AN

ORATION

DELIVERED

March 5*th*, 1772.

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MARCH 5th, 1772.

AT THE

REQUEST OF THE INHABITANTS

OF THE

TOWN OF *BOSTON*;

TO

COMMEMORATE THE BLOODY TRAGEDY

OF THE

FIFTH OF *March*, 1770.

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BY

Dr. JOSEPH WARREN.

Quis talia fando,
Myrmidonum, Dolopumve, aut duri miles Ulyssei,
Temperet a lacrymis. VIRGIL.

BOSTON:

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1772.

[The SECOND EDITION.]

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At a Meeting of the Freeholders and other Inhabitants of the Town of BOSTON, *duly qualified and legally assembled in* Faneuil-Hall, *and from thence adjourn'd to the* Old South Meeting-House, *on* Thursday *the 5th Day of* March, Anno Domini, 1772.

Voted Unanimously,

THAT the Moderator *Richard Dana*, Esq; the Honorable *John Hancock*, Esq; Mr. *Samuel Adams*, *Joseph Jackson*, Esq; Mr. *Henderson Inches*, Mr. *David Jeffries*, and Mr. *William Molineux*, be and hereby are appointed a Committee to return the Thanks of this Town to *Joseph Warren*, Esq; for the Oration just now delivered by him at their Request, in Commemoration of the horrid Massacre perpetrated on the Evening of the 5th of *March*, 1770, by a Party of Soldiers of the XXIXth Regiment; and to desire a Copy thereof for the Press. *Attest*,

William Cooper, *Town-Clerk.*

GENTLEMEN,

THE generous Candor of my Fellow-Citizens prevails on me to give a Copy of what was Yesterday delivered, for the Press.

I am, Gentlemen, with much Respect,

Your most humble Servant,

JOSEPH WARREN.

March 6, 1772.

AN

ORATION.

WHEN we turn over the hiſtoric page, and trace the riſe and fall of ſtates and empires; the mighty revolutions which have ſo often varied the face of the world ſtrike our minds with ſolemn ſurprize, and we are naturally led to endeavor to ſearch out the cauſes of ſuch aſtoniſhing changes.

THAT Man is formed for *ſocial life*, is an obſervation which upon our firſt enquiry preſents itſelf immediately to our view, and our reaſon approves that wiſe and generous principle which actuated the firſt founders of civil government; an inſtitution which hath its origin in the *weakneſs* of individuals, and hath for its end, the *ſtrength and ſecurity* of all: And ſo long as the means of effecting this important end, are thoroughly known and religiouſly attended to, Government is one of the richeſt Bleſſings to mankind, and ought to be held in the higheſt veneration.

IN

IN young and new-formed communities, the grand design of this institution is most generally understood, and most strictly regarded; the motives which urged to the social compact cannot be at once forgotten, and *that* equality which is remembered to have subsisted so lately among them, prevents those who are cloathed with authority from attempting to invade the freedom of their Brethren; or if such an attempt is made, it prevents the community from suffering the offender to go unpunished: Every member feels it to be his interest, and knows it to be his duty, to preserve inviolate the constitution on which the public safety depends*, and is equally ready to assist the *Magistrate* in the execution of the laws, and the *Subject* in defence of his right; and so long as this noble attachment to a constitution, founded on free and benevolent principles exists in full vigor in any state, *that* state must be flourishing and happy.

IT was *this* noble attachment to a free constitution, which raised ancient Rome from the smallest beginnings to that bright summit of happiness and glory to which she arrived; and it was the loss of *this* which plunged her from *that* summit into the black gulph of infamy and slavery. It was *this* attachment which inspired her senators with wisdom; it was *this* which glowed in the breasts of her heroes; it was *this* which guarded her liberties, and extended her dominions, gave peace at home and commanded respect abroad: And when *this* decayed, her magistrates lost their reverence for justice and the laws, and degenerated into tyrants and oppressors—her senators

* Omnes ordines ad conservamdam rempublicam, mente, voluntate, studio, virtute, voce, consentiunt. CICERO.

nators forgetful of their dignity, and ſeduced by baſe corruption, betrayed their country——her ſoldiers regardleſs of their relation to the community, and urged *only* by the hopes of plunder and rapine, unfeelingly committed the moſt flagrant enormities; and hired to the trade of death, with relentleſs fury they perpetrated the moſt cruel murders, whereby the ſtreets of imperial Rome were drenched with her *nobleſt* blood—Thus *this empreſs* of the world loſt her dominions abroad, and her inhabitants diſſolute in their manners, at length became contented *ſlaves*; and ſhe ſtands to this day, the ſcorn and deriſion of nations, and a monument of this eternal truth, that PUBLIC HAPPINESS DEPENDS ON A VIRTUOUS AND UNSHAKEN ATTACHMENT TO A FREE CONSTITUTION.

