

S E R M O N,

DELIVERED BEFORE

**HIS EXCELLENCY JONAS GALUSHA ESQUIRE,
GOVERNOR,**

**HIS HONOR PAUL BRIGHAM ESQUIRE,
LIEUT. GOVERNOR,**

THE HONORABLE COUNCIL,

AND

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

OF THE

STATE OF VERMONT,

AT

MONTPELIER,

ON THE

DAY OF GENERAL ELECTION, OCT. 8, 1812.

BY ISAAC BEALL,

PASTOR OF THE BAPTIST CHURCH OF CHRIST IN PAWLET.

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1812.

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY, OCT. 9, 1812.

RESOLVED, that a committee be appointed consisting of three members from this house, to wait on the Rev. ISAAC BEALL, and return him the thanks of the house, for his sermon delivered before his excellency the governor, his honor the lieutenant governor, the honorable council and house of representatives ; on the 8th inst. being the day of election : and request a copy for the prefs.

Mr. KING,
Mr. B. KINNE, } *Committee.*
Mr. BAILEY,

Attest,

WM. D. SMITH, *CLERK.*

S E R M O N .

PROVERBS XXIX. 2. When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice : but when the wicked bear-eth rule, the people mourn.

CIVIL government is one of those blessings which a kind God has seen fit to bestow upon the lapsed family of Adam. In this present imperfect state, a people could not long remain happy, without civil government : to remain in such a state of anarchy, would be to remain in a state of perpetual war. To prevent such a dire calamity, God instituted this ordinance. Rom. xiii.

But as important as civil government is, to the happiness of man ; yet, like all other gifts of providence its blessings can never be enjoyed, but through a just and wise administration. God has ordained summer and winter, seed-time and harvest ; but should we neglect our relative duties, we should neither be fed nor clothed.

Though God has ordained civil government for the good of man, he has not instituted any particular mode or form of government ; but this he has left to human wisdom, according to the different circumstances, customs and habits of different nations.

A good and well adapted constitution is to be preferred ; nevertheless, a defective constitution, wisely administered, would be productive of great-

er good to the community, than a good constitution in the hands of unrighteous administrators.

There may be such ignorance, neglect or injustice in the rulers on the one hand ; and such want of attention and submission (not to say opposition) among the ruled on the other hand, as to render civil government rather a curse than a blessing.

That civil power and authority might be vested in such men, under whose administration the people might be rendered happy, seems to be the leading idea in the passage read for consideration.

In adverting to this subject, I shall endeavor to give a short description of those rulers, under whose administration the people rejoice. Secondly, reverse the subject. Thirdly, a short improvement of the whole. Then close with customary addresses.

Agreeably to the proposed method, our attention is called,

1. To the character of those rulers, under whose administration the people will rejoice.

Righteousness is the only qualification of a civil ruler, mentioned by the inspired penman in our text. There are some, who strenuously contend, that a person must be made righteous, by the imputation of the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ ; or which is the same thing, he must be possessed of christianity, or he is not suitably qualified for civil office. Should this be granted, in order to be consistent, another thing must be granted (viz.) that it

is the only necessary qualification : for *when the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice* That religion would be of great utility to a civil ruler, will be granted ; but that this is the only, or even an essential qualification, cannot be so easily admitted. For according to this sentiment, any man, giving good evidence that he is a christian, however weak his intellect, might with safety be elected governor of the state, or president of the nation. A sentiment so weak and glaringly inconsistent, as to need no refutation.

It remains therefore, to be ascertained, what that righteousness is, which is a characteristic of a good ruler.

As civil government is alluded to in the text, it is just and reasonable to conclude that the righteousness, there spoken of, is a *political righteousness*, that is, a righteous administration of the government with which they are entrusted. To which several things are necessary. As

1. They must be men of good natural abilities, men of penetrating mind and sound judgment. For should there be a defect in their intellect (however otherwise qualified) they would never be able to look through the intricate affairs of state ; or attain to a consistent scheme of administration, which the good and safety of the public calls for. Therefore, men of weak minds should never be chosen into office by the freemen ; and in case of election, they ought not to accept : for though they may be men who possess honest dispositions of mind, yet the great af-

fairs of state, exceeding their natural abilities, renders it utterly impossible for them to administer the government in righteousness. In such a case, it would be more honorable in a man to decline, than to accept of a place in civil government.

2. In order to a righteous administration of government, rulers must not only have good heads, but they must have good hearts. They should possess a large portion of philanthropy, an ardent love for their people. Love is the mainspring of every interchange of kind offices among men. In no case has this divine principle a more efficacious operation, than when the ruler's heart is inspired with a paternal affection towards his subjects. To be the father of his people, is the magistrate's dignity. This constitutes his nearest conformity to our universal Parent. This will stimulate rulers to pursue the common happiness, under the greatest difficulties and most pressing trials. It was this, that animated a *Moses*, inspired a *David*, and fortified a *Nehemiah*, under the most alarming trials, perplexities and dangers, while managing the great affairs of state. And this will give energy to the exertions of our rulers, for the prosperity and happiness of their brethren; and make them esteem the most assiduous painful labors, but reasonable and pleasant services, for the public good. That they may administer in righteousness, civil rulers must possess a kind and benevolent affection for their people.

3. In order to a righteous administration, rulers must be men of knowledge. Ignorant and uninformed statesmen, however strong their heads, or

