



Mr. COOKE'S

ELECTION-SERMON,

May 30, 1770.



A

S E R M O N

PREACHED AT CAMBRIDGE,

IN THE

AUDIENCE OF HIS HONOR

THOMAS HUTCHINSON, Esq;

LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR AND COMMANDER IN CHIEF;

THE HONORABLE

HIS MAJESTY'S COUNCIL,

AND THE HONORABLE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

OF THE PROVINCE OF THE

Massachusetts-Bay in New-England,

MAY 30th, 1770.

BEING THE ANNIVERSARY FOR THE ELECTION OF HIS
MAJESTY'S COUNCIL FOR THE SAID PROVINCE.

BY SAMUEL COOKE, A. M.

Pastor of the Second Church in CAMBRIDGE.

B O S T O N :

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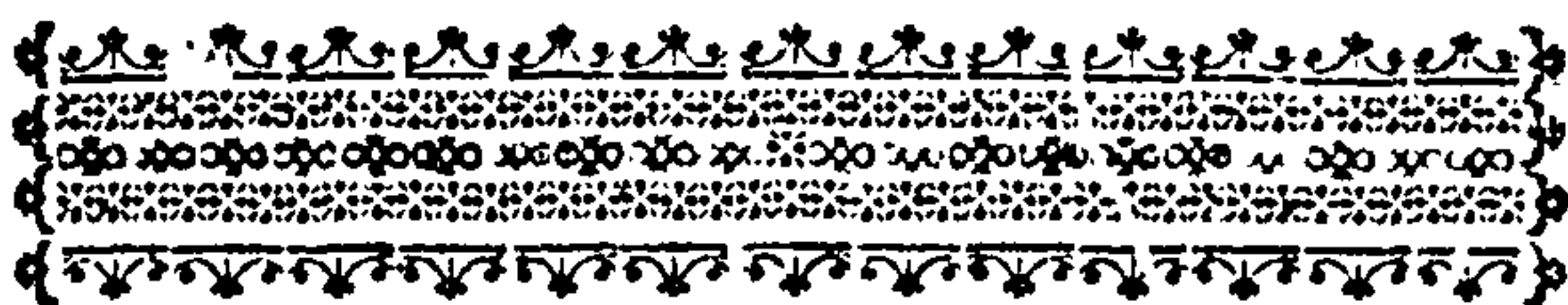
MDCCLXX.

In the House of *Representatives*,
May 30, 1770.

R*ESOLVED*, That Mr. *Gardner* of *Cambridge*, Mr. *Remington*, and Mr. *Gardner* of *Stow*, be a Committee to return the Thanks of this House to the Rev'd Mr. *Samuel Cooke*, for his Sermon preached Yesterday before the General Court, being the Day of the Election of Councillors; and to desire of him a Copy thereof for the Press.

Attest.

Samuel Adams, Clerk.

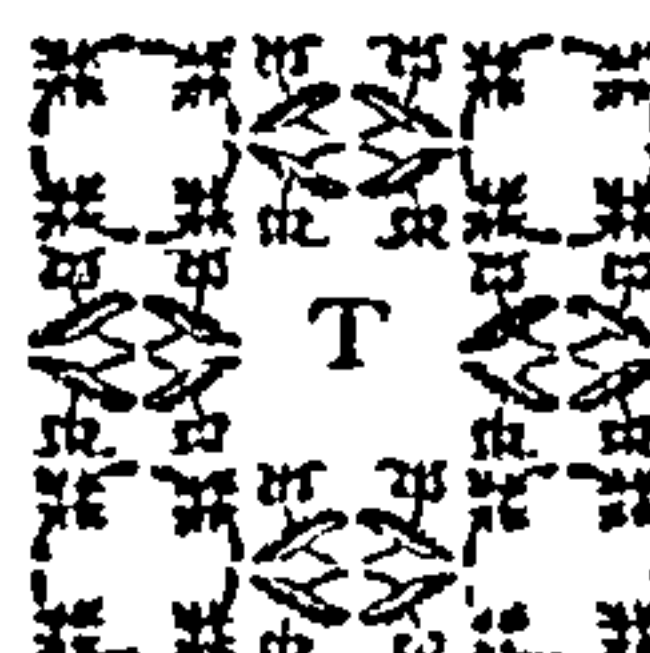


AN ELECTION-SERMON.

2 S A M. XXIII. 3, 4.

— *HE that ruleth over Men, must be just, ruling in the fear of GOD.*

And he shall be as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds : as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain.

 **T**HE solemn introduction to the words now read, Respectable Hearers, is manifestly designed to engage your attention and regard ;—as given by inspiration from God,—and as containing the last—the dying words, of one of the greatest and best of earthly rulers ;—who by ruling in the fear of God, had served his generation according to the Divine will.—
Transporting

Transporting reflection !—when his flesh and his heart failed, and his glory was consigned to dust.