IT was *this* attachment to a conſtitution, founded on free and benevolent principles, which inſpired the firſt ſettlers of this country:—They ſaw with grief the daring outrages committed on the free conſtitution of their native land—they knew that nothing but a civil war could at that time reſtore it's priſtine purity. So hard was it to reſolve to embrue their hands in the *blood* of their brethren, that they choſe rather to quit their fair poſſeſſions and ſeek another habitation in a diſtant clime——When they came to this new world, which they fairly purchaſed of the Indian natives, the only rightful proprietors, they cultivated the then barren ſoil by their inceſſant labor, and defended their dear-bought poſſeſſions with the fortitude of the chriſtian, and the bravery of the hero.

AFTER various ſtruggles, which during the tyrannnic reigns of the houſe of STUART, were conſtantly kept up between right and wrong, between liberty and ſlavery, the connection between Great-Britain and this Colony was ſettled in the reign of King William and Queen Mary by a compact, the conditions of which were expreſſed in a Charter; by which all the liberties and immunities of BRITISH SUBJECTS were confirmed to this Province, as fully and as abſolutely as they poſſibly could be by any human inſtrument which can be deviſed. And it is undeniably true, that the greateſt and moſt important right of a Britiſh ſubject is, that *he ſhall be governed by no laws but thoſe to which he either in perſon or by his repreſentative hath given his conſent*: And this I will venture to aſſert, is the grand baſis of Britiſh freedom; it is interwoven with the conſtitution; and whenever this is loſt, the conſtitution muſt be deſtroyed.

THE *Britiſh conſtitution* (of which ours is a copy) is a happy compound of the three forms (under ſome of which all governments may be ranged) viz. Monarchy, Ariſtocracy, and Democracy: Of theſe three the *Britiſh Legiſlature* is compoſed, and without the conſent of each branch, nothing can carry with it the force of a law: In moſt caſes, either the ariſtocratic or the democratic branch may propoſe a law, and ſubmit it to the deliberation of the other two; but, when a law is to be paſſed for raiſing a tax, that law can originate only in the democratic branch, which is the Houſe of Commons in Britain, and the Houſe of Repreſentatives here——The reaſon is obvious: They, and their conſtituents are to pay much the largeſt

part

part of it, but as the ariſtocratic branch, which in Britain, is the Houſe of Lords, and in this province, the Council, are alſo to pay ſome part, THEIR conſent is neceſſary; and as the monarchic branch, which in Britain is the King, and with us, either the King in perſon, or the Governor whom he ſhall be pleaſed to appoint to act in his ſtead, is ſuppoſed to have a juſt ſenſe of his own *intereſt*, which is *that* of all the ſubjects in general, HIS conſent is alſo neceſſary, and when the conſent of theſe three branches is obtained, the taxation is moſt certainly legal.

LET us now allow ourſelves a few moments to examine the *late acts of the Britiſh parliament for taxing America*——Let us with candor judge whether they are conſtitutionally binding upon us:— If they are, IN THE NAME OF JUSTICE let us ſubmit to them, without one murmuring word.

FIRST, I would aſk whether the members of the Britiſh Houſe of Commons are the Democracy of this Province? if they are, they are either the people of this province, or are elected by the people of this province, to repreſent them, and have therefore a conſtitutional right to originate a Bill for taxing them: It is moſt certain they are neither; and therefore nothing done by *them* can be ſaid to be done by the democratic branch of our conſtitution. I would next aſk, whether the Lords who compoſe the ariſtocratic branch of the Britiſh legiſlature, arePeers of America? I never heard it was (even in theſe extraordinary times) ſo much as pretended,

