

**"THE UNION OF ALL HONEST MEN."**

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# **O R A T I O N,**

**DELIVERED AT**

**ROWLEY, WEST PARISH,**

**JULY 4th, 1805.**

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**BY ISAAC BRAMAN, A. M.**

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**UNITED WE STAND, DIVIDED WE FALL.**

*Washington.*

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**NEWBURYPORT :**

**FROM THE PRESS OF WILLIAM B. ALLEN.**

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**1805.**

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To Capt. WILLIAM PERLEY,  
Lieut. JONATHAN NELSON,  
Ensign DANIEL M. SPOFFORD, and  
The MILITARY COMPANY UNDER THEIR COMMAND,

THIS ORATION, delivered at their request, is now dedicated.....

*Prepared for war, may they enjoy peace. In peace may they fight the good fight of faith. In their laudable exertions to support the liberties and independence of our country, may they be supremely engaged to secure and stand fast in the far more glorious liberty wherewith Christ maketh them free. In their contest with principalities and powers, the rulers of darkness and all their spiritual foes, equipped with the whole armor of God, may they come off more than Conquerors, through the great Captain of our Salvation.*

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AN ORATION, &c.

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**H**AIL, natal day of our vast and growing Empire! *And the Lord said unto Moses and unto Aaron, This day shall be unto you for a memorial; ye shall observe it in your generations by an ordinance forever.* How striking the similarity of that ever memorable day to the present! *Then, were the sons of Jacob delivered from the oppression and tyranny of the Egyptian monarch, and constituted a free, distinct and sovereign people, dependent on none but God in their government and laws. On this day, just twenty-nine years ago, the people of the American colonies, by their Representatives in Congress assembled, wearied with a long series of oppressions and cruelties on the part of Britain, "appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of their intentions," made the following solemn and spirited declaration, That these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, Free and Independent States; that they are totally absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, &c.*

My countrymen, swear not at all, but firmly resolve, "with a reliance on the protection and aid of Divine Providence," that you will hold this declaration sacred till the day of your death: Nay more, that you will use your utmost endeavors to instil the same principles of patriotism and rational freedom, by which

it was dictated, into the breasts of your children and the rising generation, that they may be handed down pure and unadulterated to the latest posterity.

THE God of the armies of Israel, who with a mighty arm wrought deliverance for that highly favored people, made bare the same arm for our protection from those who rose up against us, and of whom we were held in bondage. In war he fought our battles ; put to flight the armies of the aliens ; made our ~~war~~ <sup>Walls</sup> salvation, and restored peace and tranquility within our borders. In our national infancy he supported and defended us from evil, and saved us from the paw of the lion and of the bear. Hitherto the Lord hath helped us. Having arrived to adult age, shall we like perverse, ungrateful children, forget our kind, benevolent Parent, on the plea, that we can stand alone, and need no further help ? Shall we neglect thankfully to record and publish the goodness of a tender nurturing Father, whose mercies surround us continually ? Hold not thy peace, O my soul, lest the stones in the wall cry out. Bless the Lord, and forget not all his benefits. Publish with the voice of thanksgiving, the mighty acts of his goodness.

AFTER carrying us safely through a long and perilous war with our foreign enemies, he saved us from the swelling floods of ungodly men among ourselves, which soon rose high, threatening to overwhelm us.\*

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\* Referring to Shays' rebellion.

Truly may our American Israel say, Had not the Lord been on our side when men rose up against us, then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled. But the Lord restrained their wrath and spared his people.

OUR ablest men were inspired with wisdom and understanding to form that master-piece of human skill, the *Federal Constitution*; by which the sovereignties of the several States were brought to a common centre, while their particular liberties and privileges were fully and distinctly maintained. By wise and able men it was duly organized, and all its springs set in motion for the common good. Much evil was predicted of this new political machine; and by many it was undoubtedly believed that its effects would be most pernicious. But blessed be God, the predicted evils have not yet been realised; and we trust will not, so long as this ark be kept from an unhallowed touch, and its sacred contents be preserved inviolate. On the contrary, many great and important blessings have resulted both to States and individuals from the *Federal Constitution*, far exceeding the most sanguine expectations of its warmest friends. And if its fundamental principles and maxims be duly regarded, the happiest effects may still be rationally anticipated. While like the sun in the centre, it imparts light, life and energy to the whole political system, it presents no obstacle to the springs and motions of particular bodies. The several States experience no clogs to their "wheels of

