

AN

Samuel Little

ORATION,

PRONOUNCED

IN THE NEW MEETING HOUSE AT ABINGTON,

BY 4th, 1810.

.....
BY DANIEL THOMAS, A.M.
.....

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1810.

Abington, July 4th, 1810.

REV. DANIEL THOMAS,

SIR,

IN compliance with the vote of a number of respectable Citizens, convened this day to celebrate the Anniversary of American Independence, we present you their thanks for your elegant and appropriate Oration delivered before them on the occasion, and request a copy for the press.

**AARON HOBART, jun.
MICAH WHITE.
DANIEL SAWIN.**

Abington, July 6th, 1810.

GENTLEMEN,

THE copy you have kindly requested for publication, I submit to your disposal.

I am, Gentlemen,

respectfully yours,

DANIEL THOMAS.

**MR. AARON HOBART, jun.
CAPT. MICAH WHITE.
DR. DANIEL SAWIN.**

AN ORATION.

LIBERTY is precious to all her true disciples. To her they are bound by strong, indissoluble and immortal ties. When her fortress is assailed by hostile legions that menace its destruction, in her defence they unite with unshaken fortitude and unabating ardour. To shield her from the fatal poniard concealed under the cloak of pretended friendship, and protect her from the rude assault of the highway robber, they circle her standard; and, like the wave-beaten rock of the ocean, are fixed, collected and unmoved. The inextinguishable fires of patriotism glow in their bosoms, and in this hour of danger, incite them to deeds of valour, which confound their enemies, and astonish the world.

The exploits of patriots and heroes in the bleeding cause of liberty, confirm the truth of these remarks. In illustration of them, examples might be selected from the history of ancient times; but those, however renowned, I shall now pass over, to mention one of recent date; and one, which Americans cannot fail to remember with admiration and joy, until the love of freedom ceases to warm their hearts, and they submissively bend their neck to a tyrant's yoke. I allude to that memorable era, thirty four years ago, when the fathers of our country, the heroes of our rev-

olution, proclaimed to their enemies, proclaimed to the *world*, that these United States were free and independent. What but the utmost abhorrence of oppression and slavery; what but the most ardent love of their country, suffering accumulated wrongs and impositions beyond the power of endurance, could impel them to take a step so bold and daring; to tread in a path strown so thick with dangers? What but this could inspire them and their compatriots with fortitude to encounter, in the field of Mars, the gigantic power of Britain, whose fleets covered the ocean, whose troops spread over the land like grasshoppers in the drought of summer, and whose arms had carried terror and conquest into other countries renowned for war and victory? And what but the arm of Omnipotence could save them from the fatal blasts of the black tempest that howled over their heads? How gloomy was the prospect before them! Few in numbers, almost wholly destitute of resources, and without that experience in the art of war, which could furnish any reasonable ground to hope for success, they knew they had to contend with numerous, well disciplined and veteran troops, led on by generals whose locks had whitened on the plains of battle. They saw the conflagration of their temples and cities redden on the dark curtains of night. The winds of heaven wafted to their ear the groans of their brethren from the floating prisons of pestilence, despair and death. They beheld numbers, unworthy of the country which had given them birth, and brought them up as children, turn traitors, and join the standard of her invaders. They saw half-way patriots, fearful of the issue of the unequal contest, look back and sigh for

Egypt. They beheld their little army, reduced by slaughter, by capture, by disease and want to a mere handful, stand tottering on the verge of annihilation. But none of these things could move their steadfast minds, or shake their settled purpose. They had embarked in a cause which they resolved to defend to the last drop of their blood. And how glorious was the result!—The God of **BATTLES** looked upon them with a smile of approbation, spread over them the broad wing of his protection, and led them to victory and triumph.

Our country reaps the precious fruit of this triumph of freedom over the lawless and arrogant assumptions of despotick power. Let us, in union with all true Americans, distil over the tombs of the martyrs in the cause of liberty, the tear of filial affection; and while we celebrate her natal day, offer the pure incense of gratitude and praise to Him, who gives us to participate in those blessings which they were instrumental of obtaining, but were forbidden to enjoy. Let all those prejudices and base-born passions, that are the bane of social happiness, be melted down at the altar of independence. Nor let the demon of party discord step his unhallowed foot over the threshold of our hearts, to pollute the joys, which the scenes, this day brings to our remembrance, should inspire.

How shall a free people preserve their liberty, and transmit it to posterity unimpaired? is a question worthy of their most careful investigation and anxious concern. For under Providence, it depends on their conduct, whether they shall continue freemen, or become slaves. The richest blessings may be forfeited and lost, through the misconduct of those on whom

they are bestowed. This question, therefore, is to us very interesting and important. And it is thought, that both the occasion on which we are assembled, and the present situation of our country and of the world, evince the propriety of giving it our fixed and undivided attention.