and if they are not, certainly no act of *theirs* can be ſaid to be the act of the ariſtocratic branch of our conſtitution. The power of the monarchic branch we with pleaſure acknowledge, reſides in the King, who may act either in perſon or by his repreſentative; and I freely confeſs that I can ſee no reaſon why a PROCLAMATION *for raiſing money in America* iſſued by the King's *ſole* authority, would not be equally conſiſtent with our conſtitution, and therefore equally binding upon us with the *late acts of the Britiſh parliament for taxing us*; for it is plain, that if there is any validity in *thoſe acts*, it muſt ariſe altogether from the monarchical branch of the legiſlature: And I further think that it would be at leaſt as equitable; for I do not conceive it to be of the leaſt importance to us by *whom* our property is taken away, ſo long as it is taken without our conſent; and I am very much at a loſs to know by what figure of rhetoric, the inhabitants of this province can be called FREE SUBJECTS, when they are obliged to obey implicitly, ſuch laws as are made for them by men three thouſand miles off, whom they know not, and whom they never have impowered to act for them; or how they can be ſaid to have PROPERTY, when a body of men over whom they have not the leaſt controul, and who are not in any way accountable to them, ſhall oblige them to deliver up any part, or the whole of their ſubſtance, without even aſking their conſent: And yet, whoever pretends that the late acts of the Britiſh parliament for taxing America ought to be deemed binding upon us, muſt admit at once that we are abſolute SLAVES, and have no property of our own; or elſe that we may be FREE-MEN, and at the ſame time under a neceſſity of obeying the *arbitrary commands of thoſe* over

whom

whom we have no controul or influence; and that we may HAVE PROPERTY OF OUR OWN, which is entirely at the diſpoſal of another. Such groſs abſurdities, I believe will not be reliſhed in this enlightened age: And it can be no matter of wonder that the people quickly perceived, and ſeriouſly complained of the inroads which theſe acts muſt unavoidably make upon their *Liberty*, and of the hazard to which their *whole property* is by *them* expoſed; for, if they may be taxed without their conſent even the ſmalleſt trifle, they may alſo without their conſent be deprived of every thing they poſſeſs, although never ſo valuable, never ſo dear. Certainly it never entered the hearts of our anceſtors, that after ſo many dangers in this then deſolate wilderneſs, their hard-earned property ſhould be at the diſpoſal of the Britiſh parliament; and as it was ſoon found that this taxation could not be ſupported by reaſon and argument, it ſeemed neceſſary that one act of oppreſſion ſhould be enforced by another, and therefore, contrary to our juſt rights as poſſeſſing, or at leaſt having a juſt title to poſſeſs, all the *liberties* and IMMUNITIES of Britiſh ſubjects, a ſtanding army was eſtabliſhed among us in time of peace; and evidently for the purpoſe of effecting *that*, which it was one principal deſign of the founders of the conſtitution to prevent, (when they declared a ſtanding army in time of peace to be AGAINST LAW) namely, for the enforcement of obedience to acts which upon fair examination appeared to be unjuſt and unconſtitutional.

THE

THE ruinous consequences of standing armies to free communities may be seen in the histories of SYRACUSE, ROME, and many other once flourishing STATES; some of which have now scarce a name! Their baneful influence is most suddenly felt, when they are placed in populous cities; for, by a corruption of morals, the public happiness is immediately affected; and that this is one of the effects of quartering troops in a populous city, is a truth to which many a mourning parent, many a lost, despairing child in this metropolis, must bear a very melancholy testimony.—Soldiers are also taught to consider arms as the only arbiters by which every dispute is to be decided between contending states;—they are instructed *implicitly* to obey their commanders, without enquiring into the justice of the cause they are engaged to support: Hence it is, that they are ever to be dreaded as the ready engines of tyranny and oppression.—And it is too observable that they are prone to introduce the same mode of decision in the disputes of individuals, and from thence have often arisen great animosities between *them* and *the inhabitants*, who whilst in a naked defenceless state, are frequently insulted and abused by an armed soldiery. And this will be more especially the case, when the troops are informed, that the intention of their being stationed in any city, is to OVERAWE THE INHABITANTS. That, *this* was the avowed design of stationing an armed force in this town, is sufficiently known; and WE, my fellow-citizens have seen, WE have felt the tragical effects!—THE FATAL FIFTH OF MARCH 1770, CAN NEVER BE FORGOTTEN—The horrors of THAT DREADFUL NIGHT are but too deeply impressed on our hearts—Language is too feeble to paint the emotions of our souls, when our streets were stained with the BLOOD

