

A 5
S E R M O N

PREACHED BEFORE HIS EXCELLENCY

FRANCIS BERNARD, ESQ;

GOVERNOR,

THE HONORABLE

HIS MAJESTY'S COUNCIL,

AND THE HONORABLE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

Of the PROVINCE of the

Massachusetts-Bay in New-England,

MAY 29th 1765.

BEING the *Anniversary* for the ELECTION of
HIS MAJESTY'S COUNCIL for the PROVINCE.

By ANDREW ELIOT, A. M.

Pastor of a Church in BOSTON.

B O S T O N :

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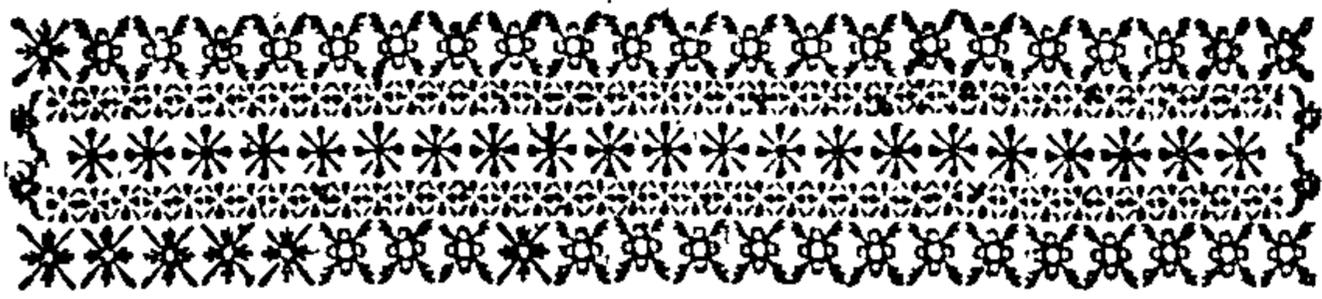
MDCCLXV.

In the House of REPRESENTATIVES,
May 30, 1765.

RESOLVED, *That Mr. Cushing of Boston, Mr. Gray, and Judge Russell, be a Committee to return the Thanks of this House to the Rev'd Mr. Andrew Eliot, for his Sermon preached Yesterday before the General Court, being the Anniversary Election of Councillors, and desire a Copy thereof for the Press.*

Attest.

Roland Cotton, *Cl. Dom. Rep.*



AN ELECTION-SERMON.

I CHRON. XII. 32.

And of the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do, the heads of them were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their commandment.



ACCORDING to the original constitution of the Hebrew polity, "each tribe was under it's own proper and distinct government; and order'd it's affairs by it's own princes, heads of families, elders and courts". At the same time, there was a union of all the tribes, the whole congregation had a right to meet together, either personally or by their representatives, to consult the common good and the prosperity of the whole.

After

After the death of Saul there seems to have been a breach in this general union. The tribe of Judah set up David to be king, the other tribes adhered to Ishbōsheth the son of Saul. Ishbōsheth being dead, the other tribes, sensible how prejudicial such a disunion was to their common interest, by mutual consent made David king over all Israel. This was done, it's like, by a convention of the states from each province, or an assembly of the heads of each tribe.

David had long before been anointed, by a special commission from God, to be king of Israel. This was only an intimation from heaven of what would certainly take place. Neither David nor Saul before him claimed any authority in virtue of this divine appointment, until they were elected by the people, and solemnly inaugurated in their high office.

Among others, who came to Hebron to make David king, were the children of Issachar, who appeared by the heads of the tribe; of these it is particularly said, they "were men that had understanding of the times, to know

know what Israel ought to do, they were in number two hundred, and all their brethren were at their commandment.”

It is an excellent character that is given of the heads of Issachar, and it was a singular favor to this tribe, that they had such a number who were able to guide them at this critical season.—You are told the good effect of their wisdom and prudence, there was an entire union between them and the rest of the community. They who were in government were possessed of talents which qualified them for their trust, and their brethren were so satisfied of their prudence and integrity, that they reposed an entire confidence in them, and submitted to their authority without murmuring or opposition.

You have here the model of a happy state: What a prospect of peace and lasting prosperity, where rulers are wise and good, and the people are quiet and submissive!

What I propose in the following discourse is,

First,

First, To consider the character of a good ruler as it is drawn in the text. And then,

Secondly, To point out the duty of subjects to their rulers.

The first thing that presents itself to our consideration, is the character of a good ruler. And in order to determine when men are qualified to govern, it is necessary to take a general view of the great end of government.

