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ORATION,

In honor of the election of President JEFFERSON, *and the peaceable acquisition of* LOUISIANA, *delivered at the National Festival, in Hartford, on the 12th of May,* 1804. BY ABRAHAM BISHOP

(Concluded from last Tuesday's Star.)

On equal grounds the republicans of this state would long since have prevailed—but even against this machinery, more complicated than can be found among the depraved governments of Europe, they would have prevailed, had not the usurpers of power called to their aid many such auxillaries.

The whole state government being aristocratic, the leaders saw ruin in the advance of our cause—therefore every man, who cherished republican principles, was derided and abused as a deserter from steady habits—every man, who questioned the infallibility of our state oracles, was held up to public contempt—every one who prayed the clergy to preach the gospel and leave politics to civilians, was pronounced a heretic, deserving of no mercy. If any spoke of liberty, equality or the principles of our revolution, he was denounced as an innovatar and an illuminant. Sermons were preached in favor of the men in place and in terms not to be doubted we were charged with belonging to secret masonic societies, whose object was the destruction of all religion and government. The grossest misrepresentations of our proceedings were made in and out of the desk, and the most malignant slanders were dealt out against the private character of our President. Large sums of our property were annually collected for the support of the Clergy, who courted the loss of our confidence, and larger sums for Lawyers, who were sacrificing our rights.

If we offered to rejoice in the election of our President, the best men of our party were insulted with the odious appellations of infidels and disorganizers. Years of most exemplary piety, of ceaseless public service and even the hoary head, found in the way of righteousness, were no protection against the friends of order—a truce was bid to God, to Heaven and religion, in order that every outrage might be committed on the friends of the general government.* For a time these federal auxillaries hindered our advance, but at length their enormity excited resentment, and in every quarter of the state were rising up men, who would brave the decisions of courts, the artificial terrors of electors and all the vengeance, which the worst of passions could vent on the best of causes.

If this be the good government, this the religion and the steady habits, of which federalists boast so much, we cannot deny them the full credit of their professions.

For the remedy of all these evils in our state government, we propose that the people shall be convened to form *a constitution which shall separate the Legislative, Executive and Judicial powers,—shall define the qualifications of freemen so that legislators shall not tamper with election laws, and shall district the state, so that freemen may judge of the candidates for their suffrages.* These provisions are so perfectly rational and so completely effectual, that we need not enlarge on the correctness of the remedy. It lays an axe to the root of the evil, offers emancipation to thousands of white slaves, reduces the masters to the condition of citizens and crushes a host of aristocracies.

Some republicans have feared that the federalists would avail themselves of their present majority to call a convention for this purpose. The fear may be allayed in several forms. Any change must be for the better, but should the federalists now relinquish their boasts of the perfection of our state policy under their management, instantly would their majority desert them. Could a convention be wholly composed of federalists, they would never risk to offer a constitution to the people, so full of absurdities as the present system. The very sound of a Connecticut constitution appals federalists: It is to them like the (Caira) war song of France to its monarchs and nobles, or like the miraculous sound at which fell the walls of Jericho. A constitution will give a death blow to Connecticut federalism, and with it, to all hostility against the general government.

The first christians did not fear that the chief priests and elders would turn to the true worship. Luther and Calvin did not neglect to sound the Protestant trump lest the pope and cardinals should become Protestant. All the proud systems of our world, which have originated in, and been conducted by the passions, have stood to the last, and be assured that the *federalism of this state will, like a ship on a lee shore, under an obstinate commander, stand straight on for destruction and perish with every sail set.*

Humbly indeed would be the people of other states conceive of our address and industry, or of the integrity and intelligence of our people, could they believe that we had been combatting on ordinary ground. Had the parties in this state been divided on the merits of the past and present administration, long since should we have prevailed. The body of our people did never approve the standing army, the excise, the land tax, nor the war system: They have generally approved the repeal of these, the reduction of our expenditures, the diminution of executive patronage, and the acquisition of Louisiana; but the federalism of this state consisted of leagues of privileged orders, clinging to each other, and revolving about one common centre—a congregation of passions, aiming at personal benefit, instead of a system of principles, operating for general good. We have been like an army, which, after taking a few out posts, is obliged to retrench with our little arms before the great fortress which has always commanded the country, full of men, of artillery and provisions, trained to the art of war.—Church and state is the grand fortress of Connecticut federalism; we have already presented the principal points of its strength and its attitude towards the general government.