OF

OF OUR BRETHREN,—when our ears were wounded by the groans of the *dying*, and our eyes were tormented with the ſight of the mangled bodies of the *dead*.—When our alarmed imagination preſented to our view our houſes wrapt in flames,—our children ſubjected to the barbarous caprice of the raging ſoldiery—our beauteous virgins expoſed to all the inſolence of unbridled paſſion,—our virtuous wives endeared to us by every tender tie, falling a ſacrifice to worſe than brutal violence, and perhaps like the famed LUCRETIA, diſtracted with anguiſh and deſpair, ending their wretched lives by their own fair hands.—When we beheld the authors of our diſtreſs parading in our ſtreets, or drawn up in regular *battalia*, as though in a hoſtile city; our hearts beat to arms; we ſnatched our weapons, almoſt reſolved by one deciſive ſtroke, to avenge the death of our SLAUGHTERED BRETHREN, and to ſecure from future danger, all that we held moſt dear: But propitious Heaven forbad the bloody carnage, and ſaved the threatned victims of our too keen reſentment, not by their diſcipline, not by their regular array,——no, it was royal GEORGE's livery that proved their ſhield—it was that which turned the pointed engines of deſtruction from their breaſts.† The thoughts of vengeance were ſoon buried in our inbred affection to Great-Britain, and calm reaſon dictated a method of removing the troops more mild than an immediate recourſe to the ſword. With united efforts

† I have the ſtrongeſt reaſon to believe that I have mentioned the only circumſtance, which ſaved the troops from deſtruction. It was then, and now is, the opinion of thoſe who are beſt acquainted with the ſtate of affairs at that time, that had thrice that number of troops, belonging to any power at open war with us, been in this town in the ſame expoſed condition, ſcarce a man would have lived to have ſeen the morning light.

efforts you urged the immediate departure of the troops from the town—you urged it with a resolution which ensured success——you obtained your wishes, and the removal of the troops was effected, without one drop of *their blood* being shed by the inhabitants!

THE immediate actors in the tragedy of THAT NIGHT were surrendered to justice.——It is not mine to say how far they were guilty! they have been tried by the country and ACQUITTED of murder! And they are not to be again arraigned at an earthly bar: But, surely the men who have promiscuously scattered *death* amidst the *innocent* inhabitants of a populous city, ought to see well to it, that they be prepared to stand at the bar of an OMNISCIENT JUDGE! And all who contrived or encouraged the stationing troops in this place, have reasons of eternal importance, to reflect with deep contrition on their base designs, and humbly to repent of their impious machinations.

THE infatuation which hath seemed for a number of years to prevail in the British councils with regard to us, is truly astonishing! What can be proposed by the repeated attacks made upon our freedom, I really cannot surmise; even leaving justice and humanity out of the question, I do not know one single advantage which can arise to the British nation, from our being enslaved:—I know not of any gains, which can be wrung from us by oppression, which they may not obtain from us by our own consent in the smooth channel of commerce: We wish the wealth and prosperity of *Britain*; we contribute largely to both.—Doth what we contribute lose all its value,

because

becauſe it is done voluntarily? The amazing increaſe of riches to *Britain*, the great riſe of the value of her lands, the flouriſhing ſtate of her navy; are ſtriking proofs of the advantages derived to her, from her commerce with the Colonies; and it is our earneſt deſire that ſhe may ſtill continue to enjoy the ſame emoluments, until her ſtreets are paved with AMERICAN GOLD; only, let us have the pleaſure of calling it our own, whilſt it is in our hands;—but this it ſeems is too great a favour—we are to be governed by the *abſolute commands of others, our property is to be taken away without our conſent*—if we complain, our complaints are treated with contempt; if we aſſert our rights, that aſſertion is deemed inſolence; if we humbly offer to ſubmit the matter to the impartial deciſion of reaſon, the SWORD is judged the moſt proper argument to ſilence our murmurs!—But, this cannot long be the caſe—ſurely, the *Britiſh* nation will not ſuffer the reputation of their juſtice, and their honor, to be thus ſported away by a *capricious miniſtry*; no, they will in a ſhort time open their eyes to their true intereſt: They nouriſh in their own breaſts a noble love of Liberty, they hold her dear, and they know that all who have once poſſeſſed her charms had rather die than ſuffer her to be torn from their embraces—They are alſo ſenſible that *Britain* is ſo deeply intereſted in the proſperity of the colonies, that ſhe muſt eventually feel every wound given to their freedom; they cannot be ignorant that more dependence may be placed on the affections of a BROTHER, than on the forced ſervices of a SLAVE—They muſt approve your efforts for the preſervation of your rights; from a ſympathy of ſoul they muſt pray for your ſucceſs: And I doubt not but they will ere long

exert

exert themselves effectually to redress your grievances. Even in the dissolute reign of king CHARLES II. when the house of *Commons* impeached the Earl of Clarendon of high treason, the first article on which they founded their accusation was, that "*he had designed a* "*standing army to be raised, and to govern the kingdom thereby.*" And the eighth article was, that "*he had introduced an arbitrary* "*government into his Majesty's plantations*".—A terrifying example, to those who are now forging *chains* for this COUNTRY.

