

AN  
ORATION,

PRONOUNCED AT

*GOFFSTOWN,*

JULY 4, 1805,

THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE

**Declaration of Independence.**

—♦♦♦♦♦—  
BY JOHN CAYFORD.  
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# ORATION.

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*FELLOW CITIZENS,*

**I**T is not my business at this time to apologize. I will only say, I could wish you had made choice of some person more adequate to the task. However, as far as in me is, I feel to assist and support the cause of *republicanism*. Of ~~the~~ this cause none need to be ashamed. It is a cause worthy of the rational mind. Let those only be ashamed, who are engaged in impeding its progress. True republicanism, like true religion, tends to harm none, but to benefit all. True republicanism, like true religion, cost much. That religion, which falls short of giving up the whole heart, will not meet the approbation of that great, wise, good and just Being, with whom we have to do. To say nothing of that immense price it cost the Saviour to procure an open door, through which alone the heart can be given up; our privileges are the price of immense riches, of immense labor and toil, of almost unbearable hardships; yea, the price of blood, and the result of a kind, superintending, all-wise Providence. Your treasuries might have been drained, your strength exhausted, your veins emptied, but for a kind Providence, whose wheels are ever turning, and disclosing to our view the designs of infinite wisdom.—True

republicanism, like true religion, cost little to support it, compared with those forms of government so repugnant to the rights of man—governments supported only by men whose ends and aims are self and *sinister*. It cost but little to maintain a republican form of government. If we refer to political points—its principles are the most natural, easy, simple, and most salutary; whilst to maintain a monarchical government requires much political exertion, much hypocrisy—the crafty invention of the designing must be racked—families must be called as a defence to those who usurp on the free right of reason and revelation.

Every government short of a republic is maintained at the expense of the people's rights. Blood and carnage mark the footsteps of every such government under the sun. Israel of old was a happy people, under a republican form of government. But, say they, we will have a king; we will be like the heathen round about us. A holy God gave them a king in his anger. They had a king and a curse: and to this day doth the curse exist where the useless cause exists.—But we, my fellow citizens, may congratulate each other, under the smiles of a republican administration.

ALL HAIL AMERICA!—thou most highly favored nation under the sun!

Many of your memories serve you to recollect the various steps displayed in the superintending Providence of the great Jehovah, which led on the bold patriot to victory and triumph; which maintained the flame of liberty, under all those

accumulated pressures which this land in its infant state experienced.

Many of you remember the Stamp Act in 1765—the menacing hostility of the British you cannot forget in 1770, 1772, 1773—the consternation into which the Boston port Bill threw the inhabitants of Massachusetts, about March, 1774.

Many of you remember the resolution and fortitude of the colonies, and the concurrence of the different states with them, to oppose the black designs of the British parliament. You remember with what firmness of resolution, fortitude of mind, and zeal for the public good, many, by a wise, indulgent Providence, were at that time inspired. A HANCOCK and an ADAMS are not to be forgotten.

Many of you can remember the dawn of the tragic scene at Lexington. Perhaps some of you were then present. You can reflect on what the enemy *did* : and you will not forget what a just fate they suffered. On their return, what a scene opens ; windows, trees and fences flash vengeance on them. Inflamed with just resentment, the inhabitants pursued them to Boston ; whilst divine justice conveyed many of them into vast eternity. Here was spilt the first blood in the late unjust war between England and America. Here opened the first terrific scene of this great drama, which in its progress discloses the most awful and pleasing scenes, the most illustrious characters and salutary effects the world ever experienced ; and at last closed with a revolution equally glorious for the actors, and important in its consequences to all mankind.

In 1776, July 4, Congress, then in an infant state, published their Declaration of Independence, which separated America from Britain. This great event took place 284 years after the discovery of these shores by Columbus—166 years from the first effectual settlement in Virginia—156 years after the first settlement of Plymouth—and after having waded through almost seven years hostility with Britain. This, my fellow citizens, is the day we celebrate, the birth day of your privileges; a day pregnant with blessings to America, but with shame, disgrace and loss to her enemies.

