

Page, Timothy

Conciliation.



A N

ORATION,

PRONOUNCED ON THE

ANNIVERSARY

OF

AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE,

BEFORE A

LARGE AUDIENCE

CONVENED AT

SHOREHAM,

JULY 5, 1802.

By Timothy Page.

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Francis W. Johnson
of Fort Madison, Iowa.
(born 1825.)



SHOREHAM, July 30, 1802.

DEAR SIR,

DUI.Y appreciating the important advantages resulting from the cultivation of a spirit of union, and brotherly love, in a republican government ; and rightly judging your excellent Oration, delivered before us, on the last anniversary of American Independence, to be fraught with every sentiment requisite to promote the happy purpose of endearing Man to Man ; we now tender you the homage of our high respect, and grateful thanks, for the composition, and request a copy for the Press. With warmest wishes that you may enjoy, to the fullest extent, the blessings attendant on that spirit of rational liberty your benevolence has aimed to inculcate, we subscribe ourselves

Your friends and humble servants,

SAMUEL HEMENWAY,

CHARLES RICH,

(Signed)

DANIEL NEWTON,

JAMES MOORE,

TIMOTHY F. CHIPMAN,

(And a large number of other gentlemen.)

To TIMOTHY PAGE, Esq.



TO THE READER.



IT is but reasonable that the reader should be informed, that while employed in writing the following pages, I was laboring under indispositions of body, which were so pressing, that when I had completed my design in a rough draught, my complaints had so increased upon me that I was obliged to commit the copying of it, principally, to another hand, without being able to revise it, or to prepare it for a currency in the ear of the Critic ; or even, finally, to read it on the occasion for which it was designed ; and for the performance of which I am indebted to the politeness of a friend—And it is now presented to the public, verbatim, as delivered, with very little exception.

In suffering the work to go to the Press, which is merely in compliance with the prefixed address, I am not unaware that the interesting nature of the subject is calculated to invite the nicest scrutiny of the Critic ; but if it may in any measure discourage the spirit of dissension, and promote a disposition to unity, upon a just and impartial ground, it will abundantly compensate for all the possible persecutions of criticism.

THE AUTHOR.

ORATION, &c.



FELLOW-CITIZENS,

THE occasion on which we have this day assembled, brings to mind an event of a nature and magnitude well worthy the tribute of an anniversary commemoration—and pregnant with succeeding events of the last importance to millions, and perhaps, millions multiplied upon millions, to the latest posterity of man.—It is no less than the birth-day of an empire, consisting of a vast extent of territory, which, with the prospects naturally attached to it, promise a commanding influence in the future politics of the world; with an existing population of more than three millions of inhabitants, bursting into the elements of liberty, and nobly asserting the right of an independent agency among the nations of the earth.—But great as the event was, it was as serious as great. A civilized people, in a dubious state of anarchy—unassociated and undisciplined, claiming the protection of an organized government, for the mutual security of their equal rights. This was a time to try the souls of the people, and the genius of the statesman. We had the example of all tried forms of government before us, out of which to chuse, or compound one to our own liking. After laboring for many years under the weakness and dangers of a modest advisory system, and finally surmounting the many embarrassments naturally attached to a business where so many varying in-

terests and speculations are concerned, a government was finally organized and established under a constitution, probably the most unexceptionable of any ever yet in use, if not in the possible invention of man :—Under which we have flourished beyond a parallel, for more than thirteen years, with all the pleasing prospects of population, strength, and respectability, rapidly progressing, attached to our national career. But it is not my design at present, to come forward with the eulogium of government, or to panegyryze the many worthy personages officially concerned in its several departments ; though I acknowledge it is doing violence to my own feelings, to pass such an occasion without offering a grateful tribute at the shrine of an illustrious WASHINGTON ; whose active virtue, and distinguished philanthropy, has embalmed his pure memory with a sweetness which shall exist as long as the human mind is capable of reflection. A different theme, however, seems to invite the employment of the little strength which the declining state of my health will afford, while my beloved country is suffering under the baneful influence of party, which threatens the most serious consequences, and calls aloud for all the wisdom and virtue of the whole community, discreetly to direct the tide of public opinion, and to tranquilize the feuds of dissention. For it is too late to cry peace, when the floors of our legislative assemblies are groaning with the apparent weight of violence and opposition, and the murmuring clamors of the people are vibrating from one extremity of the Union to the other. But why, my fellow-citizens, should we suffer those jarring dissentions to disturb our national tranquility ? If we look back to our former administrations, we have passed thro' the long period of a ten years war in Europe, whose extraordinary influence has drawn almost all na-

