

ORATION,

DELIVERED

AT WATERFIELD,

ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF

INDEPENDENCE,

ON THE FOURTH OF JULY, 1804.

By DEACON NATHANIEL COLEMAN,

WORTHAMPTON,

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1804.

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AN O R A T I O N.

Friends and Fellow Citizens!

WE are convened for the purpose of mutual congratulation, that the Ruler of the Universe has not only granted us our Independence, and given us a name amongst the nations; but that he continues to bestow upon the American People many distinguishing testimonies of his goodness.

WHILE slaves to tyrants and kings are shedding each other's blood in support of *energetic government*, we are enjoying in *peace* the fruit of our labour.—While the fields of the old world are desolated to gratify the ambition of the lordly few; we are daily increasing the means of our prosperity, and extending our commerce to the ends of the earth.—While the people of Europe are bowed down in subjection to despots; we are exercising the highest degree of popular sovereignty, respecting the right of suffrage, and cheerfully obeying laws of our own enacting.

THE principles of our Revolution are now fully recognized, the will of the people is the supreme law of the land, and the number of those who have mourned that these things are so is constantly diminishing. Fellow Citizens! Let us make this association profitable to ourselves and to the community, by investigating the true principles of civil liberty. It is of the first importance that every citizen in a Republic, should be possessed of knowledge and virtue. The immortal Montesquieu maintains that "in a free state every man that is supposed to be a free agent ought to be concerned in his own government." A man cannot act understandingly, unless he uses the means of information. It is absolutely necessary therefore, that we should search into the principles of our government,

ment, t we may ascertain whether our rulers depart from these principles.—In free governments constant watchfulness is necessary on the part of the people to preserve liberty.

WE are not to presume that because we have entered the field of battle, unsheathed the sword, vanquished our foe, gained our Independence, framed our State and National Constitutions, and organized every branch of our government, that we are to sit down in *stupid security*, NO. We must constantly watch over our liberties, as man even in his best estate is liable to err and prone to do wrong.

THE much celebrated Marquis Beccaria affirms that “ In every human society, there is an *effort* continually tending to confer on *one part* the height of POWER and happiness, and to reduce the *other* to the extreme of *weakness* and misery.” *Rulers* stimulated by this pernicious *effort*, and subjects striving against its woful effects, has occasioned that great variety of event which has filled the history of so many nations.

THE people of England, under a view of this truth, reared up the fabric of their constitution, and erected barriers to guard against this pernicious “ *effort on the one part.*” For a long time they enjoyed a good degree of civil liberty ; but the Crown, stimulated by a spirit of tyranny, has now thrown down all those barriers, and reduced that people to a state of the most refined slavery.

THE Government of Britain, by increasing its officers and pensioners in every department, both in Church and State, by maintaining great Armies and Navies in *time of peace*, by involving the country in unnecessary and ruinous wars, has brought on the Nation an enormous debt, has secured to itself and to that class of citizens to whom the debt is due, such a superiority over the great body of the PEOPLE, both in power and influence, as to render all their “ efforts” for a reformation vain and abortive. Nothing but a special interposition of that Being who presides over the fates of men, can burst asunder the golden chains which bind that people in slavery.

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Every nerve of the nation must be extended to the highest pitch, even in time of peace, to pay the annual demands of Government. The payment of the interest of their debt, the enormous expence of supporting the Royal Family, hereditary Lords, and a countless number of Officers and Pensioners, together with the burthen of a large Army, and overgrown Navy, after swallowing up all the resources of the country, add millions anually to the debt.

THE People of England can never lessen the public debt, and what renders their situation more deplorable, is, that the place-men and creditors and soldiers of the Government, scattered all over the country, in such multitudes, and so interested to support the present order of things, that it is impossible for the people to concentrate their efforts for a constitutional reform.

FELLOW Citizens, behold with amazement! "this most stupendous fabric of human invention." Were this kind of government introduced into this country, what a goodly number of us would it make happy. What blessings are we about to loose if OUR PUBLIC DEBT should be discharged, instead of being increased, and a large number of offices *abolished*, instead of being multiplied? What mischiefs will not befall this *country*, if the energy of government should be in the least relaxed? The "*rabble*," or the common people, would in that case, rise up and assert their rights, although every one knows that they would be more happy in a state of *servitude* than in a state of freedom!

