DA. BURNET'S

ELECTION SERMON.

MAY 12, 1803.

ELECTION SERMON,

PREACHED AT

HARTFORD,

ON THE DAY OF THE

ANNIVERSARY ELECTION,

MAY 12, 1803.

BY MATTHIAS BURNET, D. D.

Pastor of the first Church in Norwalk.



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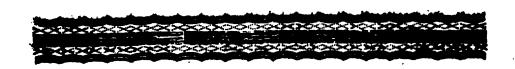
AT a GENERAL ASSEMBLY of the State of CONNECTICUT, holden at Hartford on the second Thursday of May, A. D. 1803.

ORDERED, That the Hon. DAVID DAGGETT and WM. M. BETTS, Esq. present the thanks of this Assembly to the Reverend MATTHIAS BURNET, for his Sermon preached at the General Election on the 12th May instant, and request a copy thereof that it may be printed.

A true copy of record,

Examined by

SAMUEL WYLLYS, SECRETARY.



RELIGION AND GOVERNMENT THE FOUNDA-TIONS OF ORDER, PEACE AND SECURI-TY, IN SOCIETY.

PSALM, xi. 3.

THE FOUNDATIONS BE DESTROYED WHAT CAN

HIS animated interrogatory exhibits in firong and expressive language, the deplorable state of the good man, when those only sure foundations of order, peace and security in society, religion and government, are undermined and destroyed—For though these are not expressly named, yet I think it evident from the context, that they are the foundations referred to by the Psalmist, when he reprefents the righteous as reduced to fuch a perplexed and wretched condition by their destruction. indeed, what condition on earth can be imagined more wretched than this? If those only sure foundations of order, peace and fecurity in fociety are destroyed, what can the righteous do? or where ean they fly for protection and comfort? The pillars on which their safety rested being taken away, they are of all men the most miserable. Their conscience

will not allow them to refort to those measures, to which the wicked without scruple do, and they are exposed to the persecution, the rapine and plunder of all who hate their persons or covet their property, without hope of relief. If government is destroyed, every human barrier to the corrupt lusts and passions of men is broken down, and we have no fecurity for any thing we possess. The hand of every man will be against the hand of every man, and the stronger will oppress the weak.—This doctrine, I am fensible, is contrary to that of some minute philosophers of the present day, who say, that man needs no external law or government to regulate his conduct, but that reason which was given him for his guide, united with opinion and fentiment, or the moral sense, as they call it, is amply sufficient to render him a law to himself and to answer all the purposes of society, without any written law or coercive power. But the falfity of this affertion is demonstrated by the whole history of man, and the great prevalence of vice, in every age and country, in opposition to reason, sentiment and law. Corrupt as the world is, the general fentiment of mankind is against vice and iniquity; the course of education in all schools and public instructions is to discountenance it, and the express design of all law and government is to restrain and repress it. Yet over all these barriers how often do the corrupt lusts and passions of men break? How often are men found hardy enough to commit crimes which their own conscience and the judgment of all mankind con-They burst the law's inclosure, rob the widow and the orphan, and riot in the spoil of innocence. They "perpetrate treason, murder, and " other atrocious deeds that strike the foul with "horror but to name them." And if such enormities are often committed in opposition not only to reason and the general sense of mankind, but to the restraints of law and government, how much more frequent would they be, and to how much greater height would they rife, if this fence was broken down, and this restraint taken off? Would not the lawless passions of men rage without controul, and fpread desolation far and wide? They surely would. On this account therefore, in order to bridle the lusts, to curb the violence of men, and protect the person and property of one man from the invasion of another, all nations have of necessity, as well as of choice, submitted to some form of government, declared and established by written laws or common confent, to be administered and executed by the one, the few, or the many. A monarch, a body of nobles, or representatives and magistrates chosen by the people, for the terror and punishment of evil doers, and the encouragement and protection of them that do well. This is, or should be, the end and design of all government; and to this end when rightly framed and administered, it doth indeed greatly conduce.