tions into its vortex, while the influence of our cabinet has maintained peace, and supported a most respectable consideration in the scale of national command, and enabled us, at the same time, to meet all the expenses of government, with an enlargement of our national strength, a lessening of the public debt, and considerable unappropriated money in the treasury, and our legal contributions have not been grievous or immoderate.—If we turn to the present administration, we have a fair pledge for lessening the easy burthens of the former, by an improved economy of the expenditures of government; and the experiment is now in operation, with a considerable share of savings already announced, and the final result unknown, and of course cannot be duly rated or appreciated, and furnishes no fair pretext for a final denunciation.

FROM these considerations, it will appear that the subsisting differences do not grow merely out of existing evils, but are connected more abundantly with a speculative ambition, and the misguided jealousies of the imagination: and it is no difficult point to conceive how they should obtain upon such a ground; for the human mind is so formed as to be easily attached to the wonderful, and to believe in things most extraordinary, when the least obscurity exists; and especially when their interest or religion are concerned.—And it requires but a little acquaintance with human nature, to be able to turn the current of this credulity in favor of our own views; for it is well known what a colouring the human faculties are capable of giving to any proposed object; and it is by imposing upon this honest credulity in man, that the demons of corruption insinuate their infernal schemes, and fill the world with mischief. I will go farther, and even suppose that such mischief may eventually arise from a mere heedless indiscretion in the agent

immediately concerned, where no evil is designed; and the misconception of the candid mind may lead to all the hurtful effects of a false colouring; but it argues, nevertheless, the same necessity of reformation.

Look into the history of man, and you will find hundreds of sectaries of religion—many of which, according to the most substantial evidence, are founded in corruption, and its votaries enslaved in the vilest servitude, with all the zeal of a conscientious obedience to the will of Heaven—While others of a more charited order, manifest the most ardent zeal in the creeds of their divines, which you may follow to the test of facts, and you will find all growing out of the imagination, and a single truth gives all to the wind. Turn your eyes next to the profession of physic—see the flaunting mountebank, imposing his nostrums and infallible specifics, with such a fascinating address, that a thousand disappointments will give no conviction of the cheat; while the world is teeming with thousands of inferior quacks of various descriptions, eternally chanting their darling theme of “I have, and I can,” who, with all the natural evidence of ignorance and presumption, are mysteriously encouraged by the wise, flattered by the great, adored by the simple, and doubly rewarded with a generous fee, and and grateful thanks, for destroying a good constitution, and murdering all the sweet comforts of departing health; and even hastening the hapless patient, with all his credulity, prematurely to the world of spirits; whose enchanted brain chants forth the praises of his destroyer in full confidence, to the very borders of the grave.

If we turn from the chambers of the sick, to the broad field of politics, we shall find the wonders of imposition no less extraordinary, and its

consequences no less serious. While depravity possesses the heart of man, and corruption lurks in its secret parts, we shall never lack for men who will stick at no mischief to effect their ambitious views. This may seem like a burlesque upon man, but the world is too full of examples to need an apology. It is immaterial what station a man occupies to enter the list of outrage upon man; for there is no point but what admits of an object for his ambition, in the weakness or wickedness of man, to be hoodwinked or bribed over to his purpose, which may operate to the injury of man partially or generally, according to the nature and magnitude of the object, from the supplanting a brother in his birth-right, through the various degrees of *dissention, sedition, opposition, insurrection, civil-war*, and all the dread calamities of foreign invasion, even to the slaughter of thousands, and perhaps, hundreds of thousands of innocent victims to gratify the cursed ambition of a stickler for a place or a pension; or perhaps, for the flimsy fame of differing from others.—Fellow-citizens, this is not a mere speculative reverie. History furnishes abundance of examples in all ages of the world, which have deeply touched the heart of benevolence, and dressed the feeling soul in sackcloth; and it lies with us to profit by the examples, and if possible, to ward off the painful consequences.

