E U L O G Y
TO THE MEMORY,

OF THE

Honourable Nathaniel Gorham, Esq.

MDCXCVI.



A
S E R M O N,

PREACHED AT
CHARLESTOWN,

JUNE 19, 1796,

AND

OCCASIONED BY THE SUDDEN DEATH

OF

THE HONOURABLE

NATHANIEL GORHAM, Esquire,

Æt. 59.

BY PETER THACHER, D. D.
MINISTER *of a* CHURCH *in* BOSTON.



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MDCXCVI.

1796



1 SAMUEL, XX. 3.

BUT TRULY AS THE LORD LIVETH, AND
AS THY SOUL LIVETH, THERE IS BUT
A STEP BETWEEN ME AND DEATH.

THE friendship which subsisted between Jonathan and David, as recorded in the scriptures, was so warm and sincere as to have become proverbial. This friendship was founded on mutual esteem, and was cemented by many acts of kindness and affection. The interests of these persons were dear to each other, and no evil could befall the one without sensibly wounding and grieving the other.

IN such a friendship there must be an unreserved confidence; for where a man conceals any thing from his friend, which it is necessary and fit for him to know, he violates his engagements, and trespasses against the laws of friendship. David did not offend in this manner, but opened his heart freely and fully to Jonathan. Envy at his fame, and jealousy of his increasing influence, after his conquest of Goliath, had
filled

filled Saul with the utmost virulence against David. His passions rose to such a pitch as led him to attempt, in various different ways, to dispatch this innocent young man, whom he viewed as the rival of his fame, and the future usurper of his throne and kingdom. So bitter was Saul's rancour, and so plainly had David perceived his attempts to murder him, as that he could not think it proper to continue any longer in the court where he was liable constantly to feel the effects of Saul's enmity. He fled from Naioth in Ramah, and came to Jonathan, the friend of his soul. There appears to be a degree of warmth in his first application to Jonathan ; a warmth which arose from the consciousness of his innocence, and an impatience of unmerited persecution. "What have I done," says he, "what is mine iniquity ? and what is my sin before thy father, that he seeketh my life ?" Jonathan could not suppose his parent to be guilty of so much cruelty and ingratitude as to seek the death of a man, who had preserved his crown when it was just falling from his head, and saved the kingdom of Israel from imminent destruction ; he could not suppose him to be so unjust as to attempt injuring an innocent and upright man, as he knew David to be ; and his duty, as well as inclination, led him, so far as was possible, to think well of his father, and justify his conduct. He, therefore, attempts to calm the mind of his friend, not only by these considerations, but by assuring

assuring him, that his father never took a single step, of any kind whatever, without communicating it to him. David had felt too much to be soothed in this way, or persuaded to disbelieve that of which he was so fully convinced. He obviates Jonathan's objection by remarking, that Saul knew well the friendship which subsisted between them, and was loth to communicate to his son a resolution which he knew must grieve him. He adds immediately, as an evidence of his full conviction and absolute certainty of the truth of what he had said, the words of the text, "As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between me and death!" A method was then concerted between the two friends, by which the fact might be ascertained, and Jonathan be convinced of the real intentions of his father. Too soon this good young man found the suspicions of David to be just, and that his father was really the cruel and unjust tyrant which he had been represented. Fatal indeed are the effects of ambition and envy on the human heart! They destroy its amiable sensibilities; they diminish, and in the end exterminate, our sense of justice, of gratitude, and even natural affection, and often hurry men into crimes which astonish the world, and bring indelible disgrace upon the human character!

DAVID could not have more strongly expressed the full conviction which he felt, that he was in imminent
danger

danger of death, than by the declaration, the solemn declaration, of the text. It is confirmed by two oaths ; and though we praise him not for using such language, yet it expressed strongly the perturbation of his own mind, and served to impress the mind of Jonathan with a sense of his extreme hazard. “ As the Lord liveth,” so surely as there is a God in heaven : “ As thy soul liveth,” so truly as you have an existence, “ I am in the most imminent danger of death. A day, an hour, or a moment may subject me to the effects of thy father’s cruelty, and carry me out of the world. There is but a single step between me and death.”

It was upon a particular occasion that these words were spoken, and the man who uttered them was exposed to be murdered by stratagem, by the prostituted forms of justice, or by immediate and direct violence. He was in the hands of a prince whose absolute power enabled him, at any time, to execute his bloody purposes, and therefore he felt his danger to be extreme. But the declaration cannot be confined only to such a man, and to such circumstances. On the contrary, with the utmost truth and propriety may the words of David be applied to us all. “ As the Lord liveth, my Brethren, and as your souls live, there is but a step between you and death !”

THERE is no need of entering into a formal proof of this point. Every man knows it. He sees it.

