

REPUBLICAN CELEBRATION
OF
AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.

AN
ORATION,

PRONOUNCED

IN THE NEW MEETING HOUSE

AT

PLYMOUTH,

JULY 4, 1808.

BY ABRAHAM SAMPSON, A. M.

BOSTON:

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1808.



SIR,

THE numerous and respectable company of the Republican Citizens, this day assembled, have appointed us a committee to present you, in their names, their thanks for your spirited, elegant, and appropriate Address, delivered on this occasion, and to request a copy thereof for the press. This we now do with peculiar pleasure, resulting from our personal gratification in perfect unison with the feelings of our friends.

ADONIRAM JUDSON,
SAMUEL NILES,
JOSEPH BARKER. } Committee.

Mr. SABBIEL SAMPSON.

PLYMOUTH, JULY 4, 1808.

GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour. only in conformity with the request of so respectable a company, with great diffidence, to submit a copy of the Oration, this day delivered, for the press; desirous that it may be received with a candour comporting with its sincerity. Accept, Gentlemen, my thanks, for the very polite manner in which you have tendered me the wishes of my republican friends.

*I have the honour to be, gentlemen, with great respect,
your obedient servant.*

SABBIEL SAMPSON.

Reads. ADONIRAM JUDSON,
SAMUEL NILES,
JOSEPH BARKER.

PLYMOUTH, JULY 4, 1808.

ORATION.

In testimony of our patriotism we unfurl the signals of liberty, and, the first time, in this ancient town, celebrate the day which gave America birth. The sound of cannon which roused the slumbers of the night and ushered in this auspicious morn; the steel which now glitters in our view; the presence of a number of those veteran patriots who braved the tempest of our revolution—these things touch our feelings and flame our souls with all the ardour and energy of freedom.

This day commenced our national existence. Our fathers arose above the oppression of tyrants, made a solemn appeal to their conscience and their God, fixed their resolutions on liberty or death, and declared that the United Colonies were, and of right ought to be Free, Sovereign, and Independent States. Inspired with their patriotism, we this day declare to the world that we will celebrate the independence they declared, and to the last struggle vindicate our titles to the rich treasures of liberty.

The declaration of American Independence opened a new era in the history of nations. It laid a foundation for the regeneration of the world. By its energy the thrones of tyrants were shocked, monarchy seemed to languish and slavery expire. The impositions of ages, the superstition, fanaticism, and blind credulity of centuries give up their powers. The radiant sun of freedom dispels their darkness, illumines the world and adds new splendour to the dignity of man.

At this brilliant dawn of the rights of man, tyrants combined and directed their energy against the sons of freedom. Scarcely a voice was heard unless to eulogize the cruel acts and bloody deeds of a British ministry. Even heaven was implored to accomplish the de-

signs of those who had determined our ruin. Here seemed to be almost a pause in nature. The Americans arise, call into union all the energies of patriotism and valour, renew their resolutions on liberty or death, and swear to vindicate the independence they declared. The times begin to try the soul. The struggle commences between slavery and freedom.

Need I, on this festive day, call to your mind the worst of traitors, the blackest of satan's empire, the torries of our revolution? See them cutting asunder the dearest ties of nature, and brandishing their swords already moist with the blood of their brethren. You, my aged fathers, were spectators of their cruelty. You have not forgotten the savage deeds of Hutchinson and his party. You recollect the horn-book gentry, who mingled among the sons of freedom with the religion of God in their mouths and the malice of Satan in their hearts. You see them meditating the slavery and death of millions, while you were making efforts for liberty. You see them mourning that the proscribed Adams and Hancock were not victims of their sanguinary vengeance. A mercenary band of outcasts, from the filthy dungeons of Britain, join this miscreant host. In union they trample on the rights of man and exult in the ruins of innocence. They commit every crime that traits the character of a brutal ministry.