But still excellent and beneficial as this institution is, feeble in many instances would be the best form of government, and ineffectual the most wise and salutary laws, and the greatest sidelity in the execution of them, without a sense of religion and the terrors of the world to come. The great and the mighty are often so exalted by their wealth and

their power, as to be above the fear of the penalties of the law, and the censures of men for the breach of them; and the poor sometimes, view themselves as already funk so low in the public estimation, that they have little concern about finking lower, and they are so wretched in their circumstances that they cannot be reduced to much worse in this world, and are therefore under little restraint from what men think of or can do to them, and thus without fear or shame commit any crimes to which inclination or opportunity prompts.—But even where men dread the penalties of the law and the censures of the public, there are ten thousand instances in which they may elude them both. In which men of all ranks may commit a multitude of crimes, under the covert of fuch darkness and concealment as no human eye can penetrate, nor any finite arm lay hold on them. —If then there be no fense of religion on the mind, nor any fear of God before their eyes, what will restrain them from any deed however atrocious, to which profit or pleasure tempts them? Will the man who difregards the authority of that Being who is every where present, and to whose all piercing eye all things are open and naked, regard the authority of one whom he may deceive every moment? Will the man who has perfuaded himself, if such a persuasion there can be, that there is no God, or if there is, that this life is the whole of his existence and that he shall never be called to an account in a future state, for any of his conduct in this; will he abstain from any crime to which his inclination leads, where concealment can shield him from the reproach, or power protect him from the vengeance of the public? Un-

der fuch circumstances will he hesitate to defraud his neighbor, to betray or affassinate his friend, or fell his country, if he can make a profitable or even a faving bargain to himself? He surely will not. But honor, honefty, gratitude and friendship, will in this case be all sacrificed at the shrine of interest, pleafure or ambition. In a word, banish a sense of religion and the terrors of the world to come from fociety, and you at once diffolve the facred obligations of conscience and leave every man to do that which is right in his own eyes; you let mankind loose like so many beasts of prey, to roam at large, to deceive, destroy and devour all whom fraud or force may put in their power. Whoever therefore regards his own interest or that of the public, must be a friend to religion as the furest bond of propriety in all private dealings, and as the best preservative of national peace and welfare. If then religion and government are thus fundamental and important, to the order, peace and fecurity of fociety, it will be natural to ask, how these foundations may be best laid and perpetuated? and to this question I answer.

1. By a right and virtuous education of the children and youth of the country. Train up a child in the way in which he should go, was the advice and command of a great ruler and very wife man; and the benefit of it he assures you will be, that when he is old he will not depart from it, and it is an advice most worthy of attention and regard as being sounded in fact and experience. Tis education forms the mind and directs the habits. Without education, and that knowledge which is the effect of

it, men are ever liable to be imposed upon and led aftray. Ignorant of the true nature of things they are degraded and depressed by the grossest superstition, or blown up by the wildest enthusiasm. are duped and lead blindfold by every defigning demagogue, or tamely crouch down under every lordly despot: but when men are well educated and rightly informed, they will shake off these fetters of the mind and affert the true rights and dignities of Instructed in the arts and sciences, in the laws and customs of nations, in their own rights and those of others, they will be more likely to defend the one and to abstain from infringing the other. Trained up in the knowledge and in the habit of performing the duties they owe to God, their neighbor and themselves, they will be less likely to depart from or break the order and peace of fociety by any improper conduct. It is in this view that all civilized nations have confidered the education of children and youth as a matter of the greatest importance. The ancient Greeks and Romans paid a very particular attention to this fubject. They early taught their children to fear the gods, to obey their parents, teachers and rulers, and to love their country. They instructed them in their rights, and infpired them with spirit and courage to defend them. They brought them up in the habits of industry, temperance and justice. They inured them to hardships by labor and exercises suited to their age. stimulated them to virtuous and heroic deeds by motives of glery and honor, and deterred them from vice and iniquity by difgrace and punishment. Hence arose poets and orators, patriots and heroes,

that have eternized the names of these republics. And would we arrive to like same, and hand down to posterity unimpaired the happy constitution under which we live, and the divine religion which we enjoy, with a reasonable hope that they will be preserved in our land, it must be as one mean, by attending to the education of the rising generation. The happiness or misery of a nation like ours must greatly depend upon the knowledge or ignorance of the great body of the people.

