

**AN  
ORATION.**

**IN COMMEMORATION**

**OF THE**

**INDEPENDENCE**

**OF THE**

**UNITED STATES**

**OF**

**NORTH-AMERICA,**

**DELIVERED JULY 4, 1787,**

**At the REFORMED CALVINIST Church in Philadelphia,**

**By JAMES CAMPBELL, Esquire.**

**TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,**

**AN**

**INTRODUCTORY PRAYER,**

**DELIVERED ON THE SAME OCCASION,**

**By THE REV. WILLIAM ROGERS, A. M.**

**PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE PENNSYLVANIA SOCIETY  
OF THE CINCINNATI.**

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**MDCCLXXXVII.**

At an Annual Meeting of the *Pennsylvania Society of the Cincinnati*, held at the State-House in Philadelphia, July 4th, 1787;

*On Motion, unanimously resolved,*

THAT the Thanks of this Society be given to JAMES CAMPBELL, Esquire, for his *Oration*, delivered this Day, in commemoration of the Independence of the United States of America—Also to the Rev. WILLIAM ROGERS, for his *Introductory Prayer*, on the same occasion—And that a copy of each be requested for the press.

*Extract from the Minutes,*

RICHARD FULLERTON, *Secr'y.*

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## Introductory Prayer.

**SUPREME**LY great and infinitely glorious  
**LORD OUR GOD!** From everlasting to  
 everlasting **THOU** art the same! Unchange-  
 able in thy nature, in thy word, and in all thy  
 works! Cloathed with light as with a garment,  
 and with majesty as with a robe! Who makest  
 the clouds thy chariot, and walkest upon the  
 wings of the wind! Possessed of every adorable  
**ATTRIBUTE** and divine **PERFECTION!**

We, thy unworthy but dependent children, as-  
 sembled on this joyful occasion, humbly desire to  
 approach the **THRONE** of **THY GRACE**, in and  
 through the merit of thy coequal **SON**, our **EVER-**  
**BLESSED SAVIOUR!** For **HIS** sake, be pleased  
 to pardon our manifold sins, and to blot out all  
 our transgressions! Justify our persons through  
**IMMANUEL'S** righteousness, and sanctify our na-  
 tures by the powerful influences of thy most **HOLY**  
**SPIRIT!** May we wholly be devoted to thy ser-  
 vice, and live uniformly to thy praise!

With united hearts and uplifted voices, we  
 render unfeigned thanks to thy name, **O THOU**  
**SOVEREIGN RULER OF ALL WORLDS**, for  
 those numberless mercies wherewith we have been  
 and

and continue to be visited! We adore thee for thy creating power, preserving goodness, and redeeming love! Suffer us never to forget any of thy favours, as we are altogether undeserving, even of the least! Particularly, O GOD! are the inhabitants of these States, on THIS DAY, under the strongest obligations to bless THY NAME, for that Liberty, civil and religious, which they so fully enjoy! We would join the general body, and ascribe praise and thanksgiving to thy ADORABLE MAJESTY, for this AUSPICIOUS Anniversary, A DAY long to be remembered by us and future generations! A DAY, whereon this extensive Continent was, by the representatives of a numerous and oppressed people, DECLARED FREE AND INDEPENDENT!—HEAVEN approved the declaration, our arms were crowned with success, sweet peace hath visited our borders, the soldier once more became the citizen; Retiring, without regret, from stations of command, our military officers returned with cheerfulness to the several duties of domestic and tranquil life! Our ears are no more pierced with the confused noise of war, our eyes are no longer pained with the horrid spectacle of garments roll'd in blood.—While we thus thankfully acknowledge thy reiterated favours in our political hemisphere, we beg leave also, to mention thy providential smiles in crowning the YEAR with thy goodness, and causing thy paths to drop fatness; “ Our pastures are cloathed with flocks,  
our

our fields are covered over with corn and with wheat, our husbandmen shout for joy, yea, they also sing."

That we may continue to enjoy these important blessings; Be pleased, O LORD, to visit all the nations of the earth, and incline their hearts to peace and love; shower down upon them thy heavenly grace; may they know THEE as the KING OF KINGS and LORD OF LORDS! In an especial manner, Do THOU visit our land, graciously regard our country, protect and defend our infant, but hitherto highly favoured empire, bless our CONGRESS, smile upon each particular State of the UNION; May those who are in authority rule in thy fear, prove a terror to evil doers and a praise to them who do well! As this is a period, O LORD! big with events, impenetrable by any human scrutiny, we fervently recommend to thy Fatherly notice that august Body, assembled in this city, who compose our FEDERAL CONVENTION; will it please THEE, O THOU ETERNAL I AM! to favour them from day to day with thy immediate presence; be thou their wisdom and their strength! Enable them to devise such measures as may prove happily instrumental for healing all divisions and promoting the good of the great WHOLE; incline the hearts of all the people to receive with pleasure, combined with a determination to carry into execution, whatever these thy servants may wisely