government," but like the various planets are suffered to revolve and move freely in their own particular orbits, as though wholly actuated by a self-determining power. By the *Federal Constitution*, "every State in the Union is guaranteed a republican form of government ;" which secures to them their rights and privileges on a far better foundation than they could rationally promise to themselves from their own individual power and wisdom. "It has strengthened the bonds of union among the several States ; and done much toward establishing an uniform system of justice and an equitable mode of decision between contending parties. It has promoted peace and prosperity at home, and secured us a respectable rank among the nations of the world. Under its genial influence, Commerce has greatly flourished ; our merchants have risen to affluence ; while our respectable mechanics and farmers, on whom we principally depend for the necessary articles of life, are generally placed in circumstances which are easy and prosperous. It is now a rare thing to hear an honest, industrious man, whose family is also honest, healthy and industrious, though poor, complain that he is not able to procure his daily bread ; or to hear a common upright farmer repining under an enormous burden of public expense, which he is unable to discharge without greatly injuring, if not ruining himself and household. At least, those who can look back twenty years or more, have known "times which tried men's souls," in these and many other re-

spects far beyond the present. These happy changes have taken place under the regular operation of the *Federal Constitution*. It empowered Congress, and they exercised the power to make provision for a just and honorable payment of the public debt. Under its sanction and authority, they likewise assumed the state debts, and justly apportioned the expenses of the late war to the several States. By these means confidence and credit were restored to a people mutually distrusting one another, and distrusted abroad. The latter measure was a great relief to this Commonwealth in particular, which had become deeply involved by her noble exertions in the cause of the revolution. It raised her at once from indigence to competent wealth, and caused a free circulation of cash among her citizens. Such important purposes the old confederation lacked energy to accomplish. In a word, the *Federal Constitution* "has raised this country from the depths of despondency and danger, to as high a state of prosperity and safety as any country in the same period ever attained."\* Wisely administered by its ablest supporters and warmest friends, it has hitherto preserved our national independence entire, and saved us from a state of anarchy and total ruin.

In mentioning wise men and national blessings, let us not forget to drop a tear of gratitude over the tomb of him who was the chief instrument of good to us, in

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\* Several preceding ideas were borrowed from an anonymous pamphlet.

all the momentous scenes through which we have passed. If I forget thee, O WASHINGTON, let my right <sup>hand</sup> forget her cunning. If I do not thankfully remember thy distinguished patriotism, thy great achievements, and thy paternal counsels, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth. How much do we owe to thy superlative wisdom, to thy matchless bravery, to thy irreproachable virtue, in establishing our independence, in rearing the grand pillar of our political edifice, and founding it upon the broad basis of republican freedom. May we imitate thy sublime virtues, nor suffer thy parting counsels to be lost upon us.

FROM this brief retrospect of the measures which have already been pursued to bring us to our present state of peace and prosperity, it seems natural to conclude that nothing more is necessary (humanly speaking) to raise us to the summit of national glory, than carefully to walk in the path pointed out by our wise leaders who have gone before us ; to be virtuous, united and obedient to the laws ; and faithfully to support those excellent constitutions of government, which, under the direction of heaven and in the hands of good men, have proved so highly beneficial to us. These things duly observed will secure us tranquility and happiness among ourselves, and render us formidable to our foes, as well as powerful to resist and repel those who may presumptuously invade our country.

FELLOW CITIZENS, this is not a day for strife and political contention. We are all equally interested in the joyful anniversary. I will not, therefore, ruffle your minds and damp the joy which I see sparkling in your countenances, by introducing things which must necessarily be construed as favoring altogether of party, and pointedly contradicting the opinions of many respectable persons present. Rather let us endeavor to verify the declaration of our first magistrate, and show by joining heart and hand in the celebration of this auspicious day, that "*we are all federalists and all republicans.*" Let us now and henceforth evince by our conduct, by our readiness on all occasions to serve our country and obey her wholesome laws, that we are all true patriots, all sincere friends to our civil constitutions of government, however we may differ in judgment respecting men and measures the best calculated to insure us the richest blessings resulting from them. That republican\* was unjustly censured who gave for a toast, "*The union of all honest men.*" It is high time that all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from among brethren, and that we all cordially unite in seeking the best interests of our country, both civil and religious. Let the veil of prejudice be thrown aside, that we may see things clearly and truly as they are, and not under those false colors in which they appear to a jaundiced eye.

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\* Vice-President BURR.

BOTH our national and state constitutions embrace the idea, that "all men are born free and equal," that they have a native right to govern themselves in that way which they believe will be most conducive to their peace, prosperity and happiness; and consequently that all power and authority, vested in rulers, are originally derived from the people. To these maxims it is presumed we should all readily subscribe.

