

# AN ORATION

DELIVERED

BY

APPOINTMENT

BEFORE THE

OLYMPIAN ATHLETIC SOCIETY

OF NEW-JERSEY,

IN THE

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, TRENTON.

JULY 5th, 1824.

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BY SYMMES C. HENRY, A. M.

PASTOR OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CRANBURY.

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TRENTON,

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY FRANCIS S. WIGGINS.

1824.

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*At a meeting of the Society of Cincinnati of the State of New-Jersey  
at Trenton on the 5th July 1824.*

*Resolved*, That the thanks of this Society be given to the Rev. *Symmes C. Henry* for the very eloquent and truly appropriate Oration publicly delivered by him before the Society this day; and that he be respectfully requested to deliver a Copy thereof to the Secretary to be preserved in the archives of the Society.

A True Copy from the  
Minutes.

GEO. C. BARBER Sec'y

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At a meeting of Citizens of Trenton, held on Thursday the 8th inst. at the City Tavern, with a view to procure from the Rev. *Symmes C. Henry* a copy of the Oration delivered by him before the Cincinnati Society of New-Jersey, at their 48th Anniversary Celebration of American Independence, for publication,

David Johnston, esq. was called to the Chair, and Stacy G. Potts, appointed Secretary,

The object of the meeting having been stated by the Chairman,

On motion of William Hyer, esq.

It was unanimously resolved,

That the Citizens of Trenton have heard with much satisfaction, the eloquent and appropriate address delivered by the Rev. *Symmes C. Henry* on Monday the 5th inst. to a large and respectable meeting held in the Presbyterian Church of this city, for the purpose of celebrating the 48th Anniversary of our National Independence, and are persuaded that the sentiments therein contained are not only in true accordance with the spirit and nature of the occasion, but also with the sentiments of him who may be morally styled the *Father* and Deliverer of our country, and that the same ought to be published—Therefore

Resolved further—That this meeting request the Rev. Mr. *Henry's* permission to have the said oration published; and that the Secretary forward to him a copy of this resolution.

A true Copy.

DAVID JOHNSTON, Chairman.

STACY G. POTTS, Sec'y.

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## AN ORATION.

FELLOW-CITIZENS,

THE day we have assembled to celebrate is commemorative of no ordinary event. It reminds us of an era that gave birth to one of the happiest nations that morning ever visits. It is a standing monument of a country's deliverance, a country's gratitude, and a country's joy. As we are brought to it in the revolving course of each successive season, we welcome its return, and pause in the midst of busy life, to indulge in associations the most interesting and pleasing; to remember that the land of our nativity, and our residence is the dwelling place of freedom, and the consecrated asylum of that religion, which lays the foundation for all that is excellent in human character, and gives stability and glory to all the institutions of man.

When we behold a great and growing people on the rapid march of improvement, and rising in the majesty and strength of their resources, it is natural to enquire into the causes of all this prosperity, and happiness, and to look to the rock from whence they were hewn, and to the hole of the pit out of which they were digged. Such a retrospect is both pleasing, and profitable, although it may be familiar, and seems to be peculiarly appropriate on occasions like the present. At the return of every Paschal celebration in ancient Israel, the various and wondrous circumstances which led to their establishment as a nation, and their triumphant settlement in Canaan, formed the subject of many a pious, pathetic and animating rehearsal. They were among the favourite themes that tuned the harp of the son of Jesse, and may I not add, that the productions of this inspired writer relative to the deliverance of that chosen people from Egyptian servitude, and their unexampled prosperity under the smiles and protection of Heaven, contain the most perfect models for similar performance.

A national festival, is the memento of some great national blessing, it is therefore the dictate of grateful feeling and of virtuous propriety, to recall the scenes and the circumstances that ushered it into existence. Under the impression of such sentiments, and for such purposes, the society whose anniversary we now celebrate, was organized. It was founded upon the principles of the purest friendship, benevolence and patriotism; and whether we regard its primary design, the good it has already accomplished, or the distinguished character of its members, it alike deserves our sincerest respect, and our most unfeigned wishes for its permanency, and success.—It is indeed a noble and gratifying spectacle to look at the men who bore a part in the burden and heat of our revolutionary struggle; it is animating to hear them tell us what their own eyes have seen, and to recount the achievements of valour and patience and self-denial, for which that memorable era was distinguished: it is truly exhilarating to associate with them in bringing our homage of gratitude and rejoicing to the same altar; to look back on the beginning of a work so mighty, and to trace it down from its incipient stage, through the concatenation of cause and effect, to its ultimate and splendid completion. I know that in a place and an assembly like this, the mind of every veteran patriot, instinctively recurs to the transactions of former days, and while he sits and listens to their recital, it is “like the memory of joys that are past, pleasant and mournful to the soul.” In entering, then, upon a detail of the most interesting particulars which led to the settlement and independence of our country, you will, I am persuaded, lend me your attention, while I shall endeavour to be brief without obscurity, and yet sufficiently explicit, without being tedious.

