

**ADDRESS TO THE BOARD  
OF ALDERMEN  
OF THE CITY OF  
BOSTON, JAN. 3, 1829**

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Address to the Board of Aldermen of the City of Boston, Jan. 3, 1829 by Josian Quincy

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**JOSIAN QUINCY**

**ADDRESS TO THE BOARD  
OF ALDERMEN  
OF THE CITY OF  
BOSTON, JAN. 3, 1829**



*Amos Holbrook M.D.*

*with respect*

**ADDRESS**

TO *Josiah Quincy*

**THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN,**

OF THE

**CITY OF BOSTON, JAN. 3, 1829.**

BY

**JOSIAH QUINCY,**

**ON TAKING FINAL LEAVE**

OF THE

**OFFICE OF MAYOR.**

**BOSTON:**

**PRINTED BY CROCKER & BREWSTER,**

**No. 47, Washington Street.**

**1829.**

## **ADDRESS.**

GENTLEMEN OF THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN:

HAVING been called, nearly six years since, by my fellow citizens, to the office of their chief magistrate, and having, during that period, been six times honoured by their suffrages for that station, I have endeavoured, uniformly, to perform its duties, to the best of my ability ;—with unremitting zeal and fidelity. At the late election, it was twice indicated, by a majority of those, who thought the subject important enough to attend the polls, that they were willing to dispense with my services. According to the sound principles of a Republican constitution, by which the will of a majority, distinctly expressed, concerning the continuance in office of public servants is, to them, the rule of duty, I withdrew from being any longer a cause of division to my fellow citizens ; declaring that “no consideration would induce me, again to accept that office.” These were not words of passion, or of wounded pride, or temporary disgust ; but of deep conviction, concerning future duty,

in attaining which, my obligations to my fellow citizens, were weighed as carefully as those, which I owe to my own happiness and self respect.

I stand, then, to this office, in a relation,—final and forever closed. There are rights and duties, which result from this condition. It is an occasion, on which acknowledgments ought to be made; feelings to be expressed; justice to be done; obligations to be performed. To fulfil these duties, I have thought proper to seek, and avail myself of, this opportunity.

And first, Gentlemen, permit me to express to you that deep and lasting sense of gratitude, which is felt, for all the kindness, support and encouragement, with which you have lightened and strengthened official labors. In bearing testimony to the intelligence, activity, and fidelity, with which you have fulfilled the duties of your station, I but join the common voice of your fellow citizens. With me, your intercourse has been uniformly characterised by a willing and affectionate zeal; leaving, in this respect, nothing to be desired; and resulting, on my part, in an esteem, which will make the recollection of our association in these duties, among the most grateful of my life. Accept my thanks for the interest and assiduity, with which you have aided and sustained endeavours to advance the prosperity of this city.

I owe also to the Gentlemen of the Common Council a public expression of my obligations, for the candor and urbanity, with which they have received and canvassed all my communications. It is a happy omen for our city, that for so many successive years, the intercourse between the branches and members of

its government has been distinguished for gentlemanly character, not less than for official respect. The collisions, which are naturally to be expected, in a community, where rival interests and passions exist, have never disturbed the harmony of either council. When diversity of opinion has arisen, a spirit of mutual concession has presided over the controversy. Happy! if in this respect, past years shall be prototypes of those, which are to come.

To my fellow-citizens, who for so many years have supported, or endured an administration, conducted on none of the principles, by which popularity is, ordinarily, sought and acquired, I have no language to express my respect, or my gratitude. I know well that recent events have given rise, in some minds, to reflections on the fickleness of the popular will; and on the ingratitude of republics. As if the right to change was not as inherent as the right to continue; for the just exercise of this right, the people being responsible;—and to bear the consequences. As if permission to serve a people at all, and the opportunity, thus afforded, to be useful to the community, to which we belong and owe so many obligations, were not ample recompense for any labours, or any sacrifices, made, or endured, in its behalf. Is it wonderful, or a subject of reproach, that in a populous city, where infinitely varying passions, and prejudices, and interests, and motives must necessarily exist, an individual, who had enjoyed the favour of its citizens for six years, should be deprived of it, on the seventh. Is it not more a matter of surprise that it has been enjoyed so long, than that it is lost, at last?



