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A Funeral Sermon
by
Greenwood, F. W. P.



Class F69

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Funeral Sermon

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ON THE LATE

HON. CHRISTOPHER GORE,

FORMERLY

GOVERNOR OF MASSACHUSETTS.

PREACHED AT KING'S CHAPEL, BOSTON,

MARCH 11, 1827.

By **F. W. P. GREENWOOD,**
ASSISTANT MINISTER OF KING'S CHAPEL.

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SERMON.

REVELATION, XX. 6.

On such, the second death hath no power.

THE first death is the death of the body; the quenching of that undiscovered spark which warms and animates the human frame; the return of our dust to the earth, as it was; the event which happeneth unto all men; "the sentence of the Lord over all flesh." We cannot prevent it. Like birth, it is inevitable. Helplessly, and without our own will, we open our eyes at first to the light of day; and then, by an equal necessity, we lie down to sleep, some at this hour, and some at the next, on the lap of our mother. This death is an ordinance of God. It was intended for our benefit; and can do us no essential harm. It disturbs not the welfare of the soul; it touches not the life of the spirit.

The second death is more awful and momentous. It is the death of that which the first death left alive. It is the death of reputation, the death of love, the death of happiness, the exile of the soul. It has no connexion with the first death: for

its causes are all engendered in the life of the body. Unlike the first, it is a death which all men do not die. Unlike the first, it is a death from which there is a way of escape. And yet there are more who are terrified by the first death, unimportant as it is, than there are who fear the second, though it includes every woe. And almost all men attempt to fly from the first, though they know it to be impossible, while few take pains to avoid the last, though it is within their ability to do so.

The first death, then, is invested with complete power over all men. It withers human strength; it respects not human authority. Rank is not exempt from it; art cannot elude, riches cannot bribe, eloquence cannot soften, nor can even virtue overcome it. But with that second and far more dreadful death, it is not so. There are those over whom it hath no power. Any one may join their number. There is no mystery, no hardship in the terms of the blessed exemption. All may read, all may comply with them. They arise from the nature of the second death. For as nothing but vice and disobedience towards God can affect the life of the spirit, and invest the second death with its power, so it is righteousness only and the healthful fruits of religion, which can defy and render it powerless. "In the way of righteousness is life; and in the pathway thereof there is no death." So little is the first death considered, and of so small account is it made, in many parts of Scripture, that we are

told in some of its sublimest strains, that the believer in Jesus, the true Christian, "shall never die." Goodness carries with it the eternal principle of life, deeply engrafted into its constitution; so that it cannot lose it, nor part with it. It is the good, the benevolent, the pious, and the pure, to whom life is promised; and "on such, the second death hath no power."

In the sight of men they die; and so far, there is indeed but one event to the righteous and the wicked. But this is only the first, the corporeal death; and in all essential respects they live.

I. They live, in the first place, in the good which they have done; in the indestructible life of their virtuous deeds. We all exert an influence on all, whether it be less or more. Our good example both lives with us, and remains after us. It strengthens the cause of virtue, and virtue is life. It is the occasion of happiness to an unknown extent, and happiness is life, the divine essence of life. But in leaving a bad example behind him, a man dies twice. For misery is death, and he has sowed the seeds of it. His actions work out their deadly consequences when he is gone; and in him, and by him, other men are dying; and over him the shades of the second death gather and descend, and the might of its power is on him. On the righteous it has no power. In the light of Heaven their actions live, and live forever; because their effects will continue with an

increasing brightness of manifestation, when even the world, in which they were performed, shall have sunk into chaos and death ; and in the life of their actions, they themselves will live.

II. They live, secondly, in the life of affectionate memory, and in the beatings of grateful hearts. This is a life which the unrighteous have forfeited. "Infamy doth kill." The words of the poet are the words of soberness, and are confirmed by the words of scripture. "The memory of the just is blessed ; but the name of the wicked shall rot." We all try to forget a bad man as fast as we are able ; for to remember him, gives us nothing but pain. And even when it is impossible to forget him, his memory is coupled with condemnation and death. His character is dead, and we mourn over it ; his reputation is lost forever, and with it he dies again, he suffers the second death. But over the grave of the good man, endearing recollections, fond regrets, and tributes of honour and love, spring up like flowers, though not like flowers to wither, but to bloom and breathe out their odours perpetually, borrowing and bestowing life. His kindness, his benevolence, his uprightness never die ; nor do they permit his name to die ; they embalm it, and keep it fresh, with spices more precious and more effectual than the old Egyptians used ; for what is the embalming of the body, to the embalming of the spirit : the preservation of a useless, untenanted

frame of dust in houses or catacombs, to the lively presence of worth and beauty and love in the sacred home of the heart. The second death hath no power over such as have kept their names alive, and their characters from reproach or oblivion, by securing the attachment and veneration of those whom they leave behind them.