Singular as has been our contest have been the means of our increase.

The federalists pronounced that the election of Mr. Jefferson would annihilate public faith, destroying credit abroad and confidence at home, would weaken our commerce, and would endanger religion and its altars, with a multitude of other fables, in the whole of which they have proved to be false prophets.—Religion and its altars have been safe, our commerce has yielded, in an increase of revenue, proof of its prosperity and the means of diminishing our taxes.—Public stock is even in high federal estimation, and our credit abroad has been sufficient for the purchase of Louisiana. Clear proof that federalism meant to mislead on this subject has been highly useful to us

When the republicans of this state, oppressed long and sorely as was Israel in Egypt, proposed to rejoice in a prospect of deliverance under the administration of our President, torrents of abuse were poured from the federal papers on men, whose lives had proved their integrity, and to aid the work of ridicule a psalm distinguished for devotion and ascriptions of glory to the Creator for his wonderful works to the children of men, was transformed into an infamous ballad, and the name of a noted courtezan substituted in place of that of the God of Heaven.—This extremity of federal imprudence aided our cause.

When the federal papers of this state quoted from Callender charges of the basest crimes against our President, multitudes decided that those could not be christians, who would support such inhuman slanders of a character, which had been fought into its high estimation through close ranks of irritated assailants. Not thus did our republican papers assail the private character of Mr. Adams.—Hence have we gained

When federalists were applauding in one breath the advice of President Washington, and in the next vilifying the southern republican states, we gained in numbers †

When to aid an election reports about French fleets, foreign loans, raising of salaries, emoluments of officers and the mighty wonders, which our legislature have wrought in the state treasury, were employed, and afterwards proved to be unfounded, we gained in numbers.

These reports are well recollected, but no French fleet arrived, no loan was demanded; salaries have never been higher than they were in 1799, the emoluments of the principal collectors where diminished soon after Mr. Jefferson came to office. Those of many other collectors have been since diminished—no clerk higher in our collector's offices has been paid by the government, and as to the savings of money and paying all our state debts and having the treasury full, it is exactly true that by the sale of our reserve we own some money has been placed in the treasury, and our state debts were assumed by the United States: But another thing is true, viz: that what this state owes as her proportion of the principal of the funded debt is more than equal to the whole of our state debts, and the whole purchase money of the reserve, and all the money in the treasury, and all the public paper, which we hold; and our real estate and industry are pledged for the support of the public faith, and we are paying annually our full share of the interest of all this. Here is a saving of which our federal papers have never boasted!

When federalism discovered itself, under the present administration, directly opposite to what it was under the last, many discerned that there was less of principle in it than had been pretended.

Had federalists filled their nominations with men who had the character of christians in *their own neighborhoods*—had they employed *christians* to retail federal columns about religion and the pious clergy—had they exercised towards charity or even decency—had they confined the clergy to their professions, they would have checked our progress; but if their leaders have really possessed the amiable graces of christianity, we must allow them the credit of superlative modesty in the total concealment of them from the world. We have recognized in all their professions only the old continental currency of the same class of men in every age of the world.

It is a memorable fact that federalism, with all the talents and all the weight of character, and all the piety, and all the steady habits in the state, having by their weak and wicked innovations, yielded a powerful aid to our cause We have reason to rejoice that it has never relaxed its violence, and outrage that it has given us public proof every week, that it possessed none of that charity which hopeth and endureth all things, full of mercy and without hypocrisy, that its papers have exhibited all the qualities of a pestilence, which aims at the fairest hopes of society, social intercourse and domestic peace.—No evil could arrive to any of us or to our friends—even death could not deprive us of our dearest relatives, without exposing us in the moment of affliction to the poisoned arrows of the destroyer. This federal policy has nerved our arms, and we will not repine, but rather glory to have been assailed by the enemies of liberty.