From this, and many other passages, in the sacred oracles, it is evident, that the supreme Ruler, tho' he has directed to no particular mode of civil government, yet allows and approves of the establishment of it among men.

The ends of civil government, in Divine revelation are clearly pointed out—The character of rulers described,—and the duty of subjects asserted and explained. And in this view, civil government may be considered as an ordinance of God ; and when justly exercised, greatly subservient to the glorious purposes of divine providence and grace.—But the particular form is left to the choice and determination of mankind.

In a pure state of nature, government is in a great measure unnecessary ; private property in that state is inconsiderable, men need no arbiter to determine their rights,—they covet only a bare support,—their stock is but the subsistence of a day,—the uncultivated desarts are their habitations,—and they carry their all with them, in their frequent

quent removes—they are each one a law to himself, which in general, is of force sufficient for their security, in that course of life.

It is far otherwise when mankind are formed into collective bodies, or a social state of life ;—here, their frequent mutual intercourse, in a degree, necessarily leads them to different apprehensions, respecting their several rights, even where their intentions are upright.—Temptations to injustice and violence increase, and the occasions of them multiply, in proportion to the increase and opulence of the society.

The laws of nature, though enforced by Divine revelation, which bind the conscience of the upright, prove insufficient to restrain the sons of violence, who have not the fear of God before their eyes.

A society cannot long subsist in such a state—Their safety,—their social being depends upon the establishment of determinate rules or laws, with proper penalties to enforce them ; to which individuals shall be subjected :—The laws, however wisely adapted, cannot operate to the public security, unless they are properly executed ;—The execution of them, remaining in the hands
of

of the whole community, leaves individuals to determine their own rights, and in effect, in the same circumstances, as in a state of nature.

The remedy in this case is solely in the hands of the community.

A society emerging from a state of nature, in respect to authority, are all upon a level,—no individual can justly challenge a right to make, or execute the laws, by which it is to be governed, but only by the choice, or general consent of the community.—The people, the collective body, only have a right, under God, to determine who shall exercise this trust for the common interest, and to fix the bounds of their authority.

And consequently, unless we admit the most evident inconsistency, those in authority, in the whole of their public conduct, are accountable to the society, which gave them their political existence.

This is evidently the natural origin, and state of all civil government,—the sole end and design of which is, not to ennoble a few, and enslave the multitude, but the public benefit,—the good of the people,—
that

that they may be protected in their persons, and secured in the enjoyment of all their rights,—and be enabled to lead quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty.

While this manifest design of civil government, under whatever form, is kept in full view; the reciprocal obligations of rulers and subjects are obvious, and the extent of prerogative and liberty, will be indisputable.

In a civil state, that form is the most eligible which is best adapted to promote the ends of government,—the benefit of the community ;—reason and experience teach that a mixed government is most conducive to this end.

In the present imperfect state, the whole power cannot with safety be entrusted with a single person ; nor with many, acting jointly in the same public capacity.

Various branches of power, concentrating in the community from which they originally derive their authority, are a mutual check to each other, in their several departments, and jointly secure the common interest : This may indeed, in some instances, re-

tard the operations of government, but will add dignity to its deliberate counsels, and weight to its dictates.

This, after many dangerous conflicts with arbitrary power, is now the happy constitution of our parent state.—We rejoice in the gladness of our nation,—may no weapon formed against it prosper—may it be preserved inviolate till time shall be no more.

This, under God, has caused Great Britain to exalt her head above the nations—restored the dignity of royal authority—and rendered our Kings truly benefactors.

The Prince upon the British throne can have no real interest distinct from his subjects; his crown is his inheritance—his kingdom his patrimony, which he must be disposed to improve, for his own, and his family's interest—his highest glory is to rule over a free people, and reign in the hearts of his subjects—The Peers who are lords of parliament, are his hereditary council.—The Commons, elected by the people, are considered as the grand inquest of the kingdom ; and while incorrupt, are a check upon the highest offices in the state.

A constitution thus happily formed and supported, as a late writer has observed, cannot easily be subverted, but by the prevalence of venality in the representatives of the people.

How far septennial parliaments conduce to this, time may further shew.—Or whether this is not an infraction upon the national constitution, is not for me to determine.

But the best constitution, separately considered, is only as a line which marks out the inclosure, or as a fitly organized body without spirit or animal life.

The advantages of civil government, even under the British form, greatly depend upon the character and conduct of those to whom the administration is committed.

When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice ; but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn.

The Most High, therefore, who is just in all his ways—good to all--- and whose commands strike dread, has strictly enjoined faithfulness upon all those who are advanced to any place of public trust.

Rulers of this character, co-operate with God, in his gracious dispensations of providence, and under him, are diffusive blessings to the people :—and are compared to the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds.

