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Bennett, Benjamin, fl. 1802.

Address on American Independence at Middletown,  
July 4, 1802.

New York, 1802.

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*J. Moore*

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# Anniversary Address,

DELIVERED

At Middletown-Point Church, on Monday the fifth of  
July, 1802, to the inhabitants of that place, and  
its vicinity, on the subject of

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE,

with inferences from that event.



By the Rev. BENJAMIN BENNETT,

PASTOR OF THE ANABAPTIST CONGREGATION NEAR  
MIDDLETOWN, MONMOUTH COUNTY, N. JERSEY.

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Hail Independence! vast design;  
The efforts of the brave were thine  
When doubtful, all, and dark....  
It was a chaos to explore,  
It seem'd all sea without a shore,  
Nor on that sea an ark.

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NEW-YORK:

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.....  
1802.

## ANNIVERSARY ADDRESS, &amp;c.

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Friends and Fellow-Citizens,

I RISE with peculiar diffidence to discharge the duty you have assigned to me on this day ; but, relying on the plenitude of your candour ; and supported by a conscious rectitude of my own views, I will endeavour to fulfil the appointment in the best manner I am able ; and at the same time take the liberty to remind you of an animated portion of divine truth recorded in the nineteenth chapter of *Revelations* ; verses *sixth* and *seventh* :

“Hallelujah! for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him.”

This portion of divine truth I would recommend to your serious attention on this occasion, and will beg your indulgence, while I carry it along with me as the motto of the sentiments I would convey to you, in the address I am to make.

Under the various impressions of joy and sorrow incident to this constantly varying state, the virtuous and reflecting mind finds irresistible motives to gratitude; and a fruitful source of relief, in contemplating the divine government, and its dispensations to man, in particular, as represented to us in the consoling page of inspiration.

In the gloomy day of adversity, when the clouds of impenetrable darkness encompass us on every side, and

the billows of trouble dash impetuously against us, a recollection of the important truth suggested in the words just mentioned, restrains the excesses of grief, and converts the destroying deluge into a harmless stream.

Thus, also, on occasions of extraordinary joy, recognizing the great Jehovah as the fountain of all happiness, and ruler of all worlds, the heart dilates with sentiments of gratitude and affection, and awfully adores the wisdom, power, and beneficence of the Creator. Much, therefore, of that portion of happiness, for which we have any foundation to hope, in the present and future state of things, depends on the established belief in that leading *truth*, the existence and controul of a superintending providence, and a careful observance of the ways of God to man.

Toss'd on the ocean of uncertainty, and subject to continual disappointment, the mind unestablished in this supremely interesting truth, is perpetually tortured with corroding anxiety and painful suspense. Forlorn and miserable must be the person, who wandering confused in the bewildering paths of infidelity, vainly imagines the universe, with its vast concerns, is solely under the influence of a blind fatality, a sportive chance, or a fortuitous concurrence of things. Destitute of virtuous sentiment, and strongly prejudiced against the character, perfections, and attributes of the infinite HOLY, he strives to obliterate from his mind the very remembrance of his Creator!...Happy would it be for him, were he incapable of effecting his wishes! But, alas! he succeeds in the attempt. He accomplishes his dread-

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ful, his detestable purpose. God is not in all his thoughts. Prepared for the perpetration of every crime, his heart is resolutely set to do evil; and, to complete his guilt, he glories in his shame. But, mark his end, his fearful end!... With imperceptible precipitation he is hastening into ruin...

“ On slippery rocks I see him stand,  
 “ And fiery billows roll below.”

Justice, inflexible in its demands, and steady in its pursuit as the course of time, will suddenly overtake him, and an inundation of horror will overwhelm his soul for ever.

To the guilty wretch who views in his omnipotent Creator an omnipotent enemy, the consideration of his universal dominion must be painful indeed. But let the righteous be glad and rejoice, for the Lord God Almighty reigneth, that Being of beings,

who (as an ancient Philosopher\* said) has his centre every where and his outline no where.

Over all things in heaven, over all things on earth, over all things in time, and all things in eternity, he reigns unrivalled in perfection, power, and glory. Enthroned in unapproachable effulgence, he sits on the circle of the universe; nor can the united efforts of wicked men, leagued in eternal opposition to the cause of truth and righteousness, frustrate his glorious purposes or retard their execution.

With equal ease he can sink the earth into nothing, or bid it rise from chaotic confusion. He can, and does, at will, debase the proud or elevate the humble, reward or punish, save or destroy an individual, a nation, or a world. The unoriginated source of

\* Plato.