And

And with respect to every man but himself, he feels it. We can look around upon our fellow men and see their infirmities. We can perceive them to be hastening with rapid steps to the grave, and may expect every hour to find them seized by the king of terrors. "All men think all men mortal but themselves." We find no difficulty in considering the various circumstances which may attend the deaths of others. We can realize how they will appear when their bodies are shrouded for the grave. We can anticipate our own feelings, and the feelings of their friends, when the passing bell shall announce their approach to the "house appointed for all living." We can see them lowered into the dark, cold grave, and can hear the earth sounding on their coffins. We can think how we shall feel when we come away, and leave them "covered with the clods of the valley;" how their houses will appear, and what situation their friends will be in, when "the places that now know them, shall know them no more." We can paint all these things strongly upon our imaginations as to others; but our hearts shrink when we come to apply them to ourselves. A secret shuddering seizes the mind, and we turn away from a prospect which terrifies us. What!—to bid an eternal farewell to the world; to have no more to do with its concerns; to leave the persons, the places, with which we have, from the beginning of

our existence, been conversant ; to lay aside the body, which has been our close companion, and the principal object of our cares, for many years, to go down into the grave ; to be shut up in darkness and gloom, and to have “no share in any thing that is done under the sun !” To realize these things, is a very great attainment, and very few there are who arrive at it, who possess firmness and coolness enough to keep their eyes steadily fixed upon objects so terrifying, and upon scenes so awful. If, by alarming providences of God, we are for a moment awakened, we soon return to our slumbers, and dream on, without being disturbed or awakened.

BUT, we must every one of us be convinced that there is but a step between us and death. If we listen only to the voice of reason, of discretion, of common sense, we shall hear a voice loudly proclaiming, that “in the midst of life we are in death.” What is the voice of the frequent infirmities, the pains, the languor, the indisposition which we daily feel ? Is it not that we “dwell in houses of clay,” that we have the seeds of death germinating within us ; and that the smallest defect in one of the vessels of the body, may stop forever the operations of the machine, and reduce it to an inanimated trunk ? When the partners of our lives, the parents who gave us being, the companions of our cheerful hours, the neighbours with whom we were daily conversant ;

fant; when these are suddenly, and, as it were, in a moment snatched from us, what is the language of divine providence? What instruction, what lesson is addressed to the heart? Is it not the important lesson taught by the Prince of life and glory, "Be ye also ready; for at an hour that ye think not, the Son of Man shall come"? When we see our friends one hour conversing with ease and cheerfulness, in the enjoyment of full health and vivacity, and the next stretched upon the bed of death, what should we learn from the sight, but a lesson of our own mortality? For, we are made of the same perishing materials; we are liable to the same accidents, and know as certainly that *we* must *die*, as we know that *they* are *dead*. Brethren, we are hurrying rapidly down the hill of life. Every step brings us nearer to the close of our journey. Our next step may be the last. "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," we may fall into the dark, the fathomless abyss, which has swallowed up the myriads of mankind who have existed since the creation, and which terminates, unavoidably, the career of human life. One step more may end our journey. We may fall, never to rise again, and the gulf of eternity may swallow us up forever! What plainer proof can I give to this congregation, of the truth of these observations, than the sudden and surprising death which has occasioned the present discourse! This is a louder lesson

lesson of mortality than any which I can read to you. This is a preacher who must be heard, whose veracity cannot be doubted, and who addresses himself deeply to the heart and the feelings! It is death, sudden, alarming, melancholy death, who now addresses you. His voice is deep and solemn, but loud and commanding. He calls you to awake from the slumbers of insensibility, and to “consider your latter end”! Let him not address you in vain. Let not his voice be silenced by the follies or flatteries of life, lest he should come and lay his icy hand upon you, and carry you the way whence you shall not return.

BUT what benefit will result from these considerations? Is it merely to make us feel grave and melancholy for a time, and take away our relish for the amusements and pleasures of life?—No—the most salutary effects will result from such a realizing sense of our mortality; effects which will not deprive us of the pleasures of life, but which will give us a true and proper enjoyment of them; effects, which will increase the real dignity of our characters, and prepare us for exquisite and endless happiness.

A FULL conviction that we are liable, every moment, to death, will lead us, in the first place, to fix a proper value upon the world.

IT will prevent us from being fondly attached to it, and will make us feel as “pilgrims and strangers here

here upon earth." If, when we rise in the morning, we know not that we shall live till night : If, when we leave our houses, we know not that we shall ever return to them : If, when engaged in parties of lawful and cheerful amusement one hour, we know not but that in the next we shall be gone away forever : If we bring home these things to our hearts, we cannot surely be immoderately attached to the world and its enjoyments. We shall not place our happiness in our friends, pleasant or agreeable as they may be to us, because we know that we and they are equally exposed to the assaults of the grand enemy. We shall not place our happiness in honor, because all honor is humbled by the dust ; nor shall we fix our hearts upon riches, because they cannot "redeem the soul in the day of death ;" and when we are gone, we "know not who shall gather them." Alas ! what are the pleasures of life, exquisite as they may be, to a man who feels himself dying, and who "knows not what a day may bring forth ?" They are as nothing ; and the glory of the world, its value, its importance, its excellency, all vanish away on the approach of death, "like the baseless fabric of a vision, and leave not a wreck behind."

THIS sense of death will lead us to think soberly of the world, to be thankful for its good things, and to improve them as the traveller gratefully improves the accommodations of an inn ; to embrace every opportunity

tunity of being useful to the world, as “knowing that our labor will not be in vain in the Lord.” It will learn us to be moderate and temperate in prosperity ; to be patient and humble in adversity, never to murmur at the divine disposals, but “in whatever state we are, therewith to be content.” “But this, I say, Brethren, the time is short ; it remaineth that both they that have wives, be as though they had none ; and they that weep, as though they wept not ; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not ; and they that buy, as though they possessed not ; and they that use this world as not abusing it, for the fashion of this world passeth away.”