By the ruler in the text, is intended not only the King as supreme ; but also every one in subordinate place of power and trust, whether they act in a legislative or executive capacity, or both :—In whatever station men act for the public, they are included in this general term——and must direct their conduct by the same upright principle.

Justice as here expressed, is not to be taken in a limited sense, but as a general term, including every quality necessary to be exercised for the public good, by those who accept the charge of it.

Justice must be tempered with wisdom, prudence and clemency ; otherwise it will degenerate into rigor and oppression.

This solemn charge given to rulers, is not an arbitrary injunction imposed by God ; but is founded in the most obvious laws of nature and reason.

Rulers

Rulers are appointed for this very end—*to be ministers of God for good.*—The people have a right to expect this from them, and to require it, not as an act of grace, but as their unquestionable due.—It is the express or implicit condition, upon which they were chosen, and continued in public office,—that they attend continually upon this very thing.

Their time—their abilities—their authority, by their acceptance of the public trust, are consecrated to the community, and cannot, in justice, be withheld ;—they are obliged to seek the welfare of the people, and exert all their powers to promote the common interest.

This continual solicitude for the common good, however depressing it may appear, is what rulers of every degree have taken upon themselves ; and in justice to the people,—in faithfulness to God, they must either sustain it with fidelity, or resign their office.

The first attention of the faithful ruler will be to the subjects of government, in their specific nature ;—He will not forget that he ruleth over *Men*—Men, who are of the same species with himself, and by nature equal—

equal—Men who are the offspring of God, and alike formed after his glorious image—Men of like passions and feelings with himself, and as men, in the sight of their common Creator of equal importance—Men who have raised him to power, and support him in the exercise of it—Men who are reasonable beings, and can be subjected to no human restrictions, which are not founded in reason ; and of the fitness of which they may be convinced—Men, who are moral agents, and under the absolute controul of the High Possessor of heaven and earth ; and cannot, without the greatest impropriety and disloyalty to the King of kings, yield unlimited subjection to any inferior power—Men whom the Son of God hath condescended to ransom, and dignified their nature, by becoming the son of man.

Men, who have the most evident right, in every decent way, to represent to rulers their grievances, and seek redress.

The people forfeit the rank they hold in God's creation, when they silently yield this important point, and sordidly, like Issachar, couch under every burden wantonly laid upon them.

And

And rulers greatly tarnish their dignity, when they attempt to treat their subjects otherwise than as their fellow-men,——Men who have reposed the highest confidence in their fidelity ; and to whom they are accountable for their public conduct.——And in a word, Men, among whom they must, without distinction, stand before the dread tribunal of heaven.

Just rulers therefore in making and executing the laws of society, will consider who they are to oblige, and accommodate them to the state and condition of men.

Fidelity to the public, requires that the laws be as plain and explicit as possible ; that the less knowing may understand and not be ensnared by them——while the artful evade their force.

Mysteries of law and government may be made a cloak of unrighteousness.

The benefits of the constitution, and of the laws, must extend to every branch, and each individual in society, of whatever degree ; that every man may enjoy his property, and pursue his honest course of life with security.

The

The just ruler, sensible he is in trust for the public, with an impartial hand, will supply the various offices in society:—his eye will be upon the faithful—merit only in the candidate, will attract his attention.

He will not, without sufficient reason, multiply lucrative offices in the community; which naturally tends to introduce idleness and oppression.

Justice requires, that the emoluments of every office, constituted for the common interest, be proportioned to their dignity, and the service performed, for the public:—Parsimony in this case, enervates the force of government, and frustrates the most patriotic measures. A people therefore for their own security, must be supposed willing to pay tribute to whom it is due, and freely support the dignity of those under whose protection they confide.

On the other hand, the people may apprehend they have just reason to complain of oppression and wrong, and to be jealous of their liberties, when subordinate public offices are made the surest step to wealth and ease.

This

This not only encreases the expences of government, but is naturally productive of dissipation and luxury—of the severest animosities among candidates for public posts, ---and of venality and corruption ; the most fatal to a free state.

Rulers are appointed guardians of the constitution, in their respective stations ; and must confine themselves within the limits by which their authority is circumscribed.

A free state will no longer continue so, than while the constitution is maintained entire, in all its branches and connections.—If the several members of the legislative power become entirely independent of each other, it produceth a schism in the body politic ; and the effect is the same, when the executive is in no degree under the controul of the legislative power,—the balance is destroyed, and the execution of the laws left to arbitrary will.

The several branches of civil power, as joint pillars, each bearing its due proportion, are the support, and the only proper support of a political structure, regularly formed.

A constitution which cannot support its own weight, must fall—It must be supposed essentially defective in its form or administration.

Military aid has ever been deemed dangerous to a free civil state ; and often has been used as an effectual engine to subvert it.