wisely recommend ; That the United States of America may furnish the world with ONE example of a free and permanent government, which shall be the result of human and mutual deliberation, and which shall not, like all other governments, whether ancient or modern, spring out of mere chance or be established by force.— May we triumph in the cheering prospect of being completely delivered from anarchy, and continue, under the influence of republican virtue, to partake of all the blessings of cultivated and civilized society ! In tender mercy bless this Commonwealth, the President, Vice-President, and Supreme Executive Council, our Legislative Body, and the respective Judicial Departments !

Finally, we commend to thy paternal regard, all orders of men, all seminaries of useful learning, the Ministers of thy Gospel of every denomination, the Church of CHRIST, and all for whom we ought to pray.—With heart-felt gratitude we anticipate the GLORIOUS Æ. A, when instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, instead of the briar shall come up the MYRTLE TREE, and WISDOM and KNOWLEDGE shall be the stability of the times, both in church and state.

Prepare us, O LORD, MOST HOLY ! for every dispensation of thy righteous Providence, for life, for death, for judgment, and the joys  
of

of Paradise—Humbly intreating **THY** gracious assistance, in suitably discharging all those duties enjoined us by thy word, and enforced by thy authority, we close this, our solemn address, by saying, as our **LORD** and **SAVIOUR** **JESUS CHRIST** hath taught us—

**OUR** Father, who art in Heaven; hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, forever and ever. **A M E N.**

*The Honorable THOMAS M'KEAN, Esq.  
Doct̄or of Laws, and Chief Justice of the  
State of Pennsylvania.*

S I R,

**A**S a publication of the following sheets is requested by a *Society*, whose wish bears with me the weight of a command, permit me to beg that your name may accompany it. I am the more induced to make this request, as the distinguished share you have had in our *National Councils*, the pre-*fidency* your important office gives you over almost every blessing which *Freedom* and *Independence* can bestow; and your unre-mitted exertions, official and personal, in establishing that great event, to commemorate which was the design of this performance, all join to designate you the most proper person to whom I can look for patronage. Unaccustomed to write, and never having spoken publicly before, it was neither my object or expectation to rise to *applause*; my hopes were negative, and to escape *censure* is my utmost wish. With sentiments of the highest respect,

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your obedient humble servant,

JAMES CAMPBELL.



A N

## O R A T I O N, &amp;c.

**I**T is so much a *rule* of modern declamation to make the exordium to *consist* of personal apology, that any departure from it *might*, I fear, be deemed a violation of *that* respect which is *held* to be due from a *speaker* to an *audience*; and *indeed* if there *ever* was propriety in the *rule* itself, or justice in the popular construction of its omission, *I feel* it to be at this *very* moment, when *I* have so much occasion to *entreat*, and you so much room to *extend* your indulgence, and when *not* to express would be in some degree *not* to feel *that* deference which the presence of *such* an assembly can never fail to inspire.

*Sensible* then, as I am, of the difficulty of the task which *your* partiality has commanded me to perform, and *conscious* of my inequality to discharge it as I ought, I am left without an alternative but to make choice of a subject, which from the relation it bears to the purposes of *your* institution as well as the oc-

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*caſion* we are now convened to commemorate, will in ſome degree enſure to me that candor and attention *which*, were I to reſt on any abſtracted efforts of my own, muſt neceſſarily be withheld.

*This* ſubject, Gentlemen, you will at once anticipate, in reflecting on the advantages which have reſulted to mankind from the Independence of America. A ſummary recital of thoſe advantages will conſtitute the principal object of my preſent enquiry and diſcuſſion.

Our petitions and remonſtrances having been rejected, and inſult being added to injury, it became at once eſſential to our ſafety and freedom to burſt the bonds of dependence and ſhake off the yoke of foreign legiſlation. It was this bold but neceſſary meaſure which gave us rank among nations.—It was this that emancipated us from military law, and reſcued us from all the horrors of ſlavery.—Had not this act and the events which it drew after it taken place, how very different at preſent would have been our ſituation.—In place of contemplating the majeſty of a free people, convened in awful ſimplicity to conſult their ſafety and promote their happineſs, we ſhould have beheld the pomp and extravagance of royal governors trampling upon

