

**DISCOURSE ON THE CHARACTER  
AND SERVICES OF JOHN HAMPDEN:  
AND THE GREAT STRUGGLE FOR  
POPULAR AND CONSTITUTIONAL  
LIBERTY IN HIS TIME**

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Discourse on the Character and Services of John Hampden: And the Great struggle for popular and constitutional liberty in his time by W. C. Rives

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**W. C. RIVES**

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DISCOURSE  
ON  
THE CHARACTER AND SERVICES  
OF  
JOHN HAMPDEN,  
AND THE GREAT STRUGGLE FOR  
POPULAR AND CONSTITUTIONAL LIBERTY  
IN HIS TIME.

BY W. <sup>William</sup> C. <sup>Calvert</sup> RIVES, ESQ.

DELIVERED BEFORE THE TRUSTEES, FACULTY AND STUDENTS OF  
HAMPDEN SYDNEY COLLEGE, THE 12th NOVEMBER, 1845.

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1845.

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## CORRESPONDENCE.

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HAMPDEN SYDNEY COLLEGE, 13th Nov. 1845.

DEAR SIR,

I take pleasure as the organ of the Trustees of Hampden Sydney College, in communicating to you their grateful acknowledgments for the very instructive and able Address delivered by you yesterday. That the gratification which they received in hearing it may be measurably extended to other citizens of the Commonwealth and the Union, and that the attention of the youth of our country may be drawn to its most interesting subject, they solicit a copy for publication.

I remain,

Dear sir,

Very respectfully yours,

F. N. WATKINS,

*Sec. to the Trustees.*

HON. MR. RIVES.

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PRINCE EDWARD CO. NOV. 13th, 1845.

DEAR SIR,

I have just had the honour to receive your note of this date.

I derive much pleasure from the very kind and favourable acceptance which my attempt to do justice to a great subject, has met from those at whose instance the task was undertaken. The sense I feel of the surpassing importance (to us especially) of that portion of the annals of our British ancestors which the occasion necessarily brought under review, with the hope that what was essayed, however imperfectly executed, may yet serve to invite other minds to the contemplation and study of the noble lessons and examples in which the history

of that period so richly abounds, far more than any feeling of complacency in regard to the performance which the Trustees of the College have been pleased, through you, to honour with their approbation, impels me to yield obedience to their wishes, and to place the Address at their disposal, for whatever good end it may seem to them calculated to promote.

Begging to renew to them and yourself my most cordial and respectful salutations,

I remain,

Very truly and faithfully,

Yours,

W. C. RIVES.

F. N. WATKINS, Esq.

*Secretary to the Trustees of H. S. College.*



## DISCOURSE.

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MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN :

The Board of Trustees, charged with the management of this ancient Institution, were pleased to do me the honour to invite me to take part with them in the proceedings of this day ; and my young friends, the Students of the College, in a very flattering manner, added the expression of their wishes to those of the corporation. So honourable a call, coming to me from so high and respected a source, and so persuasively enforced, I have not been able to resist, however unequal I feel myself to the performance of the duty which has been assigned me, in a manner to justify your selection, or worthy of the occasion.

An occasion of more interest and dignity rarely occurs in the course of human affairs. We are met to receive, publicly and solemnly, the silent yet eloquent memorials achieved by grateful art, of the person and virtues of one of the illustrious patriots of the land of our forefathers, whose name this Institution is proud to bear—the immortal champion of civil and religious freedom, John Hampden. These

memorials are now before you. The one is a medallion portrait of that great man, executed in the noble simplicity and purity of his own character, the other, a copy in marble of the monument erected to his memory by the gratitude of his countrymen on the field, in which he gloriously fell in defence of the liberties of his country and of mankind. The monument stands in Chalgrove Field, Oxfordshire, and was erected there on the 18th day of June 1843, being the two hundredth anniversary of the day of the glorious martyrdom which it commemorates. It tells its own story in a noble and eloquent inscription far more impressive than any words I can use, and I beg leave, therefore, to read so much of it as is essential to the merits of its object :

“ *Here* in this Field of Chalgrove, John Hampden, after an able and strenuous, but unsuccessful resistance, in Parliament and before the Judges of the land, to the measures of an arbitrary court, first took arms, assembling the levies of the associated counties of Buckingham and Oxford in 1642 ; and *here*, within a few paces of this spot, he received the wound of which he died, while fighting in defence of the ancient liberties of England, June the 18th, 1643. In the two hundredth year from that day, this stone was raised in reverence to his memory.”

It could not fail to be gratifying to every lover of liberty to read over the list of proud and lofty names, the most elevated in rank and the most dignified by station, which concurred in this warm and approving verdict of a distant posterity upon the principles and actions of one of the stanchest advocates which the

cause of popular freedom ever had. But I must content myself here with merely stating that the family of Hampden in England, learning with pride that an Institution existed in this country, bearing the name of their honoured ancestor, and dedicated to the cause of sound learning, and to the promotion of those principles of civil and religious liberty for which that ancestor had freely offered up his life, eagerly sought the occasion to present to it the interesting memorials which are now before us. So graceful an act of international courtesy, drawing together distant people by the kindly offices of mutual sympathy and recognition, deserves to be acknowledged, to be appreciated, to be imitated. It is an offering which does honour to the high character of those from whom it proceeds, and which this Institution, by many titles, is worthy to receive.

An Institution which started into existence under the fresh impulse of our own great contest for freedom—whose first session was opened on the first day of that year which ushered in the Declaration of American Independence—whose patriotic founders significantly proclaimed to the world the lofty principles with which, at that soul-stirring period, their own bosoms were animated, by assuming for their symbols the names of Hampden and of Sydney—an Institution, in short, which boasts at the head of its first Board of Trustees the name of *Patrick Henry*, a name to liberty and to eloquence ever dear, cannot be an unfit depository of those memorials of the model statesman and patriot of England, which are now committed to its keeping. These are glorious recol-