

*JOSEPH CHANDLER*

AN

ORATION,

PRONOUNCED

AT THE CENTRE MEETING-HOUSE,

IN

MONMOUTH, MAINE,

ON

THE FOURTH OF JULY, 1806.

IN

COMMEMORATION

OF

**American Independence.**

~~~~~  
By JOSEPH CHANDLER.  
~~~~~

---

PORTLAND:  
FROM THE ARGUS-PRESS.....BY N. WILLIS.  
1806.

MONMOUTH, 4th July, 1806.

To JOSEPH CHANDLER, Esq.

SIR,

*AT the request of the Gentlemen assembled at Prescott's Hall, to celebrate the Anniversary of our Independence, we return you their thanks for your excellent Oration, pronounced on the occasion, and request a copy thereof for the Press.*

JOHN CHANDLER,  
WILLIAM SPRAGUE,  
MARK ANDREWS.

MONMOUTH, July 4, 1806.

GENTLEMEN,

*ACCEPT for yourselves, and the Gentlemen assembled at Prescott's Hall, my acknowledgments for the respect paid me by your request for a copy of my Oration for the Press. At the same time that I submit it to the inspection of the public, I have a confidence in the candour of my Fellow-Citizens. Under these impressions, I submit it to your disposal.*

*With respectful considerations,*

*I am, Gentlemen,*

*Your obt. servant,*

JOSEPH CHANDLER.

Hon. JOHN CHANDLER, }  
WILLIAM SPRAGUE, }  
MARK ANDREWS, Esqs. }

## ORATION.

*FRIENDS and FELLOW-CITIZENS,*

IT has been the custom of almost all Nations and ages, to celebrate those great events which have, at different periods of the world, varied and changed its political aspect. The establishment of Empires, their revolutions from the shackles of Bondage to Freedom, have almost invariably excited in the glowing bosom of Patriotism, those heavenly emotions which Freedom inspires.

At the return of this glorious Anniversary, the importance of the event which its institution is designed to commemorate, is sufficient to preclude every apology: For, if the splendid achievements of Wisdom, Patriotism and Valour deserve to be praised, remembered and imitated; if the immortal *Laurels* and *Trophies* of *SAGES* and *HEROES*, justly won in the cabinet of wisdom or in the field of battle, in defence of all that is dear to man, are worthy to be handed down to Posterity—then are we justified in making *This Day* a Solemn Festival, religiously devoted to those virtues which inspired the venerable Fathers of American Liberty; who unfolded to the world a new and glorious era in the history of Nations; and whose immortality shall be coeval with the gratitude of Posterity.

To us, then, my Countrymen, is committed the sacred pledge of their toils and virtue; to us is committed this glorious inheritance, for which they faced the imperious foes of Liberty; for which they spilt

their blood, and gave their fortunes and their lives a voluntary sacrifice—Can we, then, be insensible of the importance of the trust? No; my Countrymen, lest the sacred ashes of their illustrious *Manes* should cry from the grave against us, for being unworthy the blessings we possess! Shall we lull in stupor and apathy, and suffer the yoke of Tyranny to be again riveted on our necks? No; but let the spirit of **FREEDOM** and **INDEPENDENCE** electrify our hearts; let the **World** know that *AMERICANS* are worthy to possess and able to defend those sacred Rights which the **GOD OF NATURE** has made it the privilege of Man to enjoy.

At the moment when the grateful hearts of Americans are enlivened by an impressive sense of the singular political happiness we enjoy; with souls expanded with the genuine flame of Philanthropy, we approach the *Altar of Freedom*.

While we call to mind some of the most prominent features of the Principles which impelled the People of America to an Independent Establishment among the Nations of the Earth, our thoughts will naturally range the wide field of the world; travel back to the first creation of man, and trace his various footsteps in political existence, through the vast and important changes which have so often marked the progress or decline of Nations and Empires:—For it was a fair and candid review of this important subject, added to an enlightened mind, and a sacred impulse of celestial fire animating the noblest powers of the human heart, which effected the *FREEDOM* of *America*, and established her *EMPIRE* on the permanent foundations of Nature and Reason.

When this Globe sprang to existence, and turned on its revolving axis ;

“ And from the Orient burst the golden Sun,”

with all the cheering beams of life and splendor, calling forth the latent energies of Nature, clothing the hills, vallies and plains with the richest verdure, luxuriance and beauty—then did this terrestrial Eden gladly receive the soft impressions of the footsteps of the Lord of this Lower Word.