It ought not to be forgotten that it is very little more than three centuries ago, since this section of the globe was first known to the civilized world. Until the discovery of Columbus in the year 1492 it remained a barren and uncultivated waste—the habitation of ferocious beasts, and wandering tribes of savage men. The undaunted enterprise of this skillful navigator, the perils he endured, and the injuries he sustained, fill many a page of American history and cannot but be recollected with mingled emotions of admiration, pity and resentment.—The fame of Columbus and his wonderful discoveries were soon known throughout Europe, and served to kindle a spirit of adventure, that spread with the ardour of bewitching enthusiasm, and led to results of no common magnitude and importance. *Spain* and *Portugal* took the lead in this new field of speculation and enterprise. Prompted by motives of ambition and avarice, they commenced the work of conquest, slavery, and extermination, among the wretched inhabitants of the new

world, and in a few years completed the subjugation of almost the whole of the southern part of the American continent. Here they transplanted their absolute governments under the most unprincipled and despotic vice-roys; and the corruptions of Popery formed the basis on which their dominion was supported. The wealth of *Mexico*, with the splendour and magnificence of her capital; the treasures of *Peru*, with her ancient Incan government: the free and untutored natives of *Terra-Firma* and *Brazil*; all fell a prey to the basest passions of a set of military adventurers armed with the sword of conquest, and the exterminating vengeance of the Papal religion. The friend of humanity will drop a tear, as he draws a veil over the wanton devastation, and merciless cruelties that marked the despotic progress of early adventure; and as he casts an eye to the revolutionary struggles that now convulse the ill-fated Kingdoms of South-America, he is encouraged to indulge the pleasing hope, that the day is not far distant, when they will shake off the superstition, ignorance and oppression under which they have so long groaned, and rise to a conspicuous rank amongst the free and enlightened nations of the earth.

Shortly after the discovery of America, the glorious epoch of the Reformation from Popery commenced in Europe. Many were the champions which stood forth in its sacred cause, and extensive and deep the influence which they exerted. In a few years the see of Papal Rome was shaken to its foundation, and the supremacy of his *Holiness* denied and disowned by more than half of Christendom. England was among the first to embrace the principles of the Reformers, and to assert her independence of the Roman Pontiff. There were not wanting those who entered with an apostolic zeal into the arduous work of purifying her from the corruptions, and weaning her from the fooleries of *the mother of all abominations*. In the midst of these mighty triumphs of reason and religion over the ignorance and superstition of the times, the demon of Bigotry began to sow the seeds of controversy and to light up the fires of persecution. Hundreds in every part of the kingdom became willing martyrs to the cause of truth and sacrificed their fortunes, their liberties and their lives in asserting the rights of conscience. An established creed and form of worship were made the standard, by which the orthodoxy and the loyalty of a whole people were to be tested. To enforce this act of uniformity, occasioned the most serious evils, injured the protestant cause, and greatly marred the peace of the nation.—It would carry me too far from the design of this day, to give you any thing like a circumstantial account of the sufferings and privations to which the dissenters submitted, under the dynasty of Queen Elizabeth, and the distracted reigns of the corrupt and pusillanimous house of

Stuart. Let it suffice to observe that the principles of an enlightened and liberal toleration were never brought to bear in their soothing and conciliating influence on the patient and aggrieved endurance of this part of the community. Petition after petition was presented to the crown and parliament for redress, without effect. The clouds grew darker—The evils complained of increased, until forbearance was exhausted, and hope could catch not even a distant prospect of relief.

In this gloomy and discouraging crisis of affairs, there were some who determined to seek a sanctuary and retreat in the unknown and distant wilds of the new world, where they might quietly enjoy the religion of their consciences without the restraints and the shackles of an *established uniformity*. Under the influence of such views they embarked as a company of pilgrims, and after a long and perilous voyage landed on one of the most dreary and desolate parts of the New-England coast. Thus was planted the Plymouth colony in 1620; a colony founded in faith, and composed of voluntary exiles from their country, their kindred and their homes. About ten years previous to this, two other settlements had been made, one by the Dutch at the mouth of the Hudson, and the other by the English at Jamestown in Virginia. In looking back but two centuries ago, we are surprised to find that these little insulated spots, were the only places throughout the whole of this great country, where could be found a single trace of moral and civilized man. All the rest was a mighty forest: the hand of culture had never graced it, nor had the light of science and religion ever illumined and dispelled its darkness. But the day of its redemption from obscurity and barbarism had come. “*Hidden from ages and from generations,*” it was now revealed for the great purpose of displaying the manifold wisdom and goodness of God. Here under the direction and guidance of a superintending providence, our Fathers found a refuge from the proscription and persecution that pursued them in their own land. It was soon known and regarded as an asylum for the oppressed. Such were the distressing scenes that distracted England under the successive reigns of the Stuart family, that the colonies were constantly augmented in number and strength by new accessions. Others were established; patents were granted by the crown to adventurers, and some of the choicest spirits, and best blood of the nation, emigrated to these consecrated and happy shores.

The trials, privations, and sufferings that constantly awaited these infant settlements were deeply felt, but can never be described. They were visited with severe and mortal sickness, distressing drought and threatening famine. The tomahawk and the scalping knife of the murderous Indian were often stained with

their blood, and in several instances whole settlements were broken up and destroyed, by the ravaging incursions of these merciless barbarians. In this exposed and defenceless situation they were led to feel their mutual dependence, and to cultivate that friendly intercourse with each other, that became necessary for resisting and subduing the common enemy. Thus united, they continued to gain strength in new acquisitions of territory and number. Under the smiles of Heaven they grew and prospered beyond a parallel. The principles of civil and religious liberty which they brought with them when driven into exile by the intolerant spirit of persecution, became generally diffused, were incorporated with all their institutions, and thus laid the foundation of that national government, which the United States now enjoy; which is the perfection of ages, and the admiration of the world.