MANY are the arts used by the enemies of Liberty, to cheat the people out of their rights. Universal experience teaches us that a pernicious "*effort*" is constantly making by the ambitious to confer on the *one part* the "height of power, and to reduce the other part, that is, the large body of the people, to the extreme of weakness and misery." The French people after having burst the chains of their oppressors and gained their freedom, suffered their leaders to deprive them

of their hard earned liberties, and now every thing is yielded up to the disposal of *one man*.

We must ever realize this truth, that the sovereignty is in the hands of the People. The People are the only safe guardians of their own rights. If they neglect to defend them, we cannot long calculate to enjoy liberty, which ought to be dearer to us than life. Government is instituted for the benefit of the great whole, for the "protection, safety, prosperity, and happiness" of every individual, and not for the separate benefit of one man, or class of men.

If these principles are correct, it follows of course that whenever an administration creates unnecessary offices, in order to furnish lucrative places for its friends and supporters, that administration departs from the true principles of our Government. Whenever any set of men in office impose any unnecessary or unequal burthen upon the people, they leap the bounds of their trust; and that act must be considered as one of those pernicious "*efforts* to confer on the *one part* the height of power, and to reduce the other to the extreme of misery."

LET US request our Fellow Citizens, who call themselves Federalists, to listen to us while we take a retrospective view of those measures which have been adopted since we have gained our Independence, which we believe have a tendency to subvert our Republican Government, and to introduce Aristocracy. We do not believe that the great body of our federal brethren (because they have approved of the measures of the Federal Administration) have ever had an idea of overturning our present republican government; but we do believe that the greater part of the leading federal characters are not friendly to it. We believe that those characters are of opinion that *if our government was more assimilated to that of Great Britain, both in form and policy, it would be better for the people of this country, and that those men now are, and for a long time have been, pursuing such measures*

as they think will bring about this (to them) desirable end.

It has been the constant object of these men to erect an Aristocracy upon the ruins of our *too* liberal government. To bring about this grand object, the leading Federalists have taken great pains to render the very name of *Liberty* ridiculous. Notwithstanding our state and national Constitutions are framed upon the principles of a pure representative *Democracy*, notwithstanding the very first sentence in the Bill of Rights fully recognizes the principles of *liberty and equality*; yet have these men endeavoured to raise a popular sneer against these very words. "*Liberty and Equality*," "*Democracy and Democrat*," "*Sovereign People*," &c. are holden up to public derision, with an intention to impress an opinion upon the public mind, that they are something very mean, vulgar and detestable. In this way do these men calculate to raise the prejudices of the people, that an easy *transit* may be made from Liberty to Aristocracy.

LET it be remembered that every man who is friendly to our Constitution, is truly a *Democrat*, and he that says he is not a *Democrat*, in so saying, declares himself an enemy to the Constitution and Government, and to the rights of the People.

ANOTHER singular effort has been made by the federal party, to injure the advocates of republicanism. They have endeavored to impress upon the public mind, an opinion that he who is friendly to *Democracy* (or what is the same thing to a *popular government*) is an *Infidel*, or at least in the direct road to infidelity. They adduce the example of France, and because the French nation threw off the yoke of their civil tyrants, and with it the ecclesiastical tyranny of the Pope of Rome, they would draw this most erroneous conclusion, that the friends of civil liberty throughout the world, are the *enemies* of religion.

THE religion of the Pope was nothing but an engine of cru-

el slavery : on this account many of the French became infidels. The real cause of their infidelity was *religious tyranny*, and not *civil liberty*. Is there any necessary opposition between *civil liberty* and *religious truth* ! On the other hand, are not the doctrines of our Lord and Saviour perfectly congenial to the principles of true Republicanism ? Does he not in all things appertaining to the government of his disciples, pointedly remonstrate against Monarchy and Aristocracy ? So far is republicanism from leading to infidelity, that in every thing wherein it *differs* from other governments, in *that* it corresponds with the *Gospel*, while other governments are in their foundation directly in opposition to its precepts, as completely as the African slavery. I cannot see how the conduct of any of the followers of the meek and lowly Jesus, and particularly that of his ministers, in advocating any other form of government, can be reconciled with their religious profession.

IN a Kingly or Aristocratical Government, the People are dependent on the *rulers* ; in a Republic, the *rulers* are dependent on the people ; our Saviour told his disciples, " he that is *chief* among you, let him be your *servant* .