Whether reclining under the arcadian groves of flowering forests ; ranging the fertile plains in the capacity of husbandmen ; or in the sylvan shades and grassy mountains, the pastoral care of flocks and herds engaged the attention of primeval man—all were free, and all were equal : But, to suppose that man could live in this state of purity and simplicity, thro’ the succeeding ages of the world, without Government or Laws, would be as idle and chimerical as it is contrary to fact and the experience of every age and generation : For the evil passions of man springing up, and encroaching on the rights of his neighbor, and even lifting the horrid weapons of blood against his defenceless brother, impelled the necessity of Barriers to defend those Rights, and induced him to institute Rules of Order and Government. But these in the beginning must have been rude and undigested, and far inadequate to the purpose in the progressive advancement of Art, Science and Civilization. Hence, an advancement in the one naturally made an improvement in the other. It was to the superior advantages of civil society, and a necessity of submitting to certain regulations that induced man to give up certain rights for the purpose of having the others guaranteed and defended. It is, there-

fore, to the consent of the individuals of the community, that Government owes its origin. The People thus giving their acquiescence to the Laws, must naturally be ready to give their aid in the execution of them. A Magistrate, therefore, receiving his authority from the People, would naturally execute the Laws in the most just and equitable manner. But as the wisest institutions have frequently been prostituted to the basest purposes; so have the blessings of Government and Laws been the cause of devastation, corruption, destruction and death! From a dependance on the will of the People, and an accountability to them, Magistrates and Rulers have grown giddy with the power delegated to them, and assumed authorities which they never possessed; and thus encroaching on the rights which were never submitted to them, and providing for their posterity to rule after them, they have exercised a lordly dominion over their fellow-men—thus has been established arbitrary, despotic and hereditary power, contrary to the command of God, the voice of reason, and the natural, unalienable rights of man. And to maintain this predominancy over mankind, *Despots* have enlisted all the baseness of satanical delusions, by the coalition of superstitious bigotry, immerging their fellow-men into the darkness of ignorance, and the coercions of the grinding hand of oppression:—And when all this was not sufficient to restrain the innate impulse of the soul, recourse was had to the infernal *butchery of the Human Race*, and the *immolation of innocent blood!* It was this cause, which drenched the face of the Earth in ancient times with the fluid gore of human sacrifices—it is for this cause that *modern Europe* has presented to the eye

of the Traveller dreadful *hecatombs* of fallen victims to the pride of Kings and Papal delusions! For this cause too, thy shores, O, *COLUMBIA*, have sounded with the dreadful roar of the weapons of war—thy defenceless Towns and Villages sent up blazing volumes, falling in ashes before the devouring element; and thy defenceless Children, forced from affluence into the rude tempest, their only canopy the vault of Heaven!—thy rivers have been tinged with the crimson flood; and fields of desolation and seas of blood have marked the hand of *Despotism* in America's fair melifluent soil!!

A particular recital of the dreadful scenes of our Revolutionary contest would but harrow up the wounds of bleeding sensibility, which have scarcely been healed by the lapse of many years of peace and prosperity; it would be a repetition of events which are still fresh in the memory of every American, and which we have not time particularly to enumerate: Let it suffice, therefore, at this time, to attend to the happy consequences resulting from the establishment of our National Independence.

All the crowned heads, from the beginning of the world to this day, have not presented an achievement so glorious as that of which this day is commemorative: For, if once an individual is made heir, "*en fee simple*," to an Empire, that moment the Rights of that People are prostrated, and made the engine of the caprice, and gratification of the pride of that individual: Witness those monumental piles of Egypt, raised by the hands of innumerable workmen, who were born only to wear out an ignorant, slavish, and unprofitable life, in the base servitude of an *Ideot*,

or an *Impostor* ! Witness also, all the *Kingdoms* of ancient and modern times. Did ever a *Xerxes*, an *Alexander*, or a *Cyrus* achieve so noble an exploit ? or were not all their views and exertions rather for the depression of human happiness, and for their own gratification and aggrandizement ?

We may, I think, challenge the most profound antiquarian, or the most learned in the history of modern times, to produce an era more glorious in the annals of the world ! Some illustrious individuals have, at different periods, *attempted* to withstand the torrent of oppression ; and have fallen glorious sacrifices to the holy cause of *FREEDOM* ! *Greece* and *Rome* have presented spectacles of brilliancy and greatness, and have shined like stars and constellations in the firmament of glory—But where is an instance that the People of a territory equal to one thirtieth part of the habitable globe, have repelled the assaults of Tyranny ; disdained the threats of a *Despot* ; successfully fought at the portals of *Liberty* ; and established an *Empire* whose Laws are a transcript of the dictates of *Reason* and *Truth* ?