Holy federalism, which can emaculate the leopard and bleach the Ethiopian, which offers the horns of the altar to the murderers of reputation, and cities of refuge to men loaded with crimes, has itself violated all the laws, which it affected to serve, and has thus aided the government and the friends of the government, which it had resolved to humble and destroy.

Republicans, what our eyes have seen, what our ears have heard, and what we have personally experienced, will be better impressed on our memories than what our fathers have told us. We have lived in a state, which exhibiting to the world a democratic exterior, has actually practiced within itself all the arts of an organized aristocracy, under the management of the old firm of Moses and Aaron.

No single man is wicked enough to have corrupted the three great branches of our government and our elections, as they have been corrupted—perhaps no *body of men* is wicked enough for this purpose, and certainly the compass of a few years would not be sufficient to complete a system of government, such as ours. The present moment present this case in the strongest possible view.

Our council, holding the mainspring of government in the control of all laws and appointments, the majority of this council composed of practicing lawyers—All the courts dependant on this council, and the council itself a supreme court over all the rest, and this majority having a right to plead before this supreme court—the lives, liberties, property and reputations of all the people of the state subject to this council, whose will is sovereign and conclusive—more than half of the other legislative branch depended on the council—all the bodies of men, wishing for corporate powers or for aid from the treasury, looking up to the council—The council associated with the corporation of college—having assumed the guardianship of literature and religion; *even the election law, that palladium of elective franchise, subject to such alterations, as their zeal for power may dictate*—and the clergy contending that the interests of religion require the continuance of these men in office.

This may be a delightful state of things for federalists, but to men, who must suffer all the evils, which arise from such complicated usurpation of power it appears to be a wanton violation of all those civil, moral and religious principles, which have been accredited by the world.

To federalists no apology would be sufficient, and to republicans none is necessary, for our having improved a part of this occasion in tracing to their source our political evils. It is best that the course of our political warfare should be well understood. We are not contending about the general government: its measures have been far above the censure of its enemies. Ours is a local contest, the issue of which will decide whether our civil and religious rights are to depend on caprice or on constitutional compact. We are contending for that which the uniform sense of civilized nations has decreed to be the right of the people. We do not impute to the body of federalists, the evils of which we complain. There are many aged federalists in this state, who in their better days would have opposed the current, some magistrates, many of the clergy, and thousands of the people, who have been deceived into the part which they have taken. These will soon become *really* freemen; but the leaders will retain their places by the subtlety of their arts, till they shall be expelled by the energy of our votes. *Their power is sinking, we are advancing, and shall unquestionably prevail.*

But we ought not to seek this issue for the purpose of retaliation, nor of mere change of men, nor for wanton innovations, nor for imposing on others burthens, of which we have complained. A constitution, formed by the people, would be a safe foundation for many rational improvements in our laws, our appointments, our courts and elections. Great alarms have been excited, lest a change of men should endanger all the *valuable* institutions in this state; but all our institutions new depend on the mere will of a set of men, who for the perpetuation of their own power, have broken down one of our most valuable institutions, and have innovated on most of the steady habits of the state. We ask for a safer guaranty of these institutions.

As to the College, we have indeed been distressed by its uniform combination with our state directors against a republican administration, by its encouragement of *public* abuse on our cause, and by its preference, in appointments, to the sons of federalists; but as knowledge is the foundation of liberty, it will be our interest to yield an ample support to that and other institutions of learning, as is now given. We wish our sons to be worthy of our daughters, and this cannot be done, unless they are instructed in some arts and sciences, besides ploughing, hoeing and going to meeting.‡

As to the system of taxation, it can be equitably improved to the immense belief of the laboring classes of our people. The old doctrine of *taxation and representation inseparable* ought to be revived. Every man, who pays money or renders public services common or military, should have a voice in choosing the men, who are to guage his pocket or estimate his strength, and there is no danger in suffering the poor man's vote to weigh as much as the rich man's.