History relates the tragical scenes of those trying times. It tells us of every successive struggle between slavery and freedom. Registered in history, the cruelties of Gage, Howe, Pigot, Arnold, Burgoyne, and Cornwallis will be remembered with irreconcilable hatred; while the achievements of American worthies will swell the lists of patriotism and virtue to the latest period.

The cause Americans vindicated, in the revolution, did not embrace the rights of a tyrant or despot. It embraced the rights of their country and their God. Not the spirit of slavery, but the spirit of freedom led them on to brave the dangers of the day. It was this that rendered even life to them prodigal, and the thoughts

of dying for their country delightful. It stripped tyranny of its frowns, and death of its terrors. It enabled them to surmount every difficulty, endure every struggle and crush every foe. It finally tore the laurels of triumph from the brow of British glory, and wrote the name of Washington among the stars.

By her independence, declared and vindicated, America became the peaceful abode of persecuted Liberty; see this celestial goddess driven from paradise, see her an exile on the blood stained sands of Persia, leaving the ruins of Asia's glory, in vain she seeks a refuge among the boasted patriots of Greece. In Rome, even there she sees her altars abandoned and her temples consecrated to tyranny. Persecuted and driven from the splendours of the east she wings her way athwart the Alps, and commands an extensive view of the European world; but there, even there the sombre shades of oppression deny her a residence. She claps her wings on the glaciers of Switzerland; frowns on the tyrants of Britain, and wings her course to America. Here she sees the shades of oppression dispelled, and with joy beholds her incense arising from a thousand altars. While millions of new-born patriots shout her welcome, she takes her seat on the mount of Independence; adds a new zest to the joys of victory, and enriches the existence of man. Thus the intrigue of Britain was baffled, and our fathers, by the charms of their patriotism and courage, allured independence and liberty to hover around their standard and give a permanent lustre to the infant glory of their country.

The next prominent feature of our revolution, was the organization of government. Then the wisdom of the mind was called into action. A constitution of government was formed agreeable to the laws of equality. The productions of the human mind are ever to be valued according to their affinity with natural and divine truths. In this point of view our constitution is of inestimable value. While it is consonant to the dictates of common sense, it harmonizes with the oracles of inspiration. Says our Saviour, he who is greatest

among you let him be your servant. He who excels in wisdom and virtue chose him to regulate the great interests of your country. To disapprove of our constitution, is acting not only against reason, but it is aspersing the solemn injunctions of heaven. It forms a government for the whole. It meets all on the ground of equality. If not deprived of its privileges, by the corrupt agency of constituted authority, we have the liberty to choose our own rulers. Not riches nor birth-right, but real merit is the standard of choice. Our constitution is a satire on tyranny; a scourge to those who are born to rule; the ark of nature's rights; the bulwark of our national blessings.

The constitution being ratified, the illustrious **GEORGE WASHINGTON** was chosen President. The day of his inauguration was a day of joy. **SPARTA** boasted of a **LYCURGUS**; **ATHENS** a **SOLON**, and **ROME** a **CATO**: but **AMERICA** then boasted of a **WASHINGTON**. The sensibilities, of that affecting scene overcome the organs of language, and baffled imagination with all her powers. It is recorded as the most interesting period in the annals of history. Then independence and liberty met together; then unity and peace embraced each other. Then were consummated the great objects of our revolution. If there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repents, what must have been the joy of celestial spirits on that auspicious day? The vast galleries of heaven must have been expanded, and all the shining ranks in glory must have chanted the regeneration of the world.