*AMERICANS* ! From a review of general history and the present political state of the world, how joyfully does the eye settle on the peaceful and flourishing condition of the American States ! Comparing the physical and political situation of our country with that of all others on the earth ; with what rapture does the generous heart of patriotism and philanthropy exult at the important contrast ! We are on terms of peace and friendship with all the nations of the earth, except some misunderstandings respecting the boundaries between us & the territories of Spain ;

and some recent piratical conduct of the British, who always have, and probably always will, view the encreasing prosperity of America with an envious eye ; but our determination to use *her* as well as all other nations, with strict justice, will be more likely to gain an amicable adjustment of all difficulties, than to precipitate our country into a war, which must be a burthen and a sore calamity to America. Nevertheless, if friendly negociation will not obtain us that justice to which we are entitled—*then are we ready, with the weapons of human destruction, to try the event of war!* It is the policy of America to cultivate peace and friendship with all nations. The policy of Britain is different : Her war establishments have grown to such an amazing magnitude, that she must be eternally involved in wars, in order to support herself by the plunder of other nations. Her decrepitude has come on her, with the increase of corruption and ambition ; she is, in fact, unable to bear her own weight. She cannot, however, subsist without our commerce, and will not come into open war, where she has more to lose than to gain. The Act of Congress respecting the non-importation of certain British manufactures, has alarmed her, and she has manifested a disposition to an honorable and amicable adjustment of all differences, which ought to be the wish of every American patriot.

Our internal concerns were never in a more flattering condition. The Savages of the desert, who have heretofore subsisted by the plunder of the forest are becoming civilized ; and begin to unstring the bow and turn to the arts of agriculture and peace.—From natural enemies of the colonies, while under the jurisdiction and subject to the commotions of Europe, they have become our brethren and allies.

The rich blessings of *Freedom* are extended to the lately oppressed regions west of the Mississippi. The field of speculation, enterprize and commerce enlarges, and opens a more extensive display for the energies of our industrious citizens. The face of the earth grows pliant and fertile. The clothing of the forest is converted into usefulness, and the growth & manufactures of our land glides upon the waters of every part of the world: our canvass whitens the coasts and harbors of the four quarters of the globe, wafting to every clime the various productions of the western continent.

Were we to indulge for a moment, the visionary ken of rational futurity, we should view a scene worthy of the contemplation and admiration of the higher spheres!—But behold the *reality*!!—A country larger than all Europe, and blest with every perfection of nature, is meted out in various portions, to an almost innumerable host of peaceable, industrious, enterprizing, brave and enlightened *Freemen*, who are the lords of the soil on which they tread, and which they cultivate.

Thrice happy states,

—————“ Extend their fair domains,  
 “ O’er fleecy mountains and luxuriant plains;  
 “ Where happy millions their own fields possess:  
 “ No *tyrant* awes them and no *lords* oppress.

*Liberty* in its purity without the excesses of licentiousness, here,

—————“ Unlicenc’d reigns.”

Here, under our own vines and fruit-trees, we can sit unrestrain’d; we can worship in our temples according to the dictates of our own consciences, and there is none to molest or make us afraid. If it is

possible for the purity of primæval simplicity to coalesce with the refinement of laws and society, *ours* is certainly that enjoyment. The right of every man to enjoy his own principles or tenets of religion is the dictate of Heaven and of reason : while the province of equal laws is, to restrain one man from trespassing on the property, rights and privileges of another : And on these lumenous principles are established the very foundations of our Constitution and Laws.

What, my Countrymen, would have been the present condition of America, had she continued under the government of Britain? We may read the answer in full grown characters imprinted with the horrid glare of noble, innocent blood, in the unhappy fate of *Ireland!* or hear it in the despairing shrieks of the natives of *India!* Our Heroes who have gained a name of immortality in the enfranchizement of our country, would have suffered like *EMMET*; or have been hunted down like the savage beasts of the desert. What abundant reason have we then on this day to rejoice! Every American who is susceptible of the noble feelings of sensibility, of philanthropy, of patriotism, cannot but rejoice.

It is in a free government, a government like ours, that the genius of man receives the cultivation of the high and sublime energies of his mind. The sympathies of humanity, useful inventions and improvements, with all the faculties and destinies which ennoble his nature, have flourished most in those countries which have been most celebrated for the freedom and righteousness of their governments : There the Arts and Sciencies have received their highest culture; and there have the people enjoyed the

greatest happiness. Who, that turns over the pages of history, will not conceive a veneration for those great geniuses who have, by their inventions & discoveries in Arts, Science and Philosophy, smoothed the cares of this life, and taught mankind their true interests, and their general and relative situation in the great scale of universal being.

From these considerations, therefore, of the many great and important privileges and blessings of *Freedom*, our hearts glow with warm devotion and zeal in her sacred cause. Under our free Constitution, formed on the pure principles of political wisdom, and the present illustrious administration thereof, by men whose wisdom and integrity have ensured them the confidence and gratitude of millions of free and independent citizens, we have every reason to hope for a continuance of the high prosperity under whose auspices we this day, celebrate this glorious anniversary. But, while we rejoice in these our privileges, and exult in our prosperity; let us not forget the foundation whence they flow: But let our hearts burn with unfeigned adoration and gratitude to the Great ETERNAL who hath cast our lot in this highly distinguished land; and who hath crowned us with such a profusion of *Immortal Blessings!*

---



---

THE END.

---



---