

REPUBLICANISM & ARISTOCRACY

CONTRASTED:

OR, THE

STEADY HABITS

OF

CONNECTICUT,

INCONSISTENT *WITH*, AND OPPOSED

TO THE PRINCIPLES OF THE

AMERICAN REVOLUTION.

EXHIBITED IN AN

ORATION,

DELIVERED AT NEW-LONDON, (CON.)

JULY 4th, 1804.

ON THE CELEBRATION

OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.

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AN ORATION, &c.

FELLOW CITIZENS,

AS all men were created by the same infinite being, formed of the same materials, crumble to the same undistinguished dust and ashes, consequently they came into the world possessed of the same equal rights and privileges:—it seems a pity they could not live together in a state of peace and harmony, and suffer each other mutually to enjoy, without interruption, those blessings which by nature are common to all. But mankind being imperfect, placed in different circumstances, under a necessity of following different employments; and being at the same time swayed and warped by passion and prejudice, all led to vary exceedingly in their opinion, even respecting the same things. And perhaps there are no two subjects on which they differ more widely than those of politics and religion—not owing however to the intricacy of the subjects or the difficulty of investigating them; for when kept separate, there are no subjects more simple and better adapted to the capacities of all classes of citizens;—but when blended together for the purpose of sacrificing the interests of the many to the unnatural and unchristian interests and feelings of the few; the direct tendency is to corrupt and prevent both; they then become mysterious and hard to be understood and to an uninformed mind appear a kind of civil and ecclesiastical witchcraft.

KEEP religion separate, view it as a matter betwixt man and his maker, for which he is accountable only to his God, and you at once strip it of all mystery, and it becomes so plain and easy that he who runs may read and understand. So when civil government is considered in its nature and design as a social compact, instituted for the good of society, to secure the lives, liberties, and properties of all; the mystery at once vanishes, and it appears not such a very difficult and puzzling thing to investigate as many pretend. Thus it evidently appears

that civil government and religion are instituted for quite different ends. The former to regulate our conduct towards men. The latter to regulate our conduct towards God. The one for the purpose of making or keeping us civil, to fit us for the society of man in this world; the other for the purpose of preparing us for the society of saints in Heaven.

The Saviour declared that his kingdom was not of this world—and what Heaven has ordained shall be kept separate, let not men on earth attempt to unite.

When civil government is so far corrupted and perverted from its original design, as to become a matter of speculation, and viewed as the road to preferment, wealth and honor;—when those selected from the people for the purpose of attending to political affairs, forget their accountability to the people, and instead of seeking and promoting public interest, pursue private interest and personal aggrandizement: when they forget they are the peoples servants, and abuse the power delegated to them, by oppressing those from whom the power was derived; and the people at the same time are reduced to such a state of ignorance and credulity as to place implicit confidence in them, and think no men can do so well as those now in office, and believe and confide in every thing they say and do; and finally when government is represented as a very weak thing in itself and unless propped up by the pillars of the church will certainly fall, and unless civil laws are made to support religion that will also tumble; when the people are so far deluded as to believe this mysterious doctrine, and those who are opposed to these *monstrous absurdities*, are reprobated in the strongest terms; and branded as, *atheists, deists, hereticks, jacobins, infidel philosophers, enemies to God and man, and in league with the devil, Frenchmen, and infernal spirits* to destroy all government, order, and religion, and turn the world upside down. When things come to this pass, then both politics and religion become enveloped in mystery, and the knowledge of them confined to a few—a very few indeed. And that civil

government and religion may be, and have been so perverted and degenerated as to be united, and then corrupt each other, and instead of a blessing prove a curse to mankind, is incontestible.

AND if history may be relied on, more of the evils with which the human race have been afflicted, have arisen from this ungodly union of church and state, than any other source that can be named.

WHERESOEVER this union does exist, in whatever age or nation...fines, imprisonments, banishments, loss of property, whips, axes, gibbets, chains and racks are the most approved and established means of persuading men to obedience, and "saving the people from themselves." In this country and even in this state, in consequence of this union, there have been repeated acts of intolerance.

AND at the commencement of the American revolution, not a nation or a people on earth, that we have any knowledge of, enjoyed true civil and religious liberty.