A SENSE of our liability to instant death, will lead us, secondly, to conduct properly towards our friends and connexions in every station and relation of life.

How careful should we be of grieving or offending them ; of doing that which would wound or injure their feelings, if we viewed them as on the borders of the grave, and knew that they would not be spared to us another day. How easy would it be in this case, to bear with their little failings ; and how careful would it render us to do every thing which we knew to be necessary to their comfort and happiness ! *Could* we grieve, offend, or injure a friend, whom we viewed as on the verge of eternity, and of whom we knew that a few hours would deprive us forever ?

IF

If we felt *ourselves* in this situation, how careful should we be of injuring, either in person, in good name, or estate, any one with whom we were connected! How strict and punctual and conscientious in all our dealings! How careful not to do the least wrong! How solicitous that we should be, and appear to be, upright; and not only so, but kind and benevolent! How charitable would it make us in our opinions of others! How thoroughly would passion and envy and pride be eradicated from our bosoms, and how ready should we be to pardon and pass by the failings or offences of our neighbors! If it was in our power to do good to their souls or bodies, how cheerfully should we embrace the opportunity, and exert ourselves for their benefit! The excuses which we now make for our idleness, and the specious arts by which we attempt to justify or disguise our sinful and wrong actions, would then lose all their force, and we should "follow that which is altogether just," kind and good! Nothing will so effectually cure us of turbulent or unruly passions, of dishonest or improper practices, as seeing and feeling that "there is but a step between us and death." If husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants, rulers and subjects, felt this really to be the case, it would make them strictly careful of their conduct to each other.

GREAT care to redeem our time, would be another
 consequence

consequence of our realizing that we are liable to instant death.

MY BRETHREN, if we knew that we were to die to night, how should we improve this holy day? How should we attend upon the duties of public worship? How should we spend our time, when we return from the house of God? Do you think that we should walk out for our amusement, that we should pay a visit to our friends, or seek visits from them?—Much do I doubt whether this would be the case. It is more natural to suppose, that we should pass our time in serious devotion; and if we sought any company, it would be the society of those who could guide and assist us in the way to Heaven. On other days, if we felt as David expresses himself in the text, we should not waste our time in idleness or unnecessary amusement; we should not delay our attention to any business which was properly before us, nor should we neglect to “set our houses in order.” It is a plain duty for every man who possesses property, and who wishes to dispose of it at his death so as to prevent contention, injustice, and difficulty, to do this immediately. Not for a single day should it be delayed, because hereby the opportunity for doing it may be forever lost. Men who feel themselves to be dying, do not procrastinate their business. They do not waste their time; but a sense of its value, as well as of the account which they must give of it, makes them careful to redeem it.

A SENSE of our being liable to instant death would, fourthly, make us careful of our thoughts, words and actions.

DYING men do not generally indulge themselves in sinful or improper thoughts or words. Death is a serious hour, and will bring a solemnity over the spirit. It will make us careful of what we say and do, and will induce us to conduct properly and suitably, so as that we may not be afraid to account to God. Did we bring death near to us ; vain, idle, impure imaginations would be banished from our minds, and we should “ keep our hearts with all diligence.” Our conversation would “ tend to the use of edifying.” Every thing improper would be avoided, and “ our speech would be with grace, seasoned with salt.” Finally, how careful would the prospect of death make us of doing any thing sinful or wrong ! Temptation would lose its force. The world would be deprived of its charms, and we should feel the necessity of “ walking circumspectly,” of “ avoiding the most distant appearance of evil, and abounding in every good word and work.” If we knew, if we realized, that “ there was but a step between us and death,” we should not dare to offend God, nor wound our own souls.

FIFTHLY. The prospect of immediate death would make us prayerful.

PRAYER is our first refuge in distress of any kind, and it is the first employment to which a dying man

will betake himself. Oh, how earnestly desirous are persons sensible of approaching death to have the throne of grace addressed in their behalf! what “strong cryings and tears” do they pour out, and how fervently do they cry to God to have mercy upon them! This is not the effect of weakness or enthusiasm. It is a principle felt in every country, and under every system of religion; it is a principle deeply engraven on the human heart; and it is a principle calculated to produce every good disposition in us, to make us feel that we depend upon God, that we are accountable to him, and that we must be holy if we wish to enjoy his favor.

IF we rose in the morning apprehensive that we should die before night, is it probable that we should neglect secret prayer? Should we not cry mightily to God for his pardon and eternal life? Would the business and concerns of life appear so important, as to hinder us from performing the devotions of the family? Would the cares of the world, its amusements or pleasures, so engross our minds, as to prevent us from thinking upon subjects of religion, or attending upon the offices of it?—Let our own consciences reply; and at the same time let them tell us, that as we “know not what a day may bring forth,” it becomes us always to live in this manner.

BUT, finally, if we felt as David appears to have done, by the expression used in the text, we should

not

not be easy, unless we knew that we were truly religious, and were savingly interested in the divine favor.