2. In this view also, the public worship of God, the assembling ourselves together for prayer, praise, and religious instruction, on the Lord's day, is a matter of the greatest moment. This is the most excellent method, to communicate, spread and perpetuate the knowledge of God and religion in the world, that ever hath been, or can be devised. Indeed it is the only method that can maintain a public regard to religion, which without it would be quickly lost and forgotten. Were the preaching of the word and the administration of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper generally neglected or discontinued, men would foon relapse into the same darknefs and idolatry which fo univerfally prevailed before the appearence of the great sun of righteousnefs, and as univerfally reigns now in those parts of the earth where the gospel hath never come or been received.—For this reason Julian the apostate, when he attempted the overthrow and destruction of the Christian religion, prohibited the public assembling of the Christians for public worship and religious instruction, well knowing that if he could succeed ! in this, he could the more effectually accomplish

his defign; and if ever the Christian religion is extirpated, it must be by bringing its institutions into disrepute, and causing them to be neglected. And therefore to demolish these is the great aim of its enemies. But not only is public worship or an attendance upon the institutions of religion, important, as it is adapted to communicate, diffuse and perpetuate the knowledge of the doctrines and principles of Christianity, but as it has a most happy tendency to give them a deeper, and more lasting impression on the mind, to render men not only wifer but better, to rectify the temper and regulate the conduct. The hearing the virtues of piety, justice, temperance, purity and charity or love from Sabbath to Sabbath explained and inculcated, and the opposite vices of impiety, injustice, intemperance, impurity, enmity, variance and contention, stigmatized and condemned, and all enforced, with the folemn confideration of a judgment to come, when the fecrets of all hearts shall be revealed, and the deeds done in the body be rewarded or punished, according to their nature and defert, has a natural tendency to lead to the practice of the former, and to check and reftrain from the commission of the latter. In this way the public worship of God has a most salutary influence not only to promote the best good of individuals, but the order, peace, and harmony of families, focieties, states and empires. To make good husbands and wives, good parents and children, good masters and servants, good rulers and subjects—To make rulers rule in the fear of God, and the ruled submit and pay all

proper obedience, not only for wrath, but for conscience take. Yea the very meeting together of numbers in one place, from Sabbath to Sabbath, as the children of one God and Father, to offer up their prayers and praises to him the Father of mercies and the fountain of all good, is adapted to conciliate their minds to each other, and make them more loving and friendly than they otherwise would be. On the contrary were the public institutions of religion generally neglected and difused, gross ignorance in divine things, and great corruption in morals would foon enfue.—This I think may be fairly concluded from the difference there is, between the knowledge and the morals of the mass of the people, in those places in our land, where the institution of the Sabbath, and the preaching of the gospel are regularly observed, and where they are In the latter the people grow up in ignorance of these things, quite rude and uncivilized in their The Sabbath being confidered as a day manners. of rest, is spent in idleness, drinking, gaming, and other vices which corrupt the mind, and introduce penury and want, misery and wretchedness into the abodes of men. So that as one strongly but truly expresses it, if our churches were generally shut up and the public institutions of religion thrown aside, according to the infidel's wish, the civil magistrate, if he consulted the good of society, would soon force them open in order to reclaim the criminals that would otherwise be let loose upon the world.

3. Another thing, upon which the welfare and fishility of government much depends, is the choice

of wife and worthy men, men of found heads, honest hearts, and exemplary lives to fill the legislative, judicial and executive departments of state. This in a republican or free government is a matter of most ferious concern, what are the characters and qualifications of the persons you elect to office, and too much attention cannot be paid to it, by all who wish well to their country; because, if the men who are raifed by the people to legislate, judge of, or execute the laws for them, are weak and ignorant, the laws they frame must partake of the same qualities; or if they be corrupt in their principles, and diffolute and immoral in their lives, they will have a motive in their own breast and conduct to be remiss in the execution of the laws, however wife and good they may be. Yea they become themselves examples and encouragers of vice to others, and thus contribute to weaken and destroy the very government they are fworn to maintain. On which account, the ancient Greeks in the time of the greatest purity and perfection of their government, would admit no person to office among them who lived a dissolute and immoral life, judging him unworthy of public trust who could not, or would not govern himself by the rules of prudence, fobriety and justice. And upon the same principle no doubt it was that Jethro the father in law of Moses, gave that excellent advice to him, with respect to the qualifications of the judges he should chuse to assist him in the government of the people Ifrael.