Patriotism forbids our passing by the worthies who fought, bled and died for our freedom. Not like an **ALEXANDER** did they sit down and weep for more worlds to conquer. Having accomplished the independence and liberty of their country, they were satisfied; they were happy. To exhibit a just delineation of their characters, I must dip my "pencil in the colours of the sky." If any thing worthy of perpetual remembrance has ever been done, it was achieved by the fathers of our liberty. To the independence they vindicated and

the government they organized, even Britain, this day, would fain affix the seal of her kingdom. Their memories will exist parallel with the spirit of their country. Not like the heathen world do we resort to the broken monument, collect fragments of letters, and strive to spell the origin of our country, and the wisdom of its worthies. The birth of our nation and the deeds of its patriots are written on the orator's page. There they will remain while the cold marble crumbles to dust; there they will remain till the last period of time, yea longer. When the vast engines of nature shall cease to roll, and all terrestrial things shall be on fire, "the great archangel, stretching forth his almighty arm, will pluck the deathless scroll from the general conflagration and deposit it in the archives of eternity."

Is there any value in civil, political and religious blessings? Has independence a virtue, or liberty a charm? Are the rights dear to us which our fathers sealed with their blood? Arise then, unite your energies and strengthen that Union on which depends your sacred all. Despise not the last advice of your beloved WASHINGTON. Attend to his instructions and be politically wise. "The unity of government, which constitutes you one people, is also dear to you. It is justly so; for it is the main pillar in the edifice of your real independence, the support of your tranquillity at home, your peace abroad; of your safety; of your prosperity; of that very liberty which you so highly prize."

The nature of this union is republican. Its office is the support of our national constitution. Washington, when speaking of American liberty and unity, with emphasis he qualifies them with the term republican. This is the only union congenial to the spirit of our country, the only political union that can be constitutional in America. He who strives to destroy it, asperses the character of Washington and wounds the sacred character of our government, in the same degree as do Voltaire, Hume, and Paine the oracles of inspiration.

This union is absolutely necessary to our national existence. It is as important in the political, as in the so-

lar systems. In our solar system, the sun, planets and satellites are all mutually dependent. Nothing but union keeps them regular and harmonious in their courses. Was there the least disorganization; was even a small quantity of matter on our earth to revolt and destroy its union with its brother particles, it would derange our whole system. It would unhinge all the systems throughout infinite space. Instead of union and harmony, nothing would strike the view but one universal "crush of worlds." In our political system, the constitution is the great centre around which all the states are revolving. These bodies are all mutually dependent. Union alone preserves them from ruin. Give to certain characters the accomplishment of their designs; without opposing suffer them to divide the northern from the southern States, or even permit them to destroy the connexion of this state from her sister states. What are to be the consequences? Our political system will be convulsed. All the systems on the globe will feel the shock. Our unity will cease, our liberty expire, and the great pillars of universal philanthropy will be demolished. These now united would then be divided states. Wandering, without union for their existence, they would become the menial satellites of some European system, and America's sun would set for ever.

Impressed with the importance of union, Washington, when retired from the theatre of action, when no hypocrite disturbed his mind, when on the borders of the eternal world he makes one solemn appeal to his God, and utters the following important advice. "Consider union as the main prop of your liberty. Distrust the patriotism of those who in any quarter may endeavour to weaken its bands. Frown indignant upon the first dawning of every attempt to alienate any portion of our country from the rest, or to enfeeble those ties which link together the various parts." Here the saviour of his country seems to antedate the exertions, which have been and still are made against our republican union, but, agreeable to his advice, the patriotism of such struggles has been distrusted, and every attempt to di-

vide our country has been indignantly frowned to silence.

For a moment, revert to that period, when monarchical measures were arising on the ruins of republican union. Then the intricate and extensive system of British legislation was embraced. An impost, an excise, a stamp act, a house tax, a land tax, an enormous per cent. loan, alien and sedition laws, with an overgrown unnecessary military establishment in time of peace, which Washington declared to be hostile to republican liberty, all these, in rapid succession, threatened the destruction of our union. A division of the States was proclaimed from high authority. The first in power compares the American family to wolves; pronounces the constitution weak in its executive capacity, and declares that nothing but the energy of a nobility was adequate to the civilization, and good government of the sons of Columbia. For opposing these signs of terror, the patriot of our revolution was torn from his family as a disorganizer and a traitor and cast into irons. The same measures were ratified against which the immortal Washington once marshalled the armies of his country. The ensigns of tyranny hovered around, the political hemisphere darkened, and anti-American measures tarnished the lustre of our country. Every movement was a conspicuous attempt to destroy our union. But thanks to heaven, the guardian angel of America again appears and averts impending ruin. With the advice of their best friend the republicans arose, frowned indignant on the measures of that day, and in Jefferson obtained another Washington to restore the lost character of their country.