Those, who in the camp, and in the field of battle, are our glory and defence ; from the experience of other nations, will be thought, in time of peace, a very improper safe-guard, to a constitution, which has Liberty—British Liberty, for its basis.

When a people are in subjection to those, who are detached from their fellow citizens, —under distinct laws and rules—supported in idleness and luxury—armed with the terrors of death——under the most absolute command—ready and obliged to execute the most daring orders——What must!—what has been the consequence!——

Inter arma silent leges.——

Justice also requires of rulers, in their legislative capacity, that they attend to the operation of their own acts ; and repeal
whatever

whatever laws, upon an impartial review, they find to be inconsistent with the laws of God—the rights of men—and the general benefit of society.

This the community hath a right to expect. And they must have mistaken apprehensions of true dignity, who imagine they can acquire or support it, by persisting in wrong measures ; and thereby counteracting the sole end of government.

It belongs to the all-seeing God alone, absolutely to be of one mind. It is the glory of man, in whatever station, to perceive and correct his mistakes.

Arrogant pretences to infallibility in matters of state or religion, represent human nature in the most contemptible light.

We have a view of our nature in its most abject state, when we read the senseless laws of the Medes and Persians, or hear the impotent thunders of the Vatican.

Stability in promoting the public good, which justice demands, leads to a change of measures, when the interest of the community

nity requires it ; which must often be the case in this mutable--imperfect state.

The just ruler will not fear to have his public conduct critically inspected ; but will choose to recommend himself to the approbation of every man.--As he expects to be obeyed for conscience sake, he will require nothing inconsistent with its dictates ; and be desirous that the most scrupulous mind may acquiesce in the justice of his rule.

As in his whole administration, so in this, he will be ambitious to imitate the supreme Ruler--who appeals to his people, Are not my ways equal ?

Knowing therefore that his conduct will bear the light, and his public character be established by being fully known--He will rather encourage than discountenance a decent freedom of speech, not only in public assemblies, but among the people.

This liberty is essential to a free constitution, and the ruler's surest guide.

As in nature we best judge of causes by their effects--So rulers, hereby--will receive the surest information of the fitness of their laws,

laws, and the exactness of their execution,—the success of their measures—and whether they are chargeable with any mistakes, from partial evidence or human frailty——and whether, all acting under them, in any subordinate place, express the fidelity, becoming their office.

This decent liberty the just ruler will consider not as his grant, but a right inherent in the people, without which their obedience is rendered merely passive.

And tho', possibly, under a just administration, it may degenerate into licentiousness, which in its extreme, is subversive of all government ; yet the history of past ages, and of our nation, shews, that the greatest dangers have arisen from lawless power.

The body of a people are disposed to lead quiet and peaceable lives---and it is their highest interest to support the government under which their quietness is ensured——They retain a reverence for their superiors, and seldom foresee or suspect danger, till they feel their burdens.

Rulers of every degree, are in a measure above the fear of man ; but are equally
with

with others under the restraints of the Divine law.

The Almighty has not divested himself of his own absolute authority, by permitting subordinate government among men——He allows none to rule, otherwise, than under him, and in his fear.—And without a true fear of God, justice will be found to be but an empty name.

Though reason may in some degree investigate the relation and fitness of things, yet I think it evident, that moral obligations are founded wholly in a belief of God and his superintending providence.

This belief deeply impressed on the mind, brings the most convincing evidence, that men are moral agents,—obliged to act, according to the natural and evident relation of things—and the rank they bear in God's creation ——That the Divine will, however made known to them, is the law by which all their actions must be regulated, and their state finally determined.

Rulers may in a degree be influenced to act for the public good; from education---from a desire of applause--from the natural benevolence

benevolence of their temper : But these motives are feeble and inconstant, without the superior aids of religion. They are men of like passions with others, and the true fear of God only, is sufficient to controul the lusts of men ; and especially the lust of dominion---to suppress pride---the bane of every desirable quality in the human soul---the never-failing source of wanton and capricious power.

So did not I---said the renowned governor of Judah---*because of the fear of God.*

He had nothing to fear from the people:---His commission he received from the luxurious Persian court, where the voice of distress was not heard---where no sad countenance might appear.---But he feared his God.---This moved him to hear the cries of his people, and without delay, redress their wrongs.---He knew this was pleasing to his God, and while he acted in his fear, trusted he would think upon him for good.

This fear doth not intend, simply, a dread of the Almighty, as the supreme Ruler and Judge of men---but especially, a filial reverence, founded in esteem and superlative love implanted in the heart :---This will naturally

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turally produce a conformity to God in his moral perfections---an inclination to do his will---and a delight in those acts of beneficence which the Maker of all things displays throughout his extended creation.

This fear of God is the beginning, and also the perfection of human wisdom.