WE are therefore very justly led to conclude, that there never was an event, considered as human, that promised so much to the peace, liberty and happiness of man. It may emphatically be termed "the returning dawn of long lost liberty."

WELL may we then, with the utmost propriety, celebrate the day on which the *people* of the United States declared they *would be free*. The resolution then made was consistent with reason and the unalienable rights of man...met the approbation of heaven; and was opposed by tyrants only....And there never was and there never will be any just reason given, why America should be subject to Great Britain....But the immediate causes of our separation would be useless for me to mention, as you have just heard them read as penned in the celebrated declaration of independencé.

TWENTY-EIGHT years ago this day, this instrument was formed and published to the world. The people of the United States, then took that separate and independent station among the nations of the earth, to which they

were entitled by the God of nature. They then declared they would have *no king*, but the king of Heaven; *no most high, most mighty, and dread Sovereign*; but the *most high, mighty and dread Sovereign* of the UNIVERSE. The very principles on which the revolution was founded, as those also which the declaration of independence recognize, are truly republican. They dispense with all privileged orders; have nothing to do with *high birth*, and *low birth*, *high rank* and *low rank*, and all those foolish titles and distinctions, that exist in monarchical and aristocratic Governments, and tend to reduce the greater part to ignorance, and dupe them to mean and servile submission; and exalt the other part to wealth, opulence, and arbitrary power. These principles place the power where it ought to be, in the people. They are calculated not to make men think of themselves more highly than they ought to think. They teach us that titles, stars, ribbands, garters, &c. do not constitute true nobility; but that it consists in greatness of mind, and the possession of good principles reduced to practice. However, when the declaration of independence was made, it was but a declaration: for we had our independence still to obtain at the expence of much blood and treasure. For Great Britain, possessing hereditary ideas, and being taught according to the doctrines of the old school, viewed us as incapable of governing ourselves; and as our ancestors sprang from them, they were the mother and we her children, and were firm in the opinion, that this relation ought to exist to the latest posterity. Thus America be kept in a state of everlasting minority. Consequently, they sent over large fleets and armies, to force us to obedience, and “*save us from our worst enemies, ourselves.*” But to the slavish and tyrannical doctrine of absolute passive obedience, we opposed the manly sentiment—“That rebellion against tyrants was obedience to God;” and, during the whole struggle, it was evident the Lord was on our side. For as feeble and inconsiderable as the United States then appeared, she, after a seven year’s contest, completely gained

the cap for which she fought, & separated herself from the wretched and distressing policy of Britain, "together with her heavy debts, and future fate."

As it would not be consistent with my present design, to say any thing respecting the situation of our country at the conclusion of the war, I proceed to observe, that,

We have every reason to believe, that in proportion as the principles of our revolution are neglected, ridiculed and forgotten, in that proportion will our liberties be in danger. And the more these principles prevail, the greater will be our political and religious safety. Therefore, as we cannot too highly appreciate our civil and religious rights, we ought ever to watch over them with a jealous eye, and stand ready to repel the first invasion of them. Human nature is the same in every age and nation; and even in this country, the most free and happy of any on the globe, we have those among us, even at the present day, who are unfriendly to the rights of man. We have not only secret, but open and avowed advocates of anti-revolutionary principles. And how often are sentiments advanced, which disgrace the American name, that border on the doctrines of the old school, and coincide with the principles of those who have GEORGE, for their FATHER.

ONE I shall mention is this, say they, "the common people have nothing to do with politics; there are men who are bred to the business." How often do they observe, "that such a man is a mechanic, or a common labourer—how should he know about these matters; it takes a great deal of hard study & learning, to make a lawyer, and in addition to these, a vast deal more to qualify a man for a politician. These men therefore, had better attend to the plow and the hoe, &c. When their assistance is wanted they will be called on, or sent for, and dictated what is to be done."

Now, whoever the men are, or whatever be their professions, whether priest, lawyer or doctor, I care not; but would ask, them what exclusive privilege have you to dictate in political matters? Please to attend to your particu-

lar professions gentlemen, till you have learned quite a different lesson; for at present, if you are called to legislate, or take any part in Government, you are the most unfit of all God's creatures.

