

A  
DISCOURSE  
ON  
THE RELIGION OF THE INDIAN TRIBES  
OF  
NORTH AMERICA.

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*Mr. President, and  
Gentlemen of the Historical Society,*

IN surveying those portions of American history, from which I might select a subject for the present occasion, it appeared to me, that the religion of the Indian tribes of North America, had not been viewed with that largeness of observation, which is the characteristic of enlightened philosophy. Various causes may be mentioned, which have hitherto conspired to prevent, or to impede, such an examination. In the first place, the horror, proceeding from the cruelties of their warfare, forbade the calmness of investigation. As long as they were formidable, curiosity was overpowered by terror; and there was neither leisure, nor inclination, to contemplate their character as a portion of the human family, while the glare of conflagration reddened the mid-