

P R A Y E R

at the

Dedication of the

W A S H I N G T O N M O N U M E N T

by

Rev. HENDERSON SUTER, *Rector of Christ Church,*

ALEXANDRIA, VA., FEB. 21, 1885.

(George Washington's Church)

Almighty God, Ruler of nations and of men, by whose providence our fathers were led to this goodly land –and by whom they were guided and sustained in their efforts to secure their liberties, accept, this day, the grateful homage of us, the inheritors of their well-earned rights.

Them and their leaders thou didst choose. With courage and patriotism thou didst inspire all; but, we today, while unmindful of none, are specially called to acknowledge as thy gift, George Washington.

In honor of him, thy servant, the nation of thy planting and of his thoughts and prayers, has built this monument, and we, today, in that nation's behalf, speak of his God and ours, in prayer and thanks.

As we stand beneath the lofty height of this memorial work, and mark the symmetry of its form, we would remember Washington's high character, and all the virtues which in him, builded-up the man.

A leader fearing God; a patriot unstained by self; a statesman wishing only the right, he has left us an example for whose following, we supplicate thy help, for ourselves and for all who are now, and shall hereafter be, the instruments of thy providence to this land and nation.

In so far as he followed the inspirations of wisdom and of virtue, may we follow him and may his character be to the latest generation, a model for the soldier, for the civilian and for the man, - that, in our armies may be trust in God, in our civilians integrity and among our people, that home life which extorteth praise; and so, all those blessings which he coveted for his people and his kind, be the heritage of us of our children, forever.

O God the high and mighty Ruler of the universe, bless today, and henceforth, thy servant the President of the United States and all others in authority.

To our Congress ever give wisdom. Direct and prosper all their consultations.

May our judges be able men, such as fear God, men of truth - governed in judgment only by the laws.

May our juries be incorruptible, ever mindful of the solemnity of the oath, and of the great interests depending on its keeping.

May no magistrate, or officer, having rights to maintain or order to secure, ever "wrest the judgment of the poor," or favor the rich man in his cause.

O God, throughout our land, let amity continually reign. Bind ever the one part, to the other part. Heal every wound, opened by human frailty, or by human wrong. Let the feeling of brotherhood have the mastery over all selfish ends, that with one mind and one heart, the North and the South and the East and the West, may seek the good of the common country, and work out that destiny, which has been allotted us among the nations of the earth.

Merciful Father, from whom "all good thoughts and desires come," let the principles of religion and virtue, find firm root, and grow among our people. May they heed the words of their own Washington, and never "indulge the supposition, that morality can be maintained without religion," or forget that "to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports." Deepen in them reverence for thy character.

Impress a sense of thy power. Create a desire for thy favor, and let it be realized that man's highest honor, is to be a servant of God, and that to fear Him and keep his commandments, is our whole duty.

O God, in all our relations with the nations of the earth, let honor and justice rule us. May their wisdom be our guide and our good their choice. Emulative only in the high purpose of bettering the condition of man, may they and we dwell together in unity and concord.

Bless all efforts to widen the sphere of knowledge, that true wisdom may be garnered by our people and nature yield her secrets for man's good and thy glory.

In all our seminaries of learning – our schools and colleges – may men arise, who shall be able to hand down to the generations following all that time has given.

And look upon our land. Give us the rain and the fruitful season. Let no blight fall upon the tree – no disease upon the cattle – no pestilence upon man.

To honor thee O God, we this day yield our homage and offer our praise.

Our fathers, "cried unto thee and were delivered." "They trusted in thee and were not confounded." - and we, their children, gathered by this monument today, the silent reminder of thy gifts, ask thy blessing, O Ruler of nations and of men, in the name of Him through whom thou hast taught us to pray, and, may no private or public sins cause thee to hide thy face from us; but from them turn thou us, and in our repentance, forgive.

To our prayers, we add our thanks, our thanks for mercies many and manifold.

Thou didst not set thy love upon us, and choose us because we were more in number than any people, but because thou wouldst raise us up to be an asylum for the oppressed, and for a light to those in darkness living.

For this great honor, O God, we thank thee.

Not for our righteousness hast thou upheld us hitherto, and saved from those evils which wreck the nations; but, because thou hadst a favor unto us.

For this great mercy, O God, we thank thee.

Not solely through man's wisdom have the great principles of human liberty been embodied for our government, and every man become the peer of his fellow man before the law; but, because thou hast ordered it.

For this great mercy, O God, we thank thee.

And now our Father, let this assembly, the representatives of the thousands whom thou hast blessed, go hence, today, their duty done, joyful and glad of heart, for all the goodness that the Lord hath done for this great nation.

And for the generations to come – yet unborn – may this monument which we dedicate today, to the memory of **George Washington**, stand as a witness for those virtues and that patriotism, which lived, shall secure for them Liberty and Union forever.

Amen.

(Source: Library of Congress Rare Book Collection.)