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Fourth of July Sermon

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My Christian Brethren,

Assembled as we now are for the purpose of commemorating the return of this the birth-day of our common country, and congratulating one another upon the sure possession of the blessings secured to us by the courage and virtue of our Forefathers, it might seem proper for me on this occasion to consider the causes which led to the development of our ever memorable Revolution, & the events which brought that revolution to a successful issue. These events however as they speak the best eulogy of those who achieved our independence, so they have been at all periods of our national existence,

dwelt upon with a proper degree of enthusiasm and force. They have become in this way as it were mingled with our character as Americans, and the keener edges of those vows into the first principles of our education. And if ~~a~~ ^{the} ~~present~~ science of what our Forefathers have done for us, were all that ~~was~~ ^{is} required of us to perpetuate the blessings thus ^{obtained}, we certainly should not be accused of neglecting our duty ~~in~~ in this particular.

In fact if any remark, upon a review of our situation, strikes me as obvious it is this that we all of us require more to know what is to be, than what has been done. They who once at the hazard of all that is held dear by ~~men~~ ~~and~~ stepped forth in the arduous contest, ~~that~~ we this day celebrate, are now fast disappearing from our sight down ^{the} ~~the~~ ^{irreversible & fast, gliding} stream of time: while the principles that

upheld & the feelings that animated them
will soon be called for as alone enabling
us to preserve what they with so much
glory & at so great hazards obtained.

Every day's experience serves to convince us that
it was no common and ordinary blessing
which was by the fruits of our Revolution
obtained for us: & that the world is
at this day no indifferent spectator
of the means we use to perpetuate &
secure that blessing. It is a spectacle
no doubt highly gratifying, to every re-
flecting mind to behold a nation, which
had never before known its own strength,
boldly stepping forth to the contest with
a colossal power, & struggling, under
every disadvantage, for a succession of years
in the animating contest for political free-
dom: — But it is a more profitable, tho'
perhaps a less glaring picture, that of a

nation, perpetuating & securing this blessing to the latest generations, by the wisdom and prudence of its institutions & the virtue & integrity of its citizens.

Recent events among the nations of the earth may serve to convince us that freedom may at no great cost be obtained by those who are strenuous in asserting & undaunted in the act of contending for ~~it~~ ~~that freedom~~. And they serve to teach us, that it requires more stability & shall I say more manly virtue than falls to the share of the generality of the nations of Europe, to secure & maintain that freedom. So that, were I asked the reason why so few of the nations of the earth are in possession of that liberty & freedom they all acknowledge so desirable, the answer is obvious, because so few ~~are~~ ^{to possess} ~~are~~ capable of maintaining that.

function. To bring the remark home to
ourselves, we may rest assured, that as-
surely as we are attached to the princi-
ples of our constitution, much prouder as
we justly are of the privileges we pos-
sess, yet whenever, we lose that char-
acter, which as a nation we have hith-
erto maintained, and partake of the
degrading vices of the greater part of
the nations of Europe, we shall fail
as they have done in maintaining our
independence. The moment we begin
to seek after pleasure and wealth ~~and~~
more than honesty & virtue, & wish rather
to be amused & entertained, than
instructed and amended, that mo-
ment our character as men, & our priv-
ileges as freemen ^{are lost}. This is a truth, which
every page of history both ancient & mod-
ern confirms, - the sum and substance in-
cluded of every thing that is related in

the story of Grecian glory & Grecian degradation, of Roman power & Roman corruption. Happy will that republic be in modern days which shall teach her sons to profit by the awful lessons which the history of these nations point out, & the invariable nature of God's Providence demonstrates.

With these remarks premised, you are prepared instead of political discussion upon the passing events of the day, to which both from my station & my feelings I am very averse, to listen to a detail of some of the ^{peculiar} causes which have thus far contributed, & I hope will ~~long~~ contribute to preserve our independence. In making this ~~enumeration~~ ^{enumeration}, should the remarks you hear be ^{deemed} destitute of novelty, you must remember that to Americans at least our subject is by no means a new ^{though not an uninteresting} one;

we should any of you recognize any of my
remarks as having been made escaped
me on a former though a different oc-
casion, you will not, I presume deem
the same observations misplaced now.

The first peculiarity then to which we
may look for the security of our present
blessings arises from our great removal
& fortunate distance from other nations.
It is not ~~on this account~~ ^{by this} that we are
safe from the calamities of war or the
horrors of invasion that I have alluded
to this: but because by this happy dis-
tance, we are in less danger of being
injured by the profligate example
& the ever vating contagion of other less
virtuous nations; a species of invasion
far more dangerous in tendency ~~than~~
than any which war could bring upon us.
The ^{latter} ~~former~~ we could repel with ease by our
own decided & inherent strength. The for-

mer has undermined & destroyed even
sterner virtue than our own. If ever
we as a nation become corrupted by Eu-
ropean example, it must be their means,
through whose medium we have the
communication. Happily then for us
our distance from other nations less
favoured than ourselves is so great that
the number of those who bring con-
tamination home with is compara-
tively very small. — It is indeed
truly lamentable, & I have seen even
for this lamentation too often, how
much harm may be done to our coun-
trymen, by an importation of the un-
manly vices ~~and~~ of other nations —
Many have I seen & more have I
heard of — would their number were
less, who bring home to our own coast
my all ~~the~~ vices all the fantastical ^{modes of} amuse-
ments of Italy & not a Roman virtue
among; who bring to our feet woods & fer-

the fields, every fantastical fashion, & barbarous innovation, & not a manly grow or honourable improvement among them. When ~~the~~ contemplating this unhappy course of things how often have I wished that it were ^{as} possible for us by a sort of moral quarantine, to prevent the ~~contagion~~ pollution of European vices, as it is to hinder the contagion of their disorders.