It was not difficult to predict that the growing prosperity of the rising colonies would command the notice of the mother country. The British ministry were sensible that a people possessing the energies and resources of the American colonies, supported by a system of wise and virtuous institutions, whose bosoms glowed with the purest principles of political and religious liberty, and whose rich and extensive country opened a vast theatre for the gradual and complete developement of these principles, would soon display the character of a great, powerful and independent nation. A question at once arose in the councils of her cabinet, as to the measures which would be most effectual to secure to Britain a permanent sovereignty over these colonies. In this momentous question her councils were divided. One party were in favour of mild and gentle measures, at the head of which stood the illustrious *Earl of Chatham*; the other were for energetic and compulsory means, and were led on by a *North* and a *Bute*. But the measures of the latter were adopted in defiance of the sage and prophetic councils of a *Pitt*. At this time the navigation act of Great-Britain was rigidly enforced, by which she engrossed the whole commerce of her colonies. But not content with the advantages she enjoyed from the regular and exclusive trade of the colonies, her avarice and her jealousy led her to impose a system of unjust and oppressive taxation. The colonies ever awake to their liberties and their rights took the alarm, and were determined to resist the usurpation at the very threshold.

The sons of those sires who had fled from the cruel persecutions of the land of their fathers, raised the voice of warning, and the whole country aroused as if by the spirit of inspiration rallied round one common standard to protect those rights which they deemed it

sacrilege to invade. The mere matter of taxation was not so much the object of complaint, as the *principle* which was involved in the parliamentary bill, and which recognized the right of that body to tax the colonies without granting them the privilege of *representation*. It was a maxim interwoven with those principles of liberty on which the colonial governments were established, *that taxation and representation were and ought to be inseparably connected*. In the light of this wise and equitable maxim, they discovered that if England could claim and exercise the right of raising a revenue upon the Colonies by the levy of duties in one instance, she could by the same right, impose on them that whole system of oppressive taxation under which her own subjects then groaned, and have continued to groan to this day. Impressed with the reality and importance of these truths, they demanded by petition to the crown that the taxes might be removed, and the colonies be left to tax themselves or be admitted to an equal representation in the government. But their petition was rejected, and the invidious acts of parliament were enforced in the most authoritative tone. Stung with the keenest sensibilities at this cruel injustice they resolved to make a dignified resistance and to seek an honourable redress of their wrongs.

At this critical and interesting juncture of affairs, the legislatures of the several colonies appointed committees to co-operate for the public welfare. By means of these committees a general correspondence was opened throughout the country, the patriotism of the people enkindled, and a happy union of sentiment and interest promoted. These preparatory measures paved the way for the convention of the first Congress, which assembled in Philadelphia on the 5th of September 1774.—Its proceedings were all characterized for their wisdom, dignity and patriotic spirit. Every step was taken with a cautious deliberation and heroic firmness.—But their resolutions, petitions and addresses could effect no equitable adjustment of contested claims. Britain still pursued her plan of usurpation, until the colonies were compelled to appeal to the sword and to the musket, as a last and only resort.

Hostilities, had commenced and several bloody battles were fought, before a Commander in Chief of the American forces was chosen. At their next session; therefore, in May 1775, Congress unanimously appointed Colonel Washington, then one of their number, to this honourable and important station. With the modesty and disinterested patriotism that have not been recorded even of a *Cincinnatus*, this Hero of America, accepted a trust which led him to enter the list with the *Howes*, the *Clintons* and *Burgoynes*



of Britain, those military champions of the age, who considered British soldiers and British valor as paramount to every enterprise and viewed the resistance of the colonies as the madness of folly, and the sure precursor of defeat, disgrace, slavery and ruin.— But the wisdom of Congress in selecting such a man as Washington to this high and responsible trust was truly conspicuous. Early in life he had signalized himself in the old French war, and at the famous defeat of *Braddock* conducted the retreat with such consummate prudence and courage as to lead off the shattered remains of his army in safety. Such was the man who had been selected to be the deliverer of his country. God directed the choice, and graciously succeeded the appointment.

Two years had elapsed since the sword had been unsheathed before the colonies assumed the attitude and spoke the language of independent States. However far from this may have been their intention at the first rupture between them and the Mother Country, they now upon mature deliberation resolved to declare themselves, a free and independent people. The immediate cause of this measure must be in part attributed to the patriotic manner in which the attack upon Charleston was repelled. Such was the character of the heroes who defended that city, and such the signal defeat of the English, that they abandoned the enterprise with great loss of men, and with the shattered wrecks of vessels. The news of this action, like the action of Bunker's Hill, spread through the country with the rapidity of lightning, and gave new confidence, strength, and energies to the American cause.

When the intelligence of this intrepid and glorious achievement reached Congress, it kindled into a flame that spark of liberty, which prudence and caution had long smothered, and it burst forth in the ever memorable Declaration of Independence on the 4th of July 1776. The strength and confidence which the action of Charleston, joined to the action of Bunker's-Hill and the evacuation of Boston had given to the public mind, ensured universal support to the measure, and the Declaration of Independence was hailed, by the patriotic sons of Columbia as the salvation of their country.

It would be unnecessary to eulogize this production. It is sufficient to say, that a more memorable and masterly State-paper, cannot be found registered on the historic page. After its adoption it was publicly proclaimed in the city of Philadelphia, amidst the joyful acclamations of thousands, and was soon circulated in every corner of the nation. Never was a people better prepared for such an event, and never was there a measure in which all hearts were more cordially united. This was the Epoch of perma-

nent liberty, and the death blow to British power and British influence in America.