I HAVE said something of the extraordinary, and unsuspecting credulity of man, by which, in his own agency, he is liable to be led into the violation of his own rights and interest, by the cunning artifice of those demons of corruption, whose inventions are basely employed for the gratification of their partial views; but there is another ingredient in the human mind, which is equally assailed as an instrument of their vile purposes: Mankind naturally inherit a certain share of jealousy over all

who are possessed of a power of control ; which jealousy, however, is not naturally disposed to rage, without the blast of some pestiferous breath to chafe the coal ; and is, indeed, an ingredient of vast importance in the rights of government, provided it be restrained to its proper limits, in the due estimation of the means of knowledge : for we are not to be led into a base and oppressive servitude, in the control of constituted authorities, with any more propriety than to bend to the mischievous purposes of the lawless *partisan* : but this forms a nice point in the policy of life, and calls up all the judicious forces of wisdom and prudence, to steer in a safe course, in the duties of society, and to evade the snares of *deception*. Jealousy, says Solomon, is as cruel as the grave ; and when a little excited by the false painting of the sycophant, it is like the jaundiced eye that gives a yellow hue to every object ; or a fascination whose mysterious influence converts the shadow of the fragrant rose-bud into the imagined substance of a hideous mountain, whose dangerous aspect alarms the traveller, with the threatening attitude of its prominences, while the hissing serpents, lurking in their secret places, are ready to fasten upon him by *surprise*.

IN a free government, like ours, when the mind gets a little warped with the undue influence of party zeal, we are apt to forget the necessary restraints of order and subordination.—Feeling the important right of being equal as citizens, we assume the forced right of being equal also as magistrates, as senators, and as judges ; we enter the cabinet, and assume the jurisdiction of every department of State ; we negotiate for the President, debate for the Legislator, and execute for the Magistrate ; and by assuming this ground, we lose all due respect for those who have a right to

command, and forget those necessary distinctions on which our peace, happiness, and political existence depends; and as the celebrated Montesquieu has pertinently said, “ This licentiousness will soon taint the mind; the restraints of command be as fatiguing as that of obedience; wives, children, slaves, will shake off all subordination; no longer will there be any such thing as manners, order, or virtue.” This, my brethren, is opening a most enticing door for petty tyrants to try their importance; and they only need to start the influence of some plausible pretext to complete the sacrifice of Liberty, and at the monstrous expense of thousands of lives, to assert the favorite prerogative of a tyrannical Monarchy; and this is a state of government to which our divided situation seems now to be in a threatening manner progressing:—not that the royal traits have ever yet appeared in the spirit of government, or in the people governed; for the genius of the empire is opposed to it from the birth, and we all detest it as a monster of unnatural production; but our notions of extreme equality, that seem to level the necessary distinctions of an organized government, threatens to burst the vital bands of union, and expose us a prey, in the field of blood, to the policy of the wretch, who, in our calamity, shall take the lead in the awful contingencies of the day.

PAUSE then, my brethren, pause a moment, and let us see where we stand. The consciousness of our own probity is not a sure criterion of our steering in a right course—the zealous mind, misled, is, eventually, in as bad a course as he who moves upon a bad principle.—It is a natural weakness in man, to be too hasty in the espousal of sentiment.—Falshood may often wear a more plausible garb than truth, and especially when dressed by the hand of a demagogue; and our fancy readily at-

taches the opinion of intrinsic worth—and, with a judgment once formed, we cease to investigate; and with an air of unerring rectitude, are too ardently set upon gaining a favourite point, without duly estimating the events; for the glory of conquest is entirely eclipsed in the more important consideration of acquiring the truth: and in the scale of reason, the satisfaction of being in the right, whether primary or secondary in the acquisition, must forever triumph over the pride of personal pre-eminence; for the balance of conquest is in favor of him who gains the truth, and not in him who merely supports his argument; for no object short of truth, and the assertion of a positive right, can justify the discord of a contest; and if the object be obtained, it is of no importance to say by whose agency. These are considerations, which, if duly appreciated, cannot fail to soften our tenacity in the display of sentiment, and inspire a spirit of free enquiry, and fair conclusions, for the furtherance of the best policy of life; and it is our delinquencies upon these grounds, that principally accounts for all the oppositions, and wild divisions, that embarrasses the present career of the Union.