And tho' dominion is not, absolutely, founded in grace ; yet a true principle of religion must be considered as a necessary qualification in a ruler.

The religion of Jesus teacheth the true fear of God, and marvellously discloseth, the plan of Divine government ;—

In his gospel, as thro' a glass, we see heaven opened---the mysteries of providence and grace unveiled---Jesus sitting on the right hand of God,---to whom all power is committed,---and coming to judge the world in righteousness.

Here is discovered to the admiration of angels---the joy of saints, and the terror of the wicked ; the government of the man Christ Jesus, founded in justice and mercy ;
which

which in his glorious administration meet together in perfect harmony.

The sceptre of his kingdom is a right sceptre ; he loveth righteousness and hateth wickedness.

And tho' his throne is on high—prepared in the heavens ; yet he makes known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom.—By him kings reign, and princes decree justice, even all the nobles and judges of the earth.—His eyes are upon the ways of men—His voice which is full of majesty, to earthly potentates, is, be wise now, O ye kings ; be instructed, ye judges of the earth—serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice in your exalted stations with submissive awe—embrace the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way.

The christian temper, wro't in the heart by the Divine Spirit, restores the human mind to its primitive rectitude,—animates every faculty of the soul—directs every action to its proper end—extends its views beyond the narrow limits of time, and raises its desires to immortal glory.

This makes the face of every saint to shine ; but renders the ruler, in his elevated station, gloriously resplendent.

This commands reverence to his person—attention to his counsels—respect to the laws—and authority to all his directions. — And renders an obedient people easy and happy under his rule.

Which leads to the consideration of the last thing suggested in the text, viz. The glorious effects of a just administration of government.

And he shall be as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds—as the tender grass springing out of the earth, by clear shining after rain.

This includes, both the distinguishing honor and respect acquired by rulers of this character ; and the unspeakable felicity of a people thus favored of the Lord.

Justice and judgment are the habitation of the throne of the Most High ; and he delighteth to honor those who rule over men in his fear—He has dignified them with

a title of divinity—and called them in a peculiar sense, the children of the Highest.

And we are not to wonder, that in the darker ages of the world, from worshipping the host of heaven, the ignorant multitude were led to pay divine honors to their beneficent rulers—whom they esteemed as demi-gods.

The light of Divine revelation has dispelled these mists of superstition and impiety, and opened to the pious ruler's view, the sure prospect of unfading glory in the life to come:—And in the present state he is not without a reward.

To find that his conduct meets with public approbation,—that he is acceptable to the multitude of his brethren, greatly corroborates his internal evidence of his own integrity and impartiality,—and especially, of his ability for public action.—And which is the height of his ambition in this state of probation,—enlarges his opportunity of doing good.

The shouts of applause, not from sordid parasites, but the grateful,—the artless multitude, the pious ruler receives as the voice

of nature—the voice of God.—This is his support under the weight of government, and fixes his dependence upon the aid of the Almighty, in whose fear he rules.

How excellent in the sight of God and man, are rulers of this character !

Truly the light is good, and a pleasant thing it is to behold the sun—Thus desirable—thus benign, are wise and faithful rulers to a people. The beautiful allusion in the text naturally illustrates this.

The Sun, as the center of the solar system, connects the planetary worlds, and retains them in their respective orbits: They all yield to the greater force of his attractive power,—and thus with the greatest regularity observe the laws, impressed upon the material creation.

The Ruler of the day, as on a throne, shining in his strength, nearly preserves his station, and under the prime agent, directs all their motions—imparting light and heat to his several attendants, and the various beings which the Creator has placed upon them.

them. His refulgent rays dispel the gloomy shades, and cause the cheerful light to arise out of thick darkness, and all nature to rejoice.

The Planets, with their lesser attendants, in conformity to their common head, mutually reflect with feeble beams their borrowed light, for the common benefit ; and all, in proportion to their distance and gravity bear their part, to support the balance of the grand machine.

By this apposite metaphor, the Divine Spirit has represented the character and extensive beneficence of the faithful ruler—who with a God-like ardor employs his authority and influence, to advance the common interest.

The righteous Lord, whose countenance beholdeth the upright, will support and succeed rulers of this character: And it is an evidence of his favor to a people, when such are appointed to rule over them.

The natural effect of this is quietness and peace, as showers upon the tender grass, and clear shining after rain.

In

In this case a loyal people must be happy, and fully sensible that they are so---while they find their persons in safety---their liberties preserved---their property defended,---and their confidence in their rulers entire.

The necessary expences of government will be born by the community with pleasure, while justice holds the balance, and righteousness flows down their streets.

Such a civil state, according to the natural course of things, must flourish in peace at home, and be respectable abroad—private virtues will be encouraged, and vice driven into darkness--industry in the most effectual manner promoted--arts and sciences patronized---the true fear of God cultivated,---and his worship maintained.