'The time had now come when it was to be determined whether Americans should be freemen or slaves. The primary object of the war was changed in its aspect; and the united energies of a whole people were demanded for the support and the establishment of that independence which they had claimed and promulgated to the world. This was indeed a trying and eventful crisis. How unequal was a young country, in the very infancy of her improvements with comparatively but few inhabitants, scattered over an extensive and unwieldy territory—without funds, and destitute of clothing, of ammunition and almost of arms for her few soldiers; and on the other hand, a nation possessing an organized and efficient government—a nation renowned for her victories, & successful in her policy—ample in her resources and irresistible in her conquests—holding in one hand the balance of power in continental Europe, and in the other almost half the wealth and commerce of the world. In looking at the overwhelming contrast, America might have shrunk from the conflict without the least imputation of disgrace. Upon every principle of human calculation, an impartial observer would have pronounced her cause, desperate—her resistance, worse than folly—her end, defeat and degradation. But the patriotism of her sons and the talents of her leader, were in the room of armies and of treasures. Washington was found equal to the task of delivering his country from insult and oppression, and his success ranks him among the greatest generals the world ever saw. We now look back with admiration at the wisdom that dictated his plans, and the coolness and perseverance he displayed in their execution. With what splendour did his martial abilities shine in successfully maintaining himself in the face of a superior enemy; in inspiring with courage, raw and undisciplined troops; in seizing victories by an enterprising bravery, or in conducting retreats that gained him no less fame than victories; in vanquishing his enemies by a firm, undaunted courage, or consuming and wasting them away by a wise and persevering patience. In all changes of fortune he was serene and collected. “Success did not elate him. No reverse could sink his courage or shake his firmness. With equal admiration, we behold him when compelled to retire with the broken remains of his army across our own state, as at the capture of Cornwallis, when he entered in triumph over the demolished fortifications of York-Town, and by one splendid action, put a period to the war.”

I shall not attempt to detail the exploits nor recount the bloody scenes of the revolution. History has recorded them, they are

still fresh in the recollection of many, and our Fathers have taught them to their children. Nay, with some of you, they were matters of personal observation. The names of *Lexington* and *Bunker's hill*; of *Crown Point* and *Ticonderoga*; of *Trenton*, *Princeton* and *Monmouth*; of *Brandywine* and *Germantown*; of *Camden*, *Charleston* and *York-Town* are rendered dear to every lover of liberty, and awaken associations the most tender and impressive. Here on these consecrated spots was displayed the intrepid courage of our venerable sires, and here flowed the blood of patriotism. Here many a hero fell a martyr in the cause of his country. Here victory waved her standard and bid a nation be free.

The noise of war was now hushed, peace restored, and the liberties of the new world established on the firmest foundations. The soldier exchanged the din of the camp for the quiet and the sweets of private life. The fields of the husbandman that had long been laid waste, were again covered with plenty: The ransacked and depopulated towns and cities were soon rebuilt and re-peopled, and the hum of business once more heard in their joyful streets. Trade and commerce revived—industry and enterprize were richly crowned, and “every man could sit down under his own vine, and under his own fig-tree, without any to molest or make him afraid.”

In reviewing the causes that led to the settlement and independence of the United States, how clearly visible is the guidance and superintending providence of a divine and omnipotent hand. Blind must be the eye of that man who cannot see it, and steeled with infidelity, that heart that will not acknowledge it. This was most eminently conspicuous in the selection and preservation of him who is this day eulogized as the *Father of his Country*, and whose name is embalmed in the memory of a grateful people. Let the soldier behold in *Washington*, a hero endowed with that wisdom, firmness, penetration and valour, which fitted him to become the Chieftain of a nation struggling for its liberties; whose inexhaustible mental resources, ever fruitful in expedients, enabled him to surmount the most overwhelming embarrassments, and to march on to conquest and to glory—and then say, by the spirit of a soldier, and the valour of his sword, hath he done all this.—Let the philosopher behold the fortuitous coincidence of events, that conspired to relieve him in the most dangerous situations, and say not to his prudence, his valour or his skill, does he owe this, but to the propitious smiles of fortune.—Let the christian in contemplating the same subject, pause and say, the Almighty raised up in this man, a deliverer for his people: By him was he protected from “the pestilence that walketh in darkness, and the destruction that

wasteth at noon-day ;" by him he was inspired with wisdom and courage ; by him the way was opened, and all the circumstances ordered, that led to the triumphant defeat of our enemies, and sealed the independence of a nation. " He is the most High who ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will."

In tracing the various events that have rolled on the United States of America to their present union, independence and glory, we might enumerate a splendid succession of heroes, statesmen and divines, whose joint co-operations under God, have rendered them the honourable instruments of raising the fairest structure of national greatness and prosperity that ever adorned any age, or was the boast of any people. Those illustrious characters acted well their parts in the grand drama of political liberty, and the most of them have passed off the stage, but their deeds of virtue and of patriotism, will go down to the last ages of recorded time, and their names will be held in deserved veneration, by an admiring posterity.