MEN permit themselves to remain in uncertainty, as to the nature of religion, and their own concern with it, because they are not sensible of its importance. If they felt themselves on the verge of eternity, and saw that they were just ready to enter on a future state, their first and most earnest inquiry would be, “what shall we do to be saved?”—They would be anxious above measure to know in what true religion consists, and to examine the proofs and evidences by which it is supported. They would not “give sleep to their eyes,” till they knew they were born of God, that they were true believers in Jesus Christ, and had exercised the “repentance which is unto life.” They would be careful to have their tempers, their words and actions conformable to the will of God, as expressed in the gospel of his Son; and they could not be easy, nor at rest, while they had reason to doubt whether they were real christians, and had truly felt the power of divine grace. To a dying man, religion is the most interesting of all subjects. And I do not hesitate to say, that the religion of the gospel, which holds up a free pardon to the guilty sinner, through the merits and righteousness of Jesus Christ, is alone calculated to give relief and consolation to a dying man. This doctrine of free grace will be balm

to his heart, and can alone heal the wounded spirit. "Oh that we were wise, that we understood this, that we did but consider our latter end ;" that we did so consider it, as to feel the importance and necessity of our being truly and personally interested in the blessings of the gospel !

To these observations, so plain and practical, nothing need be added by way of application. If they are properly considered, they will lead us to make a good improvement of the sudden and affecting death which occasioned them. And we ought all to be solicitous to make such an improvement. When we see our fellow-men, those who were eminently useful and peculiarly dear to their friends and connexions ; when we see them suddenly snatched away from us, and we are called to commit them to the dark and silent tomb ; we shall be inexcusable if we do not think seriously on the great subject of religion, and are not animated to prepare for our own dissolution. When, as in the instance of our departed friend, we see a person called out of the world immediately upon leaving the house of God ;* surely we must reflect with ourselves, how would it be with us, were we

now

* MR. GORHAM was taken ill as he was returning from a lecture, where he had heard a discourse from those words of Saint Paul, 2 Tim. i. 12. "I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day." His illness deprived him very soon of his speech and senses, which he never recovered.

now to be thus called away; were we to be deprived of our reason at once, and never to recover it till all was over with us, and we were introduced to our future and final state! How diligent should we be, under this impression, to “worship God in the spirit,” and to improve diligently the religious advantages with which we are favored! If we were now to hear a voice, saying, “Behold, the Judge standeth at the door,” how earnest should we be for divine mercy, and how solicitous to “make our calling and election sure”!

It would be easy for me to delineate the strong and lively traits which marked the character of the amiable and worthy man whom we now lament, but this duty is to be performed by a person * who will do him more justice than it is in my power to do. But you will not charge me with anticipating him, nor departing from my own line, when I say, that, of his tenderness as a husband, his affectionate solicitude as a parent, and his faithfulness and duty as a son, a brother and a friend, the tears, the exquisite grief of those to whom Mr. GORHAM was thus related, bear the strongest testimony. Happy in the bosom of an amiable family, and in the esteem, the love, and confidence of his friends and immediate connexions,

* PREVIOUSLY to the delivery of this discourse, Dr. THOMAS WELSH had been appointed, by the town of Charlestown, to deliver a Eulogy on the character of Mr. GORHAM.

connexions, in easy and affluent circumstances, he had much to attach him to the world, and induce him to wish for the continuance of life. But God has seen fit to order it otherwise. He who cannot err has passed the decree, which no good man will censure, and no mortal can reverse. It is for us silently to resign ourselves to the will of heaven; and though we are sensible that "the ways of God are past finding out," yet to rejoice that a being perfectly wise and good, the "Lord God omnipotent, reigneth."

THERE can be no plainer proof of the eminent abilities and virtues of our deceased friend, than the esteem and confidence which he enjoyed from a free and enlightened country. There are few men who have filled so many and important offices as he has sustained, and who filled them to such general acceptance. This town early noticed his abilities, and employed him in their service. Then he attracted the attention and confidence of this commonwealth, and at last was raised to the highest office in the United States.* Of his wisdom or integrity, it is not necessary for me to speak, because these will be important parts in the full description of his character which we are led to expect.

THIS

* PRESIDENT of the Congress of the United States, under the Confederation.

THIS town never, perhaps, lost a firmer friend than by this melancholy providence. You knew his strong attachment to it, and his earnest solicitude for its civil and religious interests. Perhaps, there is not a man living who loved you better, or who did more for you in the periods of your public distress, than did this useful and respectable citizen. I pray God to sanctify this breach to you ! Those who “seemed to be pillars” in your community, those who bid fair greatly to promote the best interests and happiness of this people, have been, one after another, taken away from you. Your tears are not yet dried up for one of the firmest of your friends and of the best of men,* when you are again called into mourning, and suffer a new and an heavy breach. Surely you must learn, my brethren, to “cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils,” and to place your confidence in the God of your fathers, who has been with you in six troubles, and in seven will not forsake you !