THAT they should be able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness. That is, as the

words plainly import, that they should be men of good natural understanding and competent acquired knowledge. Men acting under the belief and awe of God as their inspector and judge, to whom they confider themselves accountable for their conduct and whom they fear to offend. Men truly honest and upright in their principles and views, not actuated and governed by the fordid motives of felf interest and aggrandizement in their defire and execution of office, but by a fincere regard to the public good. And fure better advice than this, could not be given, nor more important qualifications directed to in the choice of rulers. Yet I am well aware that one of these qualifications, viz. the fear of God, is by numbers, thought to be of very little consequence, and fome there are, who even deride the very idea of paying any attention to it at all, declaring our dearest interests to be as safe in the hands even of an atheist, as any other man. But with that great patriot and statesman the late Governor Livingston of New-Jersey, I must yet think that this is a qualification of very great importance in a ruler. And that the father in law of Moses gave him very good advice, when he directed him to pay particular attention to it in those whom he should appoint to be judges and rulers over the people Israel. For if God be fuch a being, as both reason and revelation declare him to be, an omniscient, holy, just and allpowerful being, whose eyes are in every place, beholding the evil and the good, to punish the one and reward the other according to their character and deeds, then certainly, the fear and awe of him must operate as the greatest restraint from that which

is evil, and the most powerful incentive to that which is good, and he who is truly actuated by this principle, will never give his voice or instruence to pervert justice or support iniquity. But the man who does not believe in the being and providence of God, or is not actuated by the sear and awe of him, has in many cases no bond or restraint upon his conduct, and therefore is not fit to be trusted with a nation's weal, which he will not scruple, whenever he can with impunity, to sacrifice to his lust or ambition.

4. Another thing highly worthy the attention of all who wish to promote the order, peace and stability of government is, that as much as in them lies, they cherish and cultivate a spirit of unity and concord, and avoid and discourage that unreasonable jealoufy, and party zeal, which throws the members of the State, into different factions, pursuing different interests of their own, and often both of them very different from that of the public. So much political jealoufy as leads men to watch over their rights and liberties with care, that they be not infringed, is proper and laudable, yea, is an indifpensible duty: But when men enlist themselves in parties and range themselves under particular leaders, they too often lose fight of the public good and yield themselves up implicitly to their directions, whom like a band of dragoons they follow wherever they They consider not the truth, the reasonableness, or the justice of the cause, but what will promote the views and interests of the party to which they attach themselves. This casts a mist before their eyes and fanctifies every mean, however bale

and iniquitous, that will contribute to the particular designs of the party. Hence slander, misrepresentation, the groffest falshoods and even violence when the end cannot be obtained without it, are the common resort of men actuated by this spirit. When ir rises to any considerable height, it engenders the most virulent factions and deadly animosities in neighborhoods, focieties and states, which are often perpetuated from generation to generation and sometimes work the overthrow and ruin of the community or state where they prevail. It was this spirit of party, which hastened the downfall of ancient Rome, once the wonder and mistress of the world, The powerful parties of Cæsar and Pompey kept the state a long time in convulsions, till the victory of Czefar over Pompey gave it a master, and instead of a government managed by freemen, subjected the property, the liberty, and lives of the citizens of Rome, to the will of a tyrant. And Josephus, the Jewish historian, informs us, that to the party factions and intestine divisions that rent and convulsed the Jews among themselves, their destruction was more owing, than to the conquering arms of the Romans. fame spirit also contributed to reduce Holland and Switzerland to their present degraded and humiliating condition, to have their rulers, government and laws dictated and controlled by a foreign power. Should not then the fate of these and other nations famed in story, be a solemn memento and warning to the people of this land, to check and cast out that demon of party, which hath rifen among us, engendering enmity, strife and contention, and inciting to

the vilest slander, misrepresentation and falshood, that alas! men of different parties in the violence of their zeal, can scarce think or say a good thing of each other; and of consequence, while this disposition reigns, will never unite in measures for the public good, but even against the plainest distates of reason and common sense will forever use all their efforts to perplex and counteract each other.