But fellow-citizens, in attempting to answer the question now proposed, the speaker feels a difficulty, arising from a consciousness of his own inability and want of experience. And this difficulty is increased to embarrassment, from the consideration, that it is next to impossible to discuss subjects of this nature to general acceptance, where such difference of opinion concerning them prevails, as now does in almost every section of our country. All he asks, however, and all he desires, is, your approbation of those sentiments, he may advance, and those only, which, when weighed in the even balance of justice and truth, shall not be found wanting.

To preserve and perpetuate rational liberty, so essential to publick prosperity and happiness, government must pursue a course of conduct towards other nations, founded on the noble and generous principles of *impartiality*. Impartiality is one distinguishing trait in the character of heaven-born charity. It is this that adorns her with the robes of celestial beauty, and renders her superlatively beautifying and glorious. And surely that, which gives to religion herself, new attractions and charms, and which is admitted to be so essential to the harmony and felicity of the moral world, cannot be dispensed with in civil communities, without destroying good faith, concord and friendship; engendering strifes and animosities, and endan-

gering the very existence of freedom and national sovereignty.

In the present extremely critical and alarming crisis, it is peculiarly important, that the United States observe the rules of impartiality towards the great belligerent powers of Europe. If we should discover a disposition to depreciate the merits, and exaggerate the crimes of one belligerent; and to palliate the baseness of the other, and ascribe virtues to her, to which she has no just claim, we should take the direct method to draw ourselves into an alliance with the latter, and arm the former against us. And subjection to the mandates of a tyrant, would, in all probability, be the ultimate result of such base, such ignoble partialities and antipathies. The things suggested on this subject, are introduced with the more confidence, because they are the sentiments of *Washington*, the soundness of whose political faith neither party calls in question, and whose illustrious achievements, both in the cabinet and the field, have deservedly gained the applause of America, and the admiration of the world.

Union among the people is also necessary to the preservation of true liberty. There is a union in despotick governments; but it is formed, not with a view to the general happiness, but for the aggrandizement of a few; and is preserved, not by love, but by fear. Far different in its nature is that union, which tends to secure the possession of freedom to her votaries. Its cords are cords of love and mutual friendship, spontaneously drawn by the people around themselves, for the purpose of promoting the publick good, which consists essentially in the free exercise and enjoyment

of those equal and unalienable rights, that the Author of nature bequeathes, not exclusively to a few privileged individuals of the human family, but to all its members. Such a union in sentiment, affection and object, founded on principles of justice, equity and truth, is solid and durable as the pillars of creation. No usurper, no disorganizer, no fell traitor to his country dares attempt to sunder it; nor can all the tyrants on earth break into the sacred enclosure, to profane and plunder the temple of freedom, which it guards. But division forebodes the speedy downfall of republicks. The fiends of anarchy, war and despotism, rush forth from their dark dens, and “grin horribly a ghastly smile,” on beholding a divided people, knowing that their reign over it draweth nigh.

To preserve and perpetuate civil liberty, the people must make choice of *good rulers*. By good rulers I mean, persons justly renowned for stability of character, for talents, for extensive political science, and incorruptible integrity and sound morals; men full of wisdom derived from observation and experience; and who, “without partiality and without hypocrisy, rule in the fear of God,” and for the highest good of their constituents. Such rulers are the guardians and supporters of the constitution and laws of their country, the faithful depositaries of all those rich, those invaluable treasures she commits to their keeping. And the firm, dignified and impartial policy they pursue in the administration of government, leads to concord, peace and prosperity at home, and commands respect abroad. But when weak and ignorant, or wicked and designing men take the reins of government, how is the pleasing scene reversed! The nation’s joy is turned

into mourning, her songs into lamentations, and she hangs her harp upon the weeping willows. Justice frowns indignant at the wrongs she receives, and retires. Liberty, mangled by unskilful and barbarous hands, languishes in solitude, a houseless, friendless wanderer. The sun of prosperity withdraws his cheering beams, and political dragons and satyrs, favoured by the darkness that succeeds, leave their "murky cells," and spread terrour and destruction through the land.

The wisest of all civilians, inspired by the Divinity himself, declares, "When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when the wicked bear rule, the people mourn."

The inestimable blessing of liberty cannot long be preserved and enjoyed, where the *proper government and education of children are generally neglected*. The children of a nation are the nation in miniature. The risen generation marches with great rapidity across the stage of action, and follows those that are past to the land of silence and forgetfulness; and the rising generation comes in its stead. Nor should it ever be forgotten, that the young are susceptible of impressions far stronger and more durable than the aged.