LET the men who cultivate their own soil, wear their own cloth, eat of their own substance, and pay taxes at their own expence—talk if they please about their own power, government and administration; also if they think best, consult each other about those they mean to employ as servants, to transact their public business.

ANOTHER observation frequently made by this class of men, and equally aristocratic, is that “the *common people* have too much knowledge.” Just now they were too ignorant to meddle with politics, now they know too much. O the inconsistency of aristocratic federalism! What means they must have recourse to, to support a bad cause!

I WOULD ask the question of these noble, ignoble, (not common but) *uncommon gentlemen*, who they mean by these *common sort* of people, who know *so little*, and still know *too much*. You certainly cannot mean men who are children of the same common parent as yourselves, who walk on the same common earth, and breathe the same common air. If you say you do, your daily conduct strikingly contradicts the assertion, for you treat them as though they were infinitely your inferiors, a different species of beings, and formed of quite different materials?

AND to express myself in borrowed language, with a little variation of words, though originally of very different application.---“*Believe me fellow citizens I can scarce express the indignation I have felt, when I have witnessed the contempt with which these self-important nabobs have treated some of their fellow men. I do

*Referring to the speech of Mr. Webster, in the General Assembly at the last May session, on beholding the procession pass the Court-House, on the day the republicans celebrated the acquisition of Louisiana, at Hartford.

consider that a greater insult cannot be offered to the human understanding, or to the common Father of us all. It is a well known fact that human affairs are subject to changes, and I would ask those gentlemen if a change of circumstances should place you in the condition of those common kind of people, and you become more useful members of society, how you would like to be insulted in the manner I have alluded to.—These men whom you despise on account of that industry which gives you support, are in general the most useful, honest part of society. They neither squander in extravagance, riot in pleasure, nor loiter in idleness, and whose minds when enlightened, and whose interests hold them at an equal distance from the tyrant and the slave. By their virtue, temperance and industry, they are the greatest supporters of peace, order and government; and by the piety and morality of their lives, they are the greatest supporters of religion.—These are the men who hold the ballances, and watch over and maintain the liberties of a country; and not as if Mr. Adams supposed “one placed in a *hole*, greater than the *whole*.”

How inconsistent is the conduct of those aristocratic gentlemen with the principles of '76. The language of that day was, *we the people &c.* Now the language of these men are, *we the noble, chosen, privileged few*—They surely wish the principles of our revolution buried in eternal silence: and everlasting forgetfulness; And if they pay any attention to this day, by way of *celebration*, their pretensions are *evidently hypocritical*.

BUT we have abundant reason, fellow citizens, to rejoice on this day, that in spite of the united efforts of self-styled federalists, old tories and *all the aristocratic group*, that the principles of our revolution are not *forgotten*, but operating powerfully and extensively throughout our country. Never since the 4th of July 1776 has the sun

See John Adam's letter to Samuel Adams.

arose upon our land, and found our nation so *free, independent and happy* as at the present day.

ALL those visionary and imaginary evils predicted at the downfall of the late administration have fallen to the ground. The predictors have all proved false prophets. Not one of their prophecies have been fulfilled—nor one of the evils predicted taken place or been realized. They have all vanished “like the baseless fabric of a vision.”—And,

To their utter *astonishment and surprise!*

Our clergy are as much respected—our bibles as much read, and as safe as at any former period.—Our churches yet stand—religion still flourishing; and public and private virtue practised and encouraged.—And,

To their *sorrow,*

Information is disseminated—the public mind fast enlightning—our national debt fast diminishing—our country increasing in wealth—our public credit established and in repute—and our population rapid beyond a parallel.—And,

To their *disappointment,*

The industrious cultivator of the soil—the useful artificer—the fair merchant—together with the different professions, all receive the rewards of their labor.—And,

To their *great grief and lamentation,*

The cause of Republicanism is flourishing by the rapid increase of its numbers, especially in New-England & by the accession of the State of N. Hampshire to the general government.—Our country has become more extensive by the addition of a territory, the acquisition of which does honor to the present administration....And,

To their *vexation and despair,*

Such is the happy state of our nation that there is the fairest prospect of having our most sanguine expectations gratified, in the lasting and durable triumph of civil and religious liberty over every species of tyranny. And finally,

To their *shame and contempt,*

That they ever assumed the character of prophets. How

much more to their credit would it have been to have kept silent, and waited with patience, till at least some of those imaginary evils took place, and then exclaimed!