This,--this is their only invaluable treasure.---This is the glory, safety and best interest of rulers--the sure protection and durable felicity of a people.---This, thro' the Redeemer, renders the Almighty propitious, and nigh unto a people in all they call upon him for.

Happy must the people be, that is in such a case—Yea, happy is the people whose God is the Lord. But

But the affairs of this important day demand our more immediate attention.

With sincere gratitude to our Almighty Preserver, we see the return of this Anniversary ; and the leaders of this people assembled, (tho' not according to the general desire, in the city of our solemnities)---to ask counsel of God ; and as we trust, in the integrity of their hearts, and by the skillfulness of their hands, to lead us in ways of righteousness and peace.

The season indeed is dark ; but God is our sun and shield.

When we consider the days of old, and the years of ancient time,—the scene brightens,—our hopes revive.

Our Fathers trusted in God,—He was their help and their shield.

These ever memorable worthies, nearly a century and an half since, by the prevalence of spiritual and civil tyranny, were driven from their delightful native land, to seek a quiet retreat in these uncultivated ends of the earth.

And

And however doubtful it might appear to them or others, whether the lands they were going to possess, were properly under the English jurisdiction; yet our ancestors were desirous of retaining a relation to their native country, and to be considered as subjects of the same prince.

“ They left their native land, with the strongest assurances, that they and their posterity should enjoy the privileges of free natural-born English subjects; which they supposed fully comprehended in their charter. The powers of government therein confirmed to them, they considered as including English liberty in its full extent.

And however defective their charter might be in form, a thing common in that day,—yet the spirit and evident intention of it, appears to be then understood.

The reserve therein made of passing no laws contrary to those of the parent state, was then considered as a conclusive evidence of their full power, under that restriction only, to enact whatever laws they should judge conducive to their benefit.

Our

Our Fathers supposed their purchase of the aboriginals, gave them a just title to the lands—that the produce of them by their labour, was their property, which they had an exclusive right to dispose of—that a legislative power, respecting their internal polity, was ratified to them—and that nothing short of this, considering their local circumstances, could entitle them or their posterity to the rights and liberties of free, natural-born English subjects.

And it does not appear but that this was the general sentiment of the nation, and parliament.

They did not, then, view their American adventurers, in the light ancient Rome did, her distant colonies ; as tributaries, unjustly subjected to arbitrary rule ; by the dread or force of her victorious arms—But as sons, arrived to mature age—entitled to distinct property,—yet connected, by mutual ties of affection and interest, and united under the common supreme head.—

The New-England Charter, was not considered, as an act of grace, but a compact, between the Sovereign and the first patentees.

Our Fathers plead their right to the privilege of it, in their address to King Charles the second;—wherein they say— “ It was granted to them, their heirs, assigns, and associates for ever; not only the absolute use and propriety of the tract of land therein mentioned; but also full and absolute power of governing all the people of this place, by men chosen from among themselves, and according to such laws as they shall from time to time see meet to make and establish, not being repugnant to the laws of England—They paying only the fifth part of the tithes of gold and silver, that shall be found here—for and in respect of all duties, demands, exactions and services whatsoever”. And from an apprehension, that the powers given by the crown to the four commissioners sent here, were in effect subversive of their rights and government—they add, — “ We are carefully studious of all due subjection to your Majesty, and that not only for wrath, but for conscience sake.”

“ But it is a great unhappiness to be reduced to so hard a case, as to have no other testimony of our subjection and loyalty offered us but this, viz. to destroy our own being, which nature teacheth us to preserve; or to yield up our liberties, which are far dearer

dearer to us than our lives——and which, had we any fears of being deprived of, we had never wandered from our fathers houses into these ends of the earth——nor laid out our labors and estates therein.”

But all their humble addresses were to no purpose.

As an honorable historian observes——“At this time Great-Britain, and Scotland, especially, was suffering under a prince inimical to civil liberty: And New-England, without a miraculous interposition, must expect to share the same judgments.” And indeed of this bitter cup, the dregs were reserved for this people, in that and the succeeding happily short, but inglorious reign.

Our Charter was dissolved, and despotic power took place.

Sir Edmund Andros—a name never to be forgotten—in imitation of his Royal Master, in wanton triumph, trampled upon all our laws and rights.—And his government was only tolerable, as it was a deliverance from the shocking terrors of the more infamous Kirk.

Sir Edmund at first made high professions of regard to the public good--But it has been observed,--- "that Nero concealed his tyrannical disposition more years than Sir Edmund and his creatures did months."

But the triumphing of the wicked is often short.

The glorious revolution, under the Prince of Orange, displayed a brighter scene to Great-Britain, and her colonies. And tho' no part of its extended empire did bear a greater part in the joy of that memorable event than this province, yet it was then apprehended we were not the greatest sharers in the happy effects of it.