upon the sacred rights of the people, and treating them in all their acts of power as if they were created only to minister to their pride or ambition.—The property of our merchant would have been held by a precarious tenure—our country would no longer have been cultivated by the proprietors and sovereigns of the soil—a farmer and a slave would have been synonymous terms.—If then, such would have been our situation in a state of subjugation to Great-Britain, how much have we gained by a separation from her.—Welcome then the glorious Anniversary of American Independence—forever welcome be the return of that day which made us citizens of a republic, and gave us a rank in the scale of being—high—above the subjects of a monarchy.—To comprehend the dignity of a republican, turn to the page of history and contemplate the different characters of the freemen of Greece and Rome, and the slaves of the Egyptian and Persian empires—or compare the speeches of a Cicero and a Cato with the servile addresses of the parasites who surrounded the thrones of the Roman emperors.—But why should we travel back to antiquity for examples of the dignity of conduct and sentiment inspired by a republican form of government—we have beheld the citizens of the United States raised by their personal interest in the government of their country to a  
pitch

pitch of glory which has excited the admiration of half the globe.—It was the spirit of republican liberty that animated the patriot in the cabinet, and supported the American soldier under all his sufferings in the field, during a long and arduous war.—It is the same patriotic spirit which has convened the members of our Fœderal Convention, at the expence of private ease and fortune, to supply the defects of our confederation—to prop the tottering fabric of our union, and to lay the foundations of national safety and happiness.—Illustrious Senate, to you your country looks with anxious expectation—on your decisions she rests—convinced that men who cut the cords of foreign legislation are competent to framing a system of government which will embrace all interests, call forth our resources, and establish our credit:—But in every plan for improvement or reformation, may an attachment to the principles of our present government be the characteristic of an American, and may every proposition to add kingly power to our fœderal system be regarded as treason to the liberties of our country.

Another advantage derived from our Independence consists in the expansion it has given the human mind, and the new fields it has opened for enquiry, especially on the interesting subjects of government.—While only a  
third

third part of legislation was in our hands, it is not a subject of wonder that we were deficient in many of its principles; but since all the powers of government have devolved upon us, how many proofs of knowledge have been given in this science—witness the wisdom and energy of many of our constitutions, and witness the literary productions of those illustrious civilians, Jefferson and Adams, whose works are not only calculated to instruct their countrymen, but to enlighten Europe and posterity in the great science of social and political happiness;—nor have our studies and enquiries since the Declaration of Independence been confined to government, science has flourished in all its branches—the American historian records the events of our revolution with classical elegance, and her poets celebrate in all the harmony of verse the glorious achievements of her sons.

By a separation from Britain we have increased our resources for knowledge:—Witness the numerous colleges, academies and literary societies that have been established since the peace throughout the Union.—These institutions, so fruitful of public and private happiness, have arisen entirely from a conviction that knowledge is essential to the preservation of a republican form of government.

Our

Our separation from Great-Britain has extended the empire of humanity—no longer shall the wretched African be torn from his peaceful habitation, to fertilize with his tears the soil of a people professing themselves advocates for universal freedom—the time is not far distant when our sister States, in imitation of our example, shall change their vassals into subjects.

Our national Independence has opened the avenues of commerce with every part of the world, and thereby not only lessened the price of our imports, but added to the value of our products.—Nor is this the only advantage we have derived from the extension of our trade: It was not less the policy than the interest of Britain to instil into our minds national prejudices, and to teach us to regard all mankind, except Englishmen, as our enemies; but happily this prejudice is removed, and we now view the whole human race as members of one great and extensive family, however much they may be distinguished from us by the circumstances of distance, colour, or religion. The Frenchman and the American (till lately considered hereditary enemies) now embrace each other as children of the same father—the European Catholic and the American Protestant review with equal horror the times when their ancestors embrued their hands

hands in each others blood, and now join to cancel the remembrance of them in mutual acts of charity and benevolence.—Nor has this intercourse been restricted to Europe, the inhabitants of China, Bengal, and the United States, have met together on the sands of India; and by the influence of commerce have added the ties of interest to the obligations of universal benevolence.

Another, and a principal advantage of our Independence, results from the material change it has wrought on the opinions, conduct and government of the European nations: It was by contemplating our Independence that France has become the land of free enquiry and general toleration; Germany, from the same cause, has shaken off an immense load of religious prejudice and bigotry; Spain has caught our spirit of enterprise and innovation; and even *Britain* herself has been taught, by our successful struggle to relax in her system of general subjugation; hence Ireland enjoys what she had long demanded in vain; an exercise of her natural rights to commerce, liberty and independence. Propitious æra! happy event! which has softened the rigours of tyranny, and taught *even* Kings to revere the great laws of justice and equity.