5. Once more, permit me to observe, that in order to the stability of a free government it is necessary that the great body of the people be, and continue virtuous, fober, industrious and lovers of order. So long as this is the case, there will be little to be feared. All things will go well. Liberty, peace and prosperity, will dwell with fuch a people, at least there will be nothing among themselves, to interrupt or banish these blessed inhabitants from their residence with them. But whenever there shall be a general corruption among the great body of the people, when pride, felfishness and ambition, or an infatiable thirst for power, shall pervade and actuate the higher orders; when vice, licentiousness and opposition to all just rule and restraint shall characterize the lower ranks of men, "when rulers govern and people obey, when ministers counsel and soldiers fight, when judges prefide over the laws and jurors bear testimony, not from any regard to the principles of conscience, the fear of the Lord or the public good, but their own private interests and aggrandizement, then it is easy to see, that a government thus administered is without any folid support within

or without, and thus distempered in all its members, it must gradually decline and waste away, or fall a prey to the first acute disorder that attacks it. the Roman historians inform us, was the fatal progress of corruption and vice in that famed republic and once free state of ancient Rome. While a patriot ardor glowed in the breasts of her senators, judges and generals, while temperance, frugality and induftry, fubmission to order and just government, patience and refolution, to do and to fuffer all things for the fecurity, reputation, liberty and glory of their country characterized her citizens, peace and profperity reigned at home, fame, conquest and empire crowned their arms abroad; but when a felfish ambition took place of love of their country, and zeal for the public was extinguished by party rage, when the riches of the east and the spoils of conquered provinces, had introduced indolence, floth, luxury and avarice, and all the arts and follies of a corrupted state, and above all, when the principles of Epicurus had banished religion, the only effectual restraint upon human conduct, from the state, and left every man to do what was right in his own eyes, then as a nervous writer* very justly describes her fate, like the Ifraelites of old, when they had renounced the government of their God and the protection of his providence, they were given up to ruin. Unnerved and effeminated by luxury and excess, they were exposed to insults from abroad, and to intestine broils and civil wars at home. A fuccession of tyrants,

^{*} Mr. Hunter,

monsters of impiety, debauchery and cruelty, was permitted to lash the Romans into virtue, or correct and punish their vices, under whom the state languished, rather than lived under a complication of disorders, till Rome, imperial, immortal, eternal Rome, the mistress of the world, the strong and spreading oak, that covered all the beasts of the earth, having filled her measure of wickedness and accomplished her fate, the fate of nations, expires, or rather dwindles away, a poor and shrivelled plant, deprived of its native virtue and the benign influences of heaven, and is scattered, the sport of winds, into the common mass of universal matter. An awful monument and folemn warning to the world, that while righteoulness exalteth a nation, vice is the reproach and ruin of a people."

And now to bring this already long discourse to a close, what are the lessons which it inculcates and the improvement which is proper to be made of it, by this numerous and august assembly? To your Excellency the Governor—to your Honor the Lieutenant Governor, and to you Gentlemen the Legislators and Representatives of this State, doth it not strongly suggest, the high importance of giving all possible encouragement and support to the means of education, the common schools and public seminaries, those sountains of useful knowledge to our youth, whence streams may continually slow to water and resresh our land, or to vary the sigure, whence our children and youth may be trained up to usefulness and honor, and be as pillars in church

and state? Again, do not the above considerations, also strongly declare the propriety and importance of giving countenance and support to the public worship of God, and its necessary institutions. know it is the opinion of some, and it is to be seared, that with the fool, who hath said in his heart, there is no God, it is the wish of more, that government should take no notice, nor by any laws enacted for that purpose, give any countenance or support to religion, but leave God and religion, entirely unnoticed, as much as if there was no fuch being or thing in existence. For a nation or government of atheists, if such a government ever did or can exist, I acknowledge such a conduct would be proper and in character; but for a nation of theists, and especially of Christian theists, who profess to believe in the being of a God, and that the worship of him is a duty, and of public and general utility to a people, I say for such a nation or government to be filent on this head, would certainly be very ... improper, if not an impious and unpardonable neglect; for if there be a God, if the public worship of him be a duty and of great use to the virtue and morals of men, to check, restrain and repress, the overflowings of ungodliness, to engage men to live in peace and love with each other, to fubmit to order and good government, and above all to dispose and prepare them for a future and more happy state of existence, then certainly it must be a matter highly worthy the attention of every government to give countenance and support to the institutions of religion—nor can magistrates and rulers, according to

fcripture prophecy, be nursing fathers to the church, if they do not.