In Kingly or Aristocratical Governments, the People look up to their *Sovereign Rulers* ; but in a Republican Government, the Rulers look up to the *Sovereign People*, and are dependent on them ; so it is in the Church ; for the Officers of the Church are dependent on the Church, and not the Church on them.

IN Aristocratical governments the people address their rulers by the title " *My Lord*," there is no such distinction in a Republic, and in the Church all are styled *Brethren* .

IN a Kingly government, many classes of subjects are distinguished by their titles, which are not allowed to the large body of the people ; in a Republic, all titles of Nobility are rejected, and all privileges are enjoyed in common. So it is with the Church, for there no one is called *Lord* or *Master* .

KINGLY and Aristocratical governments, take from the people many of their rights, which are essential to social happiness
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and the general good ; but true republicanism takes from the people nothing which can obstruct social happiness, and requires of them only such conduct as will promote the *general good*. In this it perfectly agrees with the doctrines of our Saviour ; for he requires of us, that we should do unto others as we should wish others to do unto us.

UNDER the last administration a persecution was commenced against the citizens of Europe, who had landed on our shores. These unfortunate men, unable to gain a subsistence under the tyrannical governments of their native countries, sought an assylum in America, and relying on the faith of our naturalization laws, looked up to us for protection. An Alien Act was passed, empowering the President to banish those men (who like our fore fathers fled to this country to enjoy liberty) without *Judge or Jury, or even the charge of any crime*, but on the *mere suspicion*, and at his own *sovereign will*. Was it proper to invest the President of a mild Republic with such arbitrary power, when our Constitution holds a trial by Jury so sacred ? We will pass over the Sedition Act, which deprived us of the liberty of speech, the Land Tax, Stamp Tax and Excise, which were grievous burthens, and which employed hundreds of Officers, who lived on the bread of the nation. We will pass these acts without comment, and take particular notice of the new Judiciary Bill.

AN act was passed in the last moments of the Adams administration, creating a new Court, consisting of sixteen Judges, and granting them annual salaries, to the amount of thirty-two thousand dollars. If this Court was needed, then it was just to pass the law which created it ; if it was not needed, then was the creation of it one of those " efforts " to raise *one part* to the height of power, without conferring any benefit on the other part. That it was needless is demonstrable from actual experience, both before and since, the passing the act. We had before, and now have, national Courts, called District Courts, which held their session in their respective Districts throughout the

United States, and likewise a Supreme Court of the Nation. It appeared by documents, produced by the President, at the time when the new Judiciary law was repealed, that there had been very little business to be transacted by the *old Courts*. That the new Court was therefore unnecessary, and not only unnecessary but burthensome and expensive. Nothing has appeared since to contradict this statement, justice has been administered with as much impartiality and promptitude, without the sixteen Judges, as it would have been with them, and no complaints are heard from any part of our extensive country. Was it not therefore a stretch of power on the part of the last administration, to raise sixteen men to the highest pinnacle of power and authority, even beyond the reach of the whole nation combined (according to their definition of power) and to give these sixteen men thousands of dollars each, annually, for doing nothing ?

IN contending for our Independence the people of this country had recourse to a *paper currency*; the redemption of which depended on public faith. This currency soon depreciated, and at last became of no value. When the war closed, the army was paid off in Government Securities. These securities likewise soon depreciated, and were sold in market at $\frac{2}{3}$ on the pound. After the Constitution was adopted and the General Government organized, these *final settlement securities* were collected from *the soldiers* for a trifling sum, by *cunning speculators*. The speculators derived advantage from their own iniquity, for government paid the speculators the whole amount of those securities, and refused to make any discrimination in favour of the original holders. It was contended with great force of reasoning, by Mr. MADISON, and other Republicans then in Congress, that a discrimination ought to be made. That one class of citizens ought not to be made rich upon the ruins of those who had fought our battles. All the arguments of Mr. Madison availed not. Congress would make no discrimination in favour

favours of the war-worn *soldier* ; but instead of that, the soldier is subjected to pay those speculators interest for money, that according to the law of eternal justice, is due to himself, and is as it were the price of his own blood, and our Independence !