The excellence of that constitution which was the precious fruit of their labours, which republican *France* in vain attempted to imitate, and which so many other nations have been unable to procure even after ages of effort and misery, has now been confirmed by the happy experience of more than thirty years. It is founded on principles the most wise and equitable, and exhibits a national confederacy of free and independent states, united and consolidated by the most indissoluble ties. That balance of power in the several departments of government for which this republican compact is distinguished, was never attained so perfectly before. The ancient republics of *Greece* and *Rome* were strangers to it. But upon this secure and inestimable basis is founded our happy republic. Such then is the distinguished government under which we live ; a government adequate to every purpose for which the social compact is formed ; a government elective in all its branches ; that knows no distinction but that, which *merit* may originate, and under which every citizen may aim at the highest trust recognized by the constitution ; a government which secures to its members the full enjoyment of their rights, and is able to protect them from unjust and foreign aggression.—The existence of such a country presents a subject for the most profound speculation of the christian, philanthropist and statesman. Look over the vast amplitude of this world's dominions, and where can you find a country that presents so sublime a view, so interesting an anticipation ? What a comprehensive policy ! What a wise equalization of every political advantage ! What a home for the shelterless exile and the unbefriended

emigrant! Here the oppressed of all countries, the martyrs of every creed, and the unfortunate victims of despotic arrogance, or superstitious phrenzy may find a refuge. Here shall their industry be encouraged—their piety respected—their ambition animated—their virtue rewarded.—And do not all these peculiar and distinguishing favours ensure extensive happiness to the people who enjoy them?—Let the citizen answer whose rights are protected by equal laws; whose person is free; whose dwelling is a fortress; whose fireside is a sanctuary.—Let the father answer, whose children are preserved to his affections, bright in honour, smiling in health, and progressing in knowledge.—Let the christian answer, whose altar is not invaded, whose temple is open to his devotion, whose faith knows no law but the Bible—and his conscience no umpire but its God.

This is a theme for our mutual felicitation, and we claim the indulgence of dilating on a subject so delightful to every benevolent and liberal mind. It is with pleasure we reflect upon the happy conjunction of times and circumstances under which we assumed the rank of a free and independent people. The foundation of our happy republic was not laid in the gloomy age of ignorance and superstition, but at the time when the principles of political and religious liberty were better understood and more clearly defined than they had ever been. The long night of barbarism had passed away, and the intellect of man had broken loose from those shackles, by which it had so long been enslaved; researches after truth and social happiness had been carried to a great extent; the collected wisdom of ages had been presented to the world; the free cultivation of letters; the progressive refinement of manners, the growing liberality of sentiment, and above all, the pure and benign light of revelation had spread a meliorating influence over the human mind, and elevated society to a character and blessedness unknown and unequalled at any former period. At this auspicious era the United States came into existence, in all the freshness of youth, to exhibit to the wondering nations of the earth, the successful experiment of a great people governing themselves, and to send out to the remotest bounds a mighty influence in favour of the rights of man.

Under a government so admirably constituted and wisely administered, our country has taken a high and commanding rank among the nations of the earth, and bids fair to stand unrivalled. Her commerce has extended to every part of the globe—her agriculture is flourishing under the auspices of scientific experiment and complimentary reward—her towns and cities are rising up in every part of the Union—her forests are falling before the mighty

wave of an increasing and wide-spreading population—her revenue is bringing millions into the public coffers—her debt is yearly diminishing—the arts and sciences are encouraged by individual and legislative patronage—her navy is growing in strength and renown—her territory is enlarging, and is strongly environed by fortifications of defence—her internal improvements are progressing on a grand and extended scale—her institutions of literature and religion—her asylums for the indigent and forsaken—her humane and benevolent societies, and her numerous associations for alleviating the sorrows of depraved and suffering humanity are daily multiplying, and sending forth an influence more vivifying than the breath of spring through every part of the community—in short, her character is respected abroad, and commands the confidence of an enlightened, prosperous, and happy people at home.

Such is the enviable state of our highly favoured country, and such the genius and tendency of her civil and religious institutions. And I might here bring your minds to contemplate the bright and cheering prospects, which are opening before her. I might bid you look down through the vista of a century or two to come, and see her eclipsing all the kingdoms of this world, in every thing that can dignify and adorn and bless a nation. This is not empty and unmeaning declamation. There is room for all this in the natural advantages of her extensive territory, and she seems to be peculiarly designed by providence as a wide and conspicuous theatre for the display of human greatness and felicity. There are reasons to believe the day is not far distant, when she will realize the most exalted destinies. Let us then congratulate each other as fellow citizens of so distinguished a republic.

But while we contemplate the highly favoured condition and brightening prospects of our country, let us not forget that under God, we are indebted for these blessings to the *Gospel of Christ*, and that consequently their establishment and perpetuity are intimately connected with the general extension and influence of its benign and holy principles through every department of society.—It is to be feared there is much too loose and sceptical a mode of thinking and speaking about the enjoyment and security of our rights and privileges as a people. On a day like this, ten thousand hearts and voices combine to eulogise the valourous deeds and successful policy of our fathers, while the God of our fathers is forgotten, and his goodness merely referred to by the passing and common-place acknowledgment, of *a kind and superintending providence*. The most senseless and sickening praises are often lavished upon the *instruments*, while *He* who made and who moved them, receives but few offerings of pure and unfeigned