At no one moment, have I concealed from myself, or my fellow-citizens, that the experiment carrying on, was one, very dubious in its effects on continuance in office. Who that knows the nature of man, and the combinations, which, for particular ends, at times, take place, in society, could hesitate to believe that, an administration, which should neither court the few, nor stand in awe of the many, which should identify itself exclusively with the rights of the City, maintaining them, not merely with the zeal of official station, but with the pertinacious spirit of private interest;—which, in executing the laws, should hunt vice in its recesses;—turn light upon the darkness of its haunts;—and wrest the poisonous cup from the hand of the unlicensed pander;—which should dare to resist private interest, seeking to corrupt;—personal influence, striving to sway;—party rancour, slandering to intimidate;—would, in time, become obnoxious to all, whom it prosecuted, or punished; all, whose passions it thwarted; whose projects it detected; whose interests it crossed? Who could doubt that, from these causes, there would in time, come an accumulation of discontent; that, sooner or later, the ground-swell would rise above the landmarks, with a tide, which would sweep it from its foundations?

In the first address, which, nearly six years ago, I had the honour to make to the City Council, the operation of these causes was distinctly stated; almost in the terms just used; and the event, which has now occurred, was anticipated. Nothing was then promised except “a laborious fulfilment of every known

duty ;—a prudent exercise of every invested power ; a disposition shrinking from no official responsibility ; and an absolute self-devotion to the interest of the City.”

I stand, this day, in the midst of the multitude of my brethren, and ask,—without pride, yet without fear—Have I failed in fulfilling this promise?—Let your hearts answer.

Other obligations remain. A connexion, which has subsisted long and happily, is about to be dissolved ;—and forever. To look back on the past, and consider the present, is natural and proper, on the occasion. I stand indebted to my fellow-citizens, for a length and uniformity of support, seldom exemplified, in cities, where the Executive office depends upon popular election. They have stood by me, nobly, and with effect ; in six trials. In the seventh, though unsuccessful, I was not forsaken.

To such men, I owe more than silent gratitude. Their friendship, their favour, the honours they have so liberally bestowed, demand return ;—not in words, but in acts. I owe it to such goodness to show, that their confidence has not been misplaced ;—their favour, not been abused ;—and that their friendship and support, so often given in advance, have been justified, by the event.

What then has the departing City administration done ? What good has it effected ? What evil averted ? What monuments exist of its faithfulness and efficiency ?

If, in the recapitulation, I am about to make, I shall speak, in general terms, and sometimes, in language, of apparent personal reference, let it be understood,

once for all, that this will be owing to the particular relation, in which I stand, at this moment, to the subject and to my fellow citizens ; and, by no means, to any disposition to claim more than a common share of whatever credit belongs to that administration. This, I delight to acknowledge, is chiefly due to those excellent and faithful men, who, during successive years, have, in both branches of the City Council, been the light and support of the government ; by whose intelligence and practical skill, I have conducted its affairs, full as often, as by my own. The obligations I owe to these men, I mean neither to deny, nor to conceal. Speedily, and as soon as other duties permit, it is my purpose, in another way and in a more permanent form, to do justice to their gratuitous labours and unobtrusive fidelity.

Touching the measures and results of the administration, which will soon be past, I necessarily confine myself to a few particular topics ; and those, either the most vital to our safety and prosperity, or, in my apprehension, the most necessary to be understood. Time will not permit, nor, on this occasion, would it be proper, to speak of all the various objects of a prudential, economical, restrictive, or ornamental character, which, in adapting a new organization of government to the actual state of things, have been attempted, or executed.

I shall chiefly refer to what has been done, by way of protection against the elements ;—in favour of the general health ;—in support of public education ;—and in advancement of public morals.

The element, which chiefly endangers cities is that of—*Fire*. It cannot, at this day, be forgotten, by my