

AN ORATION,

DELIVERED AT THE VILLAGE OF OXFORD, IN
THE COUNTY OF CHENANGO, AND
STATE OF NEW-YORK,

On the 4th of July, 1809,

Being the Thirty-third Anniversary of American
Independence.

By JOHN CAMP, A. M.

OXFORD—1809:

The Committee appointed by the Republicans of the town of Oxford, to make Arrangements for the Celebration of the Thirty-third Anniversary of American Independence—Present their thanks to the Rev. JOHN CAMP, for the truly independent and patriotic Oration, delivered in this Village, to a large concourse of people assembled for that purpose, and request a copy for the Press.

Samuel Balcom,
Jonathan Baldwin,
Ethan Pier,
Nehemiah Smith,
Isaac Sherwood,

Committee of Arrangement.

AN ORATION, &c.

AT what moment we reflect, from the valley we now tread—on the mountain of our elevated station among beings through the universe of God ;—but especially our national prosperity and grandeur—in high exultation our bosoms swell, from the prospects of the future rising glories of this new born, and most favored empire.—From that important era ; when the declaration was first made of our independence, we may date all national prosperity and greatness. The orators of this day I find, have generally trod in one beaten path, viz. to eulogize the piety and zeal of our venerable ancestors ; the cause of their emigration to this country—their toils and blood—the manner and cause of the revolution—the horrors of the war—the barbarity and cruelty of the British nation—the glorious achievements of those worthies, both of state and in the field of battle ; who at the risk of their lives, boldly stood forth in their country's cause—and the joyful triumphs of our independence and liberty, together with high plaudits of our most excellent form of government.

From this beaten track, I design in some measure to deviate. Venerable as our ancestors were—bold, and painful as their toils may have been—bloody and cruel as the British nation were—horrible and distressing, as the war was—noble and glorious as our leaders, and heroic soldiers were—precious as our independence and liberty is—vast as our future prospects of prosperity and grandeur are ; yet by circumscribing all these august subjects into a constant sameness of method, and still they do not gain attention. Even the sacred words of independence and liberty lose their energy. There is, however, the strictest propriety we recognize, and cast an astonished watery eye on these august subjects, which develop a chain of amazing Providence, and of deep councils of the Great Supreme.

Lopped from the general stock, the bow takes deep root; is now become a goodly tree, whose strength surpasses the sturdy oak—All the tornados of war cannot shake it; the bows thereof spread forth from the Eastern to the Western oceans. This is heaven's planting—our goodly land is given from above—the Most High divides to the nations their inheritance.—By Jehovah's decree we were dismembered from the mother country; that there may be one nation of the earth to enjoy, liberty, peace and prosperity, through the tragical reign of Bonaparte, whom God hath raised up for some great and noble purposes—he has already unshackled the minds of all Europe, from their long bigotry and superstition; he has broken the Pope's head, and put down his authority and influence; no one will now deign to kiss his feet. The holy inquisition of Spain is no more; and how will the disheartened Austrians stand before his veterans! and if we had the spirit of prophecy, might we not say, that it is highly probable, that the Turkish power in Europe and Asia, must submit to his sceptre; and so he be the instrument of drying up the waters of mystical Euphrates, that the way for the people of the East may be prepared, to embrace the sceptre of the great Emmanuel! Doubtless we live in a period big with great events—This digression is dropped: we now return to our own happy land. Our councils and armies were guided by the inspiration of the Almighty, till the work was finished—that now we are a free, independent and sovereign people. This was purchased by the noble blood of many republican citizens. WASHINGTON'S lamp continued to blaze after peace was restored, whose worthy name shall for ever find a place in all compositions of this nature. In procuring the freedom of the United States, our Moses and Aaron were in unison—The sage statesman bowed the knee, in humble dependence on Divine Providence, while the splendid canopy of the sacred desk, echoed the fervent prayers of the venerable clergy. The doctrine of an universal providence was readily received; as our safeguard and

patron of our Zion, our trust was in the immensity of that Being, whose superintendence is over all; and our acknowledged dependence was upon the unseen author of our existence and the giver of every blessing. The wheels of providence are now moving, guided by an omniscient eye and an unerring hand.

