



A N

# O R A T I O N,

TO COMMEMORATE THE

# I N D E P E N D E N C E

O F T H E

# U N I T E D S T A T E S O F N O R T H - A M E R I C A,

Delivered at the REFORMED CALVINIST CHURCH, in  
PHILADELPHIA, July 4th, 1786.

A N D

PUBLISHED at the REQUEST of the

# P E N N S Y L V A N I A S O C I E T Y

O F T H E

# C I N C I N N A T I.

BY MAJOR W. J A C K S O N.

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Office

TO ROBERT MORRIS, Esquire, late Super-  
intendent of the Finances of the United States,  
and an Honorary Member of the Society of  
the Cincinnati.

S I R,

THE respect which the Society of the Cincinnati have  
discovered for your public character in associating you  
to their institution, and the affectionate regard which is  
known to actuate many of its members towards you, in a  
private relation, are among the motives which induce me  
to offer you the dedication of a performance, which their  
partiality has brought into public view.

As there is no person to whom a review of the revolu-  
tion may with greater propriety be presented, than to a gen-  
tleman, whose eminent services, in every stage of the war,  
have justly secured for him the most exalted estimation of  
his country : So, sir, there is no one within my knowledge,  
to whose candor and friendship I would rather recom-  
mend the following production for justice and patronage,  
than to yourself.

A stranger to every species of adulation, it is with con-  
fident integrity I tell the world, that this is not the lan-  
guage

guage of servile flattery, but the sincere acknowledgment of one who considers himself highly honored by your friendship, and who will always be solicitous to merit the continuance of a connection, which is at once his pleasure and his boast.

I am, Sir,

with respectful affection and esteem,

your most obedient servant,

W. JACKSON.

Philadelphia, July 8, 1786.

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O R A T I O N, &c.

**I**MPRESSED with a grateful sense of the flattering distinction, which an election to the duty of this day has conferred, and desirous of doing justice to the favorable opinions of my present friends, and former fellow-Soldiers, I have ventured to accept the hazardous appointment of this honorable station: But when I reflect on the opinions which may *possibly* have been formed.—when I consider my own inequality to meet the discernment of this respectable audience, or to answer expectations which the magnitude of my *subject* may have suggested.—I confess that my presumption has transgressed the limits of prudence; and I solicit your candor and indulgence to what might otherwise be considered an excess of dutiful indiscretion.

REVOLVING seasons have returned the anniversary of that auspicious day, which hailed our country independent, and gave freedom to a world.

To commemorate this vast event—to trace its progress, and mark its confirmation—to observe its influence, and to offer a general anticipation of its consequences, form the interesting objects of our present purpose.—

PAYING the pious tribute of our gratitude and adoration to the Great Disposer of Human Events, and imploring his continued care and protection over our infant republic, we pass, with pleasing comprehension, to contemplate the agency of his almighty will and power.

As it is far from being our wish, I trust it will not be considered our intention (in reciting the causes and occurrences of our late momentous struggle) to revive past enmities, or to awaken animosities, which respect for our national character, and the maxims of our faith, should alike dispose us forever to forget and to forgive.

It is wisdom to obliterate offences, when their effects have ceased; and it is the dictate of justice to dismiss the remembrance of an injury, which reparation has amply atoned.

OUR

OUR recapitulation of the contest, though but a frail record of their merits, is due in gratitude to the memory of those heroes, who were Martyrs in the cause of freedom.—The remarks on the sufferings of our country, are intended to impress the value of that object for which they were sustained; and the deeds of her distinguished citizens are brought forward with no other view, than as being the best incentives to public virtue.—Here then the acrimony of revenge, and the servility of adulation, are both disclaimed, as utterly unconnected with those generous principles, which prompted and atchieved our glorious revolution.

At a period \* when wisdom, valour, and commercial consequence had raised the British empire to pre-eminence over the rest of Europe—when contending kingdoms confessed her superiority, and yielded to her power—when her provincial progeny aided her efforts, and shared in her success—when maternal tenderness should have met the advance of filial affection, and cherished an equal endearment.—In this moment of pride and delusion, forgetful of her recent acknowledgments, and insensible to past obligation, she puts off the benignity of the parent, and assumes the arrogance of a despot.

ANXIOUS only to support the splendor of her court, and  
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\* 1763.

the convenience of her rulers, she extends a tyranny to the extremities of her empire; and, to promote the sordid views of pensioners and place-men, she departs from her national characteristics of generosity and honor.

A SYSTEM of unconditional slavery towards her colonies is adopted—commercial restrictions are imposed, and unconstitutional taxes attempted to be levied—distinctions, unworthy of a great nation, and subversive of human equality, are endeavored to be drawn by this unwise and haughty people.

THE humble petitions of her oppressed children, are dismissed with contempt, and their dutiful remonstrances rejected with threats and scorn — The mandates of despotism are issued for military execution, and no alternative proffered but the dagger or the rod.

Thus *compelled* to commit our equitable claims to the decision of arms, and to the event of a contest, rendered still more doubtful by the unprovided state of our magazines, and the defenceless situation of our country. It is the GLORY of America that she balanced not, when freedom or slavery became the alternative, to take the field against a nation of established military character, powerful in resources, and the *then* acknowledged sovereign of the sea.



THE love of Liberty outweighed the horrors of war, and death, in its defence, was esteemed an eligible retreat from national servitude. Neither the immediate sufferings of the camp, nor the darkened prospect of protracted war, could damp that ardor which fed the hopes of freedom, nor lessen the sense of those wrongs that urged an irrevocable separation from our unnatural foe. But, anterior to this ultimate determination, all other means had failed, and the patience of oppressed humanity been long exhausted—relentless hostility had raged throughout our country, and every aggravation of embittered warfare, been indiscriminately inflicted.

A LIBATION of patriotic blood had been poured to liberty on the plains of Lexington.—The virtuous Warren and his brave associates had bled at the altar of honor and their country on Bunker's-Hill.—The flames of Charlestown had illumined the glory of that day—and every circumstance of compulsion and resistance at once characterised the vindictive measures of Britain, and the inflexible firmness of her patriotic opponents—As the prelude to an obstinate and bloody war, too frequently stained in its progress with wanton cruelty.—We here survey a scene brilliant as the brightest fancy can form, and interesting as every feeling of humanity can render it:—A scene which should impress indelible respect and veneration for the  
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