Thus

Thus have I endeavoured to point out some of the principal benefits of American Independence: But methinks, I am ask'd, Why do we hear of such universal discontents throughout the Continent? Why does the farmer languish beneath the weight of taxes, and the merchant complain of the decay of trade? Why are the bands of our Fœderal Government so weak, and our credit and character the sport of foreign nations? These things, however true, do not militate with any proposition I have advanced: Where is the nation that ever became suddenly wise, great and respectable? History answers, none. Greece boasted her Amphyction, her Solon and Lycurgus, and yet we find her approaches to order less rapid than ours. Rome had a Romulus to frame her constitution, and yet while she conquered the world, there subsisted within her walls a civil war; the seditions of the Gracchi were more sanguinary and not less threatening than any we have felt; view Cæsar first defending and then endeavouring to subvert the constitution of his country; exult that the LEADER of our legions had nobler objects in view than a scepter or a diadem. Though Russia is now a great and happy nation, though she holds in one hand the scourge of the Turk, and the balance of Europe in the other, yet the banks of the Neister and the Larga will witness that her road to empire

and



and order has been slow and difficult. Holland did not, until after forty years struggle, attain to independence, and frequent disorders since have taught her that national stability is of slow growth: And how often has the British throne shook to its centre before she arrived at her present situation; her history is chequered from the conquest by Cæsar to the present day; one King exiled, another beheaded, now a republic and then a monarchy, this reign drained of men and treasure by an ambitious Prince smitten with a rage for foreign conquest, the next streaming with the blood of her sons, probed in every vein by the dagger of domestic faction; the fields of Hastings and of Bosworth lay on the road to her present order; rebellion has more than once stalked at large through the land, their government has been insulted by a Monmouth and trampled on by a Cromwell; and shall we who have but just become a nation expect to meet with nothing but tranquility and order? To establish a new form of government, to eradicate ancient prejudices, to remove the effects of a war, began with the sanctions of authority, and conducted chiefly by voluntary association, and to unite opinions and habits with new situations, must be the work of time. Our constitutions were made upon the spur of the occasion, with a bayonet at our breasts, and in the infancy of our knowledge

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of government and its principles; it is not therefore matter of surprize that they are not more perfect, or more generally accommodated to the temper of our citizens. The distresses, of which we complain, are wholly artificial; an anti-republican passion for foreign luxuries has exhausted our country of its gold and silver, a rage for paper money has checked credit, locked up the remains of our specie, substituted speculation for labour, and taught us to prey upon one another. The seed of independence, like many other seeds, may for a while disappear; but it will yet spring and flourish with strength and beauty, like the venerable oak, it may probably require centuries to grow, in order to be centuries in flourishing and centuries in decaying. How fallen would be the character we have acquired in the establishment of our liberties, if we discover inability to form a suitable government to preserve them? Is the science of government so difficult, that we have not men among us capable of unfolding its mysteries and binding our States together by mutual interests and obligations? Or is knowledge in legislation confined to Kings and their Ministers? There was a time when these questions would have kindled rage and resentment in every American bosom.

Let

Let us for a moment compare the present situation of America with what it was in 1775: She was then without force, without union, without an ally, and *Great-Britain* was her enemy; and yet, under all these disadvantages, she rose to glory and Independence. At present she is at peace with the whole world; France, the most powerful nation in Europe, is her faithful ally; she is in possession of eleven years experience in government; she is united in her objects, has, almost, no army to maintain, no enemy to oppose; who then, but a willing infidel, can doubt her future greatness? But our present situation is still more strongly contrasted by the gloom of 1779: Distracted in our Councils, our money hastening to extinction, our army on the eve of dissolution, and a powerful enemy in the bowels of our country; yet we surmounted these difficulties, and triumphed in the peace of 1783. There are clouds and storms in the political as well as the natural hemisphere; to weak and timid minds only are they big with terror; the true politician views them as the means of purifying the political atmosphere, and promoting the growth and stability of government. These, Gentlemen of the Society, are, I am sure, your sentiments. It was to perpetuate the remembrance of events immediately connected with the day, of which this is the anniversary, that we united; it is to transmit to posterity

posterity the principles of that day we continue our association; and although we have sheathed our swords, and gone back to the pursuits of private life, it remains for us to remember, that the same exertions may be necessary to defend and preserve, which were so successfully employed in establishing our Independence and peace; and that as soldiers of a republic our work is incomplete while national dangers exist on any quarter. In casting my eye back upon the scenes of danger and distress out of which our Society grew, I am insensibly led to pay a tribute of respect to the memory of such as sealed their attachment to the liberties of our country with their lives: Though scattered from the plains of Abraham to the sands of Georgia, no monument be raised to point their reliques to the passing stranger, yet laurels shall bloom around their graves, and while gratitude or justice shall rule the remembrance of human action, the brilliant story of their fame will retain its lustre, and pass to posterity in the full splendor of glory.