Thus we have bidden farewell to Old England, whom we did once love, and in whose greatness we did once glory, and for whose sovereign we did fervently pray: I remember the words commonly made use of by the venerable clergy for the king, which is as follows—
 “ We beseech thee, O God, to bless our sovereign lord the king George the third, and our most gracious queen Charlotte, George prince of Wales, the princess dowager of Wales, and all the royal family, and so replenish their hearts with every divine grace and virtue, that our king may be a nursing father, and our queen a nursing mother to our British Israel; and may we never want a man from that illustrious house of Hanover, to sway the British sceptre so long as sun and moon shall endure.”

The theory of political subjects, and the primary principles of a well organized civil government will not be expected from me. It is not my employ—I have something more noble in which I glory, an ambassador to the whole world, from heaven's high court. Statesmen, high in civil and political science, dignified in power, perform this important part—from the national government, that source of wisdom and power we derive full instruction. Thus favored and enlightened, I find the nation to be statesmen, and every individual of both sexes is an accomplished divine. Heaven be blessed for this! I say with Moses, would to God all the Lord's people were prophets!

As I said before, the chariot of divine providence is in swift motion; conquests great and deep; discordant things, in their time and order, triumphs. In America, liberty rears a majestic head; the frown of her brow confounds tyrants. Never was the dominion of empire disputed as at the present day. Who is the true

patriot, who loves his country unto the death? Alas, what selfishness! what party spirit! what thirst for domination! where is the blaze of '76? is it in the bosom of Columbia's sons? where is the political fire, which once you might behold heaving against the storm—raising barriers against the flood, the swelling tempest of oriental vengeance. This political fire, like the furnace of Nebuchadnezzar, received seven degrees of heat above the common stand, at Lexington and Bunker-hill. It was not diminished through eight years of common struggle; it cemented the citizens into one band of brothers—the undistinguishable fire of heathen oracles, was emblematical of this political fire; so were the continual burning lamps in the temple of God at Jerusalem.—This fire therefore should never be extinguished. It was this fire that moved those choice congenial souls, who caused the declaration of independence to be proclaimed throughout our land, to unite with each other in pledged faith, equally to share in whatever consequences or events should take place, whether life or death, to the last of their treasure, and drop of their blood. It was this that matured the preparations, and ripened our land for freedom, prosperity and greatness. It led Washington, and other worthies to glory; it animates every virtuous citizen, and is the source of political happiness. Upon the glow of this continued fire, depends the preservation of our independence—it becomes therefore, every one, to be as zealous in perpetuating this, as they were in obtaining it. Of what benefit is all that heaven and earth has done for us, if not preserved? This fire will prevent a party spirit, preserve our union, and perpetuate our most excellent constitution. On this, under God, depends our future prosperity and greatness. It is suitable we here briefly offer, some reasons for celebrating this day. On a brighter and more glorious day in a political view, the sun never shone. A nation is born and ushered into its first independent light. The dear babe was furiously persecuted, it wept aloud. It was sought to be devoured, and its precious life taken. Grievous wolves, the

ravages of the wilderness were set about it. The fierce
 bulls of Bashan rushed on it. Lord North gave up,
 and the South did not keep back. The sea roared and
 was tempestuous. The ocean bellowed with the loud
 thunders of cannon. The earth shook and trembled,
 the babe cried to heaven, and was heard, and taken
 under the protection of the Great Supreme, whose
 frowns blasted every effort of the enemies, disposed
 them to give over their enterprize, and yield to peace.
 The sea was then calm, and the ocean ceased to rage ;
 the horrid bellowings of Mount Etna were heard no
 more, or Vesuvius any longer continue to spit her waded
 vollies of liquid fiery lava, and the earth returned to
 its antient regular motion. Israel commemorated
 her freedom from the Egyptian bondage, by an annual
 passover. This is the political passover of America.—
 The sun in the firmament of heaven still continues to
 emit effulgent rays upon our renowned, and most fa-
 vored nation. The day then, and the subject before
 us, must engage the attention of every mind, suscep-
 tible of religious or political impressions. Lately we were
 alarmed with the fears of a most destructive war. The
 cloud grew dark and angry, but now the cloud has
 gone over, the darkness disappears, and the bright sun
 of peace illuminates our blessed land. Citizens of every
 description are elated, and the whole land puts on a
 smiling aspect. The administration of President Madi-
 son is commenced to the great satisfaction of the nation,
 and we pray, that now all malignant party spirit may
 subside, and that his career may be continued, and
 completed with glory. Possessing these bright prof-
 pects, fellow-citizens, we are not invited, on this joyful
 day, to behold the contentions of belligerent powers,
 or the calamities of war, only with pity ; you are not
 presented with the dreadful consequences produced by
 the rage of mortal enemies, nor of subjects oppressed
 by tyrannical power. You are not called on, with a
 dejected countenance to view, but few of those national
 evils, which render all mortal enjoyments of so little
 value. Neither are you forced to mourn over moral

