

AN

ORATION

DELIVERED AT

CANTERBURY, NEW-HAMPSHIRE,

JULY 4, 1810.

.....
BY REV. MARTIN RUTER.
.....

*“ He that outliv'd that Day, and came safe back
From those sharp conflicts which the same assur'd,
Shall stand on tiptoe when that day is nam'd,
And rouse him at the name of INDEPENDENCE.”*



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JULY, 1810.

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Canterbury, July 4, 1810.

SIR,

THE committee, appointed to wait on you, beg leave to return the thanks of the audience, for the ingenious and patriotic discourse this day delivered before them, and request a copy for publication.

We have the happiness, Sir, to be yours respectfully,

JONATHAN AYER,
ABIEL FOSTER,
MORRILL SHEPARD,
WILLIAM FOREST,
EZEKIEL MORRILL, } Committee.

REV. MR. RUTER.

GENTLEMEN,

MR. RUTER presents his respects, and assures the committee, that he feels sensible of their complaisance, and is happy in complying with their request.

Gentlemen, I am happy to be yours,

MARTIN RUTER.

JONATHAN AYER, ESQ.
ABIEL FOSTER, ESQ.
COL. MORRILL SHEPARD,
MR. WILLIAM FOREST,
MR. EZEKIEL MORRILL, } Committee.



Oration.



FATHERS AND FELLOW-CITIZENS,

WHEN we survey the powers of the human mind, we are led to consider man as formed for the enjoyment of happiness upon a more extensive scale than any species of sensible beings belonging to our world. ~~Other creatures are sensible of pain and pleasure, but to man is given a more noble sphere of action. Created for important purposes, we behold him capable of doing great good and enjoying great happiness. And inasmuch as he has reason to guide him, he is expected to judge with equity, to believe with firmness, and conduct with propriety. While his inclination prompts him to contemplate on the stupendous works of his adorable Author, to trace with wonder and delight the sublime and the beautiful in their endless variety throughout creation, it is no less his privilege to notice what is passing around him, and to survey the mighty changes and revolutions which have taken place upon the great theatre of nations.~~

The reasoning powers of his mind, assisted by the light of revelation, qualify him for the exercise of those

rights which Heaven has divinely bestowed upon him ; and whether he wishes to spend his life amidst the crowd or in retirement, he has a part to act and duties to perform which are indispensable.

To listen the voice of truth, to observe the path it marks out before us, to cultivate and improve the faculties given us, is both pleasing and useful. The true exercise of reason is an important duty, and is calculated to guard us against the many errors to which human nature is ever exposed. The dictates of truth and reason relate to all the affairs of life, and will lead us aright so long as we readily follow them. Thus are we led to a knowledge of our capacities and inabilities, and thereby to a just view of our obligations to the Divine Being and the duties we owe to one another.

The powers to act and enjoy are ever wisely suited to the different grades of being for which they were intended, and as man is placed in a situation to be happy above the brutal herds, his capacity to enjoy the blessings of society is proportionably greater than theirs.

The powers of sympathy within the human breast are capable of the most agreeable, as well as the most painful sensations ; and in order to be happy, it is necessary that we should possess friendship in its purest essence. Without this power of attraction, the benefits of society would be comparatively small. Avarice would prevail over patriotism, and the ties which serve to bind communities together would be greatly weakened, if not totally destroyed. But the influence of virtuous attachments at once fills the mind with the most pleasing ideas, and lays the foundation of that union which is the bulwark of a nation.

Surrounded by the blessings of society and enjoying the liberty of conscience, man is capable of all those noble attainments which a bountiful God has placed before him, and all that happiness which virtue and friendship are calculated to inspire. By a real discharge of his duty he secures to himself the consolations of religion, and is made free from the terrors which wrangle and corrode in the breasts of the guilty. But deprived of his liberty he becomes a stranger to pleasure; the sweetest enjoyments of life lose their charms, and the noble powers of his mind grow useless and dormant. It has therefore been found expedient in every community, to have laws established for the purpose of securing to each individual what every nation is pledged to support—the rights of a citizen.

From the earliest foundation of cities and republics, constitutions and government have been deemed of importance, and no nation has ever pretended to subsist without them.

Governments are capable of improvement and have been altered at different times according to the manners and customs of the people for whose benefit they were instituted. In the first ages of society, laws were few and rulers freely chosen by the people were obeyed and respected. But in proportion as the different communities became enlarged and their numbers increased, laws were multiplied and different forms of government were established.