gratitude. All our national prosperity and happiness is' attributed to the principles of a worldly policy, while the holiness and morality of the revealed and heavenly record are never brought into view.—And is not this a kindred spirit with that which once came over a *Mighty King* in the summit of his glory, when in the pride and infatuation of his heart, he cried out, “Is not this Great Babylon which *I* have built—by the might of *my* power.”—On a subject so thoroughly interwoven with our earliest education, with our feelings of national honour, and our strongest pre-possessions—I do not wish to be mistaken. I venerate the patriotism of those brave men who fought and fell in the righteous cause of their country, and who bequeathed to us the rich legacy of our liberties sealed with their blood; while at the same time, I look up to Heaven and give thanks to him, whose right arm hath gotten us the victory. I rejoice in the practical wisdom and political ability displayed in our various civil institutions, but I would never forget that the religion of the Bible forms their only secure and permanent basis, and indeed was the deep and broad foundation upon which they were erected by our pious and intelligent ancestry.—In proportion to the tone and the standard of public morals, so will be the prosperity and happiness of any people. I know there are those who consider such a doctrine as chimerical or enthusiastic: but they have dwelt with little reflection upon the records of the past, and have but ill observed the plain and steady gradations of national rise and national ruin. Pure morality is essential to public felicity,—this cannot exist without the instructions and sanctions of the divine word. All experience justifies the assertion, that efforts to promote extensive reformation and happiness, unconnected with the knowledge of revelation and uncontrolled by it, have entirely failed. *Reason* though often improved by learning and refinement, never succeeded in its attempts to secure the real happiness of any nation under heaven.—You may, perhaps, point me to the *ancient republics* for a confutation of this remark—But in vain do we look among them for that peace and order and tranquility and virtue, which characterize a happy and well regulated state of society. What I ask was the condition of their common people? How deplorably wretched! How deeply sunk in ignorance and crime and superstition and slavery! What the stability of their government? What that boasted liberty for which we hear them so often and so blindly extolled? Liberty of dangerous and disastrous change—liberty at the will of caprice and usurpation and tyranny—liberty running thro' the ever shifting scenes, and endless transmutations of *democracy, aristocracy, monarchy* and *despotism*. Had but the truth of revelation found its way into

the bosom of these republics, it would have purified and saved them from those corruptions which wasted them away, and guaranteed their existence from generation to generation.

Consider what effects the religion of the Gospel has produced not only upon individual happiness, but in general morals, public justice, and the social relations of life. Compare its effects upon temporal order, security and felicity, with paganism, philosophy or infidelity, and where is the man, who does not feel convinced and who does not at once see, that the contrast is infinitely in favour of christianity. Look farther at its influence upon the intellectual attainments of a people. The gospel has been the constant friend of learning and science in every community in which it has prevailed. It has added vastly to the sum of useful knowledge. Learning has never flourished so much as under its light and guardianship; and in proportion to the purity of religious knowledge, have its interests been promoted. The man who opposes the gospel, who despises and rejects pure religion, is an enemy to the cultivation of the human mind, the dignity of his species, and the best interests of his country.

Let it be remembered then that the Gospel of Jesus Christ, is the *Source & the Safeguard* of all that is dear and valuable & ennobling to a people. And is it not an animating thought, that it has found a welcome reception in this land, & like a never failing fountain is continually sending forth its pure and healthful streams to gladden and beautify and fertilize every part of the nation. Its influence may be seen, and its footsteps traced in every direction. We find its trophies in our temples of justice and sanctuaries of religion—in our sabbaths and worshipping assemblies—in our asylums for the destitute, and those kindly feelings and sympathies which it produces and controuls—in our seminaries of learning, and above all, in *Sunday Schools*, the surest foundations of pure morals, and the most blessed charities of the age.—Contrast then, the situation of the community in which we live, with that of every other people. Your institutions of justice, liberty, benevolence and religion, with theirs who tremble before the rod of a tyrant, and wither under the scourge of oppression, or perish beneath the car of an idol. Behold your sons educated and trained to honourable employments, *your daughters polished after the similitude of a palace*; and then look at the condition of those whose sons are slaves, and whose daughters are degraded to servitude and dishonour, and say, whether your lot has not been cast in a pleasant place, and whether you have not a goodly heritage. A consideration of such peculiar blessings should awaken all our feelings of gratitude and all our powers of praise.

But while we thus speak, we are sensible that much yet re-



mains to be corrected. The baneful effects of party spirit have not yet ceased; passionate and greedy contentions for office and emolument occasion some inquietude and vexation; and the savage spirit of duelling is as vindictive and murderous as ever. Yet these evils affect, but a small part of the community, and those chiefly who choose to be affected by them. So happy a population in mass, as that which is found in the United States, exists no where else, we verily believe on the face of the globe. We would not say this, to cherish in ourselves and others that *national vain-glory*, with which we fear our country is sometimes too justly charged, but to awaken in our minds a sense of our great obligations to the *Sovereign Disposer* of all events for the innumerable temporal and spiritual favours, which he hath "given us richly to enjoy."—We disclaim all intention of flattering our fellow citizens with the praises of their goodness. Compared with what our moral and intellectual culture ought to be, when our superior privileges and advantages are considered, we are a degenerate and ungrateful people. If there are many instances of high cultivation and exemplary virtue, it must be confessed that public morals are much degraded.—Let then, every *christian*, every *patriot*, every *philanthropist* be anxious to diffuse and secure the knowledge, influence and power of evangelical truth and piety, as the *best* and *only* means of perpetuating and sanctifying our blessings. Let us all seek to cherish the religion, cultivate the habits, and preserve the virtuous institutions of our ancestors, remembering that these form the basis of all our boasted acquirements and possessions. When we abandon these, we abandon the God of our Fathers, and the vine which his own right hand hath planted. We may then take up our lamentation with an eternal adieu to all our greatness. We shall then add one more example to the many already gone before us, that republican liberty without virtue, is death.