It is not to be supposed that mankind would resign their natural freedom only for the sake of pomp and appearance, much less to gratify the pride and avarice of those they place in authority over them. The only rational view they can have is the common good. If men could subsist as well in a state of independency and absolute liberty, there is nothing in reason or conscience to oblige them to subjection. The necessity of government arises wholly from the disadvantages, which, in the present imperfect state of human nature, would be the natural consequence of unlimited freedom. This necessity

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ty is so apparent that the most savage and barbarous of mankind have been convinced of it ; and wherever they have formed themselves into society, have erected some kind of government. In this sense all power is from God, as that constitution, which makes government necessary, originates with him who is the author of nature ; and such a constitution is as certain an intimation of the divine will, as an express revelation. There is no positive appointment or command ; we argue the design of heaven that there should be civil government, because it is apparently for the advantage of mankind. “ He is the minister of God to thee for good”.

If the public good is the great, the only end of magistracy ; it follows that they only are worthy to be entrusted with the powers of government, who know what the public interest is, and are capable of advancing it. The heads of every community should, like the heads of Issachar, “ have understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do”.

This character supposes, that rulers have a good degree of wisdom and knowlege—That they are particularly acquainted with the constitution of the country they are called to govern—That they are men of virtue and religion—And that they have prudence to conduct affairs in seasons that are critical and alarming.

First. Wisdom and knowlege are very necessary qualifications of a public ruler. The ends of government will not be answered by committing the administration of affairs to one or more men, but by committing it to those who are capable of discharging the trust reposed in them. The meanest office requires talents suited to that office, but when men are put in places of extensive authority, they ought to have extensive abilities.

Wisdom and knowlege are so necessary for every one who has a share in government, that nothing can supply their place. The experience of all ages evidences the justice of that exclamation of king Solomon. "Wo to thee, O land, when thy king is a child!" If weak or ignorant men are entrusted with power, what can you expect but
universal

universal confusion ! If men were not wise before, they are not like to become wise by being placed in a station of eminence. Such exaltation will rather make them giddy and vain, and deprive them of the little understanding they had before.

If such magistrates mean ever so well, yet they know not how to execute their good purposes, and their administration is like to be a series of the most fatal errors. If they depend on others to manage the affairs of government, the event will not be better. Men of weak minds can seldom bear the checks and counsels of plain honest men, who know not how to disguise the truth, or to speak that which they do not think in their hearts. Parasites and flatterers easily gain their favor, who will soothe their vanity, and accommodate themselves to their foibles. And the state of such a people is often worse than where rulers are men of capacity, even tho' they are very deficient in their principles of action.

Bad men who can look to consequences are often under the restraint of fear, where

they have no other. They are aware of danger from the resentment of an injured people, if they abuse their power. But men without knowlege are devoid of such fears; and they who have the management of them endeavour artfully to conceal their own share in the public misconduct, and make use of the power with which they are vested to gratify their base and fordid passions, to the ruin of the community, and often of those who vested them with it.

It is not every kind of genius or of knowlege that qualifies a man to goyern. Many a one has made a shining figure as a philosopher or mathematician, who has had no turn for politics, and been intirely ignorant of the art of governing. It is frequently the case, that great scholars have no acquaintance with men, than which no branch of knowlege is of greater importance in a public ruler. It is necessary to know the various tempers of those he has to govern; to penetrate their particular views and interests, and even their foibles and passions, that he may make them all subservient to the public good. It is necessary to discern their different talents and capacities,

cities, that he may know whom to put into places of profit and trust, and may employ those who are fit to be employed.

Is a ruler called to act the part of a legislator? What need of a sound and exact judgment, that the laws he makes may be good and wholesome, accommodated to the temper and circumstances of the people for whom they are made; and that while he endeavors to restrain vice and licentiousness, he may not unreasonably infringe the liberties of the community?

When laws are made, it requires no small degree of understanding and of study to enter into their true spirit, to know how to apply them in every case that occurs, and to execute them with prudence and impartiality.

Where government subsists, there must necessarily be burthens laid on the people to defray the charges of it. There is nothing that affects men more than when you touch their interest; people in general find it hard to procure the conveniencies of life; nothing will sooner alienate their minds from government,

vernment; than when rulers needlessly deprive them of that which they have dearly earn'd, and wantonly dissipate the public treasures. Rulers ought ever to proceed in this part of their duty with caution and prudence, that people may see the taxes they impose are not to gratify their pride, their avarice, or any other passion; not to carry on any private design; but that they are necessary for the support of government and the exigencies of the state.

Every large community is constituted of a number of little societies, in which there will be different branches of business. These, whatever pains are taken to prevent it, will have their different connections, and form separate interests; it is vastly difficult for those who govern, to keep the balance so exactly poiz'd that neither part may be injured; but much more, to prevent jealousies and suspicions that things are carried by favor and affection.

The rulers of a people are seldom so happy as to please all who are under their authority: They have often personal enemies;

or crafty and ambitious men find fault with government because they are not in place: They had need be wise as serpents as well as harmless as doves to counterwork the machinations of such men, to give no occasion of offence to those who seek occasion, or to prevent the bad effect of the misrepresentations they will industriously spread.