III. But there is a yet more important sense in which the righteous live, and are exempted from the power of the second death. In the favour, and presence, and glory of God, they live. In endless joy, and happiness, and improvement they live. They live with their risen and ascended Saviour, whom they followed, and in whom they slept. Like him, they died once; and like him death hath no more dominion over them. They have cast off the weeds of the flesh, and in the courts of the kingdom of Heaven they have put on the garments of light and immortality.

Mourn, then, for the righteous dead. Mourn that you are bereaved of their society; mourn that you have lost their counsel, their presence, their sympathy. But mourn not as those who have no hope. Remember that on such the second death hath no power. In their good actions, in their precious memory, in the resurrection of the just, they live, they live the life everlasting. They are safe; the first death did not harm them, and they can die no more. They are safe; "their souls are in the hand of God, and there can no torment touch them."

Such should be our mourning, my friends and brethren of this society, over one of our distinguished members, who has lately departed from among us, and from this mortal life.

The good are given to us for our example. It is proper that their characters should be impressed upon our minds; that their peculiar excellences should be delineated; so that we may be excited and aided to imitate them.

The character of our deceased brother belongs to the public. It belongs to the city of which he was a native; to the state and to the nation which in high capacities he served so well. It belongs also to us; for as a religious man and a Christian he had joined himself with us, and given us a peculiar claim to his virtues. There is another hand which could better have pourtrayed them for you than I can; there are other lips by which they could have been described to you more justly and with a more persuasive force. He who on account of his early intimacy with Mr. Gore, as well as seniority of office in this church, would have been the person to draw his character, and hold up its excellence before you, is prevented from discharging the sad duty by the providence of God. By the kind assistance, however, of other friends of the deceased, I shall endeavour to supply, as far as possible, what I feel to be my own disqualifications, and almost entire deficiency of personal knowledge.

CHRISTOPHER GORE was born in Boston, in the year 1758. His father was a highly respectable mechanic, who by a course of honest and skilful industry had acquired a large property. At the breaking out of the troubles between this and the mother country, he went to Halifax; as he was favourably disposed toward the government under which he had always lived. But he afterwards returned to Boston, and died here in the year '95.

The son received his early instruction at the public schools of this town. He then entered Harvard University, and was graduated there in 1776, at the early age of seventeen. Soon afterwards he commenced the study of law with the late Judge Lowell, and continued with him through his whole period of study, both as a pupil and a member of his family. This was a situation combining moral and intellectual advantages, such as are rarely offered to any young man; and Mr. Gore was able to appreciate and improve them. When he entered on the practice of his profession, he came to it not only with a mind prepared by a judicious course of study, but with the enviable recommendation of an uncorrupted youth.

He rose rapidly in public esteem, as a sound lawyer, as a politician, in the most generous sense of that word, as a true patriot, and as an honest man. He stood among the first at the bar, where his practice was extensive and lucrative. His fellow citizens manifested the regard in which they held him, and the confidence which they placed in him, by sending him, with Hancock and Samuel Adams,

to the Convention of this State, which considered the adoption of the national constitution. This was before he had attained the age of thirty.

In 1789, Mr. Gore was appointed by President Washington, United States Attorney for the District of Massachusetts. He was the first person who held the office; and coming to it in times of great trouble and distraction, he had many serious difficulties to encounter in discharging its duties.* But he encountered them with the manly intrepidity and unbending rectitude, for which he was always remarkable, and so he overcame them; and it was probably his conduct in this critical situation which obtained for him the appointment from the Chief Magistrate to be one of the Commissioners under the fourth article of Jay's treaty, to settle our claims for spoliations. The appointment was made in 1796; and Mr. Gore's colleague was the late celebrated William Pinkney.