It would be an insult upon the understanding of the people of the United States, to suppose they were divided in their sense of the principles of government;—no, it is a mere illusion of base *design*; we are all substantially united in the sound principles of republican liberty, and are aiming at the same points of administration; the difference is in name and not in fact; and the tranquil expressions of our President, are equally pertinent and important in the case, and embrace the vital concerns of our union, and may they be stamped in living characters upon every American heart—“We are all Republicans, we are all Federalists.”—May we all realize the sentiment in perfect unanimity—re-

move the abuse of words, and the abuse of the understanding, and we are one in name and in *fact*.

HOLD fast, then, the vital cords of union ; cling to the golden chain that links all together ; and despise the clamouring wretch who would level the peace and order of our government for a few paltry *cents*.—Be wise, and prudent, as well as honest, and enquiring ; and on all measures of government, deliberate with diffidence, applaud with modesty, censure with the nicest caution, and strive to support the Constitution in all its legal operations with a religious respect, and punctuality.—I say, religious—but when I speak of religion as it respects the concerns of government, it is to be understood with its limitations ; for though government can bear no part in shaping the course of religion, yet religion, in its proper explanation, is of the last importance in the features of a good government : not the religion of sectarians, who will persecute with the tongue, the scourge, and the faggot ; nor the mere contemplative ecstacy of abstract devotioners, who are eternally boasting of a tender conscience, and all the wonders of divine love ; and yet bridle not the tongue, nor move a single finger for the comfort of the wretched ;—it is the active religion approved in the Court of Heaven ; good actions flowing from an honest heart. This is that peaceable fruit of righteousness which corresponds to the divine pattern of the great teacher of righteousness, who went about doing good. This is a religion that brightens the features of a good government, and well becomes its first principles. Not that I would exact in its agents, all the requisite qualities for enjoying the privileges of the Church, for that is a distinct right, depending on its peculiar qualifications, embracing the pure convictions of the heart ; but so far as it respects sound morality, it is absolutely indispensable in the agency

of every good government, and for the common enjoyment of the same with comfort.—And it was from the exercise of these principles, that a Washington, in the field, spared the effusions of blood, and conquered his thousands by the soft influences of his love, and eventually triumphed over all the machinations of an imposing tyrant, with his hosts of emissaries.—And it was upon the same ground, that his influence in the cabinet, has commanded the respect of surrounding empires, even in the infancy of our government ; and effected all the important purposes of peace, to the nation, and the confidence of all in the great circle of his official concerns.

BUT while we are thus delighted with the picture of Virtue, in its more exalted form, if we cast our reflections on its opposite, in the same degree of extreme, (which heaven grant may never obtain upon American ground) the mere idea fills the recoiling soul with horror ! But I forbear attempting the dreadful contrast, and refer it to the miserable time in which it may exist. But happy had it been for us, if the mystery of political iniquity had not been known in the American Empire—and where the finer feelings of morality are at ease, and the rights of conscience desert their station, the highway is open to the dread extreme—it opens the ear to the cunning policy of ambition ; we listen to its artful alarms upon our rights and interests, till we are insensibly led into the deep mazes of party, and are lost to all the manly eloquence of reason.—And the baneful effects of an excited party spirit are incalculable ;—it perverts the judgment, alienates the affections, and even establishes our belief in those things which were otherwise altogether incredible. This brings us to a *most solemn pause*--and would to Heaven the pause may exterminate the spirit of deception,

tend its veil from the understanding, and settle the feuds of imagination ; and I presume the remaining difference would justify no serious division of party. Go into the enquiry in the spirit of candor ; examine the evidence in the perspicuity of naked facts, with due regard to charity in the construction of words and measures, and where shall we find the mighty difference ?