I trust we are not insensible of the blessings we then received, nor unthankful for our deliverance from the depths of woe.

We submitted to the form of government established under our present Charter—trusting, under God, in the wisdom and paternal tenderness of our gracious Sovereign---That in all appointments reserved to the crown, a sacred regard would be maintained to the rights of British subjects ;---and that the royal ear would always be open to every reasonable request and complaint. It

It is far from my intention to determine whether there has been just reason for uneasiness or complaint on this account——But with all submission, I presume the present occasion will permit me to say,——That the importance of his Majesty's Council to this people appears in a more conspicuous light, since the endeavors which have been used, to render this invaluable branch of our constitution, wholly dependent upon the chair.

Should this ever be the case, which God forbid——Liberty here will cease.——This day of the gladness of our hearts, will be turned into the deepest sorrow.

The authority and influence of his Majesty's Council, in various respects, while happily free from restraints, is momentous: our well-being greatly depends upon their wisdom and integrity.

The concern of electing to this important trust, wise and faithful men, belongeth to our Honored Fathers now in General Assembly convened.

Men of this character we trust are to be found, and upon such, and only such, we presume will the eye of the electors be this day.

It

It is with pleasure that we see this choice in the hands of a very respectable part of the community, and nearly interested in the effects of it.

But our reliance, Fathers, under God, is upon your acting in his fear.

God standeth in the assembly of the mighty, and perfectly discerns the motives by which you act——May his fear rule in your hearts, and unerring counsel be your guide.

You have received a sure token of respect, by your being raised to this high trust ; —but true honor is acquired only by acting in character.

Honor yourselves, Gentlemen,---Honor the council-board---your country---your king---and your God, by the choice you this day make.

You will attentively consider the true design of all civil government ; and without partiality, give your voice for those you judge most capable and disposed to promote the public interest.---Then you will have the satisfaction of having faithfully discharged
your

your trust--and be sure of the approbation of the Most High.

The chief command, in this province, is now devolved upon one of distinguished abilities, who knows our state, and naturally, must care for us--One, who in early life has received from his country the highest tokens of honor and trust, in its power to bestow. And we have a right to expect, that the higher degrees of them conferred by our gracious Sovereign, will operate thro' the course of his administration, to the welfare of this people.

His Honor is not insensible, that as his power is independent of the people, their safety must depend, under providence, upon his wisdom,---justice, and paternal tenderness, in the exercise of it.

It is our ardent wish and prayer, that his administration may procure ease and quietness to himself, and the province.---And having served his generation according to the Divine will,---he may rise to superior honors in the kingdom of God.

When the elections of this important day are determined---what farther remains to be undertaken

undertaken for the securing our liberties--- promoting peace and good order---and above all---the advancement of religion---the true fear of God thro' the land, will demand the highest attention of the General Assembly.

We trust the fountain of light, who giveth wisdom freely, will not scatter darkness in your paths---and that the day is far distant, when there shall be cause, justly to complain---The foundations are destroyed ; what can the righteous do ?

Our present distresses, Civil Fathers, loudly call upon us all, and you in special, to stir up ourselves in the fear of God---Arise, this matter belongeth unto you, we also will be with you, be of good courage and do it.

Whether any other laws are necessary for this purpose ; or whether there is a failure in the execution of the laws in being, I presume not to say.---But with all due respect, I may be permitted to affirm, that no human authority can enforce the practice of religion with equal success to your example.

Your example, Fathers, not only in your public administrations, but also in private life, will be the most forcible law---the most effectual

fectual means to teach us the fear of the Lord, and to depart from evil.

Then, and not till then, shall we be free indeed---being delivered from the dominion of sin, we become the true sons of God.

The extent of the secular power, in matters of religion, is undetermined ;—but all agree,—that the example of those in authority, has the greatest influence upon the manners of the people.

We are far from pleading for any established mode of worship ; but an operative fear of God---the honor of the Redeemer, the everlasting King---according to his gospel.

We whose peculiar charge it is to instruct the people, preach to little purpose, while those in an advanced state, by their practice say—the fear of God is not before their eyes.—Yet will we not cease to seek the Lord, till he come and rain down righteousness upon us.

I trust, on this occasion, I may, without offence—plead the cause of our African slaves ; and humbly propose the pursuit of
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some effectual measures, at least, to prevent the future importation of them.

Difficulties insuperable, I apprehend, prevent an adequate remedy for what is past.

Let the time past more than suffice, wherein we, the patrons of liberty, have dishonoured the christian name,—and degraded human nature, nearly to a level with the beasts that perish.

Ethiopia has long stretched out her hands to us—Let not sordid gain, acquired by the merchandize of slaves, and the souls of men—harden our hearts against her piteous moans. When God ariseth, and when he visiteth, what shall we answer!