" 'Tis education forms the youthful mind :
Just as the twig is bent, the tree's inclin'd."

"Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it," is a truth of inspiration, that has been sanctioned by the experience of ages. Contemplating the subject in this light, it appears to be indispensably necessary that the children of a republic should be well instructed and governed in early life; that their expanding minds be stored with useful

information ; that they be led to form habits of industry and frugality ; that they be impressed with the vast importance of subordination to just authority and obedience to the laws ; that they be warned to shun the serpentine mazes of error and delusion, which lead the bewildered traveller into the gloom-wrapt regions of vice, and leave him in the gulf of ruin ; and that they be taught to watch with an unwinking eye the rising star of truth, and incline their feet to those paths which she renders bright and luminous with her beams. They are the paths of wisdom, that conduct to the realms of felicity and glory. This is the seed, which fathers and mothers should sow in the morning, and from the watering and cultivation of which, in the evening they should not withhold their hand, lest while they sleep, briars, and thorns, and noxious weeds spring up, and for ever blast the hope of a joyful harvest.

Perseveringly and faithfully attend to the government and instruction of your children, and with the smiles of heaven to crown your exertions with success, you prepare them to stand as pillars, and shine as ornaments of church and state ; to rise up the friends and advocates of rational freedom, as opposed on the one hand to licentiousness, and on the other, to ignoble and debasing servitude ; and thus you help to broaden and consolidate the foundation of your country's prosperity and happiness. On the contrary, bring up your children in ignorance, idleness and dissipation ; allow them to contradict and disobey you with impunity ; neglect to impress on their minds the nature and infinite importance of those duties they owe to God, to their country, and to mankind ; and you

near a race of beings, who, factious, turbulent and ungovernable, will trample on law and justice; and who, through all their endless mutations in folly, will be immutably fixed in opposition to genuine liberty, whose salutary restraints are always considered a species of tyranny by the licentious and abandoned. In so doing, you nourish to maturity a nest of vipers, to wind their snaky paths through your country, and scatter their deleterious poison into all her fountains and springs of life and happiness. You strike a fatal blow at the sovereignty, the independence, the very existence of your nation.

Suffer me in this connection distinctly to mention one thing more, which ought ever to be esteemed the surest and most permanent support of true liberty, I mean *the religion of the Prince of Peace*. It is a truth, which the history of man, since his defection from the Father of his existence to the present hour, clearly illustrates and establishes, that he is strongly inclined to usurp authority, and tyrannise over his fellows. Having thrown off allegiance to the King of heaven, he is impatient of human restraint and control. And the same spirit in him, which spurns at subordination to the constituted authorities, inclines him to wish to rule himself. Hence that aspiring ambition, which has ever been but too successful in its operations. Even those nations that have flourished for a time under the auspices of freedom, having struggled in vain with this tyrannising spirit, have at length been conquered by it, and sunk into abject slavery. Though all human expedients are found to be too impotent to curb his ever-restless spirit, and prevent its ultimate triumph in society, yet religion

will effectually restrain and curb it, where her influence is felt and her laws are obeyed. For her nature is friendly, peaceable, and harmonizing. Hers are golden cords of celestial love. Hers is a union of kindred souls, indissoluble and immortal; and is formed on principles hostile to all the selfish and discordant propensions of the human heart, which, unrestrained, and unsubdued, suffuse with gall the cup of life, and poison all its sweets. Her great and leading object is the diffusion of general happiness. She is, therefore, the foe of slavery, and the friend of liberty, because the former is repugnant to happiness, and the latter promotes it. Hence she opposes an impregnable bulwark to all the assaults of tyranny, and forms a basis for national prosperity and glory, solid as the poles, and durable as time.

Religion is the parent of morality. From pure fountains, pure streams will flow. In proportion then, as a people are religious, they are moral. They cultivate and foster with more than parental affection, those virtues which are the vigour, the life of freedom, and which shed celestial beauty and radiance on her brow. They combat those vices, which, like harpies, gnaw upon her vitals, and sooner or later, lay her low in the dust.

Infidel ground is perfectly prepared to receive that seed, which yields an exuberant harvest of tares. In this soil they always shoot up, and choke and blast the precious wheat. Immorality is the *Upas* of the political world. Where it flourishes, the very atmosphere is surcharged with exhalations, poisonous as the blasts of pestilence, fatal as the winged arrows of the angel of death. All things within the sphere of its

contaminating influence, present the sickening aspect of distress, and are wrapt in the mantle of despair.