OUR government is a pure representative republic, founded upon the solid base of a constitution, abounding with its checks and guarantees, which secure the subject in the free enjoyment of his rights in life, liberty and property, on the liberal scale of equality. This is my government, says the one party ; and this is my government, says the other ; while we, nevertheless, hear the opprobrious charges, of tory and monarchist, by the one, and by the other, disorganizer and anarchist.—But the charges are respectively denied, and there are no existing facts to support them.—It would be assuming too much, however, to deny the existence of the spirit of either epithet in the United States ;—it is possible to exist, in some few solitary instances, on both sides of the question ; but too few to justify the least shadow of division in the great body of the people. But the fair probability is, that the present divisions do not grow out of sentiment, in the principles of government. The extreme anguish of disappointment, and the extreme desire of the glorious benefits of appointment, are sufficient incitements, in corrupt hearts, who possess the advantage of influence, to excite all the horrors of insurrection. This is the secret hinge on which has turned the fate of empires, and brought thousands of worthy characters to the last resort of a tyrant's rage.—And the most important step in this infernal scheme, is to excite a jealousy in the people about their interests, their

rights, and their liberties—and the wonders arising upon this ground are beyond all calculation.—Like the quack who, by his peculiar skill, discovers the horrid mischiefs of mercury in his patient ; the miserable dupe well remembers that seven years before he took a huge draught from Doct. Wiseman, and can at this distant period plainly perceive all its dreadful effects, as they are first named by the quack, and is miserably languishing under the dread calamity ; when, in fact, the huge draught of mercury was but a mild cup of *tea*. This is, in fact, making a frightful mountain of the shadow of a *rose-bud*—and this is the mighty *monarchy*, and the mighty *anarchy*, whose dire conflict now shakes the very soul of our Union. The quack must have his fee, and it is to be raised upon extraordinary credit, without skill or honesty ; and the great mystery is, that he obtains this credit equally with the wise and simple.

BUT though I would thus account for the serious divisions, which have so far obtained in the great circle of our union, it is not to be presumed that our agents in government have committed no errors ; for it must be too extraordinary, to expect imperfect man to steer, at all times, in a right course ; and besides, it is possible that the sting of slander may rankle in the heart, and interrupt the due exercise of the voluntary functions—and common charity demands we should suspend our censures, till the sting be removed, and its poisonous wounds are healed.

BUT from whatever motives the principal agents of *opposition* are actuated, the spirit is contagious ; and the fever is now raging, with great ravages, upon the peace and comfort of the body politic, and the whole system seems to be unhappily interrupted in the due exercise of its functions, even to the most individual concerns ;—our common cir-

cles are tainted with its heat, the affections of friends are alienated, and the nearest connexions disturbed in their wonted tranquility, and the marks of insanity are discovered in the disconnected and clashing reports of the day, and seems to preface an unfavorable issue. But happily, we have yet to boast, there are no fatal symptoms, and I come forward with the tender of a remedy, well adapted to the exigency of the malady.

OUR Constitution has wisely provided for the responsibility of the officers of government, and for the frequency, freedom, and purity of *election*; and the wisdom of the people is called upon to exercise these privileges, for their own comfort and security. I acknowledge we are not without danger in the exercise of this right; but our danger principally consists in our own weakness and folly—we listen to the insinuations of the sycophantic partisan; his soft persuasions, and strong pledges, gain credit in our esteem; and his vile detractions, and enticing flatteries, soon get the better of our understanding; and we are completely attached to his party; and, of course, deeply interested in the support of his doctrines—we zealously run into all the niceties of fine spun theories, till we are lost in the refined dreams of imagination, and defy all conviction.

THIS is but the common witchcraft of electioneering, that subverts the salutary purposes of free and uncorrupted elections; but our common safety calls upon us to take a different position—and we may record it as a *living principle*, that whatever is moved to irritate the public feeling, or to heat the passion, comes from a corrupt source, and is calculated to bribe the understanding: men of real *merit* are not afraid to trust the discernment of others to discover it; it is our conscious distrust of our own worthiness, that makes us clamorous of our own praise, that, if possible, we may make others see different from ourselves. Re-

member, in ancient days, God was not found in a whirlwind, but in the still, small voice ; and the dignified nature of virtue is too noble to descend to the drudgery of founding its own trumpet ; and much less, to dwell on the painful theme of scandal and detraction, in the fame of a rival.