May it be the glory of this province—of this respectable General Assembly—and we could wish, of this session, to lead in the cause of the oppressed.—This will avert the impending vengeance of heaven—procure you the blessing of multitudes of your fellow men ready to perish—be highly approved by our common Father, who is no respecter of persons,—and we trust, an example which would excite the highest attention of our sister colonies.

May

May we all, both rulers and people, in this day of doubtful expectation, know and practice the things of our peace—and serve the Lord our God without disquiet, in the inheritance which he granted unto our fathers.

These adventurous worthies, animated by sublimer prospects, dearly purchased this land with their treasure.—They and their posterity have defended it with unknown cost,*—in continual jeopardy of their lives—and with their blood.

Thro' the good hand of our God upon us, we have for a few years past been delivered from the merciless sword of the wilderness, and enjoyed peace in our borders—and there is in the close of our short summer the appearance of plenty in our dwellings ; but from the length of our winters, our plenty is consumed, and the one half of our necessary labour is spent in dispersing to our flocks and herds, the ingatherings of the foregoing season : And it is known to every person of common observation, that few—very few, except in the mercantile way,—

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from

• Be it far from me, O Lord, said the ancient Hero, that I should do this ; is not this the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives ? therefore he would not drink it. —Will not the like sentiments rise in a generous mind, shruik into our possessions ? —

from one generation to another, acquire more than a necessary subsistence, and sufficient to discharge the expences of government, and the support of the gospel—yet content, and disposed to lead peaceable lives.

From misinformations, only, we would conclude, recent disquiets have arisen—they need not be mentioned—they are too well known——their voice is gone out thro' all the earth—and their sound to the end of the world.—The enemies of Great-Britain hold us in derision—while her cities and colonies are thus perplexed.

America now pleads her right to her possessions—--which she cannot resign, while she apprehends she has truth and justice on her side.

Americans esteem it their greatest infelicity, that thro' necessity, they are thus led to plead with their parent state—the land of their fore-father's nativity, whose interest has always been dear to them*—and whose wealth they have increased by their removal, much more than their own.

They

* Their losses, and private expences, in watches, guards and garrisons for their defence, and from continual alarms—in all their former wars—have greatly exceeded the public charges.

They have assisted in fighting her battles, and greatly enlarged her empire—and God, helping, will yet extend it thro' the boundless desert, untill it reach from sea to sea.

They glory in the British constitution, and are abhorrent, to a man, of the most distant thought of withdrawing their allegiance from their gracious Sovereign, and becoming an independent state.

And tho' with unwearied toil, the colonists can now subsist upon the labors of their own hands—which they must be driven to, when deprived of the means of purchase,—yet they are fully sensible of the mutual benefits of an equitable commerce with the parent country ; and chearfully submit to regulations of trade, productive of the common interest.

These their claims, the Americans consider, not as novel, or wantonly made, but founded in nature—in compact—in their right as men—and British subjects——The same which their fore-fathers the first occupants made, and asserted, as the terms of their removal with their effects into this wilderness

ness*—and with which the glory and interest of their King, and all his dominions, are connected.

May these alarming disputes be brought to a just and speedy issue—and peace and harmony be restored.

But, while in imitation of our pious forefathers, we are aiming at the security of our liberties ; we should all be concerned to express, by our conduct, their piety and virtue. And in a day of darkness, and general distress,—carefully avoid every thing offensive to God, or injurious to men.

It belongs not only to rulers—but subjects also, to set the Lord always before their face, and act in his fear.

While under government, we claim a right to be treated as men ;---we must act in character, by yielding that subjection which becometh us as men.

Let every attempt to secure our liberties be conducted with a manly fortitude ; but
with

- * It is apprehended, a greater sacrifice of private interest to the public good, both of Great-Britain and the Colonies, hath at no time been made, than that of the patriotic merchants, of this, and all the considerable colonies, by their non-importation agreement——And whatever the effects may be, their names will be remembered with gratitude to the latest generations, by all true friends to Britain and her Colonies.

with that respectful decency, which reason approves, and which alone gives weight to the most salutary measures.

Let nothing divert us from the paths of truth and peace, which are the ways of God—and then we may be sure that he will be with us as he was with our fathers ---and never leave nor forsake us.

Our Fathers, where are they?--They looked for another and better country, that is an heavenly. They were but as sojourners here ; and have long since resigned these their transitory abodes, and are securely seated in mansions of glory.—They hear not the voice of the oppressor.

We also are all strangers on earth ; and must soon, without distinction, lie down in the dust ; and rise not, till these heavens and earth are no more.

May we all realize the appearance of the Son of God, to judge the world in righteousness;--and improve the various talents committed to our trust ; that we may then lift up our heads with joy---and thro' grace, receive an inheritance which cannot be taken away---even life everlasting.

A M E N.