THE bereaved family will accept of my deep sympathy under their loss, and my earnest wishes and prayers that divine supports and consolations may be afforded to them ! May the “Father of the fatherless,” the “God of the widow,” the “Staff of the aged,” and the kind and good Benefactor of us all, bless and comfort them ! May he give to them
all,

* THE Honourable THOMAS RUSSELL, Esq. who died April 8, 1796. Æt. 56.

all, an interest in the “better part, which can never be taken away from them,” a portion which shall never fail them, a life which shall never end !

THE voice of God calls loudly to you all, to “be also ready,” to see that “your hearts are right with God, and that you are savingly interested in the blessings of the gospel. “*Now* is the accepted time,” but this *now* is swiftly passing away, and “like water spilt upon the ground,” it cannot be gathered up.

BRETHREN, it becomes me also to say, “As the Lord liveth, and as your souls live, there is but a step between me and death !” The ministers of religion are no more excused from his arrests than other men, but are constantly liable to give an account of their stewardship ! The frequent visits which they are called to pay to the bed of death, and the house of mourning ; the sad offices which they are daily called to render, in their last moments, to the dearest of their friends, and the kindest of their benefactors, must deeply affect them with a sense of their own mortality, if they are not lost to the feelings of humanity and the dictates of religion ! This will furnish a sufficient reason for the plainness with which I have addressed you on this occasion, and for the earnestness with which I plead, that you would instantly attend to the great subject of religion, and to the care of your souls ! Distressing will it be if you have to make your peace with God, and to prepare for eternity, while

while the agonies of dissolving nature are upon you ! Then you can receive very little assistance from mortals, frail, weak, and sinful, like yourselves ! Give me leave, therefore, to urge you, as you value your souls, as you would not die in distress, and be miserable throughout eternity, instantly to renounce those “ iniquities which separate between God and your souls,” and not to be easy till you know that your peace is made with God, and that you are actually prepared for the happiness of Heaven ! If you are thus prepared, you may welcome death, let him come ever so soon ; and if you should suddenly be taken out of the world, you would be suddenly transported to the paradise of God ! Where may we all finally meet, for Christ’s sake.

Amen.



AN
EULOGY,

DELIVERED JUNE 29, 1796,

AT THE

MEETING-HOUSE IN CHARLESTOWN,

IN THE

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS,

In Memory

OF

THE HONOURABLE

NATHANIEL GORHAM, Esquire,

WHO DIED JUNE 11, 1796.

BY DOCTOR THOMAS WELSH,

Member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and Fellow
of the Massachusetts Medical Society.

"Death opens the Gate of Fame, and shuts the Gate of Envy after it."

TRISTRAM SHANDY.



PRINTED BY SAMUEL HALL, IN CORNHILL, BOSTON.

MDCXCVI.

*AT a Meeting of the FREEHOLDERS and INHABITANTS of the
Town of CHARLESTOWN, June 18, 1796.*

VOTED, That in consequence of the merits and important public services of our late deceased Fellow-Citizen, the Honourable NATHANIEL GORHAM, Esq. the Selectmen, with three other Gentlemen, be a committee to appoint some suitable person to pronounce an EULOGY to his Memory ; and take such further measures, respecting that business, as they may think proper.

Attest. SAMUEL PAYSON, Town-Clerk.

BY Virtue of the above Vote, the Committee have appointed Dr. THOMAS WELSH to deliver the Eulogy ; and the performance will be at the meeting-house, in Charlestown, on Wednesday next, the 29th instant, at half past 5 o'clock, P. M.

DAVID GOODWIN, Chairman.

Charlestown, June 28, 1796.

Charlestown, June 29, 1796.

SIR,

THE Selectmen and Committee, of the town of Charlestown, duly appointed and authorized, beg leave, in behalf of the town, to testify their grateful acknowledgements, for your elegant and well-adapted Eulogy, pronounced this day, at their request, to the memory of the Hon. NATHANIEL GORHAM, Esq. and to request a copy for the press.

DAVID GOODWIN, Chairman.

To Doctor THOMAS WELSH.

GENTLEMEN,

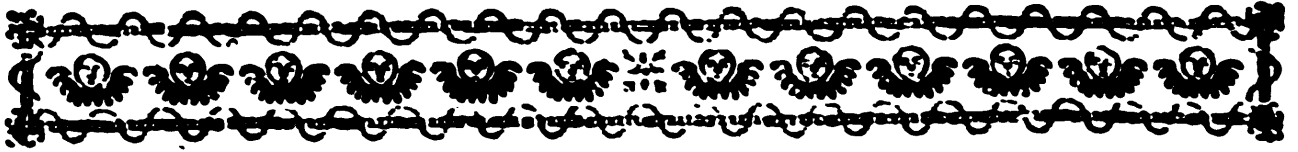
THE same motives of affection which induced me to comply with the request of my native town, now constrain me to deliver them this copy for the press.

I am, Gentlemen, with great respect,
your humble servant,

June 30, 1796.

THOMAS WELSH.

Capt. DAVID GOODWIN, Chairman of the
Selectmen and Committee of the Town
of Charlestown.



AN

E U L O G Y.

IN compliance with your request, my fellow-citizens, I appear before this respectable auditory, to render a tribute of gratitude to the memory of our departed Friend and Benefactor ; with you to weep over the tomb of the Patriot ; with you to mingle tears in commemoration of the man beloved by you all. These are tears becoming the manly face of freemen, testimonials of the estimation in your minds of the services of him whose loss you now lament.