On July 4, 1776, while formidable fleets and armies darkened your coasts, and threatened devastation and death, Independence was declared. After a long and bloody contest, a series of battles, of incredible hardships, and after a WASHINGTON had terminated the march of the British galant at York-town, in 1782, the Independence of America was declared by the Court of London; Holland acknowledged the Independence of America, April 19, 1782; Sweden, Feb. 5, 1783; Denmark, Feb. 25; Spain in March; and Russia in July, 1783.—Thus ended a long and arduous conflict; in which Britain expended upwards of one hundred millions of sterling money, with a hundred thousand lives, with a loss of territory, common confidence and credit. America endured every cruelty and distress her enemies could devise and afflict her with; lost many valuable lives, and much treasure; but delivered herself from foreign dominion, and gained a rank amongst the nations of the earth.

Thus, by a kind and indulgent Providence was this new and infant world carried through the dismal struggle, and by the God of armies, the flag of triumph put into their hands.

In a few years there was found energy to conceive, and wisdom to adopt the federal Constitution—the glory of America—the wonder of the world—the butt of the envy and rage of tyrants. Under the administration of this Constitution, peace hath been enjoyed; prosperity and wealth hath abounded beyond calculation; a spirit of industry hath increased, and now prevails; the means of moral and intellectual improvement abundantly multiplied. May the God of Providence continue to us the pleasing blessings; may they be handed down uncontaminated to the latest posterity of America.

Different is the public mind in opinion at the present day. Heaven forbid divisions in this new world. Let us reflect union is our strength. That there hath been and now are men who are engaged in making parties, is too notorious to be denied. That there are those who are engaged in casting odium on our present administration, and, as far as in them is, rendering odious our administration, is undoubtedly true: an evil to be lamented and guarded against. That this evil may be removed, let every well disposed citizen of our great community ruminatè in their minds that our present privileges cost the fathers immense riches, labour, toil, hardship, and blood, with many lives.

It is the wisdom and privilege of every citizen of this highly favored empire, to think freely for himself, on the ground of our excellent constitution ; and ever drinking into the spirit of it in its native purity and simplicity ; let every man labor more and more to diffuse the principles of the same in all his public and domestic walks.

Will it be said I go too far, when I say that next to the spirit of christianity is the most noble spirit of republicanism ? Yea, I will say, that the spirit of republicanism, next to the holy religion of our Lord Jesus Christ, is the most important thing to progress in human affairs. Let us then, my fellow citizens, gratefully look back twenty-nine years to this day, and we have the event which occasioned these observations, and this respectable gathering : an event pregnant with events—big with glorious consequences, the most salutary—not confined to this nation or any other.

May we not expect that the revolution of America—the declaration, establishment, and maintenance of her Independence, will prove one of the most important steps in the progressive course of human affairs ? Is there any thing likely to prove so salutary in setting mankind free from the shackles of superstition and tyranny, both civil and ecclesiastical, as this great event ?

Our Independence, Constitution—our civil rights as men, and privileges as citizens of this new world, influence us to realize and see for ourselves, that nothing is fundamental but impartial and free enquiry, an honest, upright, and virtuous mind—that we are all members of civil

community confederately, each standing on the same base with each:—not subjects, as many say. No: we are not to harbour a thought that our rulers are our masters; our Independence forbids it. Our rulers are selected from amongst ourselves. And one peculiar privilege we have—a privilege not to be forgotten, nor even to be wrested out of our hands, while we are a free people—is, that when the public mind please, they may change their officers from the highest to the lowest, without prejudice to the ruler or ruled; and have both law and justice to support the act. Hath not a town an undoubted right to change their officers? doth not prudence dictate it, and necessity require it? Surely we expect our nation to enjoy equal rights with our several towns. Our Constitution exhibits a government, which consists in the dominion of equal laws, made with common consent; in the dominion of men over themselves, not over others.

