

AN  
ORATION

PRONOUNCED

BEFORE THE REPUBLICAN CITIZENS,

OF

PORTLAND,

ON

THE FOURTH OF JULY, 1805,

BEING THE

TWENTY-NINTH ANNIVERSARY

OF

American Independence.

---

---

By JOSHUA TAYLOR.

---

---

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

~~~~~

P O R T L A N D :

FROM THE ARGUS-PRESS.....BY N. WILLIS, JUN.

1805.

---

---

## ORATION.

---

---

AT your request, my Fellow-Citizens, I arise, inexperienced in political controversy, but grateful for the blessings we enjoy. Your candor and discretion, I believe, is such, that you neither expect nor wish me to enter a heated controversy with an acrimonious spirit ; nor would you require me to appear as an organ of reproach or slander to any party. Such a task I should decline. We have enough to do, enough to say, and may feel enough, without offering sacrifice to the worst of demons.

OUR GOD hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad. His holy arm hath been made bare in our deliverance and preservation ; and under *his patronage* we enjoy *LIBERTY* and *INDEPENDENCE* as a Nation. We inhabit an extensive, fertile country, diversified with the various soils and climates of the world, affording us all the necessaries, comforts and delicacies of life. What a theatre this for the exercise of genius ! Here the industrious *Husbandman* is richly rewarded for his laborious toils—here the curious *Philosopher*, ambitious to explore the secrets of Nature, has opportunity for the display of his mental faculties—here *Patriots*, in whom we centre the *Philosopher's* speculation and *Husbandman's* industry, are called forth to govern an enlightened People—and here the *Ambassadors of the Prince of Peace*, enlightened by divine revelation and inflamed with holy zeal,

direct numerous Congregations to the “LAMB OF GOD, *which taketh away the sin of the world.*”

ENVIRONED as we are with Heaven’s best blessings, can any of us be ungrateful? Is there an individual in this auditory, who would withhold his tribute of praise? Is there a corrupt principle in *me*, that would not unite in a service so divine?

“The dearest nerve about my heart,  
Should it refuse to bear a part,  
With my melodious breath,  
I’d tear away the vital chord,  
A bloody victim to my LORD,  
And live without the impious string,  
Or show my zeal in death.”

I HAVE observed that we enjoy Liberty and Independence, the rise of which on this Anniversary we commemorate. Perhaps it will be expedient to dwell a moment on this subject. Our dependence on the great Sovereign of all Worlds we acknowledge, and our obligation to him I hope we sensibly feel; but ranked among the Nations of the earth we are *Independent*, we are a *Free People*, having the reins of Government in our own hands, and being proprietors of an extensive country, where we may *reign as Kings*, while we *obey as Subjects*. An unbounded Liberty, in which persons may oppress and injure their fellow-creatures, without being responsible for their conduct, when general is perfect *Anarchy*; when confined to an individual is *Monarchy*; and when held by a few lordly gentlemen is *Aristocracy*. This is not the Liberty which we espouse—as legitimate *AMERICANS*, we abhor *Despotism* in all its forms; we avoid every extreme, and fixing upon a *happy mediocrity*, are tenacious of our own rights, and rejoice to see our neighbor hold his with equal firmness. Our Liberty con-

sists in the right of enjoying and augmenting, by lawful means, our appropriate possessions—electing our own Rulers—changing them when necessary—and practising Religion according to the dictates of our own consciences—and whoever shall deprive us of this, stands obnoxious to justice as an offender.

RELIGION is, in my estimation, the greatest object—it respects our future as well as present felicity ; and as every man is responsible for his conduct to his Maker, each one ought to have liberty to worship as his conscience dictates ; and should not be obliged by coercive measures to support a Religion from which he conscientiously dissents. Hence we say, in our excellent Constitution, that there shall be “ *No subordination of one sect or denomination, to another, ever established by Law.*”

MOST of the States are perfectly free as it respects their Religion—but it is our fault, in this Commonwealth, not to have shaken off the yoke entirely : In various instances, persons of one denomination are taxed to support the Ministry of another, on which they do not attend, and from which it appears they conscientiously dissent.\*

OUR National Government invites persons of *all*

---

\* This is indeed contrary to the spirit of our Constitution, and might be avoided by virtue of an Act of the General Court, passed in March, 1800 ; and consequently exists more in the arbitrary disposition of certain *Assessors*, than in any just *Right* to call, by parochial taxes, upon persons whom they know to be of another denomination.—I hope this evil will be soon removed, and that a proper balance of *Republican Members* in our *Legislature*, by destroying the ambiguity of the act referred to, will put it out of the power of *Assessors* thus to oppress their fellow-citizens.—Pardon this digression a hint upon the subject is deemed requisite.

*denominations*, to the free and regular exercise of their religion, while they demean themselves as good citizens. We have no *golden image*, erected by an imperious *Nebuchadnezzar*, to which all must bow, or be cast into a fiery furnace—such an establishment may *America* never experience. *Liberty of Conscience* we cannot appreciate too highly—it gives life to our rights as Freeman, and adds lustre and perfume to all our enjoyments. *Sweet balm of life, of virtue, and of friendship!* may thy benign influence reach all the Nations of the earth—and while the *American Eagle* is capable of soaring, may she with prompt exertion preserve thee inviolably in these *United States*.