While in England, Mr. Gore secured by his gentlemanly deportment and amiable qualities the respect and attachment of all who became known to him; at the same time that by his assiduous attention to business, his profound knowledge of commercial law, his laboured arguments, and his personal influence, he recovered sums to a vast amount, for citizens of the United States.†

He remained abroad in the public service till 1804. When his friend, Mr. King, then our minister at the court of London, returned to this country in 1803, he left Mr. Gore there as chargé d'affaires; in

* See Note I.

† See Note II.

which station, it is unnecessary to say, he bore himself honorably and ably.*

He was welcomed home by the strongest marks of public favour. He was elected to the Senate of our State, from the county of Suffolk, two successive years; † and the next year to the House of Representatives, from this town. In 1809 he was chosen Governor of the State.

It is well known by those who remember that turbid time, that if a man's character was ever thoroughly sifted and scrutinized, it was when he consented to appear as a candidate for the office of Governor; and if a spot was to be discovered in it, it would most probably be discovered then. It would be highly improper for me to enter into any of the political questions which were so warmly agitated at that period; nor am I inclined to do so. But I hold it to be my duty to say, that notwithstanding all the zeal and activity of Mr. Gore's opponents in searching into his life, and amidst all the abuse which was the habit of the day, not one charge of moral delinquency was sustained against him, or even pretended. This fact is of itself a eulogy. The whole amount of the accusations against him was, that his father was a royalist, and that he was himself tinctured with the same partialities. The simple truth is, that though the father was a royalist, he was a good man, and had a right to his opinions; and that the son was at the first, and always continued to be, in principle, in feeling, and in practice, a patriot and a republican.

* See Note III.

† 1806 and 1807.

Mr. Gore was Governor of Massachusetts but one year.* At the next annual election the political sentiments of the majority of the people had changed, and the opposing candidate, Mr. Gerry, was chosen to succeed him.

In 1814, Mr. Gore was again brought into public life, by being appointed by Governor Strong, during a recess, Senator to Congress, and afterwards chosen to the same office by the Legislature at their meeting. He served in this capacity about three years, and then withdrew into final retirement.

That the subject of this sketch enjoyed through life a high degree of popularity, and was thought worthy of being placed in stations of great responsibility, will not be judged remarkable, when we consider the character of his mind, his manners and his virtues.

Though he might not, perhaps, be called a man of genius, in the common acceptation of the term, because reason and not imagination reigned paramount with him, yet I can hardly understand how a person can be without genius, who has the power within him, let it be called what it may, of comprehending extensive and intricate subjects, of seizing strongly on their prominent points, and of presenting them to others in a persuasive and convincing manner. It may not make him a poet or an eloquent orator; but it conducts him to the same results, and is not liable to the abuses of what is commonly denominated genius. Mr. Gore's mind was clear, acute, and discriminating. It was of a steady

* See Note IV.

and decided cast, and yet liberal, unprejudiced, and open to conviction. He had cultivated it with assiduity and care. He kept himself familiarly acquainted with the literature of the day, and was an excellent classical scholar. He has left nothing as the fruit of his studies and his pen but a few political essays in the daily papers, and some unpublished legal opinions and arguments. These are distinguished, I am told, by justness of thought and entire purity of style.

His manners were of the best class of that school, generally termed the old school. They were those of a true and a finished gentleman; dignified without pride, elegant without pretension, and courtly without dissimulation or hollowness; in short, the internal grace and polish externally manifested. The effect of such manners was assisted and completed by the gift of uncommon personal beauty.

I have said that in his youth Mr. Gore was virtuous and uncorrupted; he was so in manhood, he was so in age. His was a pure spirit, high and looking upward, keeping itself clean from contamination. "His taste was refined; his sensibility acute; his feelings manly, generous, independent. He had the most lofty and elevated ideas of public and private duty; and his conduct was always in perfect conformity with his principles. In times of excitement he was calm, and just; in times of corruption pure. He never sought popularity, but it pursued him." He lived not for himself. By kindness, cheerfulness, and charity, he diffused happiness around him. He was remarkably accessible and attentive to young

men; discerning talent and merit, and helping them forward. It was in his nature to be hospitable; and his wealth, and the circumstance of his having no children, enabled him to be extensively and bounteously so; and not only hospitable, but in various ways useful to the community. A large estate which he purchased in the neighbourhood of Boston, he embellished and improved with taste and discernment. Sensible of the value of a judicious system of agriculture, he endeavoured to bring others to a sense of it by his example. Nature has been bountiful to our land, and we need but the hand of art, skilfully applied, to render it more lovely and more fruitful. It is in this country, this new country, that the labours of the active, tasteful, improving agriculturist are particularly called for; and here, above all other places, such a man is eminently a public benefactor.