Happy for America, when these principles have their due influence on every mind in this great community. How happy the world, if these truths were received, acknowledged, and practised. Then war would be known no more; party spirit be done away; and the mind, divested of party prejudice, would turn this world measurably into an Eden. Then religious bigotry, that cruel demon, would fall asleep. Yes, that cruel adversary of the rights of man should wake no more forever. Tyrannical governments and hateful hierarchies would then sink like that mighty



millstone cast into the sea by the angel. Then will eternal truth shine bright, and be gloriously displayed, when reason and virtue shall accompany it. Then the gospel, better understood and more feelingly applied, will be more cordially embraced. Many will run to and fro, and knowledge will be increased; the wolf dwell with the lamb; the leopard with the kid; and nation no more lift up sword against nation.—May we not hope, notwithstanding the many things which may impede at present, that the independence of America is one of the leading steps ordained by a divine Providence to introduce these glorious times?

My fellow citizens, that we may be the means of promoting, furthering, and diffusing such salutary blessings, let us, as a community and as individuals, realize our danger, and be guarded against every intrusion; let us be careful to improve the advantages our present independent state affords, by throwing ourselves open to future improvement. Should this be the case, may it not be said of America as of the patriarchal family, that in thee all the families of the earth shall be blessed? Is it presumption to say, it is scarcely possible for America to think too highly of her privileges, and the glorious and salutary consequences and effects resulting from them? Our privileges are great. The only happy, the only free people under the sun. Cast an eye to England, once a favored, but now an enslaved people—weighted down with oppression and cruelty. It is death to wear the yoke, and death to shake it off.—

There despotism reigns in all its baneful effects. A worthy correspondent, residing in the heart of the country, informs me by letter, that the manufactories are in a very distressing situation—and that every city, town, and village is full of soldiers, boarded on the people throughout the kingdom. Add to this, provisions are very dear. Here is a whole nation in the depth of despotism—no open prospect of better times—civil and religious liberty unknown to them.

If we turn an eye to France and Spain, a flood of despotism rushes impetuous on our senses. Take a review of those kingdoms, and what is there baneful to peace, prosperity and religion, but what abounds in their governments?

Let it be remembered, that these nations have had a religious test, which has been an inlet to the most glaring hypocrisy, which is the worst of evils. It will be objected, if we have nothing of of this kind, we shall have no defence for religion.—No defence for hypocrisy rather. True religion ever did and ever will bear its own weight. He who is the author of it will support it. It is only the man of error who needs the civil law to support his religious sentiments. We all need the civil law to defend person and property in the free exercise of conscience; but the pure, unadulterated truth of Christ will defend itself, and the souls who embrace it. Let it then be echoed from shore to shore.

America is free—still free. Her Independence hath been declared. Her Independence hath been preserved twenty-nine years. Hath it not echoed

to the ends of the earth. And will it be presumption to say, we hope that it will so operate on the minds of the public in and through all Europe, that it will be a happy and effectual mean in the hand of a wise Providence of the overturning every other government under the sun. Fellow citizens, it is not presumption to say, there never was a nation placed in a station of more importance in the plan of a divine Providence than this nation hath been and now is. Are not your present privileges the desire of the enlightened throughout the world? Are not your present privileges the butt of the envy of tyrants? When France began to struggle first for the same native liberty we enjoy, what a combination of despots she had to encounter with.

Your Independence, fellow citizens, hath been declared amidst the roaring of cannon, the clashing of spears, with garments rolled in blood. It hath been preserved by a kind Providence, notwithstanding all intrigue and design. Kings and despots have used their influence to destroy your constitution, and deprive you of your privileges. But America is yet free. Thus, while despots and kings are disappointed, your liberties are secured, and your expectations exceeded. They have hitherto been caught in their own trap, and have fallen into their own pit. But, my fellow citizens, conclude not you have risen to the summit of perfection, and so lull yourselves to sleep; and in your stupor suffer an encroachment on your *blood-bought* native rights and privileges. Let not

America's sun thus go down, and her glory be thus eclipsed.

Know then, my fellow citizens, there is much to do, and much to guard against. Each man, as a member of this great confederacy, is bound to bear his part. Every man hath his share of right in the government, in the expenses as well as the privileges. Hence let every man be a politician for himself and family. One reason why we have so many political disputes is because men are willing to have their faith pinned to the sleeves of others. When we imbibe the notions of others, to the excluding our own judgment, we espouse an evil not easily abandoned—an evil productive of those effects which we and our children may groan under.