A thirst for power and dominion has excited the ambitious in every age to seek and contend for the right of governing. But when their object has been obtained, they have generally viewed themselves free from

any restraints of law, and abused the power with which they had been entrusted, by exercising the most cruel oppression. Thus have the rights of man been often disregarded and trampled upon by the very characters who had sworn to support them.

But since a proper observance of good laws is as much the duty of rulers as of citizens, no government can be just which places one man or any number of men above the laws which rulers are appointed to execute. Hence a monarchy, to say no worse, is inconsistent with good policy ; because it opens the way for an undue exercise of arbitrary power, and often involves a people in slavery and ruin.

It has pleased the great Creator to grant mankind the natural right of governing themselves ; and if they would be free, let them retain it, and hold in their own hands the prerogative of choosing their officers of government, and of dismissing them when a majority is against them.

It is easier for a people to possess this right than to recover it when lost : the moment they surrender it, they are no longer free. The rod of oppression succeeds, and too late they lament their rashness and folly.

Freedom for several ages found an assylum in some parts of Europe ; and while her votaries cherished the principles, and fought in defence of so good a cause, they flourished and were prosperous. The ancient republics afforded unparalleled instances of patriotism and heroic fervor : for some time they maintained their privileges and preserved the government of their choice ; but tyranny, the firstborn son of the old dragon, has long since gained the ascendancy, and scarce a

vestige of any republican government now remains in the East.

The genius of liberty has fled from the old world to the inviting shores of this western hemisphere ; where her faithful sons may rally around her standard and sing of her triumphs, and without fearing the powers of hell-born tyrants, may celebrate the natal morn of her glorious arrival.

This day, fellow-citizens, we have assembled on the pleasing occasion ! to hail the returning anniversary of our national Jubilee ! We come to reciprocate the most sincere congratulations on our country's glory and the smiling prospects we yet have to encourage us ; we join with millions in announcing to the world our united resolution to remain the firm supporters of that constitution and those rights, in defence of which our fathers fought and bled.

In reflecting on the blessings originally bestowed upon man, we thank Heaven for that portion of them we now so happily enjoy. While we cast our eyes abroad through the universe and behold with painful sensations the vast millions who live in a degraded state of subjugation and slavery, we cannot but feel a spirit of grateful devotion that our lot is cast in pleasant places.

Not to acknowledge blessings so exceedingly valuable, would betray our ingratitude ; and not to cherish the institutions by which they have been secured, would discover ignorance and insensibility.

While the eastern world is overrun with despotism, war and bloodshed, while Europe, the seat of science

and refinement, is torn with convulsions and clad in terror, America is free ! The enlightened citizens of these peaceful regions may exult in their past achievements and their present happy situation.

Thirty-four years are this day completed since America cast off the yoke and declared herself **FREE** and **INDEPENDENT**. Freedom and slavery were the alternatives to which our fore-fathers were reduced. For the one they had left their native soil ; from the other they had fled as from an evil demon. They were now called upon to surrender all they held dear ; but the powers above forbade them to do it ! A sense of duty and a love for their posterity compelled them to take up arms and face the storm ! to meet the thunders of Britain, and resist the nation that dared to oppress them.

The contest was unequal, long and bloody. Our towns and cities were set on fire and left in ruins—our fields were covered with slaughtered armies, and desolation threatened us. But thanks to the **GOD** of battles, that amidst the raging tempest, victory declared in our favor ! The foe withdrew and left us to enjoy the prize we had won. From that glad hour the fetters of bondage were broken ; the prison doors were thrown open ; and liberty which had lain dormant in the tomb of Brutus, once more awoke at the news of our achievements.

Nor can we be unmindful of those who were active in the scene. Some of them are yet with us to enjoy the fruits of their toils. To you, my fathers, this day, religiously devoted to a grateful remembrance of **American Independence**, must be unspeakably pleas-

ing. May all the joys of liberty be yours, and when you shall be called to terminate a present existence, may you reap eternal rewards.

Many who fought in the glorious cause of their country have already departed; but their memories shall live with posterity; and while gratitude remains in the human breast, the name of WASHINGTON will be revered by every true American. Venerable Hero! though the weeping dews besprinkle the silent mansions of thy retreat,

And sighing winds while softly passing o'er,
In mournful accents tell, thou art no more;

yet shall thou live in the grateful remembrance of generations to come; and when the Roman monument shall sink into oblivion, and the towering pyramid crumble to ruins, thou shalt continue a noble existence among the happy immortals. The stars shall fade away, the sun himself grow dim with age; but thou shalt flourish in blooming youth and immortality.