We told you so!

As respects the general Government, every thing appears to be conducted wisely and well--and in my opinion, no man who is a friend to the people, and possessed of information, can take a comparative view of the late and present administrations--without being struck with the contrast, and giving a decided preference to the latter....But,

Perhaps I might be justly charged with neglect were I not to pay a little attention to this State.

It cannot be said of the government of this State, that it is truly republican or democratical. Here exist laws which are opposed to the constitution of the United States; and which in their operation have a direct tendency to infringe on the rights of man, and corrupt religion....Here the legislature are afraid to let religion stand on its own basis, and have it left to the care and protection of the Great Head of the Church, but must make laws obliging every town or society to be provided with a minister or teacher of morality. And for neglect, are to be fined according to the pleasure of the General Court. Here the majority of a society may vote away the money of the minority, for religious purposes, unless the minority will conform to the majority according to law. Here also exist laws for the purpose of settling and supporting ministers; building meeting-houses, &c. &c. All which are in opposition to the Gospel, and religious freedom.

But in addition to these, perhaps in no place do taxes operate more unequal than in this State. The mode of taxation is calculated to injure the poor, and favour the rich man. Even the poll tax, in some towns, amounts to more than one half the sum total of the levy. Consequently in those towns, property does not pay one half the taxes. Yet property, and that *only*, must constitute a man a legal voter.

According to the laws of this State, the poor man who pays a poll tax, does military duty, and works two days in a year on the highways; pays annually a larger tax than is paid on 16 of the best houses in Connecticut... calculating the houses at 3000 dols. each, his tax is equal to that of 48,000 dols. of property in houses. If he has two sons or apprentices between 18 & 21 years of age, the increase of his yearly tax, is more than equal to that of 36 dwelling houses, or property in houses to the amount of 108,000 dols. This is indisputably true. And there is instances enough in this State, of men who pay a tax yearly, equal to what is here stated. Still they are "*porpoises*,"; have no voice in the government of which they contribute to support; are not allowed to vote in either town, or freemen's meetings, and go unrepresented from year to year. What can be more unjust, more unequal than this? And yet it is the case with many an old war-worn soldier, who has braved death at the mouths of 24 pounders, to establish the revolutionary doctrine, that taxation and representation are inseparable, and that taxation without representation, is tyranny; and this tyrannical principle, reduced to practice, was the chief cause of our separation from Great Britain. America was taxed in the British parliament, but not represented there. And perhaps it may throw some additional light on the subject, to quote a sentence or two, from the speeches of two celebrated members of the British parliament... Mr. PITT, in the House of Commons, with an original boldness of expression, observes, "Let the sovereign authority of this country, over the colonies, be asserted in as strong terms as can be devised, and made to extend to every point of legislation whatsoever, that we may bind their trade, confine their manufactures, and do any thing except taking the money out of their pockets without their consent." Lord CAMDEN, in the House of Peers, in strong and pointed language, said, "My position is this, I repeat it, I will maintain it to my last hour, taxation and representation are inseparable. This position is founded on

“ the laws of nature. It is more, it is itself an eternal
 “ law of nature. For whatever is a man’s own, is abso-
 “ lutely his own. No man has a right to take it from
 “ him without his consent. Whoever attempts to do it
 “ attempts an injury. Whoever does it commits a rob-
 “ bery.” Thus, according to the sentiments of some of
 the most distinguished members of the British Parliament,
 taxation without representation, is both tyranny and rob-
 bery. And indeed I think it must appear so to every
 honest man; and if this be the case how much of both
 must exist in this state. But, say our steady-habit men,
 “ it is not right for men who have no property, to vote a-
 way other men’s property?” To which I answer, neither
 is it right for you to vote away the poor man’s labour.
 If you do not believe his labour is as useful to society as
 your money, suspend industry for six months or a year,
 and see which there will be most of a call for at the
 expiration of the time.