Let it then be remembered, as the people are the sovereign, the National Debt is theirs : may it be an object with the people to charge and instruct the legislators to use their efforts, that, as soon as may be, the same may be obliterated by a just payment. Nothing will give the man, who is a friend to his country, more pleasure than to reflect on its final exit. Whatever doctrine we may be taught by others,—yet reason teacheth us, a national debt *cannot* be a national blessing. And for the very reason why some would wish to have it exist, let every true hearted American be in earnest to have it obliterated. Reflect on the British national debt, five hundred millions of sterling money. This must produce in proper time a national convulsion. Let then the United States take warning.

Again, the peace of every state, and the union of the whole, is an object of attention. United we stand; but a kingdom divided must fall. Whilst peace and union abound in the United States, she will rank unrivalled among the nations of the earth, as the first and happiest people under the sun. Let, then, hard names and party spirit die. Let a unitedness of heart in the support of our liberties abound.

Again, the maintenance of good and just laws is essential to our liberty. Liberty without law is a destruction to itself. The laws of God and the laws of our good constitution must be maintained and preserved. These are to our political existence what the sinews and flesh are to the body. These preserve our peace, produce order and union, punish the delinquent, add dignity to our national character. A strict adherence to our good and just laws is essential to liberty. We might mention a multitude of things essential to our rights and Independence—the free exercise of conscience; the liberty of the press and of speech; due attention to our public schools.

Some men have declared openly, that it would never be good times in America, till the poor were so reduced as not to be able to remove from them. Nothing is so much calculated to produce this, as inattention to our schools. Such poverty as above, and ignorance go together. As a community, and as individuals, may our attention be called up to this.

Again, free access to law and justice, a candid hearing, and a clear investigation, of all matters, are essential to liberty.

Permit me to add, that gratitude is essential to our independence—gratitude to the great Disposer of all events. Never was a divine Providence more conspicuous than in the deliverance wrought. Hence let America be grateful to the Author of her mercy. Gratitude is due to God for that firmness of resolution, he was pleased to inspire; with that wisdom to counteract the deep laid schemes, and to baffle the plots of the enemy; for wisdom to form, and energy to adopt the federal constitution, the dread of tyrants, the envy of despots; for that he hath, in his Providence, prevented all cause of division; that we are a people united to this day; for national prosperity; and that we are this day indulged, under a kind Providence, in celebrating the Independence of this rising empire: More particularly, for the glorious Gospel of the Son of God, the medium of peace for time and eternity.

Gratitude is due to those, and to their memory, whom God, in his Providence, raised up as instruments of deliverance. The most distinguished was a WASHINGTON. Through him, by a kind Providence, were the sons of Columbia led from victory to victory, until the laurel of Independence was fixed in the hands of the United States. In him the patriot, statesman and warrior all met. His genius and greatness, under God, crowned America with glory. To his memory true gratitude is due; and for his services,

his name will stand enrolled in the book of fame, with honors, and in the breasts of the sons of liberty with a grateful remembrance to the latest posterity. Many others there are who deserve well of their country a grateful remembrance for their distinguishing zeal and activity. There is now no way so effectually to manifest our gratitude to those worthies, as to protect, preserve and hand down those blood-bought privileges, the patriotic fathers obtained by dint of the sword. You cannot manifest your ingratitude more effectually to God and man, than to be careless and profligate of your inestimable privileges.

We have the happiness to say, America is a free people, her sovereignty resting on every member of her great community. Let, then, the people be ever mindful of their rights; and when those, whom the people shall elect to serve them in the interest of the nation, do not fill their important stations to answer this great end, but act from selfish motives, to the prejudice of our Independence, let such be dismissed from office, with justice to their characters. Thus, let it be made manifest, by the sovereignty of the people, that they gratefully revere those patriots who distinguished themselves, and spent their lives and fortunes in defence of the Independence and liberty of the people of America—by detecting every step which may tend to infringe on our rights.