Almost every state has it's neighbours, who watch for a favorable opportunity to encroach on it's territories, or to gain some other advantage. A ruler ought to keep a watchful eye over them, to get knowledge of their motions and designs; to prevent insult, or to resent it when offered. In these cases there is need of a thoro' acquaintance both with their strength and our own; that we may not by an ill-timed opposition expose ourselves to greater injuries, or by mean submissions encourage them to despise and abuse us.

A ruler who suitably attends to the great end of government must look beyond present circumstances, and carefully consider the tendency and consequence of every measure.

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He cannot but be sensible how much the present times are affected by the transactions that are past, and the precedents that have been established. He will doubtless see that the community has received hurt from the mistakes, as well as advantage from the prudence of those who have gone before. He bears on his mind, that his administration is like equally to affect those that follow, and endeavours to take the whole interest of his country in view, the future as well as the present. He consults the good of distant generations, leaves as little as possible for them to correct, and as far as human wisdom can, lays his plans, not meerly to keep things quiet while he is on the stage, but that the happiness of his country may be of long duration, may be perpetual.

You easily see by these hints of the business and duty of rulers, that every man is not fit to govern; there must be a genius for government, and there must be constant study and application.

I have hitherto consider'd the wisdom and knowlege which are necessary for rulers in
general

general, and under almost every constitution. Besides this,

Secondly, It is necessary they should have a particular acquaintance with the constitution of the country they are called to govern.

Reason we say dictates that there should be government; and the voice of reason is the voice of God. But what form of government they will be under is left to the choice of those who are to be governed. God has never determin'd this. It becomes those who claim a divine indefeasible right, to make out their claim in a better manner than they have ever yet done, or it is absurd to suppose any, who have common understanding, or a tolerable sense of liberty, will submit to it.

All power has it's foundation in compact and mutual consent, or else it proceeds from fraud or violence. Where the latter take place, the dominion which men claim is no better than usurpation; and they, who by these methods raise themselves above their brethren, are so far from having a right to govern, that they ought to be punished as

public disturbers and the enemies of mankind.

When government is founded in mutual consent, it is the undoubted right of the community to say who shall govern them ; and to make what limitations or conditions they think proper. Perhaps the same constitution is not best for all societies, or for the same society at all times. Be this as it may ; it is very certain that mankind have established different forms of government, according to their own will and inclination : “ Some have set up one or a few men to govern them, others have seen fit to retain the power themselves :—In some the supreme magistrates have been annually elected ; in others the power is for life. In some they are merely elective, in others hereditary under certain rules or limitations”. In GREAT-BRITAIN there is a happy mixture of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy. . This is perhaps the most perfect form of civil government. It is the glory of Britons and the envy of foreigners.*

But

* Is not England at present a proof of the goodness of mixed governments and temperate monarchies ? Is there

But whatever form of civil government men have chose, there are certain constitutions, which are the basis and foundation of the state, and which are obligatory on those who govern, as well as those who are governed. These constitutions are a sort of fundamental laws, which cannot be violated without the greatest danger to a community. When either part attempts to invade the rights of the other, it usually produces convulsions, which sooner or later overturn the state.

It is necessary they who are in authority should be well acquainted with these fundamental laws; they ought to make them one main part of their study; and should not without the utmost necessity depart from them. If such a strict adherence to the constitution is sometimes attended with inconveniencies;

a nation, every thing considered, which enjoys more prosperity at home, or more renown abroad?

BURLEMAQUI.

We hope the great MONTESQUIEU is mistaken, at least that he speaks of a very distant day, when he says of our happy nation.

“As all human things have an end, the state we are speaking of will lose it's liberty, will perish. Have not Rome, Sparta, and Carthage perished? It will perish when the legislative power shall be more corrupt than the executive.”

Spirit of Laws.

veniences ; yet a departure from it will be attended with much greater. Magistrates ought to know their own power, and not tamely give up those prerogatives with which the constitution has vested them. Such mean condescension will only expose them to contempt and further encroachments, till not even a shadow of authority is left. On the other hand, they ought to be tender of the privileges of those they govern. Even in absolute monarchies, the people may by oppression and tyranny come to know that they have rights, and to assert them in a way not very pleasing to those, who have insolently and unjustly invaded them.

In free governments people are apt to feel much quicker. To touch their liberties is to touch the apple of their eye ; every attempt alarms them, makes them jealous of further designs, and often throws them into the hands of factious demagogues, who hate government, and are ever watching for opportunities to embarrass public measures, and to introduce anarchy and confusion.

Where so much depends, and the danger of acting wrong is like to have such consequences

quences to the community, and perhaps to themselves; rulers ought to know very well what it is to act right, where power ends and liberty begins. The more difficult it is to settle this point, so much the more wisdom and prudence do rulers need, and so much the more cautious should they be in acting; and where people observe such caution and tenderness in their rulers, they will make allowances for mistakes, and even for faults.