Mr. Gore was a useful member of all our important literary societies; and to some of them he confined not his usefulness to his life-time. To the American Academy, and the Massachusetts Historical Society he left valuable bequests; and he made Harvard College, of which institution he had been for some years a fellow, his residuary legatee. I mention this last donation with peculiar pleasure. It proves his attachment to the place of his education; it proves his conviction that it was worthy of his bounty; it adds another to the many delightful testimonies in its favour. And I wish that others might evince their regard for the college, by liberally aiding it, instead of by the more questionable

method of aiding the illiberal clamours which have been raised against it.

Mr. Gore's connexion with our religious society was of the most interesting and beneficial nature. He joined it not long after the ordination of our senior minister, and was for many years a member of our vestry. It was an encouraging circumstance for us, that at a time when our church was the only avowed unitarian church in the country, two such men as Mr. Gore, and his friend the late Judge Minot, young lawyers of standing and respectability, should have united themselves with us. And it was an honourable circumstance for them, that disregarding the unfavourable effect which the declaration of their sentiments might have on their worldly prospects, they nevertheless openly attached themselves to an excommunicated church, and fearlessly espoused the cause of unitarian Christianity.

During the last years of his life, Mr. Gore was a martyr to an excruciating disorder, which seized violently on his constitution, and defied all remedy—and like a martyr he endured his sufferings. It was sad to see those benevolent features racked with agony; it was sad to see that once tall and erect form literally bent double by the overmastering hand that was upon him;—but it was also consoling and animating to behold the spirit undepressed, refusing to yield, victorious. Though the frame was bowed down, the soul was always upright; and the mind lost none of its graces and attractions amid the wrecks of his manly beauty, but rather shone with added lustre through the darkness of his corporeal

afflictions. Faithful, cheerful, and grateful to the end, he gave up his mortal breath on the first of March, in the 69th year of his age.

In the irreparable loss which his friends and connexions, and more especially the wife of his youth, have sustained, they have all the consolation which death can ever leave, or Providence can send. When they look back upon his life, every thing there is grateful to memory; and when with Christian hope they follow him beyond the grave, they are assured that on a spirit like his the second death hath no power.

As the community had once an interest in the life and character of our departed friend, so may it now be instructed and benefited by the event of his decease. "Such a man's death," and I now use the words of one who knew him well, "Such a man's death, in the fulness of life, would have been a public loss. Such a man's excellent example continued to the close of a long life, is a great gain—it is a gain to our human nature—it shows the nobleness of its origin and character—it cannot be too much cherished by those who witnessed it, or may hear of it. A republican government, of all others, is most benefited by good examples; for virtue is its only strength."

NOTES

FURNISHED BY A FRIEND WHO WAS INTIMATELY ACQUAINTED
WITH MR. GORE'S CHARACTER.

I.

THOSE, who were in full life at the commencement of the French revolution, will recollect the shock which that tremendous explosion gave to all the civilized world. In no part of it, were the effects more deeply felt than in our own. It even agitated the justly popular administration of Washington. The people from sympathy naturally took side with the revolutionists of France ; and all the influence of Washington could not prevent the most alarming breaches of our neutrality, by fitting out privateers to cruise against the commerce of Great Britain, by the sale of prizes, by the condemnation of vessels under our jurisdiction, and finally by capturing them within our waters. Boston was one of the principal scenes of these public insults. Washington was compelled to recall the exequatur of the French Consul in this port, for his insolent violation of his own duties and our rights. Mr. Gore managed all the legal proceedings in these cases, to the great diminution of his popularity at the moment, but highly to his honour in the issue.

II.

Mr. Gore's and Mr. Pinkney's great exertions during this commission which lasted nearly eight years, are well known,

but it is not so generally understood, that to Mr. Gore one large description of sufferers are principally indebted for the recovery of their claims. Mr. Pinkney, whose eminent talents are universally admitted, had great doubts as to that class of captures, which were made under the rule of 1756. Mr. Gore made a very elaborate and powerful argument in favour of these claims, which we recollect reading at the time, and by his perseverance and exertions, many hundred thousand dollars were secured to the citizens of the United States.