Is not this one of those pernicious efforts to raise one part of society to " the height of power and happiness, and reduce the other to extreme weakness and misery," even to the everlasting disgrace of our national character ? For as justice is the pole-star of all law, so surely it ought to be the only pole-star of a republican nation, especially in paying those citizens who had sacrificed every thing, and risked their own lives, to gain our existence as a Nation.

THE next thing we shall notice is, that of raising and maintaining an army in time of peace ; the very naming of which is sufficient to raise the indignation of every American, that is not prepossessed in favour of an administration, which has, in numberless instances, proved that it had views hostile to the rights of the common people. But is not this alone sufficient to satisfy any candid man, that they were pursuing such measures as they knew would not meet the approbation of the people ? otherwise why was this army raised ? It was said to repel an invasion from France. But was France at that time in any circumstances whereby it was possible for her to invade America ? No, it was not, it was then involved in all the horrors of war, with the most powerful nations of Europe, and that in its own neighbourhood, and full of internal factions, therefore there was no kind of probability that the French would leave their own continent, and go three or four thousand miles to invade America in her own territory, which Great Britain could not subdue twenty years before, even whilst we were in a state of infancy. But we are informed that Mr. Tracy, a Senator in Congress from Connecticut, whose public character

after we are all acquainted with, answered the question in this manner, viz. "So that we may not be pulled out of our beds in the night, by a lawless mob;" but were the citizens of the United States at this time in a mobbish attitude? No, they were not, they were far from it; Why then could not Mr. Tracy and his brethren rest in safety, without a standing army to guard them in their nocturnal repose, except it was because they were about to make such inroads upon the people, that they had reason to fear the people would disturb them, unless they had an army previously raised to silence the people in their noisy complaints.—Fellow Citizens, take a view of these things, and thank God that we may still sit under our own bowers in peace—and none to molest, or make us afraid.

FURTHERMORE, without naming any more of those "efforts," in which we have followed the footsteps of British policy, in increasing our officers and pensioners, and husbanding our debts in such manner as to be sure to have them increase, and not decrease; so that government may not lose that importance and energy, which necessarily follow from having rich and powerful creditors, and good heavy burdens to lay on the common people, with so much weight as to keep them from waxing fat, and kicking or disturbing gentlemen when they are drowsy. Let us pass on, and take notice of a recent "effort" that has taken place in this Commonwealth, with respect to the right of election, which is the foundation of all our rights, and is, as it were, the only political ark of our safety, and ought not to be violated by the unsanctified hands of legislators. Our constitution gives the states the right of sending Representatives to Congress, in proportion to their numbers of inhabitants, leaving it to the legislative bodies of each state, to regulate the mode and manner of their election: and likewise in the same manner, that of choosing electors of the President of the United States. In the reign of federalism, the right of the people's choosing electors was
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taken away, by the legislature of this, and several other states, and taken upon themselves to choose them ; but it is now restored in such a manner by the present legislature of this state, that it is impossible for the people to exercise it understandingly ; for now each district may not choose their own elector, according to our practice heretofore ; but must vote for nineteen, the whole number of this state's proportion, and the ticket of each man's votes must contain one inhabitant of each district throughout this Commonwealth. Whose knowledge of the inhabitants of the seventeen districts of this state, which is four or five hundred miles in length, is sufficient to know when his list of votes is in conformity to the act or not ? or how can the selectmen know what votes to reject and what not, although they are subjected to a heavy penalty for non-conformity ? Is this, my fellow citizens, following the good old *steady habits*, which they so much boast of ?

THE Federal party have of late raised a hue and cry about Virginia influence and Virginia domination. What can be the object of the federalists in raising an alarm among the people about Virginia ? It does not appear from any facts adduced, that there is any more danger to be apprehended from the designs of that state, than from any other in the Union. Virginia is a large and respectable state, and has a few more Representatives in Congress than Massachusetts. When she enters the Senate, she is no more powerful than the small state of Delaware, which is not so large as the County of Hampshire ! So faithfully has the Constitution guarded the lesser states against the power and influence of the greater, that it has almost departed from Republican principles. The *sixty thousand inhabitants* of Delaware, when represented in the Senate, can have a complete negative over Massachusetts or Virginia, either of which states have ten times that number. Why then all this clamour about the great states devouring the small ? The Senate is the most powerful branch of government, having not only the power to negative every act of the House of *Representatives*,

Representatives, but it participates in power with the Executive and Judicial departments.