It has been the laudable practice in all ages, to perpetuate the memory of their illustrious dead, either by erecting to their fame, monuments of the most durable materials ; or immortalizing their names in the faithful pages of history.

To the subject of this Eulogium, these tokens of respectful remembrance are of no avail ; they tend, however, to animate survivors to an emulation of the virtues they admire, and to the imitation of an example which they behold deservedly honored.

THE

THE wise arrangement of the constitution of the human race has provided, that man, as well as the inanimate bodies of nature around him, should be susceptible of impressions from without, to produce new motions and operations ; hence in addition to the sense of right and wrong, which exists in the human bosom, and directs the general conduct of mankind, they are influenced by a desire to obtain the esteem and approbation of their fellow citizens, whilst living, and by them to be honoured at their deaths.

- “ The love of praise, howe’er conceal’d by art,
- “ Reigns more or less, and glows in every heart ;
- “ The proud to gain it, toils on toils endure ;
- “ The wretched shun it, but to make it sure ;
- “ O’er globes and sceptres, now on thrones it swells,
- “ Now trims the midnight lamp in college cells.
- “ It aids the dancer’s heels, the writer’s head.
- “ Now heaps the plains with mountains of the dead.
- “ Nor ends with life, but nods in fable plumes,
- “ Adorns our hearse, and flutters on our tombs.”

THIS love of praise it is wise to cherish, because it promotes the prosperity and welfare of society, by exciting into energy, for the public good, those faculties of individuals, which otherwise might remain inactive ; but which, when excited to action, have procured universal admiration, and spread diffusive blessings over the whole family of man. You have already attested to these remarks by your
public

public consecration of this moment to the expressions of gratitude for the meritorious services of your Fellow-Citizen for this his native town.

MR. GORHAM was the eldest son of Capt. NATHANIEL GORHAM, one of your former respectable inhabitants, who died many years since, leaving a widow, who is still living in Boston.

NATHANIEL was born in Charlestown, the 27th of May, 1738. He had his education here, which consisted of writing, arithmetic, reading, and instruction in the latin and greek languages, by which he was qualified for admission into the university. Having completed the usual time allotted for school education, he commenced his apprenticeship with Mr. NATHANIEL COFFIN, of New-London, in the then colony of Connecticut; during this period, he spent most of his leisure time in reading, particularly the Ancient History, and that of Greece and Rome, by Rollin; and the Lives and Actions of the great Men of Antiquity, by Plutarch. These authors were his constant companions through life.

AFTER the period of his apprenticeship had terminated, he took a tour to Canada, about the close of the war, which had been carried on between France and England. He afterwards settled in business in this place; and in 1763 was married to REBECCA, the oldest daughter of CALEB CALL, Esq.

BUT although he applied himself steadily to his
 occupation

occupation as a merchant, he indulged his prevailing and favorite inclination to the reading of History, which he continued from the ancient to the modern, and at length, in addition to the knowledge of these, he made himself, in a great degree, master of the History of England, as well as that of his own country. By these means, his mind was stored with a fund of historical facts, which were of great use afterwards, in the course of his public business. He was early elected selectman of the town, and served many years in that office. In the year 1771, he was chosen colleague representative with Capt. EDWARD SHEAFFE, who had served for a number of years in that station ; his health being then upon the decline, he died before the day of the meeting of the General Court. Mr. GORHAM thus became the single representative of the town ; his election was continued annually to the year 1775.

FROM the time he was first honored by your suffrages, the oppressions and grievances, which had been the constant subject of complaint against Great-Britain for many years before, began more seriously to threaten. The records of the town will shew, that they had a full sense of their magnitude, and of the consequences which would flow from the public decisions ; they will also show to their honor to late posterity, the firmness of their measures, and their confidence in their representative.

IN the year 1774, General Gage, then governor of the Province, having convened the General Court at Salem, in May, to hold the annual election, finding them disposed to devise means to defeat the designs of Great-Britain against this country, by electing members for a General Congress, to meet at Philadelphia, dissolved the Court; but not 'till they had completed the election of delegates to the first Congress. He expected, by this measure, to intimidate the people, and to prepare them to elect men, for the next assembly, of more compliant characters; and accordingly he issued new precepts for the election of members to serve in the General Court, to be convened at the same place, the first Wednesday of October;*

and

* THE Court, early in their session in May, had expected that the governor would be very decisive in his measures, and prepared themselves for the event, by proceeding to their choice of members of Congress. The governor, informed of their intended proceedings by one of the members, in order to prevent the execution of their intentions, sent his secretary to dissolve the Court; but, apprized of his orders, they secured all the doors of the house until they had completed their business; and then admitted the secretary to the house, when he read the proclamation for their dissolution. Within a few hours of the time appointed for the meeting of the Court, in October, the governor, from the information he had obtained, found that this new election was not more favourable to his views than the last, issued his proclamation, dissolving the assembly. This, however, was disregarded; they who were elected, knew his proclamation was unconstitutional, and accordingly they assembled, were organized, and drew up an animated remonstrance, and then received their dissolution. Most of the towns had foreseen that this would take place, and they instructed their representatives to join the provincial Congress. They who were commissioned repaired to Concord, and joined the Congress, where they found the two members chosen by the town, DAVID CHEEVER, Esq. and Dr. ISAAC FOSTER.

and your present representative, RICHARD DEVENS, Esq. was chosen colleague representative with Mr. GORHAM, September 26, 1774. They were instructed to attend upon a provincial Congress, which was to meet at Concord on the Tuesday following, whenever the business of the General Court would permit. This Congress was called to deliberate more freely upon public measures, and to consult upon the means of defence, in case of the event which now began to appear inevitable. The patriots of that day, well knowing that the cause of freedom in all countries and ages, had been supported only at every peril.