III.

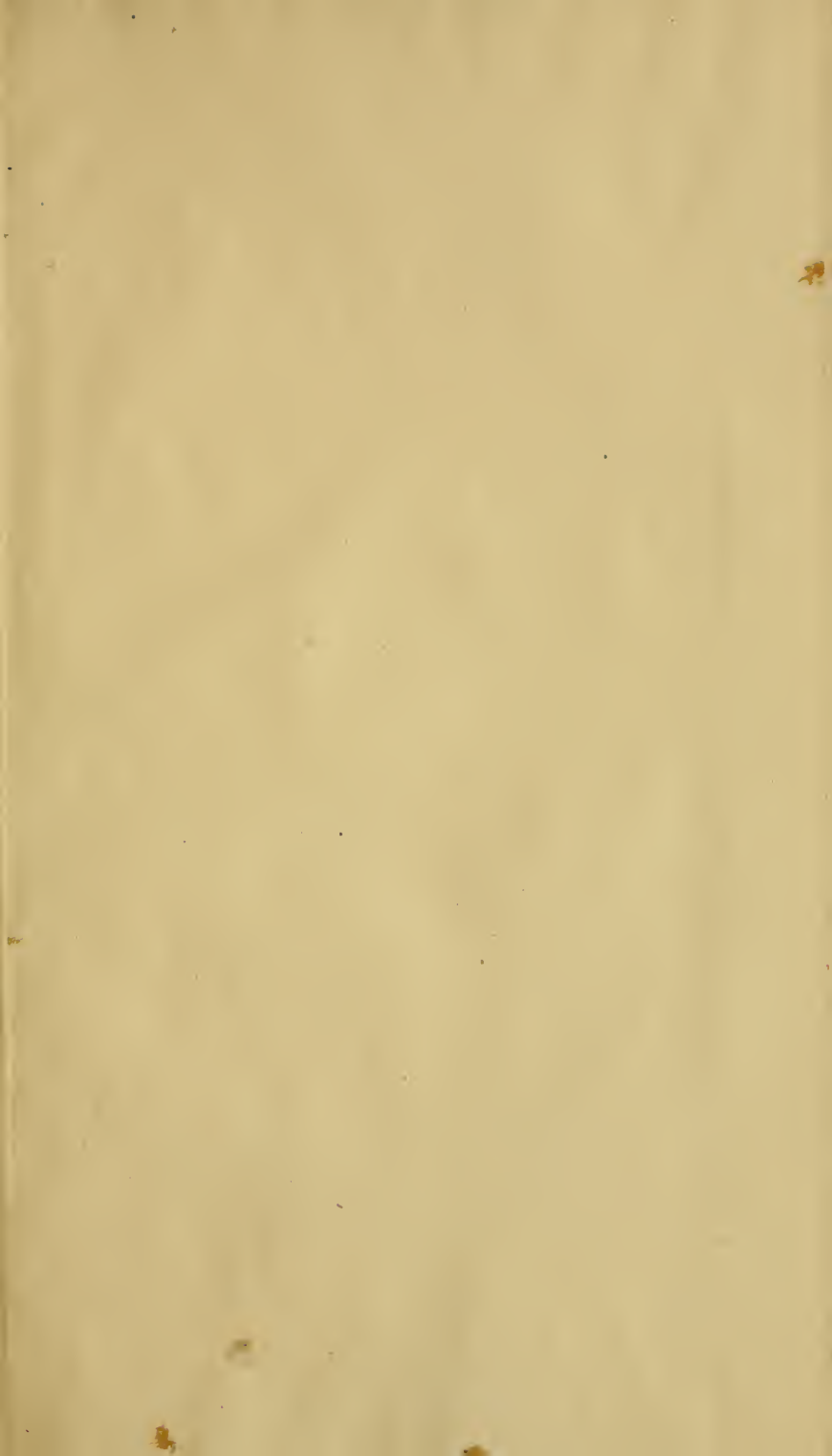
The friendship which subsisted between Rufus King, Esq. and Mr. Gore was so long continued, and so rare, that no sketch of the character of either would be complete without adverting to it. It commenced at the University, and was uninterrupted for the space of fifty years. It was more confidential, and more affectionate than almost any one which we have ever known, or of which we have any account, and is honourable to the character of them both. Few persons will feel more deeply the loss of Mr. Gore than the venerable and illustrious survivor of this uncommon friendship.