SHUN, then, the clamorous partizan, and bestow not your suffrages upon the flattering zealot, for if he be even of your own professed party, he is none the safer in the trust of power. Too warm to deliberate, if he is ever right it is by chance ; and with the same sagacity his whole zeal may be exerted, in violation of your dearest rights, against all the enticing whims of plighted favors. Cast your eyes, then, upon the calm, the steady, smiling soul, where wisdom, integrity, and the love of man, forms the distinguishing traits of his character. This is the man in whom to confide the important trust of power, to control your interests ; and this only, can be the man of safety, even with all the checks and restraints of the constitution, and the laws. And in selecting such a character, it is of equal importance, that you avoid the libels of slander, and the rages of praise : The sallies of passion, in the interest of party, are equally dangerous in every shape, and every guise.

I REPEAT it with all the fervor of imperious necessity, *look well to your elections.* In every appointment to office, even to the lowest grade of authority, you give up a portion of your own power, to the exercise of others, in a legal control over you, in their respective commands. The trust is sacred, and your only safety is in the qualifications and probity of the agent ; and your own good sense must dictate you in the disposal. But in all things, in which your influence may effect the rights of society, have special regard to peace, and unanimity.

THERE is a natural propensity in man to the attachments of party, which by indulgence, may

carry him into all the extravagance of party zeal ; that may tend to the greatest calamities of opposition and bloodshed. Labor then to discourage the evil reports of the day ; lay the finger of silence upon the lips of slander ; give no currency to the productions of party zeal ; and in the divine spirit of equity, strive earnestly for those things which make for peace ; for blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall obtain peace—a blessing in *very* deed, whose benign influences are more affecting to the heart of sensibility, than all the pleasures of the oil and wine : It makes the sun to rise in the delight of enjoyment, and set in the calm of undisturbed repose ; the eye sparkles with beams of joy, and the placid graces illumine the features of the face, and soften the very perfections of beauty ; the passions are calm as summer evenings, and the softer sympathies of the soul are all alive to enjoyment. This, my fellow-citizens, is the very life of society, whose heavenly beams dispel all the clouds of dissention, and becalms the storm of *faction* : Reason assumes its prerogative in the soul, and labors industriously for the common benefit of *society*.

IT is a maxim in republican politics, that we give up a portion of our liberty for the better security of the remainder : And it is of equal importance, that we indulge the same freedom of opinion in others, which we would wish to exercise for ourselves ; and the restraints of such opinions are readily ascertained by the limits of law and equity, and the common usages of civility, which are perfectly consistent with the enjoyment of social union, in the general police of an organized republic. And this is the way to rest in peace, on central ground, in the elysian field of liberty and equality, in the right of enjoyments : And may it be the *pride* and *glory* of every citizen of the United States, to meet on this ground, united like a band of brothers ; that we may peacefully enjoy

every blessing in the great American family, in solid harmony, and face every danger in full confidence and safety.

THINK not too much of giving up the common reserves of varying sentiment, or a little dissatisfaction in measures ; the sacrifice is trifling, in comparison with the end in view : The great object of union is too important to justify divisions upon ordinary motives, and swallows up all comparison ; and a little time may rectify all the evils of fact or fancy. Abide then by the divine *motto** which you have this day suspended in the face of the world ; call up its pacific influence on every occasion of the least invasion of your social tranquility, and enforce the charming precept upon posterity by your persevering example, and you shall forever enjoy all the social blessings attached to free empire.

We are one, cries the voice of nature, which has reared us up in a portion of the earth that gives us all the natural advantages of asserting our rights, in defiance of a hostile world. *We are one*, cries the voice of humanity, in the soft whispers of congenial sympathy, which links the heart of man to man, and recoils at the slightest shade of corruption which may be levelled at our social order and felicity. *We are one*, cries the voice of reason, whose sound policy wisely unites the strength of the body politic, as the strength of one *man*, that we may successfully face every danger, in the secure enjoyment of all our social rights and liberties.

AND may the cordial, the divine expressions, burst harmonious from every American tongue, in deep and solemn accents, that shall pierce the heavenly arch, and in majestic echo vibrate to the uttermost parts of the earth, while the listening millions of the world, in profound respect, shall eternally venerate the distinguished name of an American.

* An inscription on the Flag, WE ARE ONE, borne through the various exercises of the day.