A remnant of that anti-American party still exists. We feel the effects of their conduct. The political jars in our land; the hatred against our government, the unbounded calumny heaped on the best characters, are but signs of their existence. With conduct marking footsteps of tyrants, they organize faction, and strive with all their powers to destroy national authority. While the last words of Washington were. "the unity

of government is dear to you," their conduct says not unity but discord and dissention. While he strives to strengthen they strive to weaken those ties which link together the various parts. While his legacy recommends peace at home, their conduct encourages domestic riot and discord. While it inculcates peace abroad, they, by eulogizing the conduct of our enemies, and calumniating the government of America, thus impede the accomplishment of a permanent peace with the world. Their whole conduct is but one continued series of abuse on the government of our land. Even foreign tyrants blush at the recitation of their calumny on the American character. Does not conduct like this counteract the legacy of Washington? Does it not speak an effort to destroy the republican union of our land? Are the authors of such conduct Washington's friends? Were they his friends in our revolution? Would they have groaned in seeing that patriot struggling on Bunker's Mount? Would they have shed a tear in seeing him falling and expiring in the arms of a Warren? Were their minds ever qualified for the support and enjoyment of republican patriotism and union? Do they hereafter wish to sit down with Warren, Montgomery and Washington in the realms of bliss? If so, why do they not follow their advice? Why do they not abandon the cause of dissention, fly to the standard of union? and strengthen the republican energies of their country.

Ask the enemies to our republican union what evil we have done? An embargo is, by them proclaimed, as an evil of the greatest magnitude. They even call upon us to brandish our arms against our government for ratifying this measure, which secures our lives and property from the grasp of foreign tyrants. They call upon us to overthrow our national authority for maintaining the independence we this day celebrate. Gracious heaven! Is this the ingratitude of America? May the time never come, when I shall thus disturb the ashes of Washington; when I shall thus strive to destroy the union of my country, and abuse the patience of my God.

If this time ever comes, come with it hard hearted insensibility, make me stupid to the joys of freedom; and come, O tyranny, with all thy haggard forms, lay me silently down in the "cold bosom of slavery."

England and France have extended their blockading decrees to the destruction of our rights and privileges as a nation. Shall we permit them to riot in the destruction of our lives, liberty and property? Shall we declare war with the world? Or shall we live by ourselves, independent in the security of our national rights? Says Washington, "why entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils of European ambition, rivalry, interest, humour, or caprice? Observe good faith and justice toward all nations. Cultivate peace and harmony with all. The experiment is recommended by every sentiment, which ennobles human nature." Regarding these sentiments, which embrace our best good, our republican authority laid on the present embargo. Ask the revilers of our government what system their wisdom dictates at the present crisis. The answer is, abandon the principles of Washington. Establish an alliance with England against France. Leave the vine and figtree. Beat your ploughshares into swords, your pruning hooks into spears. Unite with an expiring kingdom against a rising world. Exchange the sweets of peace for the slaughter and carnage of war. Do you, my countrymen, who experienced the scenes of Lexington, and witnessed the flames of Charlestown, do you wish for a war? Do you wish to read a paragraph describing the slaughter and carnage of expiring millions? Do you wish your thousand hills to be stained with the blood of your fathers, your mothers, your wives and your children? Who then is it who wishes for a war, while an embargo may restore every injured right? Who thus adds a degree of depravity to a crime of the deepest dye? Our government have determined to curb the insolence of foreign foes. They have resolved to bring about that period when thoughtless tyrants shall regard our rights: when