I CONTENT that every man, whether poor or rich, who
 is a good member of society, ought to have a voice in that
 government, of which he contributes to the support; al-
 so a voice in laying that tax of which he pays a part. If
 this mode of reasoning is not acceptable, and men can-
 not be made freemen, because they do not own or possess
 property, or at least enough to constitute them voters,
 according to the laws of this State, then repeal the laws
 which oblige them to pay taxes, and do not call on them
 for a tax; for if you do, the old revolutionary doctrine,
 that taxation and representation, are inseparable; and that
 taxation without representation, is tyranny and political
 robbery....*Stares you full in the face!*

BUT the question arises, how are these evils to be re-
 medied in this State? I know of but one way, which is
 a change of officers...so long as the men now in office are
 kept in, so long we must suffer those evils to exist. But
 as soon as there is a majority of men of the right stamp,
 friends to equal rights, in both houses of the legislature,
 then will these oppressive laws be repealed, and just ones
 enacted. Then will the *old charter* be dispensed with,

and a constitution formed, fixing bounds to rulers, and saying to legislatures, thus far shall ye go and no farther.

Ask a Connecticut man, have you a state constitution made by the people? He answers, *no*. But we have a charter given us by Charles the II. And the very moment the declaration of independence was ratified, that *old* Charter became perfectly null and void. Still, this old, obsolete, nothing at all, is with some a *very wonderful affair*; is the very first thing they inserted in our statute book; immediately followed by the declaration of independence; and is to this day considered as the constitution of the Staté. Connecticut, if such are thy "*steady habits!*" we pray not for their continuance! And we will rejoice this day, that it brings to our minds sentiments which have a direct tendency to do away those tyrannical laws, and support and establish the principle that taxation and representation, are inseparable, as also the grand doctrine of "*We, the People.*" Let this sovereign principle to which all others ought to subserve, have a full and extensive operation...and we should then see men rank according to personal mérit; not according to the piety and worth of their fathers and ancellors—neither according to their houses, occupations or professions. And, instead of a haughty, imperious, scornful and tyrannical conduct and behavior in one part of mankind; and a mean, servile degrading carriage and manners, (unbecoming a being in human form, who stands and walks erect) in the other, we should see an open, frank and manly independence of manners, and propriety of conduct in all. We should see a respect of man for man...But to conclude,

We have assembled at this time, Fellow-Citizens, on no common occasion. It is to celebrate a day, the most interesting of any in the annals of America; and ought ever to awaken the liveliest sensibility in the hearts of all her sons. It may emphatically be denominated the *birth-day* of the *United States*. And surely, the recollection of that day which gave birth to our nation, and especially of those immortal sentiments which actuated,

and inspired the patriots of '76, to arise from the dust, and assume a national and independent character, is a consideration calculated to call into action, sentiments far different, and by far more congenial with the patriotic soul, than the observance of the birth-day of the greatest princes, kings, statesmen or heroes, that ever had an existence.

But we must remember fellow citizens, that festivity and external performances, constitute but a small part of the business of this day; the due observance of it is calculated to call into action some of the best feelings that ever emanated from the heart of man; and we, by commemorating this day, profess our attachment to the sentiments of our revolution. Let us then exhibit a consistency of character, and our conduct be such as shall do honor to those principles. May we consider that the first steps towards a regular and free government, is, self-government; and that the basis of all public virtue is *private virtue*; and if these are not duly cultivated, it matters but little what our form of government is, or by what name it is called. May we avoid discord, faction & every vice, practice industry, temperance, prudence, moderation, and the whole train of republican virtues. May we never suffer party views, or local prejudices to divide us, or prevent us from pursuing the public good. And let us all unite as one in giving our firm support, to those men, for public officers, and those only, who will support the rights of man.—

AND FINALLY, may the principles of genuine republicanism, become as extensive as the human race; and be handed down, unsullied to the latest posterity, till the time shall arrive, when civil government shall be no longer necessary, and the final consummation of all things take place, and time be swallowed up in the ocean of eternity.

F I N I S.