Happily for us the spirit and the honest character of our country has hitherto prevented such examples as I have been speaking of from being universal — & with one quarter of the earth's circumference between us & them we may long hope for the same exemption.

The next happy peculiarity in our own country to which we may look for future as we have done for past safety is that it is a new country. an advan-

Age it is true which in itself is every
day growing less; but which still
continues to exert a ^{beneficial} influence on
the happiness of our country for many
ages to come; in comparison with what
is possessed by other nations. This ad-
vantage is something analogous to what
the young enjoy in the blessing of the
health & vigour which attend on that
period of life. It is a situation which
encourages our activity and calls for the
all the powers both of the mind & body
of our countrymen; & leads us necessarily to
be industrious in the search of a competi-
cy, than to court luxury or pine in
hopeless & unavailing poverty. It preserves
together with the spirit of active in-
stitutions consequent on that state
that happy equilibrium of wealth, which
insures to all an equal degree of res-
pect whose virtues have equally deserved

it with others. Our country being thus
new & our territory unfilled ~~we have~~
& the means of attaining competency be-
ing thus open to all, we have, thank
God other employment than that of
torturing our ingenuity to find out new
modes of sinning, or ransacking the
archives of pleasure to discover untold
of methods of squandering inordinate
wealth. Hence it is that we are adding
every year new acquisitions to that
stock which is the support of man. Hence
the forests hear the unknown sound of
the axe in their deepest recesses & every
year ten thousand fields brighten
with unwarbled verdure, & for the
first time the benign rays of the sun
Hence it is that the farmer in our
country goes forth to his daily toil
among the wonders & the works of God
& while his eye roams over the spacious

landscapes & the flowery fields & the
ripening harvest meets his eye at
every turn, he can prompt by the
gratitude of a full heart exclaim,
"this is all my own"—To him the
palace is not hard by, whose lordly
owner rolls in wealth, earned by the
sweat of another's brow.

It is to our new & peculiar situ-
ation that we have learned to live
without the thousand adventitious
helps which wealth & luxury claim
indispensable contributors to their en-
joyments. The desires of a man in
crease with his possessions: & for every
acquired and gratified wish twofold more
will arise equally saving equally neces-
sary. Happy the man then who sees but
little to wish for by having learned to
be contented with little. Leaving greed
avarice close the hand, & envy grow the itals
& consume the rest of the purse-proud inhab-

stant of the palace, you would hardly look
for the cottages or the happy man there
No! depend upon it you may often
find him the tenant of a cabin in
our darkest woods or turning the
furrows of our wilder lands. Ostentatious
forms of enforced civility the flimsy
covering of an envious or a hollow heart
laboured professions of unfeigned attachment
exhibited through fear or demanded
by custom are thank God little known
among us. That civility only which
gives age & virtue their proper respect
or tenderness and affection their pro-
per expression is demanded of us. We
have ~~we~~ not yet learned that affec-
tation which is the consequence of fri-
volous occupations or that haughtiness
which flows from unhumiliated pride.
Viewing our own as a new country you
consider it as rather what it is or is to be
than as what it has been. You see here

The mind of man gradually acquiring new strength. You see its powers gradually unstraining — you see it compelled by necessity (styled the mother of invention) to rely upon itself & drawing from the stores of knowledge that supply which others obtain by numbers only. In a word you see your own country in a state of progression. Look abroad, & you see, with few exceptions, you see nations in ruins. You behold the mind of man cramped & fettered by prejudice & tyr power. you behold nations & men celebrated not for their own virtues but the virtues of those long since dead.

The history is long, & well adorned which recounts their father's glories: but the compass which their own occupy is short indeed. You discover enough indeed, to ^{show} ~~convince~~ you what those were, who were long since buried in the grave & enough also to convince you that their virtues

are buried with them. They who remain
are indeed aptly represented by the ho-
ken pillar or the headless statue: for
that uprightness & virtue which was once
the grace & ornament & that strength
which was the glory of their forefathers
no longer dwells among them. You
see them from the proudest title to the
meanest beggar engaged in a pious
& unsatisfying pursuit of sensual grat-
ification; enquiring not "who will show
us any good," but "who will show us
any pleasure?" — When you M. B.
hear the sickening tale of their
vices & their crimes, of their imbe-
cility & frivolity, if you have any
reflexes for the honest & homely vir-
tues, which adorn your own country,
then bless God that ocean rolls &
storms & tempests rage between you.