In turning from our own free, peaceful and comparatively happy country, we look with feelings of pity and of interest on the disturbed and hazardous state of many other nations and people throughout the world. Since the subjugation of Spain, a solemn stillness seems to have succeeded among all the great Powers of Europe. Whether this be like the portentous calm that precedes the earthquake, time only can disclose. The friends and advocates of despotic power seem to be completely triumphant in France. As for Spain, she is in *politics*, what she has long been in *religion*—a mass of mouldering ruins. Her independence has gone, and French dictation has usurped the place of her own arbitrary and misguided counsels. A weak and faithless prince, a corrupt and superstitious priesthood, the prevalence of every vice offensive

to God and destructive of social happiness, the exclusion from her territory of all the most enlightened and virtuous of her citizens, confusion and misrule and contention, with the prospect of worse to come, if worse can be, these are the calamities which mark the frown of Heaven upon this unhappy country. Infatuated Spain! how art thou humbled and degraded, and still the cup of thy misery and wretchedness is not yet full.

But in the midst of all this darkness and disorder, the eye of the christian philanthropist finds a sweet resting-place along the shores of the *Ægean sea*. In the survey of Europe, nothing interests the minds of freemen like the noble struggle in which the *Greeks* are engaged for all that is dear and valuable in human existence.—Their cause, is the cause of liberty, against high-handed oppression—of refinement, against brutal barbarity—of religion, against the superstition and vices of abominable imposture. Where then is the friend of human improvement and human happiness, who does not feel deeply interested in their success? And should they even fail to secure and establish their rights. Should their attempt to throw off the Yoke of Turkish bondage, prove abortive and ruinous, they will still claim for their exertions, the sympathies of thousands, and the admiration of approving posterity. To see liberty trampled upon by the servile, mindless and enervate *Ottoman* and crushed in the cradle in which she was nurtured, would be most painful; but in the midst of her misfortunes she would appear as lovely and attractive as ever. It is gratifying to reflect in looking back upon the history of mankind, that we perceive no human cause so completely independent of fortune, as *liberty*. I make the appeal to all who are duly qualified to appreciate its justness, and ask whether the defeats of liberty on the *plains of Chærona* and *Pharsalia* do not kindle as much emotion in their minds, as its victorious efforts at *Marathon*; whether the death of *Cato* as a martyr in its cause, fills them with dismay, or inspirits them to do and to suffer in its defence; whether the fall of *Kosciusco* does not warm their hearts with the love of freedom, as much as the triumphs of *Bolívar*; and whether the shock which liberty has received in *Spain*, does not equally endear it to their feelings, with its establishment in the governments of *Columbia* and *Mexico*. But although, we make such suppositions, we hope and believe that there are better things in reserve for *Greece*. We rejoice in that spirit of benevolence and good will which has been awakened in our own land on behalf of this long injured people: a spirit which found its way into our national councils, and has gone down through every department of the community:—a spirit widely different from that cold, calculating, and systematick policy by which the powers of *European christendom* have been actuated, and which in the midst

of scenes too shocking to be described, and a waste of human life which sickens the soul to contemplate, has led them to regard the bloody contest with all the indifference of unconcerned and unfeeling spectators. It is true, the cloud of vengeance that gathered over their heads, and poured forth upon them from time to time, the viols of its wrath, is not yet dispersed, leaving the heavens bright and serene around them. It sometimes assumes a most dark and lowering aspect, and we have our fears for the issue. But the spirit of freedom, like a hidden fire, though smothered and apparently extinguished will burst forth into the burning flame—Though eclipsed by a night of depression, it will arise and shine with new lustre. What was said of the day-star by a poet, whom liberty gloried in enrolling among her champions, is equally applicable to liberty itself—

“ So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed,  
 “ And yet anon repairs his drooping head ;  
 “ And tricks his beams, and with new spangled ore,  
 “ Flames in the forehead of the morning sky.

Such are the principles which seem to be gaining ground in almost every kingdom of Europe, that it would appear she is destined at some future day, to become the theatre of political convulsions and revolutionary changes the most important. The spirit of man is beginning to feel cramped and galled under the shackles of tyranny. The struggle now going on, is one between *despotism and national liberty*. Although it seems to have been checked and intimidated and paralyzed and put down, by the unprincipled and atrocious attack upon the liberties and happiness of bleeding *Spain*, yet it is still nurtured in the breasts of thousands, and we believe will one day break forth with new energy for the disenthralment and regeneration of *Continental Europe*. That every nation has a right to be governed by laws and institutions of its own choice, is a doctrine which none presume to deny, but the dupes and advocates of arbitrary power. It is well known to be the very proposition which brings down upon it all the scowling vengeance of that assembly, which by a most unhallowed perversion of language, persists in calling itself the *Holy Alliance*. In the fulness of their temerity and presumption, they maintain before the face of an enlightened world, that all established things must remain undisturbed, and that no nation is entitled to more freedom than it now possesses, however despotic its present government.—To support such atrocious principles they raised that storm which burst over *Naples* ; which agitated *Spain* to its very centre, and mutters around the lakes and mountains of *Switzerland* : A storm, which may yet break over *the plains of Greece*, and which for a while threatened in the raging and desolation of its progress to cross the *Atlantic*.

In looking from the *Old* world to the *New*, we still observe the greater portion of the southern part of our continent in such a distracted and unsettled state, as to leave us much at a loss to conjecture, not only *when*, but *how* it will terminate. *Columbia* may be considered as having established her independence, and is now enjoying an organized government which in its main features promises to be stable. In *Mexico* the ephemeral empire of *Iturbide* has passed away and we suspect that the time will come, when the imperial crown, and the Kingly sceptre, will not find a head to wear the one, or a hand to wield the other in any part of the American continent.