evil, or human depravity, as heretofore. Infidelity is ashamed to lift up its deformed head, faith in the sacred scriptures, hope in the prospect of immortality, and universal charity is gaining ground, to us the noise of a boisterous world is hushed, nature's horizon is clear of horrific clouds, our sun rises in his glorious splendor. Ye are now invited to social bliss, and to partake in common with the millions of America, who now with awful veneration, and hearts elevated, ascribe praise to God.

Ye now will, my brethren, rejoice in our freedom and independence. How we glory in being Americans! Our lot cast, in our present mode of existence, in a land by heaven favored, producing every necessary, and almost every luxury of life. Let me say it, some have not been fully satisfied in former administrations of our national head; let all this pass—we now every one run to our several employments with cheerfulness.

Above all, on every festive day we are bound to recognize our spiritual privileges. Theology is a celestial science, the magnitude of those blessings therein contained, infinitely excels all natural enjoyments.—The natural day is opened by the sun's rising in the East. In like manner the bright morning of the gospel is ushered in by the blessed Emmanuel, the Sun of Righteousness, bursting from the rock, his guarded vault. Blazes thro' the universe, to this world is given an incarnate God. The church of the first born labors; her travails are regular; the spiritual sun is ushered into light, by the introduction of the prince of peace. The ancient splendors, in the testimony of faithful witnesses, by the holy spirit on the hearts and consciences of men. It cost the Jews the strength of all her antient promises, the import of all her types and figures, her urim and thummim. These shall, like a mineral rod, traverse again in Zion's hands, when the fulness of the Gentiles shall have come in—the Jews be gathered, and there be one Shepherd and one sheepfold, and the whole world in union return, and come to Mount Zion, and songs and everlasting joy be on their heads.—

Vast are the prospects of futurity. The gospel develops all that reason and philosophy dictates, and beyond that, our existence in the next world; from Mount Hor we exult, from the top of Nebo we leap. Lo he cometh leaping on the mountains, and skipping on the hills, deep from the centre islands emerge; but every island, hill and mountain, earth and sea shall flee away at the sound of the last trump. Thus he comes—the day is great; what is developed of Zion's glory, her ancient splendor, the effulgence of the new Jerusalem, which St. John in vision, saw ascending from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband; all natural greatness is merely preparatory for moral splendor, which establishes grace, truth, rectitude, freedom, peace and philanthropy, and the deeper our researches the more inspiration we receive, and the more we see and feel a symmetry all around us.—That in the end all may know what is the hope of their calling, and the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in the bosom of the Father—That now unto principalities and powers in heavenly places, may be known the manifold wisdom of God and the unsearchable riches of Christ; we therefore being most deeply interested, should ever keep this unutterably wise and glorious eternal grace, in a comprehensive enlightened view. The gospel is our magna charta from heaven; it is our federal constitution, consolidating heaven and earth together, and opening a conspicuous way for divine communication and intercourse, and for social bliss, made one in Christ and each other, not only for time but for eternity. Herein is enforced your law of purity and love—the golden rule, to do to others as we would have them do to us. Here peace is recommended in all its honors, content of spirit, meekness, sobriety, and a strict abstinence from all excess, unwearied diligence in business, a feeling heart, and a relieving hand, what room is there then for the least discord?