THE federalists, if I know any thing of their sentiments, are far from wishing for a despotic, or an aristocratical form of government. I speak of them in general, and of the more approved characters in particular. I will not answer for every individual who bears the name. They wish, however, for an energetic government, and one that is able to carry its constitutional laws and resolutions into effect, in spite of all the wicked efforts of the lawless and disobedient to frustrate them. And if, (which may heaven avert) they should ever be reduced to the fatal alternative, it could hardly be deemed miraculous should they prefer a wisely limited monarchy to a state of anarchy or no government. But a radical change in our government of any kind, they would consider an evil which they most sincerely deprecate. They wish if possible to support those republican forms which we now enjoy, which they have uniformly supported from the beginning, and which many years' experience has proved to be beneficial in their effects. They believe, that notwithstanding all power and right of governing themselves are original-

ly in the people, yet when the people have of their own free choice and unbiaſſed judgment adopted for themſelves *forms of government*, they ought ſtrictly and conſciouſly to adhere to them until *constitutionally* altered; and to hold ſacred all the laws *constitutionally* made by thoſe whom they have appointed the public organs of their will. Accordingly there never has been a time, (correct me if I err) there never has been a time, ſince the day that our nation was born, when federaliſts have excited, aided or abetted an inſurrección againſt government and its laws. They have in a legal way, as they had opportunity, oppoſed both men and meaſures deemed by them erroneous, but at no time have they, through diſaffection to their rulers, indulged themſelves in riot and rebellion.

I AM happy in believing that both the ſentiments and practice of our judicious republican brethren fully accord with what has been here ſtated. *They* are not worthy the honorable name of *Federaliſts* or *Republicans* who riſe in arms to oppoſe every law, however conſtitutional, which happens not to meet their entire approbation. Enlightened honeſt and genuine republicans never have done this; they never will. *Diſorganizers*, *rebels* they literally are, *Jacobins*, according to the appropriate ſenſe of the term as firſt uſed in Paris; and worthy the execration of all upright men, who purſue theſe unhallowed meaſures to overturn government and its laws. No honeſt and peaceable citizen of any political ſect deſerves either of the above opprobrious

epithets. All well informed, good and upright men, whatever different political opinions they embrace, will voluntarily support government and its salutary laws. They never will be disorganizers. None but the most profligate men, whose necks itch for a halter, will ever harbor a wish to transgress all rule and to turn the political world upside down.

WILLING to believe that all here present are friends to order and good government, friends to the independence, the rights and liberties of our Country, let me exhort you as a necessary means to promote these great objects, to hold inviolate those inestimable constitutions which the wisdom of your sages conceived and yourselves have adopted, as the most eligible forms of civil government. Regard them as the sacred *Palladium* of your Country—as the *Ark* of your political safety and independence. Touch not, handle not with a view to maim or defile them. Infringe not their excellent principles.

As you have no opportunity to do this *immediately*, with your own hands, but *mediately*, by your representatives, be solicitous to choose such men, from time to time, as are decided friends to your country, to her constitution and laws. Be fully persuaded, also, that they are friendly to our holy religion, and to its ordinances and institutions, which you hold dear. Much depends upon the character and principles of the men whom you choose to legislate for you, and to ad-

minister the affairs of state. No man is worthy of your suffrages who is not a warm friend to your country, to its independence and republican forms of government. No man who is destitute of moral principle, or who is manifestly hostile to the Christian religion and its institutions, whatever be his political sentiments, should ever meet the approbation of an enlightened, free and independent American, for any office of honor or profit in town, state or nation. No political considerations, no vain pretensions to rank, on account of property, birth or high connections, no talents, however brilliant, should atone for the want of moral and religious principle. Every elector is under a strong moral obligation to vote for firm, patriotic, and upright men for all offices falling within his privilege. If he do otherwise, he cannot answer it to his country, his conscience or his God. If he voluntarily give his vote for men of an opposite character, knowing them to be such, he will surely be accountable for all the evil they do to society in their official capacity.