Permit me to add, that the present Administration calls loudly for our gratitude. By the indulgent Providence of God, we have in the

Chair of State, an able statesman—one who reflects honor on the station he fills—his administration efficacious and salutary. Whilst he merits your approbation, let him have the gratitude due to his merit ; but never forget to inspect all his administrations.

Let me add, we hope the time is near at hand when slander and calumny will be forgotten by our citizens ; and when characters will be so far sacred in the view of all, that reprehension shall rest only where it is due.

We hope, also, the time is coming when those of that much respected body, the Clergy, who have neglected their duty, will return to it, and obey the apostolic injunction, to pray for rulers ; a neglect of which with their profession is so unaccountable. For surely, were our President as he is represented, it would render him so much the more the subject of prayer. It hath been said of him that he is a Jehu. If his administration should answer the end of Jehu's, it would be a singular mercy. If all the false prophets are exposed, the true ministers of Christ need not fear.

We may say, in the language of an orator, who is an adept in politics,\* “ We have the least excuse  
 “ of any people under the sun, for such insurrec-  
 “ tions and rebellions, (and I may add neglect of  
 “ duty.) Therefore let every soul be subject to  
 “ the higher powers ; for there is no power but  
 “ of God. The powers that be are ordained of

\* This extract is taken from a sermon (to which no name is affixed) from Psalms lxxxiv. 5.



“ God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the pow-  
 “ er resisteth the ordinance of God ; and they that  
 “ resist shall receive to themselves damnation.  
 “ For rulers are not a terror to good works, but  
 “ to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the  
 “ power ? Do that which is good, and thou shalt  
 “ have praise of the same. For he is the minister  
 “ of God to thee for good.

“ Good rulers ought to receive encouragement  
 “ in the discharge of their duty, by the support,  
 “ fidelity and good wishes of the people ; and not  
 “ to be discouraged by the continual uneasiness  
 “ and murmurs of the factious and seditious, who  
 “ are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest,  
 “ whose waters cast up mire and dirt. Pure and  
 “ undefiled religion requires us to render to all  
 “ their dues—fear to whom fear—honor to whom  
 “ honor ; and custom to whom custom is due :  
 “ to be obedient unto magistrates, not for wrath,  
 “ but for conscience sake. Let us, then, who have  
 “ another, better, safer way to obtain relief from  
 “ all our real burdens, never betake ourselves to  
 “ mobs and insurrections to obtain redress ; but  
 “ let us move coolly and calmly, and we shall be  
 “ pretty certain of moving safely.”

Says the same author, “ But how perfectly un-  
 “ reasonable it is that individuals should rise up  
 “ in an unlawful way, and pretend to dictate  
 “ what is for the best good, and what are the  
 “ wishes of the people in general. Are not the  
 “ people able to speak for themselves ? or are ye  
 “ the only men, and shall wisdom die with you ?

“ Have not the people in general a better right to  
 “ judge for themselves, than a few individuals have  
 “ to judge for them, and to dictate what they  
 “ shall have and what they shall not have? The  
 “ question is, who shall rule, a majority or minor-  
 “ ity? I know it is cried about the streets, by the  
 “ factious and disobedient, the people are deceiv-  
 “ ed—the people will be ruined—they see not  
 “ their danger—they know not their malady.  
 “ But it is FACT, that the main body of the people  
 “ see better and judge better what is for their in-  
 “ terest, than those who assume the right of see-  
 “ ing and determining for them. Hence we have  
 “ abundant reason to conclude that this extensive  
 “ and enlightened people will not patiently sub-  
 “ mit to oppression, without feeling it, nor to ty-  
 “ ranny without opposing it. Individuals have  
 “ an undoubted right to propose their difficulties,  
 “ and, if it is in their power, to enlighten the  
 “ public mind; and then it becomes them to sub-  
 “ mit to the decision of the public.”

It is true, this was delivered some time ago; but, my fellow citizens, it is good doctrine. Nothing can be more applicable than this at the present day. We will say, the majority must rule; and, in ruling, are as firmly bound to support and maintain the rights of the minority, as the minority are bound to comply with the majority.