YOU have my friends and countrymen often frustrated the designs of your enemies, by your unanimity and fortitude: It was your union and determined spirit which expelled those troops, who polluted your streets with INNOCENT BLOOD.—You have appointed this anniversary as a standing memorial of the BLOODY CONSEQUENCES OF PLACING AN ARMED FORCE IN A POPULOUS CITY, and of your deliverance from the dangers which then seemed to hang over your heads; and I am confident that you never will betray the least want of spirit when called upon to guard your freedom.—None but they who set a just value upon the blessings of Liberty are worthy to enjoy her—Your illustrious fathers were her zealous votaries—when the blasting frowns of tyranny drove her from public view, they clasped her in their arms, they cherished her in their generous bosoms, they brought her safe over the rough ocean, and fixed her seat in this then dreary wilderness; they nursed her infant age with the most tender care; for her sake, they patiently bore the severest hardships; for her support, they underwent the most rugged toils: In her defence, they boldly encountered the most

alarming

alarming dangers; neither the ravenous beasts that ranged the woods for prey; nor the more furious savages of the wilderness; could damp their ardor!—Whilst with one hand, they broke the stubborn glebe; with the other, they grasped their weapons, ever ready to protect her from danger.——No sacrifice, not even their own blood, was esteemed too rich a libation for her altar! God prospered their valour, they preserved her brillancy unsullied, they enjoyed her whilst they lived, and dying, bequeathed the dear inheritance, to your care. And as they left you this glorious legacy, they have undoubtedly transmitted to you, some portion of their noble spirit, to inspire you with virtue to merit her, and courage to preserve her; you surely cannot, with such examples before your eyes, as every page of the history of this country affords;* suffer your liberties to be ravished from you by lawless force, or cajoled away by flattery and fraud.

THE voice of your Fathers blood cries to you from the ground; MY SONS, SCORN TO BE SLAVES! In vain we met the frowns of tyrants—In vain, we left our native land—In vain, we crossed the boisterous ocean, found a new world, and prepared it for the happy residence of LIBERTY—In vain, we toiled—In vain, we fought—We bled in vain, if you, our offspring want valour to repel the assaults of her invaders!——— Stain not the glory of your worthy ancestors, but like them resolve, never to part with your birth-right, be wise in your deliberations, and determined in your exertions for the preservation of your

* At simul heroum laudes, et facta parentis
Jam legere, et quæ sit poteris cognoscere virtus. VIRG.

your liberties.—Follow not the dictates of paſſion, but enliſt yourſelves under the ſacred banner of reaſon: Uſe every method in your power to ſecure your rights: At leaſt prevent the curſes of poſterity from being heaped upon your memories.

If you with united zeal and fortitude oppoſe the torrent of oppreſſion; if you feel the true fire of patriotiſm burning in your breaſts; if you from your ſouls deſpiſe the moſt gaudy dreſs that ſlavery can wear; if you really prefer the lonely cottage (whilſt bleſt with liberty) to gilded palaces ſurrounded with the enſigns of ſlavery; you may have the fulleſt aſſurance that tyranny with her whole accurſed train will hide their hideous heads in confuſion, ſhame and deſpair—If you perform your part, you muſt have the ſtrongeſt confidence, that THE SAME ALMIGHTY BEING who protected your pious and venerable fore-fathers—who enabled them to turn a barren wilderneſs into a fruitful field, who ſo often *made bare his arm* for their ſalvation, will ſtill be mindful of you their offſpring.

MAY THIS ALMIGHTY BEING graciouſly preſide in all our councils.—May he direct us to ſuch meaſures as he himſelf ſhall approve, and be pleaſed to bleſs.—May we ever be a people favored of GOD.—May our land be a land of Liberty, the ſeat of virtue, the aſylum of the oppreſſed, *a name and a praiſe in the whole earth*, until the laſt ſhock of time ſhall bury the empires of the world in one common undiſtinguiſhed ruin!

FINIS.