FAR be it from me to wish to see, and God forbid we ever should see, any government in this country, enacting laws to dictate what articles of faith men shall believe, what mode of worship they shall adopt, or to raise and establish one mode of worship or denomination of Christians above or in preference to another. No, let the human mind be left perfectly free, in all these particulars, to chuse and adopt, such modes as it pleases, and let all denominations have equal countenance and fupport of government; and while ye venerable fathers of your country, to whose care we commit our most valuable rights, civil and religious, while ye thus support the external institutions of religion, by wife and liberal laws and provisions, framed for that purpose, and thus become nursing, protecting fathers to the church, may we not rationally conclude, that while agreeable to the command of Mofes to the tribes of Zebulon and Isachar, ye call the people to the mountain, the temple or house of God, there to offer the facrifices of righteoufness; you will fanction and give force to your laws, by your own example going before and leading them thither, and in all things being patterns to them, in piety, virtue and every good work. Thus will you most effectually give energy to your laws, and order, peace and permanency to government.

To you, my Reverend Fathers and Brethren in the gospel ministry, this discourse may with peculiar

propriety be addressed. It is your appropriate and honorable work to diffipate the clouds of ignorance and error, to enlighten and irradiate the human mind with knowledge, and by every mean to strive to make men wiser and better, to inculcate upon them principles of love and peace, with each other, of order and subjection to government, human and divine, and by instruction and example to lead their views to a future and better world. Let this then be the grand object of our aim. Being by our station and office appointed and designed to reflect the rays of light from the great sun of righteousness, let our light fo shine before men, that they feeing the light of our good works, may be led to glorify our Father, the Father of lights, who is in heaven. Confidering ourselves as a city set on a hill that cannot be hid, that all our actions and conduct is obferved and critically scanned, and by many with the worst intent, that they may gain an advantage against us, and through our fides, wound and destroy the cause of our blessed Redeemer, let us agreeable to the command and direction of our Lord and his apostles, be wife as ferpents and harmless as doves. Let us walk circumfpectly, with prudence, honefty and uprightness, in all our intercourse with the world, being examples to the flock and to the world, in faith, in purity, in word, in doctrine and every good work. Thus let us put to silence and shame, the slanders and revilings of libertine and ungodly men, who are ever ready, and often do fay all manner of evil of us. But let us not be difmayed or disheartened, by their revilings, to

Master; but let us contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, when opposed, not with the virulence of bigots but with meekness, candor, and sound speech, that cannot be gainsayed. Let us go on, in the noble and pleasing work of diffusing knowledge, human and divine, of inculcating upon men the principles of virtue, peace and order, of training them up for, and leading them to heaven and happiness above.

And ye fathers and mothers in this our American Israel, will you not unite your efforts with ours in this benevolent work? Much depends upon you in training up the rifing generation to be worthy and useful members of society here, or suitable inhabitants of a better world hereafter; and especially upon you, ye venerable and respected matrons, who have the care of the tenderest years of your children, to fow the feeds of virtue, which are afterwards to be matured by the fostering hand of the father. The impressions first made are often most lasting, and numbers of great and good men have declared themselves more indebted to the tender and pious instructions of their mothers in childhood, that they were kept from vice, and became virtuous members of fociety, than all after means. Very honorable is the mention which St. Paul makes of the mother and grand mother of Timothy, and which St. Austin makes of his mother Monica in this view, that the religious instructions which she gave him when a child made fuch impressions on his mind as were never

obliterated, but remained with him through the dangerous season of youth, and by the blessing of God, preserved him from many a vice and folly.*