our commerce shall pass uninterrupted in the enjoyments of its natural rights, on the great highway of nations. To accomplish this great object the embargo measure was ratified. We can attack our enemies with no weapon more powerful. It has already done more than the combined armies of Europe for years. They have never caused England to exclaim, peace with France or no king. Our embargo has done more than this. It has prostrated that nation, at the feet of the throne, supplicants for their existence. Already do they declare, even from the cabinet, peace with America or we expire. All this is accomplished not by wading through seas of blood, or climbing over the mangled bodies of our brothers; but by the embargo, while sitting under our vines and fig trees. A measure which shakes thrones and empires, and proffers to us the security of our lives, liberty, property, independence and national existence. Distrust then the patriotism of those, who call this measure an evil. Frown indignant upon their attempts to destroy our government, and demolish the great pillars of our republican union. Though they salute you with pleasing sounds, be not betrayed. Enlist under the banners of your national administration. They act not by "partial" but by general laws; they have not left their own to stand on foreign ground. They have not interwoven their destiny with any part of convulsed Europe. Rather than listen to the calls of their enemies, they follow the advice of Washington. Dressed in his robes, they this day lean on the pillars of their union, circulating joy through the hearts of all republicans, and terror through the hearts of all tyrants.

The time has already come when you and I must establish our political characters. To slumber, at the present important crisis, is indifference too criminal. Patriotism, liberty, duty and conscience call for an exertion of all our powers. We must arise, marshal ourselves under the banners of our country, strengthen our republican union, or, like torics, spare our eulogies for

the cruelties of our enemies. We, who have parents and children, who regard the principles of Washington and hold sacred the constitution of our country, we this day take a bold stand with the government of America. With them we resolve to maintain our union, and never yield the rights our fathers purchased with their blood. Should foreign or domestic enemies invade us ; should they step one hostile foot over the threshold of our liberty ; they shall be prostrated. Our swords will gleam from a thousand scabbards. Their bones shall be scattered on our mountains, and shouts of triumph shall again re-echo from " Good-Hope to Nova-Zembla, from Mississippi to the Ganges."

Cherish religion as the great source of human happiness, and the support of that union, on which depends our national existence. It solemnizes the mind, sublimates the soul, and exalts the affections to God. With celestial energy it clothes a nation with dignity, and inspires unity, peace and love. On this festive day this temple was erected to the service of God. That religion, which exalts nations and qualifies the soul for bliss, you have ever heard solemnly inculcated from this sacred desk. Though enemies may forbid the joys of patriotism here to flow ; though they may threaten this part of Zion to become a theatre for the triumphs of oppression and cruelty ; we trust this time will never come ; but may the pure incense of patriotism never cease here to rise, and may this ever remain a temple for the living God.

With religion cherish universal information as the great barrier against the inroads of monarchy ; exercise moderation in argument, and candour in decision. Frown indignant on every attempt to dissolve our union. Maintain your independence, and let your every sacrifice be for your country's good.

The American fair will cherish the principles of Washington, smile success on the efforts of their brothers, and ever decorate with virtue the temple of liberty.

Fellow citizens, we would fain this day diffuse the joys of our country around our guilty globe, and embrace the universe in the arms of love. But while tyrants, mad with ambition, eagerly thirst for conquest and slaughter, so long our globe will be convulsed with the ravages of war, the termination of present European conflicts will affect our national existence. Then, while empires are falling, kingdoms dissolving, and the great powers of the earth are struggling for victory, I call upon you, in the presence of God and the universe, to deposit in the temple of religion your firmest pledges to vindicate your independence. Bind the legacy of Washington to your hearts. Unite in one vast republican brotherhood. Embrace the great pillars of your country, and swear to support them to the last struggle. These were the resolves of the heroes of our revolution. Follow their examples, imbibe their sentiments, be actuated by their patriotism, and you will obtain their triumphs, and their glory. With dignity and splendour, you will go on like yonder sun, for ever rejoicing in your course.