Before we close, we do well to enquire, how we have improved these our most precious privileges. Must we

not cover our faces in humble prostration before God, for our great abuse of them, and for our high ingratitude? how have we run into parties, to the confusion of the state? Remember union is important! Remember ye are Americans, ye are brethren! be ye therefore one. Praise ye the Lord; bless his name: Praise ye him, and magnify him for ever.

O! may the God of council be our counsellor, the God of peace ever give us peace. the God of wisdom be our guide, the God of battle be our defence, and to him only wise be all honor, glory, might and dominion, now and ever. AMEN.

On the *Fourth of July*, 1809, about 300 of the republican citizens of Oxford, assembled at the Eagle-Tavern, to celebrate the glorious event of American Independence. A procession was formed under the direction of *Major Balcom*, Marshal of the day, preceded by music, and *Capt. Burgot's* company of light infantry, whose conduct through the day was highly honorable to the officers and soldiers. After the procession had performed its marches, the Declaration of Independence was read in an audible and impressive manner, by *Mr. Simon G. Throsp*. The foregoing Oration was then delivered by the *Rev. Mr. Camp*. At 3 o'clock, the company set down to an excellent dinner, provided by *Mr. Wells*, at which *Gurdon Hewitt, Esq.* presided, and *John Tracy, Esq.* acted as Vice-President. After dinner the following TOASTS were drank, accompanied by music, and volleys of musquetry from *Capt. Burgot's* company.

1. The 4th of July—The important event, in commemoration of which, we celebrate this day, is exceeded by none, except that which happened on the first day of the week.

2. The constitution of the United States—The sacred depository of our rights, and the cement of our union; let its support be sealed with our best blood, and let the voice of insurrection and dismemberment be no more heard in the land.

3. The memory of Washington—May his wise counsels be deeply impressed on every branch of the American family.
(*Drank standing.*)

4. John Adams, our former president—An honest man; may he not stay his hand till he has completely unfolded the aristocratical projects of the Essex junto. (3 cheers.)

5. Thomas Jefferson—As a patriot and statesman, he is second to none who has gone before him; let the remembrance of his virtues, and those of Washington, live and die with each other.
(3 cheers.)

6. James Madison, president of the United States—His talents are equal to the most sanguine expectations of his constituents; let his firmness teach his enemies to fear and obey, his friends to love and support him. (3 cheers.)

7. George Clinton, Vice-President—With gratitude we remember his patriotism in obtaining and supporting our independence; with pleasure we hail him as second in the nation. (3 cheers.)

8. The congress of the United States—Let the enemies of our government for ever toast the minority, while we with pleasure support the majority. (5 cheers.)

9. The Navy of the United States—May it be commensurate with the best interests of the country, and never be Copenhagened by the pirates of Europe. (9 cheers.)

10. The Militia of the United States—Let it be well regulated, and be supported as our best defence against foreign enemies and domestic traitors.

11. **The People of the United States**—Too intelligent to be duped by foreign or domestic influence, too just to invade the rights of others, and too brave to surrender their own.

12. **The governor of the state of New-York**—Patriotic and independent; let his acts of justice silence the calumnies of his enemies, and secure the confidence of the friends of our government.
(3 *cheers.*)

13. **The lieutenant-governor of the state of New-York**—The friend and supporter of his country's rights. (3 *cheers.*)

14. **Agriculture, Commerce and Manufactures**—Dependent on each other, may they be equally supported.

15. **The memory of the heroes, who fought and bled to obtain our independence.**

16. **Backsliding republicans**—In the dark you are wandering from your father's house and are feeding on husks, we would welcome your return to partake of the fatted calf with your brethren.
(9 *cheers.*)

17. **The American Fair**—Let their virtues stimulate the hero in their defence; let their smiles crown our happiness in retirement.
(3 *cheers.*)

Volunteers.

By the President. (Mr. Camp having retired.)

The *Orator* of the day—Let the pure principles of our government, he has this day promulgated amongst us be the rallying point for all parties to unite upon.

By the Vice-President.

May our minds long be impressed with the pure and noble sentiments of those, who thirty-three years ago dared to declare,
“ We will be Free and Independent.”