As to lotteries and 12 per cent. bridge and turnpike companies, it is to be hoped that public patronage of gaming and usury will never be extended.

As to incorporations, it may be wel to provide by a general law that all men may gain what they can honestly, that they may expend it prudently and charitably—and that men may purchase valuable books and read them carefully; but as to raising a corporation from every brook and bush in order to support the manufacturers of corporations, we consider it as highly aristocratic.

As to the missionary society, we have lamented, that in a provision for an accumulating fund to be raised by contribution, a kingdom of this world had been allotted them, and that when the church was said to be so much in danger here, and when many flocks had no pastors, settled ministers and candidates should be sent to other states to preach the gospel: but as this and many other corporations have begun business with their privileges, they will doubtless retain them.

As to religion, we shall never be guilty of pressing it into public service, nor shall we refuse it the aids, which public sentiment may demand. The common charge, that we are opposed to the support of religion is confuted by the fact, that in republican towns federal clergy have been supported without those hindrances, which have been experienced by a few republican clergymen in federal towns.

In that profession, hypocrisy is more easily practiced, more profitable and impressive than in any other; hence among the higher orders of it have been generally found deceivers, making great professions of piety, while they were forming strong leagues with the powers of this world.—We do not believe in the piety of those high priests in this state, who in the circulation of Robinson and Barruel, and in preaching political sermons, have endeavored to humble us.

Bound to mount Zion and the city of the living God, if such are your pilots, they will land you on a very different course.

But in respect to the body of the clergy, if their sons or brothers are in the nominations, they will hereafter trust their elections to laymen. They will remember that they are not called on for taxes or public service and that it is *dishonest for them to vote away the money of the poor of their people who are deprived of voting.* They will reflect on their high calling, the demand for all their time and talents in the service of their Master, and the certain loss of their influence, if they continue to be partizans. Let them look to Paul and the holy apostles of their Lord, and see whether they are associated with infidel Jews to destroy the power of Cæsar. *We have always distinguished between the clergy and their political brethern who have deceived them.* The leaders will doubtless stand firmly against us to the last, but the others will retire from elections.

Republicans, in the midst of national blessings it is natural for all of us to seek the security of some rights at our own fire sides. If all the neighboring country is fruitful and yet our own fields are barren, we may suffer famine. If all the other states are republicans yet we are invested by aristocracies, we suffer. In a narrow room man may be confined from light, and in a small state man may be enslaved.

Our rejoicing, allayed by the consideration that our state has no weight in the general scale, should stimulate to exertion. In his confined sphere of action each may do much for himself and the general cause; and a single vote may decide the fate of a nation.

While we rejoice in the administration of President Jefferson, in the assurance of his re-election, and in the acquisition of Louisiana, let us look firmly at the obstacles which oppose us, and resolve that another year shall give us occasion of triumph in the restoration of this state to the constellation from which it is now a fallen star.

And let the great question be decided, Whether Moses and Aaron shall, by clinging any longer together, continue to deprive thousands of their rights, to bid defiance to the general government, to sink religion below freezing point, to make professions instead of morals a tendry, and send the principles of civil and religious liberty abroad to seek some new revolution, of which they shall be the victims.

* *For the facts on which this statement is predicated, see the federal papers for six months previous to our last annual festival.*

† *"There will always be reason to distrust the patriotism of those, who in any quarter may "endeavor to weaken the bands of union—Designing men may endeavor to excite a "belief that there is a real difference of local interests and views—northern and southern, &c."*—Washington's Farewell Address.

‡ *This refers to Mr. Tracy's project to increase the national debt and taxes, and thereby bring the body of the people to a condition that they shall know only how to "plough and hoe and go to meeting," which is the real tendency of modern federalists.*

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY.

Among the distinguished objects of federal slander we have recently noticed the honorable Robert Smith, Secretary