The news of our Independence had reached the remotest kingdoms, and many millions were fired with the love of liberty: human nature began to assume her right—the hearts of tyrants failed—all nations desired to partake of our joys and join in our triumphs. But, alas! their supineness, their luxury and vicious habits held them in strong fetters.

France struggled to be free, and for a while threw off the yoke of bondage; for a time she seemed to flourish; but how has the gold become dim—how has their glory departed! Once they sang the song of freedom, but those harps are now hung upon the

willows. Despotism has again reared his horrid head among them, and breathed his noxious blasts of pestilence and war through states and kingdoms.

America is now the only remaining land where freedom reigns ; ours is the only republic left. For many years our constitution, laws and administration have stood the test ; and amidst the difficulties arising from contending parties, we have kept our seat among the powers of the earth. But the eyes of all nations are upon us, and envious monarchs are waiting to see us fall. We must not therefore rest upon the lap of indolence, in unguarded security, vainly imagining the hours of danger all fled. It is necessary that we should keep a watchful eye, and guard our liberty as we would guard life ; for the moment we lose the one the other is of no value.

To preserve our union and maintain our rights unimpaired, is an object in which every true American will feel himself interested. It is a duty incumbent upon us, the violation of which would call down divine vengeance. The importance of this duty is greatly increased in consequence of the present crisis : never since we became a free people, has our political situation been so critical as it has of late ; the present transactions on the great theatre of nations are without a parallel in the annals of time.

The belligerents of Europe, regardless of the laws of nations and the rights of neutrals, have by their unjust orders and decrees, almost swept our commerce from the ocean, and appear determined, if possible, to compel us into a war. The ground on which either of them pretends to be justifiable is, that the other has

done the same things ! Some indeed have contended that Britain can blockade the French ports, and that she has therefore an undoubted right to cut off the trade of neutrals : but the French ports are not completely blockaded ; and admitting they were, would this cut off their resources ? Would this fetter their trade with the European nations ? Their resources would still remain, to cut off which the whole continent must be blockaded. The orders in council must therefore be considered among the many violations of right which have long been the characteristic of the British nation.

And because an all conquering monster has become invincible on the land, because thrones and powers have fallen before him, and he is suffered to be the scourge of all Europe, his insatiable thirst for power leads him to look for universal dominion. He must even presume to dictate the privileges of America ! And without power to effect any thing of consequence at sea, would fain oblige us to open an exclusive trade with him and his confederates. He has issued his decrees, unwarranted by the laws of nations, by which our rights are invaded and our trade embarrassed.

But had the injuries of those two nations, been confined to our commercial privileges, we should have less cause of complaint. So far from this, the one has assaulted our ships in our own waters in time of peace ! She has impressed several thousands of our seamen since the commencement of the present war ; under circumstances too which made these outrages more than commonly aggravating ; she is constantly taking our property upon the ground of her unjust orders in

council, and still pretends that she has ever been striving for a friendly settlement. When any of her ministers have been disposed to offer us honorable terms, she has disavowed their propositions and denied their power thus to treat with us. Such too have been recalled, and another must be sent, whose insolent conduct merits nothing so much as the contempt and abhorrence of every real American ; and whose object, if we may judge from the best information, is not to make restitution for past abuses, but to promote faction, and see how many we have among us who love British monarchy better than American liberty.

The French, on the other hand, have kept us in expectation that something would be done favorable to our commercial privileges. We had even hoped they would withdraw their decrees ; but how are we disappointed ? The French had pretended friendship to America—Napoleon had spoken of us with cordiality. But what proofs have we had of their friendship ? Such as we must ever expect from French perfidy ! Our ships have been burned upon the high seas ; our seamen taken ; our property in the ports of France, Italy and Holland, has been lately sold and the avails thereof put into the treasury of an usurping tyrant.

And who, under this view, will presume to justify either of those powers, in the line of conduct they have pursued toward us ? Will any but the promoters of faction be so regardless of their country's honor, as to say that England has done us no harm ? or that France is the friend of America ? Nay ! let us be sensible of national injuries ; let us know who are our friends and who are our enemies.

What have we now to expect from their promises but an increase of abuses, and a repetition of past aggressions? We are willing to treat them as friends, in peace, but let us first be assured of their sincerity. Our object is peace with all nations, and our administration has long been striving to maintain it by every possible measure; but if they would gain our confidence, let them restore our seamen, ships and property; let them make amends for the wrongs they have done us.