A nation of infidels is a nation of slaves; slaves to the most odious and hateful of masters. Though the high praises of freedom may be on their tongues, they cherish mortal enmity towards her in their hearts. Her expiring sighs are sweeter musick to their ears than the harps of glory, than the songs of angels. And when her pale spectre meets their eye, opened to delusion only, they imagine at once, that it is the ghost of departed imperfection; and, transported at the boundless scenes of unfolding bliss, which maniack fancy presents to their view, they kneel the throne of the murderer of human happiness, and kiss his hand, at the moment he rivets the iron yoke of despotism upon their prostrate necks.

Fellow-citizens, let us mark the causes of the decline and fall of governments similar to our own, and learn lessons of wisdom from their fate. Let us learn where our danger and weakness lie, and in what consists our strength. Since national partialities and antipathies tend to weaken, debase and ruin us, may we ever guard against them. Our beloved and lamented Washington never made hatred to one foreign power and love to another, the test of political orthodoxy at home. He supposed we might feel and act impartially towards all nations, without being hostile to our own. We can love our country, and contribute our mite to aid in her prosperity, without stooping to ask a rapacious and plundering despot what course we are to pursue towards his enemy and rival. Since internal division is subversive of all those rights we hold most dear, let us unite, in defence of these rights, with all

who have not departed from the principles that actuated the heroes of our revolution, and follow, without turning to the right hand or to the left, the path which great Washington trod, and by which, under the smiles of Providence, he led his country to the zenith of her glory. This path is luminous with wisdom and virtue, is bright with the beams of the sun of peace and joy.

So long as there are wise and virtuous and patriotic men in the land to hold the reins of government, may we never sport with the sacred right of free elections we enjoy, and help to disgrace and ruin our country, by giving a single vote to raise the artful, the intriguing and the profligate to seats of power, however smooth and oily their professions, or whatever splendid promises they make. For their professions and promises are hollow as the heart of hypocrisy. "They say, but do not."

Since the neglect of family government and instruction, and the prevalence of infidelity and vice, are the bane of republics, we should exert all our energies in opposition to these growing, these alarming evils. It is a duty we owe to our country and to posterity. Its faithful discharge is demanded by the voice of justice and of mercy, by the voice of conscience and of God. Nor can we be absolved from the sacred bond, until our "right hand forgets her cunning."—Ye guardians of the young, be faithful to your precious charge. Let not the prowling wolf steal into your folds, and devour the dear lambs of your flocks. Ye votaries of freedom; show that you are her real friends, by showing yourselves the avowed enemies of infidel philosophy, and its accursed

train of foul abominations ; and by your warm attachment to that divine religion, and that pure morality, which involve the glory and felicity of man on earth, and by which only, he can hope to rise from the darkness and silence of the tomb, to the mansions of immortality, to the realms of cloudless day and unwithering joy.

Americans, yours is the only republick existing on the face of the earth. All others that have risen and flourished, either in ancient or modern times, have fallen, to rise no more. Where are the Grecian and Roman states, so justly renowned for philosophers, sages and heroes, for arts and sciences, and all that the world calls great, magnificent, and splendid? Their lustre and glory have faded and vanished away, like the radiant dyes of the bow, penciled on the drops of a shower that is past. Their sun has gone down in darkness. The curious traveller surveys the few scattered monuments of their former greatness, which have escaped the corrosions of time, and beholds the ashes of the heroes that reared them, trampled beneath the feet of their enslaved and wretched descendants. The queen of liberty, that swayed her golden sceptre over these once happy regions, has long since given up the ghost ; a band of tyrants have sung her funereal dirge, and the cold blasts of oppression howl through the grass of her grave.

Where are the modern republicks of the eastern continent? Alas ! their days are numbered and finished. The wretched inhabitants, robbed of their free-born rights, torn from the governments of their choice, and stript of their hard-earned property, wear the galling manacles, and bend to the blood-soaked

rod of despotism. The monster ambition, in the foul and satanick hypocrisy of his heart, has professed himself the unchanging friend and patron of liberty; and has first plundered, and then enslaved her unsuspecting children. He has sworn eternal enmity to kings and monarchical governments; and has erected thrones on the ruins of free and independent states; thrones, whose foundations were laid in the blood of freedom's bravest sons, and moistened with the tears of widows and orphans.

Americans, while you view with horror the widespread ravages of successful ambition; while your souls revolt at the robberies, the murders, the assassinations he has committed; while you weep over the tomb of your sister republics, which this voracious monster has devoured, be entreated, by all you hold most sacred and dear, to guard and save your own from his all-fatal grasp. Must the only free and independent nation on the globe be subdued, to swell the odious triumphs of the plunderers of the world? Methinks I hear you exclaim, "This *must* not, *shall* not be. We will never part with liberty; we will never give up the independence of our country, until our fathers, who purchased them with their blood, *shall rise from their tombs, and give us a charter to be slaves.*