THAT we cannot look on the heart to determine its principles and moral complexion, is readily granted. But a man's avowed sentiments and daily walk are not necessarily hid from us ; and when these are manifestly contrary to religion and morality, it is neither innocent nor safe to "set him on high among the people," where his example will have a most extensive and pernicious influence. Unprincipled and immoral rulers will be likely to do much toward demoralizing

the people at large. They will provoke the displeasure of heaven, and bring down divine judgments upon the land. So it was in ancient Israel. When the rulers were wicked, though hereditary and not chosen immediately by the people, yet the whole nation suffered for *their* crimes. On the contrary, when the righteous bore rule, the people were ever made to rejoice in the smiles of Providence upon them, as a collective body. How much more may we expect this will be the case with us, when our rulers are the creatures of our power, raised by our own hand, with our eyes open, and knowing their characters ! Have we not reason to dread more than famine, pestilence or death, the evils to which we shall be exposed by a criminal abuse of our privileges in this respect, by electing into office men who are manifestly inimical to morality, to religion, and to the God of our fathers, the God whom we profess to adore ?

DEPEND not, however, on good and virtuous rulers to save you. Having done your duty in electing such as are wise, faithful and upright, still remember the following counsel : “ Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help.” Rather be pious and virtuous yourselves, and humbly trust in the Lord, in whom there is everlasting strength. If the Lord be for us, the enemy will not be suffered to prevail. *He* will be a sure defence from all their rage. But woe unto that people from whom the Lord is departed. Be faithful then to your God ;

make him your friend through the divine Redeemer ; keep his statutes and his ordinances. Let this become our national character, and we shall have the best security against the frowns of Providence, against national degradation and utter ruin. Notwithstanding this, there are means to be used by every class of citizens, according to their rank and capacity, to support and defend our country from evil ; to maintain her independence, government, liberties and laws.

In this view of things, the military establishments naturally arrest our attention. Next to religion and virtue, to an upright and energetic government and salutary laws, we look to a brave and well disciplined militia, to skilful, courageous officers, to obedient, faithful and valiant soldiers, to secure us national respect, and to defend us from the deadly shafts of our enemies foreign and domestic. Be bold and dauntless, then, ye noble sons of Mars ! Ye are the bulwark of our nation. Ye are they to whom is committed the important and honorable task to save your country, or to spill your blood in her defence. True, you are not now called into actual service in the field of battle. Blessed be God who hath given his people rest and peace on every side. But let us not feel too secure in prosperity. The tables may soon be turned. Perilous times may come, when your patriotism, valor, and military skill will all be severely tried. For a moment fancy yourselves amidst scenes of <sup>horror</sup> ~~horror~~ and seas of blood, surrounded with dangers on every side. Death, pale and dreadful, the bitter groans of your fellow-

mortals in their last agonies, assault you before and behind, on the right and on the left. Say, could you, in the trying moment, collect sufficient fortitude of mind to make a noble stand, and heroically defend the cause of your beloved country? Could you suppress all party motives, and *feel* that Americans have but one common cause and common interest, which require the utmost energies of body and mind to support and defend? Yes, brave and patriotic men! respected officers and soldiers, confident I am, that notwithstanding your different shades of opinion on political subjects, should you behold a hostile fleet sailing to your shores, or an enemy of any kind approaching your borders, or rising up among you, with a view to ravage your country, to burn your towns and cities, to destroy the lives and property of your fellow citizens, or to overturn your government and deprive you of your dearest rights and liberties, forgetting your petty dissensions and "wars of words," you would rise indignant, and with one heart and one soul rush forth to a more effective war with men. The spark of patriotism in your breasts would immediately kindle into a flame, and burn till your enemies were constrained to fly before it, or were consumed with its heat. Those odious party names which tend only to promote discord, and to widen the breach already too great, would be lost in the common name *Americans*, or in the still more endearing ones, *brethren and friends*.

**MUST we then have a direful and bloody war, before the inhabitants of the same country, state, town or neighborhood, and even children of the same parents will be persuaded that they are brethren, and treat each other as such, uniting heartily in promoting the peace, prosperity and best good of the whole? Rather by a speedy union strengthen your hands, and discourage all your enemies from making a hostile attack upon you. "United we stand, divided we fall." Let this be your motto, written on your foreheads, in your right hands, and especially upon the table of your hearts.**

**As a powerful motive to union, and the improvement of every means to support the government, independence and liberties of your country, remember that America now stands alone on the list of independent republics.\* All that existed before her day, and many that have been created since, have gone down the common road to utter ruin. Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. Never may our country, through the degeneracy, the stupidity and wickedness of her sons, be made instrumental of swelling the black and dismal catalogue. The Lord preserve us from internal commotion, and from all the machinations of our enemies at home and abroad. God save the United States of America.—*FINIS.***

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\* The nominal Batavian republic, and that of the Seven Isles are in a state of complete vassalage, no better than colonies of a great empire. And if there is any one that enjoys true republican liberty, I am ignorant of it.