At length, the long expected destinies of America began to be unfolded ; and on the first page of the volume was inscribed, “ The ever to be remembered events of the 19th of April,” and almost in immediate succession, “ those of the 17th of June, 1775 ;” a day which will forever be remembered by Americans, by the fall of the illustrious WARREN ! A day which we, my fellow citizens, shall long remember, when our ancient town, early settled, by our revered forefathers, the public buildings erected by their labour ; the great temple reared by our pious ancestors, and by them dedicated to *Almighty GOD*, whilst our gallant countrymen, on yonder hill, engaged in glorious battle with their country’s foes, amid the thunder of cannon, mingled with the groans of the wounded and the dying, all involved in liquid flames, ascended a
tremendous

tremendous smoking sacrifice, on the great altar of
AMERICAN LIBERTY.

YES, we too well remember this eventful period, and our forlorn condition in that sad, disastrous hour, when, exiled from our once peaceful habitations, we were compelled to take refuge, with our wives, our aged parents, and our little ones, where chance or fortune should direct our steps. In these distressing circumstances, Mr. GORHAM, in common with his fellow-citizens, stripped of his property, and his means of subsistence, with his wife and seven small children, found a welcome asylum in the town of Lunenburg, in the county of Worcester, where he remained a few years, and in 1778, was honored by their suffrages as representative. He had been commissioned to repair to Philadelphia the preceding year, to solicit relief for the sufferers, by the conflagration of the town. In this commission, he was joined by the late Hon. THOMAS RUSSELL, Esq. whose recent death has called forth your unfeigned lamentation. But notwithstanding their joint and able efforts, their exertions were unsuccessful.*

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* THE result of the application of the town was contained in the following report.

Philadelphia, May 16, 1777.

“ THE committee, to whom the petition of the town of Charlestown was referred, reported,

“ THAT they have duly attended to the several facts set forth in the said petition ; and while they lament the distressed condition of the petitioners, reduced from a state of affluence and ease, to want and penury,

HE was appointed, by the General Court, a member of the Board of War in October, 1778, and continued to discharge the duties of that office 'till it was dissolved in the year 1781.

IN 1779, having returned to this town, he was again chosen your representative ; and in the same year delegated by you to the convention, who formed the present constitution of this Commonwealth ; and you continued to elect him Representative, excepting one year when he declined, being chosen a Senator, 'till 1788, when he was succeeded by Capt. THOMAS HARRIS, and elected a Counsellor for the advice of the Supreme Executive, which office he sustained 'till he was called into the service of the United States.

AN insurrection having arisen in the western counties in the year 1780, and threatening to spread, the General Court appointed three commissioners to repair to the place where the disturbances existed ; Mr. GORHAM was joined to Mr. ADAMS, the present Governor of this Commonwealth, and Gen. WARD.

This

penury, by the calamities of war, they regret the inability of the United States to afford the solicited relief. Though the estimate of the damages sustained may be very moderate, and the great and early sufferings of the inhabitants of Charlestown entitle them to particular attention ; yet the committee apprehend, that if Congress were to pay that valuation, claims much more extensive, and of a similar nature, will be made by other sufferers, and subject the United States to the payment of sums of money, which, in the present exigency of their affairs, cannot be spared from the support of the present just and necessary war."

This business terminated successfully ; the insurgents all returning to their respective homes, excepting one *Ely*, whom the commissioners thought proper to imprison.

AT the close of the war, the sufferers of the town, having determined to solicit aid from abroad, requested Mr. GORHAM to undertake a voyage to Europe for this purpose. He was induced to comply with their desires, from his earnest wishes to contribute every thing, within the compass of his abilities, to retrieve the misfortunes of his beloved townsmen. There were, however, many of the sufferers who disapproved of the measure at the time ; the event of this mission, like that before to Philadelphia, proved unsuccessful.

His services in the county of Middlesex, as a magistrate, and his integrity as a judge of the Court of Common Pleas, which office he sustained several years, and which, in consequence of indisposition, he resigned but a few days before his death ; his exertions as a member of the committee for building the prison, and elegant court house, in the town of *Concord* ; the former of these, in point of strength, convenience, health, and beauty, exceeding all others of this kind in the Commonwealth ; and his various other services, of a similar nature, are impressed upon the minds of those with whom he was called to officiate, and are gratefully remembered by the county at large.