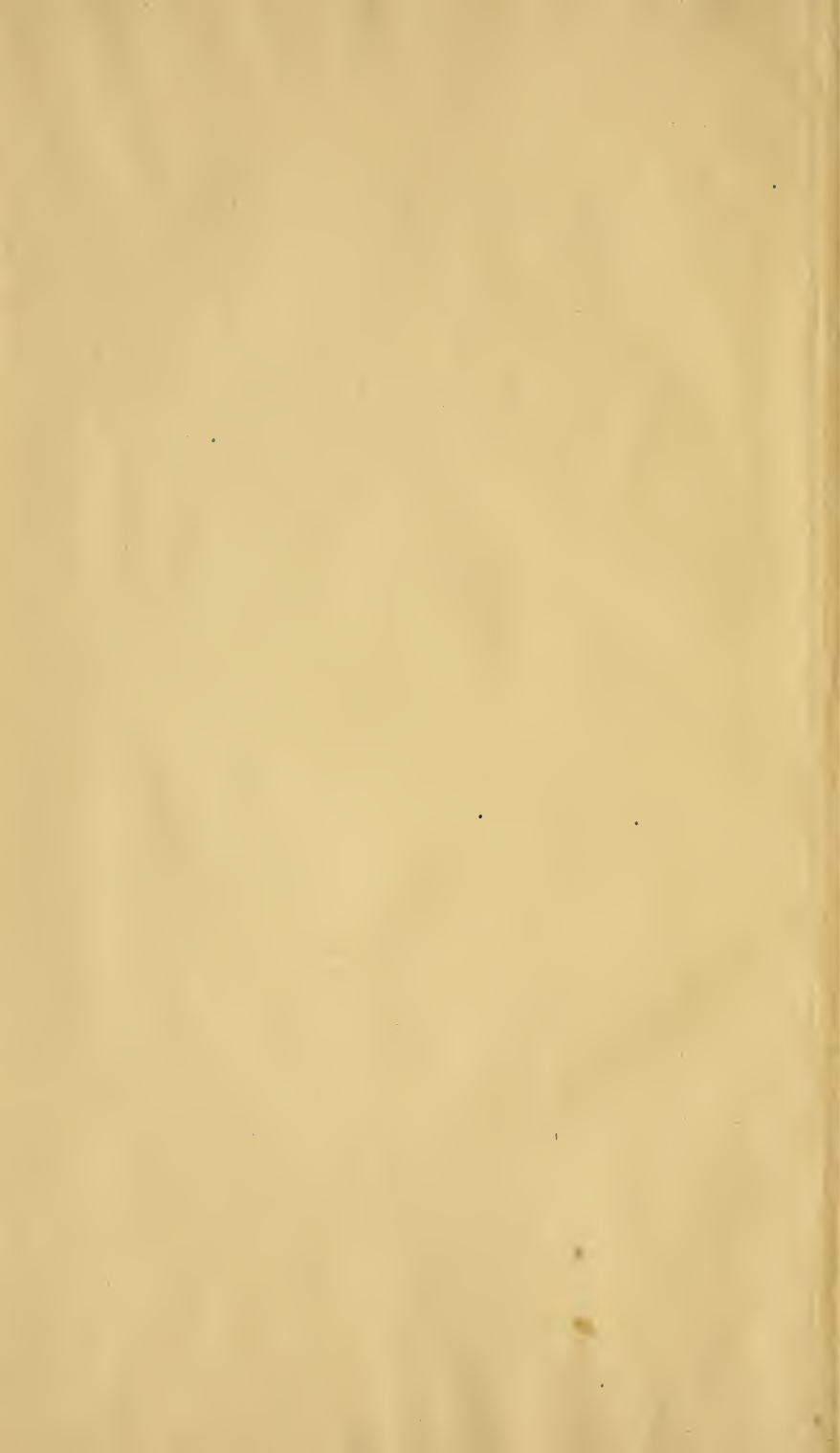
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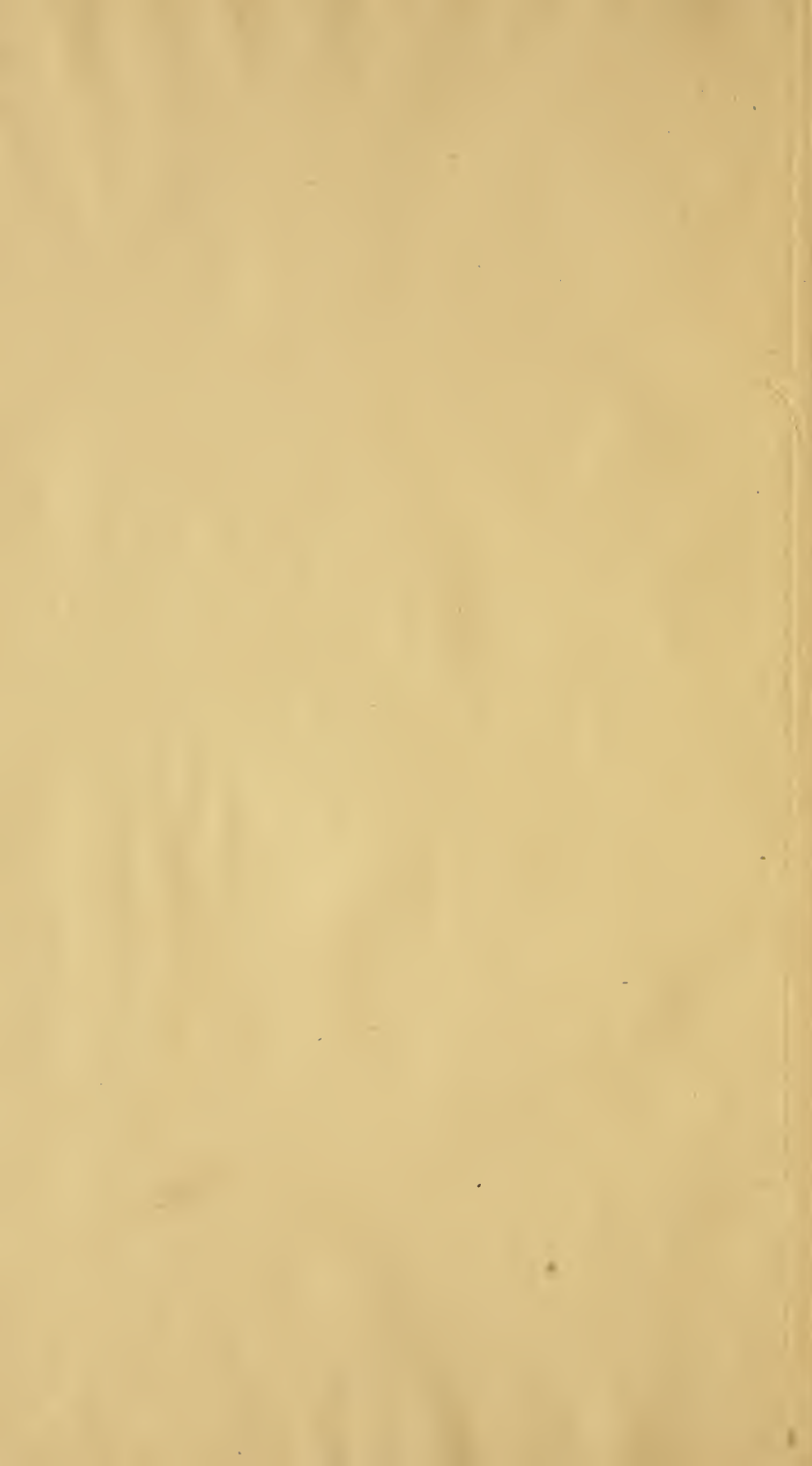
The shortness of the time in which Mr. Gore held the office of Governor of the State, was owing to the high state of excitement which prevailed in the Commonwealth; and not to his want of popularity. He was elected to the Senate by handsome majorities by both houses, within three years after his period of office as Governor had expired. Governor Strong selected him at a most critical period of the war, for the most important office in the gift of the State. This appointment reminds