EARLY then ye parents begin this benevolent, this pleafing work of feafoning the minds of your children with fentiments of virtue; teach them their duty to God and man-acquaint them with their rights, as men and citizens; inspire them with a love of their country, and a zeal to promote and defend its interests; educate them in the habits of industry, temperance, frugality, peaceableness, order and subjection to government-instruct them in the nature of the worship of God, and lead them to the performance of it, in your families and in the church; bring these lambs of the flock and present them before your heavenly Father, the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls, for his bleffing; and thus habituate them to, and prepare them for the fublime employments of his holy temple above. And ye blooming youth of both fexes, who are rifing to fucceed your parents, in whose hands the country and church will foon be deposited, will ye not listen to the counfels, and follow the example of your pious and revered parents, ministers and friends. With pleafing hope we anticipate the day when you shall come forward an ornament and bleffing to your country, to direct her counfels, and defend her

^{*} The above address to Mothers was omitted in the delivery, as there were few of them present, but as the sermon may possibly fall into the hands of some such, the author thinks proper to commit it to the press with the rest.

rights, or polish the manners and sooth the care of That this may be the case, furnish your minds while young with ufeful knowledge, fearch for it as for hid treasure, qualify yourselves to act your part with ability on the great theatre of life, to ferve your country and your God, whether in a humbler or higher department of the various stations, posts and offices to which you may be def-Cease from the instructions of tined and called. them who would cause you to err from the word of knowledge. Guard against the poisonous—the wide spreading and foul destroying principles of infidelity and libertinism-listen not to the syren song of pleasure, nor to the seductions of evil company, whose evil communications corrupt good manners. Be companions of the wife and the good, the friends of order, religion and virtue, by whom your minds may be informed, and your morals refined. all things let me enjoin it upon you, to remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come on in which ye shall fay, ye have no pleafure. Impress your minds with the solemn awe of the dread majesty of heaven and earth, and this will preferve you from many a fin, and from many a bitter pang. Seek that wisdom which is from above, and it will regulate all your steps; prescribe the proper rule of your conduct, and shew you what is due from you to yourselves, your neighbor, and your God.

FINALLY, ye Freemen, all of every class whose high prerogative it is, to raise up, or pull down, to

invest with office and authority, or to withhold them, and in whose power it is to save or destroy your country, confider well the important trust and distinguishing privileges which God and nature have put into your hands. To God and posterity you are accountable for them. See that you preserve them inviolate and transmit them to posterity unimpaired. Let not your children have reason to curse you for giving up those rights, and prostrating those institutions which your fathers delivered to you as a facred palladium, and which by the bleffing of God have been peculiarly beneficial to the order, peace and prosperity of this State, amid all the vicissitudes and convulsions of other states and kingdoms round. And that this happy state of things may continue, look well to the characters and qualifications of those you elect and raise to office and places of trust. this momentous concern, let the wife counsel of Jethro, tho' a priest, be your guide. Choose ye out from among you able men, fuch as fear God, men of truth and hating covetousness and set them to rule over you. Think not that your interests will be fafe in the hands of the weak and ignorant or faithfully managed by the impious, the dissolute and the immoral. Think not that men who acknowledge not the providence of God nor regard his laws, will be uncorrupt in office, firm in defence of the righteous cause against the oppressor, or resolutely oppose the torrent of iniquity. Their own emolument, eafe or pleafure, will at any time induce them to connive at injustice and iniquity, or join with the oppressor. Watch over your liberties and privileges

civil and religious with a careful eye. In defence of these be zealous, resolute and intrepid. They demand it of you and are worthy of it, even the your lives were to be facrificed. But indulge not an unreasonable jealous, nor a captious spirit of caviling with, or faulting the conduct of those you entrust with power—nor a fondness for perpetual and unnecessary change of men or measures. Remember it is always safer and better for a people, to commit their interests to the care of those whose ability, sidelity and patriotism they have tried and sound equal to their trust, than to those whom they have not, even though they may be supposed to be perfectly equal in all these particulars.

Banish party factions from among you—let the general good take place of contracted selfishness, and the public welfare triumph over private animosity. Discountenance vice, and be patterns and promoters of virtue and good morals as the only security for the support and prosperity of a republican government.

REVERE, imbibe and practife that holy heavenborn religion, which is first pure, then peaceable gentle, easy to be intreated, and full of good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrify. In a word, let the love of God, your country, and mankind rule your hearts and actuate your conduct; and let this be manifested by that which is the only true proof of it—obedience to his laws, "a patriot soul and a public spirit." THEN may you hope that order, peace and harmony—honor and prosperity will dwell with us, and God himself be our shield and defence—

AMEN.