ELEVEN times did he serve you as your faithful representative in the General Court. Deeply interested in promoting your welfare, and engaged in every measure which promised relief to the sufferers, or which were calculated to promote the growth or prosperity of the town, he neglected no opportunity to assist you. Few men were more perfect in the art of rendering themselves agreeable to public bodies. His knowledge of men unfolded to him all the avenues to the heart. Possessed of a mind clear and discerning, and of a temper mild and conciliating, accompanied with patience and prudence, he never hurried a debate, but always waited to hear every thing which could be objected against the measure which he was about to advocate. Having a remarkable talent at comprehending the real sense of others, after every speaker was exhausted, he began to express his mind with ease and plainness, gradually rising with his subject, 'till, with wonderful dexterity, he had refuted his most learned and eloquent opponents. From these qualities, and his natural propensity to sympathy, he was eminently calculated to be your friend in adversity ; how well he discharged this duty, many inhabitants of this town, who once were opulent and easy in their circumstances, but reduced to penury and distress by the ravages and calamities of war, relieved from their distresses by his exertions, could they be permitted to leave their celestial habitations, could witness.

THE

THE fatherless and the widow, whom he visited in their afflictions ; the improvements of the public streets ; the town, conflagrated by a mercenary soldiery, rising from its ashes, in beauty and elegance far surpassing its former state ; his activity and influence in procuring the *grant*, and his *agency in erecting* yonder magnificent bridge,* which connects this town with the metropolis, and which has contributed so much to the prosperity of both, and proved of so much utility to the public, which reflects so much honor on our country, and which has been followed by so many other enterprizes of a like nature ; and this sacred edifice, erected and ornamented by his joint agency ; the exhibitions of your gratitude this day, all declare him to be your benefactor.

MR. GORHAM having been appointed speaker of the Honourable House of Representatives, for two succeeding years, in 1785, was delegated by this state, a member of the Continental Congress ; and he was elected by that Honourable Body their President.

HE was appointed by this state, to meet in convention in 1787, at Philadelphia, where he assisted in forming the present constitution of the United States. At this time, I am informed, he frequently presided
in

* To the advice and agency of Mr. GORHAM, on this occasion, we must add, that the enterprising spirit and the personal and pecuniary aid of the late THOMAS RUSSELL, Esq. contributed, in a great degree, to the completion of this undertaking, which was deemed at that time hazardous and problematic.

in their debates, when the convention was in committee of the whole ; and that he was often useful in compromising difficulties, arising from the differing interests of the states.

HE was also one of the delegates of this town to the state convention, and was very influential in procuring its adoption. After the new constitution was organized, he was appointed supervisor of the revenue for the District of Massachusetts, and continued in that office to the time of his death, which took place on the eleventh day of the present month.

THE deceased, as a husband, was tender and affectionate ; as a parent, gentle, indulgent, provident ; as a son, dutiful and kind ; in his family, easy and happy ; and as a neighbour, sociable and friendly ; his breast was full of the pure milk of human kindness ; he knew to feel another's woe.

His mind was strongly impressed with the importance of a good education, and he has abundantly manifested this opinion, by the care and expense he has bestowed in educating his numerous family. By it he has bequeathed to them a memorable, an invaluable legacy.

WE do not now celebrate the achievements of him who has been the splendid conqueror of nations, or the destroyer of his species, but the virtues of a Legislator, whose care has been to make man mild, and peaceable to man, and to diffuse the blessings of social order

order amongst his fellow-citizens. These are the virtues which we all admire. These are *his trophies!* these are *his statues!* and although the constitution of the United States has decreed that no titles of nobility shall ever be instituted by law, yet it has never decreed, that man shall not ennoble himself by the exercise of powers bestowed on him for the benefit of mankind; and that his descendants after him, inspired by the same genius, and animated by a glorious emulation to support the honour, and transcend the exploits of their ancestors, continue to maintain, through a long succession of generations, the mead of fame acquired by their forefathers. May the sons of the deceased attain to equal honors! and all obtain a civic crown, a Crown of Glory!

F I N I S.



A D I R G E,

TO THE MEMORY OF THE

Honourable NATHANIEL GORHAM, Esq.

By the Rev. THADDEUS MASON HARRIS.

Set to Music by Mr. OLIVER HOLDEN.

I.

STRIKE the soft tone ; begin the solemn strain ;
Deep as our sorrows, let our notes complain !
Departed merit claims our plaintive lay,
And here our mourning EULOGY we pay.

'Tis not a solitary tear that falls—

We do not weep alone ;

For sympathizing VIRTUE calls

This general loss her own.

*Lately she wept the universal Friend,**

Who to her cause a generous patron prov'd ;
And *now* laments the honour'd PATRIOT'S end,
The sage CIVILIAN, and the MAN belov'd.

II.

While FRIENDSHIP here the dirge funereal breathes,
As round the tomb HONOUR a garland wreathes,
Releas'd from woe, from vanity, and earth,
The *immortal spirit* gains his heavenly birth ;
And joins the angelic choirs on high,
With them to learn and raise
New anthems there of love and joy,
And symphonies of praise.

O would *we* think this perfect bliss to prove,
RELIGION must its influence supply,
Rise in each thought, in every action move,
Teach us to *live*, and make us fit to *die*.

* THOMAS RUSSELL, Esq.