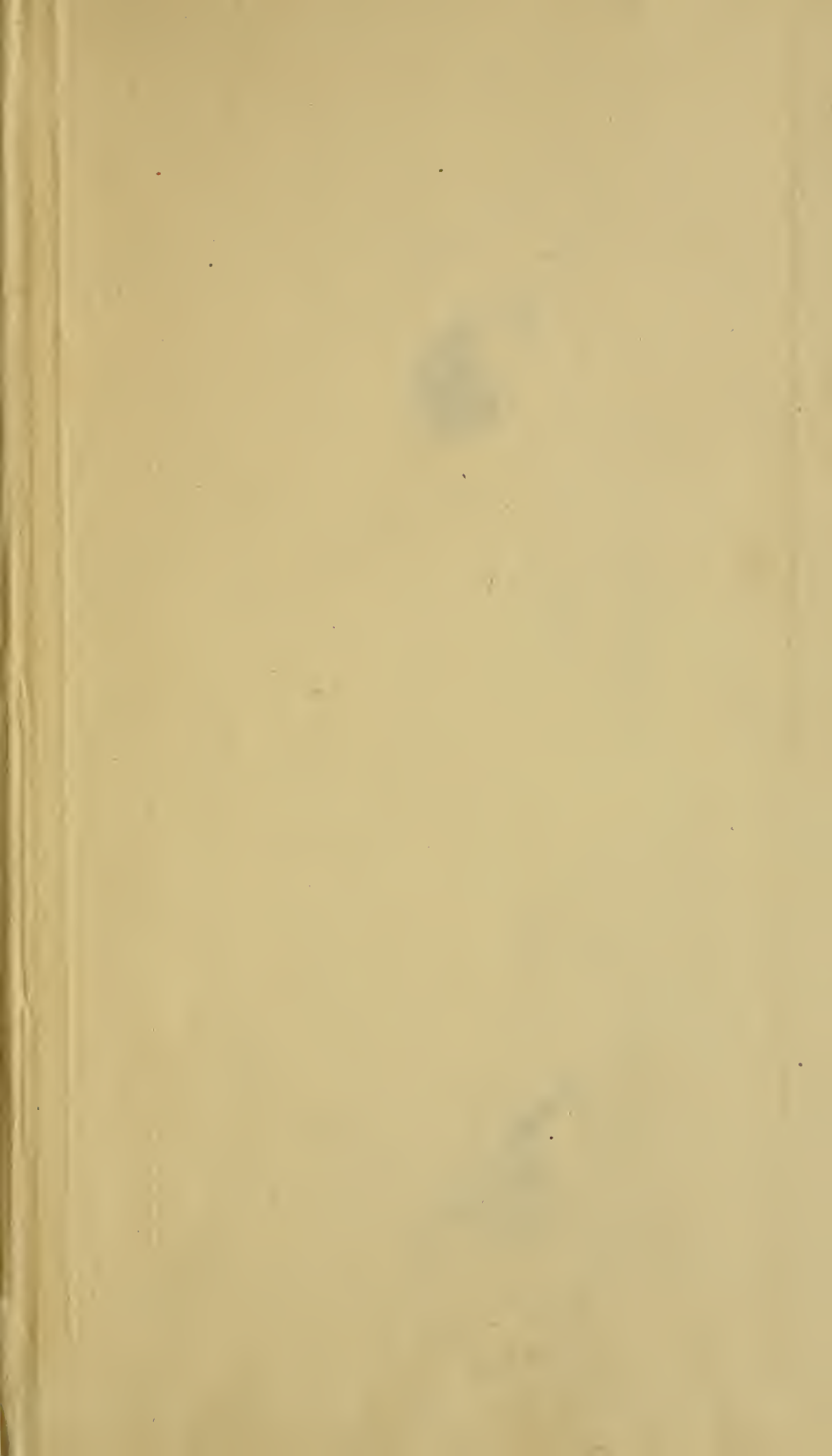
us of the strong attachment which many other men of eminence felt for Mr. Gore ; we shall only mention his warmest personal friends. They were Pickering, Hamilton, Ames, Cabot, Parsons, Jackson, Higginson, Gen. Lincoln and his lamented son, Mr. Mason of New Hampshire, Mr. Webster, &c. &c. His correspondence with these friends would furnish valuable materials for the history of the first forty years of the National Government, and would prove the purity and disinterested patriotism of the framers and early defenders of the Constitution of the United States. It would elucidate the measures by which the enemies of that Constitution succeeded in undermining the public confidence in its true friends—a scene which is now reacting against the present administration.

The first part of the paper is devoted to a
 general discussion of the subject. It is
 shown that the theory of the
 subject is not yet fully developed.
 The second part of the paper is
 devoted to a detailed discussion of
 the theory of the subject. It is
 shown that the theory of the
 subject is not yet fully developed.
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