However, we will say, that we hope the profess- ed ministers of the everlasting gospel will conform to their own doctrine; be at peace with their own writings; and, as much as in them lies, live peaceable with all men.

Lastly, in a grateful remembrance of the worthies of America, and in compliance with their injunctions, as well as our own interest, safety and independence, under a kind Providence, let us cultivate and improve the military art and order. The militia, under Providence, is the bulwark of our land, and the grand support of our independence. As a standing army is the chief base of tyranny and terror, the grand defence of despots and despotism, so a well regulated militia, we believe, will be a mean of the maintaining our independence. We have tasted a little of the bitter cup of a standing army; but the free born sons of Columbia have turned away the cup, with the bitter draught. No wise people will ever trust their defence out of their own hands, or consent to hold their rights at the mercy of armed slaves. Let the United States ever be free bodies of armed citizens, well regulated, well disciplined, and always ready. That man, who is not willing to be a soldier on the defensive side, for the support and maintenance of law, justice, and independence, is not worthy of a free country. Let us then arise, my fellow citizens, and in this put on strength. Let the sons of America show themselves men—manifest to the world their habitual readiness to defend their Independence from all foreign intrusions and intestine jars. Let us train up our children early to play the man in the field. Thus being armed with the banner of defence, our prepared situation will be terrifying to every invading foe. Let us stand equipped for every event. A preparation for danger will not hasten it; but by be-

ing negligent in military duty, and deficient in strength, we may lose our blood-bought rights and privileges. Attention to military duty and order will prevent the evil of a standing army.

Thus, my fellow citizens, while we are happily indulged in celebrating our Independence, let us be stimulated to our duty—a duty we owe to the worthy fathers of America—a duty we owe to ourselves—a duty we owe to the rising generation. Let us endeavor to inculcate and enforce a diminution of the national debt. Let us never espouse war, but on the defensive side. Let human blood be ever sacred in our sight. Cherish peace and union between the States—in each State—in every town in each State—each parish in every town—and every family in every parish. Let not liberty of conscience be infringed on, nor the liberty of the press be obstructed, nor liberty of speech prohibited, except that of slander and defamation. Let not our public schools be neglected. Let every man think freely for himself, on the ground of our excellent constitution. Let the clearest information, and the most correct, be your study, respecting national concerns; ever keeping this in view, that we are all confederates, and not subjects—that rulers are not masters, but servants. Let a due attention be paid to the characters of those, who deserve well of their country, with a strict adherence to law and justice.

Let me add, that we may never be called to hear the roaring of cannon—to see the clashing of arms—to hear the dying groans, and see the

patriot and warrior expire—to view the solitary widow—and to drop a tear on the fatherless, made such by the wanton pride of an enemy—that our country may never suffer those devastations, nor its inhabitants such butcheries as it has, let us gratefully acknowledge our dependance on God, and universally ascribe the glory to him, to whom it is due. Are we independent, it is of the Lord. Are we at peace, it is of the Lord. Are we a prosperous nation, it is of the Lord. The blessing of the Lord alone maketh rich. Have we wise and able rulers, it is of the Lord. May we sit under our own vine and fig tree, and worship God according to the dictates of our own consciences, if it is of the Lord. Let every heart be gratefully exercised, for the distinguishing goodness and kind Providential care of the great God towards us as a nation, and as individuals. He hath not dealt so with every nation.

And, whilst you commemorate the birth day of this rising empire, whilst you indulge yourselves in partaking of the festive board, do not wantonly and wickedly indulge your appetites. By so doing, let it be remembered, you will tempt God to turn the blessing to a curse. That you may be prevented, I charge you in the name and presence of the great God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and the elect angels, that nothing unbecoming a true republican, be said or done. You will remember it is our indispensable duty gratefully to commemorate the day annually; but no

to abuse it, by prostituting it to the gratification of our lust, and the great dishonour of the cause of liberty.

I only add, **GOD SAVE AMERICA** ; and let every heart vibrate

**AMEN.**

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