

magnanimously said to the voyagers in the Mayflower, that he would not foreclose his mind to the truth of God, even if it were new. The new light and liberties which our fathers had here learned to enjoy, were deemed of too much value to be lightly surrendered to injustice or the miserable expediency of false mercy. Conscience was their only compensation on earth, and God on high. Hands consecrated to sacred service, breaking the bread of life and soothing penitential sorrow, from the pulpit scattered profusely in moral and martial tempests, seeds of patriotic piety whose glorious harvests the whole world is yet destined to reap in peace . . .

*Rev. Samuel Davies—Virginia*

“Reverend Samuel Davies, for some time a pastor in Virginia, and afterwards President of Nassau Hall, deserves especial notice. He was born in Delaware, Nov. 3d, 1724, and received his education in Pennsylvania. His grand characteristic, as a patriot and preacher, was boldness. This is a valuable attribute in every public agent. The great Lord Verulam declared, that ‘if he were asked what is the first, second, and third thing necessary for success in business, he should answer, boldness, boldness, boldness.’ Timid and effeminate efforts in the pulpit are as inefficient and more destructive than elsewhere. The stupid soul is startled into attention only by bold blows. Ministers may describe for ever the beauties of nature, the pleasures of virtue, the dignity of self-respect and the vulgarity of vice, but until more exalted motives are urged, and more potent influences are employed, few effects will follow that are either great or good.

“Davies was the ablest Dissenter in the southern provinces. His custom was to study his discourses with great care. Being pressed to preach on a certain occasion without his usual preparation, he replied: ‘It is a dreadful thing to talk nonsense in the name of the Lord.’

## Davies’ Defence of Religious Liberty

“But he was as prompt and fearless in any sudden emergency, as he was habitually deliberate and studious. Thanks to the movements in behalf of religious liberty made at the North, England granted the Toleration Act in favor of all the Colonies. Virginia, however, ruled by her Episcopal establishment, refused to admit that the Dissenters of their territory were included. Davies withstood all their forces alone, with Peyton Randolph at their head. He had made himself a thorough master of English law, civil and ecclesiastical, and always chose to meet every persecuting indictment in the highest courts with his own plea. So powerful was he in the capacity which the law of necessity compelled him to assume, that many of his friends, and even his foes were wont to exclaim, ‘What a lawyer was spoiled when Davies took the pulpit!’ Spoiled, forsooth! As if the pulpit, with all its themes of eternal interest, was not the sublimest field for the development and

exercise of eloquence ever vouchsafed to man.

“Not satisfied with establishing his religious rights at the bar of colonial power, he went to England and obtained the explicit sanction of the highest authority with respect to the extension of the Toleration law to Virginia. It was during this mission that he gave another striking instance of his boldness. George II. and many of his court were in the congregation of this American Dissenter. His majesty, struck with admiration, or forgetting the proprieties of the occasion, spoke several times to those around him and smiled. Davies paused a moment, and then looking sternly at the king, exclaimed, ‘When the lion roars, the beasts of the forest all tremble; and when King Jesus speaks, the princes of earth should keep silence.’

“Mr. Davies was tall, manly and dignified. A distinguished character of the day, on seeing him pass, said: ‘he looked like the ambassador of some great king.’ His understanding was strong, his elocution graceful, and his address on some occasions was overwhelming. Patrick Henry was his neighbor and ardent admirer. It is believed that the renowned pupil was greatly indebted to this patriotic preacher, both for his sentiments and the invincible manner with which he enforced them . . .

## Prophecy Concerning Washington

“On the 10th of July, 1755, General Braddock sustained his memorable defeat, and the remnant of his army was saved by the courage and skill of Colonel Washington, then but twenty-three years old. On the 20th of the same month, our moral hero preached a sermon, ‘On the defeat of General Braddock, going to Fort Du Quesne.’ In this sermon, he calls on all his hearers, in the most impassioned and patriotic term, to show themselves men, Britons, Christians, and to make a noble stand for the blessings they enjoyed. In the same year, he delivered a sermon before Captain Overton’s company of volunteers, under the title of ‘Religion and patriotism, the constituents of a good soldier.’ It was in the discussion of this subject that his famous prophecy occurred. Speaking of the encouraging fact, that God had ‘diffused some sparks of martial fire through the country,’ said he, ‘as a remarkable instance of this, I may point out to the public that heroic youth, Colonel Washington, whom I cannot but hope Providence has hitherto preserved, in so signal a manner, for some important service to his country.’

## Sacred Eloquence

“Sacred eloquence, in revolutionary times, is the chief conservative of order and the grand solace of the popular mind. While it fortifies the patriot in his rebellion against tyranny, it exhorts him to a patient endurance of unavoidable wrongs. It alleviates as much as possible the pressure of the chain, by opening before the sufferer celestial horizons, fragrant with immortal amarynths, and teeming with