We rejoice to contemplate a day when these “wars and rumors of wars” which are abroad in the earth, will be seen and heard no more.—Considered in the abstract, and unconnected with all views of the causes for which it may be undertaken, surely war is an evil that none but a misanthrope could conscientiously rejoice in or consistently promote. Where a nation rises with one consent to shake off the yoke of oppression, either from within or from without, all fair concessions having been proposed in vain, here indeed, we have a motive that both dignifies the effort and consecrates the success; here indeed, the most peaceable sect of the most peaceable religion might conscientiously combine. But we do not think that we should be far from the truth, if we were to assert that the principles of ambition and aggrandizement have originated most of the wars that have distracted the world. To display military talent and gratify a boundless thirst for military renown, what oceans of blood have been shed. The time however, is fast approaching with the *many* and now is with the *few*, when mere military talent abstractedly considered, and without any reference as to the ends for which it be displayed, will fail to secure for its possessor, either admiration or applause. In the progress of christian principles, we see the dawn of happier days. The reign of *Christianity* which is beginning to spread her peaceful wings over the kingdoms of the earth, will be a *reign of love*. Nation will no more rise against nation; the instruments of death will lose their use; the cannon will be fused; the standard will be furled; the soldier will return to his loom and to his spade, while his spear and his sword shall be beat into the plough-share and the pruning-hook. What a sublime and enrapturing scene does this contemplation hold out to the delighted mind! Navies carrying plenty instead of desolation to foreign lands; religion and learning and agriculture and the arts uniting and ornamenting the most distant countries; whilst the kings of the earth lay aside their ambitious views, and their jealousies and their hatreds and their fears, and all that train of little passions which disturb and agitate the world. O! how many vain-glorious and op-

pressive schemes will vanish ; how many heart burnings will die. The charities of life, will be as universal as life itself, and *love*, like a stupendous chain hanging down from heaven, will bind the heart of every created being to its centre by a link, and draw them all close to God, and to one another.

In expressing sentiments like these, we do not hesitate, because we believe them to be in perfect unison with the views and feelings of every reflecting person, and of those brave men, who at the call of their country were not backward to espouse her cause, and having avenged her wrongs, cheerfully threw down their arms, and retired again to the occupations of civil life. A small remnant of this chosen and gallant band of heroes, is still left among us to encourage us by their presence, and aid us by their counsel, and we cannot but regard them as the *living mementos* of those grand events which laid the foundation of that liberty, which we so happily enjoy.—Many of their number have already dropped through from our sight, and the curtain of death and the grave separates them from all sublunary things. Their ranks are yearly thinning off, and time with his consuming wave is bearing one after another to the shores of eternity. Since the last anniversary of this society—no less than *five* of its members have gone down to the house appointed for all the living. You no doubt anticipate me when I mention the names of *Bloomfield* and *Ballard* and *Brooks* and *Spencer* and *Hendry*. The *first two*, held the highest offices of your institution. The *one* by his integrity, industry and talents had filled several stations of honour and trust, and rose to the chair of Chief Magistrate of his native state. To say that he discharged its duties with fidelity, would be superfluous, when we recollect how long he enjoyed the confidence of his fellow citizens in this high and responsible capacity.—Of the *other*, it may be said, in the language of inspired wisdom, “He was a good man, and full of the Holy-Ghost, and of faith.” Having lived the life of the righteous, he departed in peace.—While therefore, I heartily congratulate their surviving brethren, and especially those of you, who are now seated before me, on this day of festivity ; while I rejoice in the protraction of your lives—and the continuance of your health—and the vigour of your mental powers ; and while in the spirit of unfeigned regard for your welfare, I wish you the return of many more interesting seasons like the present, yet I am feelingly constrained to remind you of your latter end. There is an hour coming on apace, when the infirmities of age will begin to come over you—and heart and flesh shall fail you—and the “silver cord” of life be loosed—and your retreat will be sounded from the theatre of time. To meet this hour with composure and with triumph, venerable Fathers, something more is necessary than mere *patriotism*, or *love of Coun-*

*try.* The *divine and transforming principle of the love of God*, which is the patriotism of angels, and of heaven, is required. This will gild the horizon of your dying day with cheering hope; it will enable you to lift up your heads with joy, and meet him that cometh upon his "pale horse" with holy courage; it will disarm "the king of terrors" of his deadly sting; it will dissipate the darkness that gathers round the tomb, and will wing your spirits to the mansions of eternal purity and rest.

*My Fellow-Citizens, and fellow sinners,* I cannot conclude this oration, without reminding you, that there is a much more glorious liberty, than that which calls forth the homage of a grateful and patriotic country this day. The liberty to which I allude, is what we all need and must all obtain, or be in bondage forever. It was purchased by the blood of the Son of God, who like a *mighty conqueror*, travailed in the greatness of his strength, and the infinitude of his sufferings, and the condescending grandeur of his mercy, to deliver not merely a *province* or a *kingdom* but a *dying world* from the damning and eternal despotism of *hell* and *sin*. "If therefore he shall make you free, you shall be free indeed." And in that day when he shall come to put down the powers of darkness, and give the finishing stroke to the empire of death and sin, you will be found among his *redeemed ones*, and "with songs and everlasting joy upon your heads," he will introduce you into that kingdom, where you will enjoy the blessings of this liberty, without interruption, and celebrate the stupendous achievements of this victory, without end.