THE People of America, after noticing so many "*anti-republican tendencies*," in the measures of the Federal party, began to believe that the federalists were not friends to republican government ; but that they were a set of men associated together for their own personal aggrandizement.

THE People at length aroused from their sluggish security, and by the constitutional process of election, effected an auspicious change in the administration. By this change (through the grace of God) we believe that the subversion of our republican government, and the establishment of Aristocracy, were prevented.

ANY person who views in its proper light, the tendency of the Standing Army, the Sedition and Alien Acts, together with most of the measures of the last administration, will be satisfied that the federal party intended that we should soon enjoy the blessing of "*energetic government*."

THE superiority of the present over the last administration, in point of economy, is worthy of remark. The former administration, with the advantage of the Excise, and Land Tax, in addition to the duties on impost and tonnage, *blessed* this country, from the year '90 to 1801, with an additional debt of between ten and eleven millions of dollars ; being an average increase of nearly a million a year. The present administration, though they have repealed all taxes except the impost and tonnage, have introduced such a system of economy into the management of the concerns of the nation, that from the 1st day of April 1801 to the 30th Sept. 1803, being two years and six months, NINE MILLIONS NINE HUNDRED AND TWENTY FOUR THOUSAND DOLLARS have been paid towards the *reduction* of the public debt ! The revenues are now punctually collected and faithfully applied towards the necessary expences of the nation, and the further reduction of the debt. If nothing should interrupt the

the present prosperous circumstances of the country, the whole of our old public debt will be paid before the year 1818, and the new debt, incurred by the glorious acquisition of the Mississippi and Louisiana, in one year and an half thereafter.

FOR the correctness of this statement, Fellow Citizens, we would refer you to the official report of the Secretary of the Treasury, and other authentic documents. We do not wish you to take our mere assertion; the report has been published. If it is not true, it is an easy matter for our political opponents to expose its falsity. (*See Note 2.*)

WE wish you to see the truth, and to attend to your own interests, and those of your children. What reason have we to be discontented under the present administration? Do we not enjoy all that the best of governments can bestow? It is said that many federalists are dismissed from office! The great noise which the federal party make about the loss of office, and the tyrannical measures they pursued while in power, plainly shew that the possession of lucrative places was more dear to their hearts than the *rights of the People*. When we remember the overbearing conduct of that party, in the days of their strength, and when we recollect the pains they took to fill all the posts of honour with men of their own stamp, to the complete exclusion of every man who would not support them in all their violent measures, we shall be satisfied that it is but a salutary correction of insolence and pride, to deprive them of the means of injuring the people in future. That party have in no instance, paid that respect which is due, to the voice of the majority of the People. They have calumniated the character of the President, in a most cruel manner. They have been in the constant habit of vilifying the very name of Democracy, and all its advocates. Yet do these men, though now in a very small *minority*, raise a loud clamour because they cannot hold *every* office in the gift of Government.

WE

WE have pledged ourselves in our Constitution, to support the principles of a Democratic Republic. That the sovereignty shall rest with the majority, and that their voice shall be considered as the voice of the great whole. Let us therefore hearken no longer to a restless and disappointed *few*, let us set our faces as a flint against the mad project to effectuate a division of the States. We ought to view with horror the designs of that dying party who would not only sacrifice the happiness of this great and flourishing Country. But who rather than not carry a point against the voice of the nation would by sowing the seeds of dissention render miserable thousands and millions yet unborn.

MAY we revere the name of Washington, and treasure up in our memories the maxims of his Farewell Address; and may God grant that the maxim of our *Saviour* (that a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand) may be engraven on the hearts of Americans, with the pencil of inspiration.

F I N I S.

NOTE.—Page 5. English National Debt. Their debt last Feb. was 2249,827,461 dollars and 20 cents, which debt in silver is 63,315 tons and a half, and 165 lbs. The interest of this debt, at six per cent per annum, is 134,989,647 dollars and 67 cents. This debt, according to the doctrine of some men, is a national blessing !!

NOTE 2.—It appears by the President's Message that in the course of the year ending 20th Sept. 1804, that THREE MILLIONS SIX HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS have been paid towards the reduction of the Public Debt of the United States—and that during the three last years upwards of Twelve Millions of Dollars of the debt has been discharged, and a greater sum has been paid for the interest !! So great prosperity perhaps was never witnessed before in this or in any other country.