I ESTEEM it a great felicity that we possess the Liberty of Conscience, and that we have a *PRESIDENT* at the Capital, who advocates this sacred right—a *PRESIDENT*, re-elected by an almost unanimous confluence of suffrages, and impervious to the tongue of slander; who, as a true Patriot, magnanimously exerts himself for the happiness of his country.

THAT the Administration of our Republican Government, has *Heaven's approbation*, who can doubt? Within a few years past, copious measures of Grace have been showered upon our highly favored country. *Religion* was never in a more prosperous state—thousands and thousands have been made “*free indeed*,” by a life-giving power, which has raised them from the *bondage of sin*; while churches, hills and vallies have resounded with the praises of God, and deserts have been made to bud and blossom as the rose!

THE *price of our Liberty* next solicits your attention. Our Mother-Country, possessed of a morose, avaricious disposition, resolved upon holding us in bondage and oppressing us with burdens enormously

great. When we humbly remonstrated, she frowned, and, like Egypt of old, was for oppressing us with additional burdens. At this, our *Heroes* took an alarm—though young and inexperienced in War, they prepared themselves for defence, and the finger of a gracious Providence pointed them to the man, designed to be the *Temporal Saviour* of our Country. WASHINGTON, (a name ever dear to us) WASHINGTON, like the *rising Sun*, appeared, and moving in his orbit, gave light and heat to all his satellites; while our *whole Continent* felt his animating influence, and an *infant Army* was inspired with the firmness and stability of *manhood*. The imperious foe, having landed her troops among us, flattered herself with immediate success; to accomplish which, she made use of arms, seduction, and every measure which her fertile imagination could invent—but all in vain—our valiant Leader, with his little Army, like *Gideon* of old, was directed to such measures as proved effectual in our emancipation.

WE have rejoiced, and will ever rejoice, in the success which attended the arms of virtuous *America*. But it would be injustice and cruelty to forget the sufferings, which her sons endured. *Boston, New-York* and *Philadelphia*, together with their surrounding countries, witnessed the cruelty of our enemies, who robbed them of the comforts and necessaries of life—burned their habitations—insulted and abused the virtuous Fair—and with savage barbarity, indiscriminate of age or sex, hurried numbers out of time into eternity, besides the thousands who perished in their *loathsome Prisons*!—AND CAN IT BE THAT *PORTLAND* HAS FORGOTTEN THE *DEVOURING FLAME*?—HAVE RECENT SCENES

OF PROSPERITY WHOLLY OBLITERATED YOUR PAST SUFFERINGS?—*Some of you, my Fellow-Citizens, have these things fresh in your remembrance.* Hunger, thirst, weariness, and want of ammunition, were almost constant attendants upon our Heroes under arms. *But these things did not discourage them.* Conscious of the goodness of their cause, they looked up to the Arbiter of War for justice. They repeatedly ventured into the field of battle, where, amidst the thundering of cannon and clashing of arms, many valiant men expired, wallowing in their blood.—*O ye disconsolate Widows! ye bereaved Parents! ye war-worn, halting Veterans!* you remember well these scenes.—The *price of blood* was paid for our Liberty, though a much smaller portion of it than could have been expected in our peculiar circumstances. This, under GOD, we ascribe chiefly to that philanthropy and prudence, which dignified the character of our immortal WASHINGTON.

AT length, Victory crowned the efforts of our Patriots. Our Chieftain, with his Fellow-Soldiers and courageous Allies, after a toil of eight painful years, were enabled to quit the field in glorious triumph, whilst the enemy retired with shame. Sweet Peace succeeded. Thrice happy day! when dropping their instruments of death, our citizens sought the peaceful lyre. *Husbands and Wives*, long separated by the calamities of War, now congratulate each other; and *Patriotic Youth* are received with the tear of joy, to the embraces of their aged, faltering *Parents*, to enjoy the blessings of Liberty and Independence.

WHO that reflects upon these scenes, can avoid owning the *hand of God* in our remarkable deliverance. Our infant Country, with crowds of enemies

in its bosom, must have fallen, had it not have been for an all-gracious Providence. We likewise admire his providence, in our preservation and recent deliverance, when *threatening calamities* were crowding in upon us. Whilst a dangerous ARISTOCRACY, or MONARCHY was contemplated—a *Standing Army*, a *Stamp-Act*, and other grievous burdens were imposed upon us—our *Sons of Liberty*, were stirred up to exert themselves, and were enabled to controul the *Lordly spirit* ; so that we still enjoy our *FREEDOM*, with a *vast increase of Territory*—and ALL WITHOUT THE SHEDDING OF BLOOD !