In the mean time it becomes us to study and practice good policy at home. To watch against the spirit of faction as against deadly poison; and the moment we find any disposed to advocate the bad cause of those who have thus injured us, to view them with jealous eyes. For what can be more important to us than attachment to our own government; and what can be more destructive than a disunion in sentiment? Fellow citizens, let us not be Britons or Frenchmen; let us be Americans—let us be free and united. Union is our greatest fortress: while united, the demons of war cannot prevail against us. Our strength, if brought into exercise, would be sufficient to contend with the most formidable foe. But “divided we perish.” The moment we separate, our strength will be mere weakness. If any of the pillars of our union should be broken, if any of the sections should be cut off from the rest, the whole fabric must inevitably fall; the glorious structure which now towers toward Heaven, must sink in ruins never to rise again.

But shall it come to this? Shall the happiest people and the best government on earth thus perish? Shall we furnish the world with the last specimen of human de-

pravity, and convince them that no nation is capable of being free? Was it for this that the farmers of New-Hampshire marched to the western wilderness, and met the British and savage foe under Burguoyne? Was it for this that a WARREN faced danger, and fell in the bloom of life? Nay! but while any part of creation shall remain unpolluted with foul despotism, while liberty shall find a hiding place on the globe, it shall be here. And when grim tyranny shall have fled from the earth to his native pandemonium, the glories of American freedom shall remain unsullied.

And notwithstanding the present convulsions of the world by war, and the multiplied difficulties which attend our political situation, we have sufficient cause of rejoicing. No nation on earth can boast of privileges like ours. We live in a country embracing all the variety of soil the earth affords, and abounding with all the comforts of life. Our laws are wholesome, and our government is the government of our choice. And although our commercial privileges are interrupted, even this serves to multiply our internal productions, and therefore to strengthen our independence. Though we esteem commerce among the first sources of wealth, yet if it must be interrupted for a time, no country can subsist so well without it as the United States. The arts and sciences continue to flourish, and knowledge is diffused among all classes of our citizens. Our military strength is great, and is every day becoming more formidable. And though yet in our infancy, we have prospects of a strong and vigorous manhood. We have seen the effects of our revolution in wide and spreading blessings. We have flourished

under the fostering hand of a glorious Providence, and the same hand is yet our protection. Since the day of peace began to arise, our political and religious horizon has been almost constantly brightening. The darkness of superstition will eventually give way to that refulgent dawn which shall enlighten all nations and harmonize the world.

As a free people, then, it becomes us to be diligent and use all possible exertion to strengthen and promote the common cause of liberty. While Europe trembles with alarm, while Asia is sunk with luxury, and prostrate Africa is unable to lift up her head; let the inhabitants of the new world strive for peace abroad, and cultivate friendship at home.

The day of prosperity is too often a day of indolence, and deluding pleasures frequently cramp the prospects of a rising nation. Let us then be on our guard, and remember that a relaxation from toil is a fit time to gather strength against fatigue. Let us stand in defence of our independence, and secure the valuable legacy to a nation yet unborn. Let each cast in his mite to maintain and defend our laws, and support our government unshaken. Let us be sensible of our advantages, and view the reputation, the riches and honor of our nation as sufficient encouragement to be united.

If we live in an age distinguished by war and commotion, it is no less distinguished by the Gospel of peace and salvation. This glorious dispensation which began in the oriental world, where it broke through the night of ignorance, which had for ages darkened the nations, has long been growing brighter. Its light has shone to every part of the globe; the star of Bethle-

hem has extended his rays to the regions of Columbia! The day spring from on high has shone upon us; peace has descended from Heaven, and will spread its beams from pole to pole. The day of bright glory is fast approaching, and we look forward with blest anticipation to that eventful period, when all thrones and dominions shall be cast down; when there shall be no king but **JEHOVAH!** when "he shall turn to the people a pure language that they may all call upon his Name, and serve him with one consent;" "the tabernacles of **GOD** be with men," and all nations join to celebrate the dawn of civil and religious liberty.

If we feel transported on calling to mind the day of our national birth, how much more ought we to rejoice when we reflect that a band from the heavenly choir has been sent to proclaim the Jubilee of the universe, and sound peace on earth and good will to men.

Arise then, fellow-citizens, and be free indeed; let us improve the privileges put into our hands; let us delight to dwell on a theme so interesting, and not be contented with present blessings when Heaven would have us possess greater ones. Let us seek to be true patriots, faithful citizens, worthy members of society and the happy "people whose **GOD** is the **LORD.**"