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of the author



Mr. *DAVIE*'S

VALEDICTORY ADDRESS.

September 21, 1760.



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RELIGION AND PUBLIC SPIRIT.

A
VALEDICTORY ADDRESS
TO THE
SENIOR CLASS,
DELIVERED IN
NASSAU HALL,

September 21, 1760.

The SUNDAY before the

COMMENCEMENT:

By SAMUEL DAVIES, A. M.
Late President of the College, deceased.

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at the New-Printing-Office *in* BEAVER-STREET.

MDCCLXI. *ms. copy.*



A valedictory Address, &c.

Acts. XIII. 36.-----DAVID, *after he had served his own Generation, by the Will of GOD, [or, having in his own Age served the Will of GOD,] fell on Sleep, and was laid to his Fathers, and saw Corruption.*

GREAT and good Characters are c^om^only formed by *Imitation*: And if we would shine in any Sphere, we must propose to ourselves some illustrious Examples. Great Generals have acquired their martial Skill, by perusing the Memoirs of the *Alexanders* and *Cesars* of former Ages. And *Longinus* advises us, if we would rise to the Sublime in Writing, always to keep in View, a Homer, a Plato, a Demosthenes or a Cicero. And how shall the more amiable, tho' less glaring and renowned Character of the *good, the useful, and public-spirited Man*, be formed? Nothing surely can contribute more towards it, than the imitation of some bright *Example*. And among all the Kings, Patriots and Prophets, whose Names are immortalized in sacred History, no *Example* shines with a brighter Lustre, than that of *David*, who *served his own Generation according to the Will of God*, and then, as a weary Labourer, gently *fell on Sleep*, and sweetly rested from his generous and pious Toils.

As this is my last Address to you, my dear and worthy young Friends, who have now happily finished the Course of your Education, and are about to take Leave of this Society,

ciety, in which you have been instituted for public Life, I have been very solicitous to select some Subject of Importance, to employ your Thoughts in this precious Hour, that is peculiarly adapted to your present Circumstances and future Prospects. And after anxious Inquiry, I can fix upon none, that appears to me more pertinent or useful, than the Example of *David*; a Man characterized from the highest Excellency to which human Nature can arrive, *Conformity to God* the Standard of all Perfection; *A Man after God's own Heart*: A Man, that without the Advantages of Birth or Education, and without the dishonest Arts of a Courtier, rose to the Height of human Grandeur, and became an extensive Blessing to the Church and his Country: A Man, in whom an Assemblage of exalted Characters were united, beyond all Precedent; and who shines conspicuous, thro' all Ages, in the *separate* Splendors of *each*, and the *collected* Splendors of *all*; an invincible Hero in the Field; a magnificent and good King on the Throne; a great Example of passive Loyalty under Persecution, of Fortitude and Patience under Affliction, on a Mountain, in a Cave, or a Wilderness; an evangelical Prophet; a devout and sublime Poet, e'er *Homer's* Muse was known, and, to finish all, *the Servant of God and his Generation*. 'Tis *this* last Part of his Character, my Text delineates. 'Tis *this* I would propose to your Imitation, as not beyond your Reach. And indeed, in *this* are summed up all the complicated Excellencies of his other Characters. He *suffered*, he *fought*, he *reigned*, he *prophecied*, he *sung*, he performed every Thing, to *serve his Generation, according to the Will of God*.

The Excellency of the Example now before you, consists in two Things, PUBLICK SPIRIT and RELIGION.—Publick Spirit, *in serving his Generation*,—and Religion, in doing *this according to the Will of God*, or, (as it might be translated,) *-serving the Will of God*, in his own Generation. The Union of these two Qualities ever composes the truly good and useful Man; a proper Member of human Society; and even of the grand Community of Angels and Saints. The one includes a Temper and Conduct agreeable to our

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social Connections; and the other a Temper and Conduct agreeable to our Obligations to the Author of our Nature. And so inseparably are these united, that the one cannot exist, in the entire Absence of the other. Public Spirit and Benevolence without Religion, is but a warm Affection for the Subjects, to the Neglect of their Sovereign; or a Partiality for the Children, in Contempt of their Father, who is infinitely more worthy of Love. And Religion without Public Spirit and Benevolence, is but a sullen, selfish, sour and malignant Humour for Devotion, unworthy that sacred Name. “ For if a Man love not his Brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? But when these are united, they form a beautiful Symmetry; they adorn, cherish and perfect each other; they contain the Substance of all Obedience to the divine Law, which is summed up in *the Love of God, and the Love of Man*. And if you, my dear Youth, enter into the World with this Foundation of future Utility and Importance laid in your Hearts, my highest Wishes will be accomplished in you; and all the little Pains we have taken in your Education, will be more than repaid. It will be a Blessing to the World, that ever you passed thro’ it; an Honour to this Dome, that ever you resided in it; and an everlasting Joy to yourselves, that ever you were born.-----To excite and cherish such a Spirit, I can at present only illustrate this comprehensive Epitome of the History of *David*

---“ He *served* his Generation.”---To be the *Servant* of the Public, was his Ambition; and to perform *Labours of Love* to Church and State, was the favourite Employment of his Life. His public Spirit pushed him on to engage in the most fatiguing, self-denying and dangerous Services; he thought nothing too hard, nothing beneath his Dignity, that was conducive to the publick Good. Was he *King* of the Thousands of *Israel*? This only made him the *Servant* of Thousands; at once increasing his Labour, and enlarging the Sphere of his Beneficence. His Royal Prerogative was but an Obligation to *serve*; and his Authority but a Power of doing more extensive Good. Was he an able *General*, and a mighty *Conqueror*? He fought, he conquered, not
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