AMIDST the various immunities of our highly favored Country, it is obligatory upon us to conduct as good Citizens, by making every necessary sacrifice to public peace and prosperity. As far as property is needed to support Government, we will contribute with cheerfulness ; and as far as our prejudices or passions, would oppose the public good, let us seek their destruction. A public spirit is highly important in a free Country. And Union as a People, is an object of the first magnitude : Should we continue *ONE*, who can harm us ? should we *divide*, we destroy ourselves. A spirit of forbearance and moderation ought to be cherished among persons of different sentiments. In the heat of passion we are in danger of going too far, by substituting invective for argument, and permitting an acrimonious spirit to devour friendly benevolence. To rail at our Rulers, or misrepresent them to establish a party, is inconsistent with good policy, and subverts the peace and welfare of the Nation ; for if one party may be governed by this spirit, another may likewise, and it may be indulged to such a degree, that the *Dove* with her olive plant, must take wing and seek a more worthy abode ; whilst the mad fury of a *civil*



*war*, terminates the dispute. I would not, however, be understood to insinuate that you are to avoid *speaking the truth boldly*, in supporting your good cause, but the reverse ; a *watchful eye* is highly necessary, and it becomes you to keep a good look-out, and to steer by a true compass ; for contrary winds, storms, and tempests may yet arise, and many are the rocks and quicksands upon which we are in danger of falling. Do not therefore, *indolently betray* our Country, but by proper measures support the good cause of *Liberty*, and do it with a *conciliatory spirit*. Let us, my Fellow-Citizens, set the example, and treat with suitable respect, even those who have the *unhappiness to oppose our National Government*. Let us convince them that our principles are calculated to establish the most perfect harmony, as they influence us to do as we would be done by. And that the peace and prosperity of our Nation may be effectually secured, be careful in your *elections* to choose men of *sound principles and good conduct*. The importance of having good men in Government, I think no reasonable man can doubt ; but let it not be understood of a partial goodness, or an attachment to any particular denomination, but of a real, generous, universal benevolence, acted out in all the duties of life.

WE are tenacious of our *temporal Liberty*, we rejoice in our *Independence*, and have cause so to do. But permit me to remind you, respected hearers, that there is such a thing as an inward *Spiritual Liberty*, in which the soul is freed from the bondage of sin, and the reigning of corrupt passions. Whom CHRIST makes free, are free indeed, and none else enjoy fully the sweets of Liberty. *True Religion* in exercise has a most salutary influence upon society, and is the greatest accomplishment of human nature—it exalts the

soul to Heaven, where all his order, harmony and peace, and is evidently the grand design of all our advantages ; without this, our temporal Liberty, & all our other privileges will soon be nothing to us. “ Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.”

SOLICITOUS as we are for our own happiness, let us likewise cultivate a spirit of benevolence towards the world of mankind. We, ourselves are free, let us not therefore enslave or oppress others. We are the happiest and most highly favored nation in the world, and it is incumbent on us to give other nations an example, worthy of imitation. Other nations are groaning under the weight of despotism, and many of them are in the darkest night of error, whose condition should excite the sympathetic tear, and lead us to implore Heaven’s mercy in their behalf. Should we continue virtuous and free, (which we have unparalleled advantages to do) they may feel the benefit of it at some future period, and with us rejoice in being a free People ; but should we exchange our present Government for an oppressive *Aristocracy*, or *Monarchy*, the world must be left without an *example* of National goodness, united with Freedom and firmness.

IT affords us a peculiar pleasure to view this auditory, in conjunction with millions of fellow-citizens upon the Continent on this auspicious day, gratefully acknowledging their *Independence*. Here we behold our venerable *Sires*, whose silver locks command our respect, and who recognise with tender emotions, the *scenes* attending our emancipation. Here we view our well-disciplined and respectable *LIGHT-INFANTRY*,\*

---

\* Here the *Company of Light-Infantry*, commanded by Capt. BRADISH, arose in the most perfect order.

Who remind us of the means used in our deliverance, and of the readiness in which our Country stands to defend itself in case of an invasion. *I hope, gentlemen, that you will never have to enter the field of battle ; but should our Country call, I presume you will not be deficient in your duty. You have merited our thanks by your prompt attention to escort us on this occasion.*—And here we behold likewise, an assembly of respectable Citizens, with a skilful band of *Musicians* to invigorate our souls—all to HIS praise who hath blessed us with *Liberty and Independence*.

MAY we venture to hope that our acknowledgment ascends with acceptance to the great Sovereign of the Universe ? I trust we may hope that as often as this anniversary shall return, the Nations around us will remember the Patriotic spirit of *Americans*, and tremble at the thought of giving us an alarm. LONG MAY THE OLIVE FLOURISH IN THESE UNITED STATES—LONG LIVE THE AMERICAN REPUBLIC—MAY PEACE AND PROSPERITY ABIDE WITHIN THY BORDERS.—GOD SAVE THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

---



---

THE END.

---



---