To detail their several merits would exhaust eulogium, and far transcends my powers of panegyric. It will not, however, be deemed a trespass on your indulgence should I offer the tribute of acknowledgment to an individual, whose worth will forever endear his  
 memory

memory to our country. This is not the partial praise of professional predilection; it is a sentiment to which, I am persuaded, my audience will grant a grateful assent, when informed that it refers to that distinguished citizen and soldier, **GENERAL GREENE.**

Great in the beneficent arts of peace, he was the hope of his country, and unsurpassed in the active operations of war, he has been justly styled "her sword, and the keen avenger of her wrongs." With a mind to counsel, and an arm to execute the greatest purposes of public determination, he united a heart, honest in all its intentions, and firmly prepared to sustain the rudest reverse of fortune.

When disciplined valour had defeated our troops, and desolation marched in the train of war; when the sword had thinned our broken ranks, and dismay distracted the civil authority; when conquest and confidence were opposed to defeat and despondency; in this dark crisis of southern disaster, was he called on to stem the torrent of victory and avert the horrors of impending subjugation.

With prompt obedience to the orders of his **ILLUSTRIOUS CHIEF**, he hastens to execute the duties of his appointment, and at the head of an enfeebled *though* gallant army, he displays a  
conduct

conduct consummate in all its objects; supported by a courage ardent as the sword he drew, removing alarm and restoring confidence, he grafts an emboldened militia on the stump of that war-wasted corps, whose bravery, under every pressure of adverse fortune, had firmly upheld the standard of freedom; with *these* he advances to meet an enemy elate with conquest, and assured of success.

Discipline having resumed its station in our ranks, the astonished Briton is taught to respect the foe he so lately despised, and his predatory bands, restrained to operations of collective force, no longer desolate our guarded fields.

The exiled inhabitants return to their deserted dwellings, and separated kindred again enjoy the blissful society of domestic peace. The anxious father revisits his distressed family, and permitted in quiet to make provision for their support, he returns with zeal and ardour to the service of his country; private happiness is improved into general welfare; the husbandman, assured of the advantages which must result from the guidance of such a LEADER, mingles with alacrity in the ranks of war, and braves with ardour every danger of the field; vigilance increases to enterprise, and

and resistance is roused to retaliation, invasion is changed in its course, and rushes with impetuous recoil in an opposite direction; detachments captured and garrisons reduced, announce its rapid approach, and urge retreat to the Briton, as the last refuge from its fury; impressed with the *conviction of Eutaw*, he seeks shelter within his entrenchments, nor longer dares an opposition in the field. Alike attentive to the duties of citizenship, as ardent in the accomplishment of his military pursuits, the gallant GREENE devotes his talents and his leisure to the restoration of tranquility, and the maintenance of civil privilege; his conquering troops indulge not in excess, nor riot in the peasant's toil; contented to share with their CHIEF in the scanty allowance of the camp, victory brings no other benefit to them than the reflection, that they had done their duty. Such, my fellow-citizens, was the HERO, whose actions will be admired while patriotism and military worth preserve their rank in human estimation, and whose services entitle him to the eternal gratitude of America. If such was the Chief appointed to conduct the momentous duties of that dangerous department, how much to be admired is that wisdom, whose early penetration directed to the choice, and whose friendship maintained, through every change of fortune, an unshaken affection and esteem:

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The presence of that GREAT CHARACTER forbids encomium, and the remembrance of *his* merit is too deeply engraven ever to be effaced.

Placing, then, a proper value on the blessings which the efforts of such illustrious citizens have procured, our counsellors have not planned the happiness of their country without effect, nor have the martyrs of freedom bled in vain. No, my fellow-citizens, from their ashes, enriched by their blood, the tree of liberty shall yet grow and flourish among us: Methinks I already see the stately fabric of a free and vigorous government rising out of the wisdom of the FÆDERAL CONVENTION; I behold order and contentment pervading every part of the United States; our forests falling before the hand of labour; our fields doubling their increase, from the effects of well-directed industry; our villages enlivened by useful manufactures, and our cities thriving under foreign and domestic commerce: I behold millions of freemen, covering the shores of our rivers and lakes with all the arts and enjoyments of civilized life, and on the Anniversary of this Day, 1887, shouting forth the praises of the HEROES and PATRIOTS, who, in 1776, secured and extended to them all their HAPPINESS.