Another advantage to which we ^{may} confi-
dently look for safety, and a security
of the blessings we possess, is the generally

diffusion of knowledge throughout our
country, an advantage which all know
^{will be earnest to preserve}
~~how to preserve~~ us of experimentally from
its value. In this respect the Amer-
icans far excel any nation now in
existence. Immersed in darkness and
cheated misled & beguiled by those who
should know better ^{it is no wonder that} other nations should
fail in putting forth that strength in
asserting their freedom, which a little
more knowledge would convince them
they possess. Were it a necessary or a
novel subject I might here dwell
upon the necessity of this general
diffusion of knowledge, as it immediately
guards us from any dangerous error
ment on the principles of our constitu-
tion. But this consideration has long
been familiar to our minds. Permit
me then to say what from my sta-
tion, I rejoice at the opportunity of say-
ing, that the very general diffusion
of our book the Bible, will contribute
more than any other means, ori-

may more than all the principles put together
bring from this source to the preservation
of firm & manly principles - the
security of that virtue & integrity, which
alone more than power can make us
respected & feared by the nations of the
earth, or blessed & prospered by the
God we worship. No political prin-
ciples, no artificial ligaments can so
bind and unite us together, or con-
tribute one thousandth part so much
to our national as well as individ-
ual happiness, as the principles de-
rived from this sacred source. A
love of peace, a love of order, sobriety,
of industry, integrity, the first of
national virtues are taught by this
sacred volume - To tell you that those
who achieved our independence & who
preserved us in doing the happy thres-
sled medium between tyranny & anarchy
were animated by the principles of this
sacred book, would be telling you
what you already know. That its prin-
ciples moderated the views & guided

the best efforts of the political Father
of his country you also know - Happy
thrice happy indeed will our nation
become, when by a constant refer-
ence to the sacred contents of
the Bible, we so moderate our
national spirit as to preserve
order & respect to rightful & righteous
authority - to love virtuous habits
more than luxury and wealth
industry & temperance more than
riot & dissipation.

That God has blessed us in the means
of enjoyment & national happiness
& security, from the few hasty re-
marks thus offered to you you can
not but perceive - The result of it
all is this; that as long as we pre-
serve that national character which
is now our own, though far from per-
fect, so far shall we ~~be~~ continue to
be, as we have hitherto been blessed

in the usual and ordinary dis-
pensations of Divine Providence. Na-
tional virtues & vices can only meet
their proper retribution as nations
in this world. & he has looked upon
the affairs of the world with no
elevated views who does not see
the effects of this just and righteous
retribution in every event that has
befallen the nations of Europe within
our own
the memory of our Fathers. He is
but a fool who does not see that the
warm sun & clear skies, the olive
& the vineyards of Italy await nought
but their happiness - sunk, degraded
& embittered as they are in the
search for sensual pleasure &
fantastic amusements & gratifications.
When we like them begin to love
pleasure & ^{vanity} ~~ambition~~ more than
industrious habits, & gaudy glitter
more than contentment & competence
our honesty for gold -
then we too, shall barter our liba-

ties for a song. Then will other
nations ~~dictate~~ ^{our} laws & subvert our
institutions at their pleasure —
— ~~Thank Heaven~~

Let us then remember that, one na-
tion at least more powerful & more
numerous than we ourselves are has
once inhabited these fertile fields before
us. Where are they now? Who is there
left to tell the State — who to sing
their ^{heroic} deeds in heroic deeds if mea-
sured numbers, or who shall un-
fold the historic page that recount
their origin, or their fall —

Their very name has perished from
the earth — this truth survives
alone — That the Lord God Al-
mighty holds the empires of the
earth at his disposal — his
power can destroy as his it was
that created them —

And however fondly we may wish
or suppose ourselves to be the favor-
ites of Heaven, we may be assured
that we shall be ^{no} longer there
we preserve united our love of liberty
with our love of law, our attach-
ment to our country with our attach-
ment to virtue. When we
forget to do this, they may be
also be swept from the face of the
earth - & the red & savage of the woods
alone wander over the monuments
of our powers & grandeur & glory.

Let us mingle them with our na-
tional hatred of tyranny & ha-
tred of the vices which bring it in
their train, & we thus rest assu-
red that a tyrant will never reign
over us, till we cease to be virtuous
enough to govern ourselves -

These are the remarks which
a few moments snatched from
other occupations have permitted me
to offer you on this happy anniver-
sary. They are remarks con-
ceived upon the peculiar blessings
of my native country struck me
with peculiar force.

And as long as I believe my-

self to retain any relish for the
~~mainly~~ principles of our independence
or any of the feelings of a freeman
so long shall I continue my self
bound to bear witness to this everlast-
ing truth that righteousness
alone exalteth a nation. I that
to fear God and keep his command

ments, is the best security as
it is the only foundation of ^a ~~character~~ ^{character} respectable in the possession of
themselves as well as in individual hap-
piness
or honorable in the acquisition of
glory.

B

Wm Chase Jr

July 3. 1821.

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Fourth of July
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