I will not say, that they who are in government may not propose an alteration in the constitution, when they see manifest inconveniencies; every member of the state may do this; and there may be extraordinary cases wherein it may be necessary to deviate from common rules; in such cases the safety of the people is to be preferred to every other consideration. But no wise ruler would desire a general power of dispensing with the laws; nor is it possible to proceed with too much caution in making any great alteration in the civil constitution of a state; especially when it has been long established, and the wisdom of ages has been employed to confirm it. Where there seem to be defects, there me-
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dy may often prove worse than the disease ; and by attempting to guard against one inconvenience, we may open the way to a great many which we do not now foresee. When a constitution is essentially bad, rulers & every one else ought to run every risque to make it better. But where the constitution is tolerably good, it is generally the wisdom of those in power, to maintain a sacred regard to it themselves ; and to endeavour that it may not be violated by others. This is their safety, and very often the safety of those they govern. When a humour of changing once begins, no mortal can tell where it will end. One can scarce conceive of an alteration more just, more necessary, and that could tend more to secure the public liberty, than the establishment of tribunes at Rome ; and yet this very regulation, seemingly so wise and good, laid the foundation of the destruction of their liberties, and the ruin of the commonwealth.*

Thirdly,

* "The people by means of the tribunes, gradually usurped the authority of the senate. From that time discipline was relaxed and gave place to licentiousness. At last the republic was, by the hands of the people, reduced to the greatest slavery."

Thirdly, Rulers cannot come up to the character of the text, unless they are men of religion and virtue. Every condition has its temptations, none are exposed to more or greater, than those who are advanced to stations of power and eminence; none have greater need of a settled principle of action, and the assistance of divine grace. If there is no regard to God or the rules of virtue, wisdom degenerates into cunning, and rulers instead of endeavouring to know what Israel ought to do, only consider what they have to do themselves; instead of aiming at the public good, they consult only what is like to promote their own private interest, support their administration, and continue them in power. The selfish passions will have the dominion; and men will sacrifice conscience, and sell their country, to carry a favourite point, or gratify their vicious inclinations. The interest of such rulers, or what they imagine to be their interest, presently becomes separate from that of the community; of consequence they are obliged to make use of every art, to keep the people quiet; to make them insensible of their infelicity, or to compel them to bear it; to put

a false gloss on their flagitious actions, or to secure a powerful party, who will support their measures, and be the instruments of their iniquity. They will choose those for their companions and counsellors, who will flatter their vanity, feed their avarice, or provide for their pleasures. These are the men they will endeavour to promote; whilst they disregard persons of a different character, who feel for their country, and have courage to oppose those measures which tend to destroy it. Vice contracts the mind, and quenches every spark of public spirit; it fills the soul with criminal prejudices, and the higher it is exalted, the mischief is so much the more extensive.

The case is quite different when power is in the hands of men of virtue and religion.

By religion I intend something more than an external shew, or a mere appearance of goodness. Hypocrisy is not only a character most detestable to God, but it makes a man more extensively mischievous to society. His sanctimonious pretences procure him the esteem and confidence of his brethren, by
which

which means he has it in his power to deceive them, and to betray their interests. No consideration can be of force sufficient to bind him, who dares to prevaricate with heaven, and to trifle with the Lord his maker. The greatest prodigies of wickedness have been those who have put on the guise of religion: For a pretence they have made long prayers, that they might, with the greater ease, accomplish their detestable designs. Nor do I call it religion to contend for a few little rites and ceremonies, which are of no importance in themselves, and will not make men either wiser or better. It does not consist in nice metaphysical distinctions, and in loud and cruel anathemas against all who will not profess to believe them. Much less is it religion to invade the rights of conscience, and to inflict pains and penalties on those who are not of the magistrates sentiments, or presume to dissent from the principles established by law. On the other hand, no one can imagine there is any religion in a careless indifference about all principles; or in clamors for charity and forbearance, while malice reigns in the heart, and we can censure, revile and persecute those whom we esteem less catholic than ourselves. D I

I call that religion which Jesus Christ taught, and which is made known to us in the sacred oracles. It is a belief of the truth, and a temper of mind correspondent to it.

A religious man, or which is now the same thing, a sincere christian, is purified in some measure from those corrupt principles, which too easily find a place in the human heart, and is deeply penetrated with the things of God. He has a supreme affection to this greatest and best of beings, and maintains a constant regard to him in all his actions. He remembers the divine presence and the account every one must give to this Lord and judge of all. He heartily submits to Christ as his prince and saviour: He has some degree of that mind which was in Christ Jesus: He desires to approve himself to him, and is animated by those glorious prospects which the gospel opens to our view.

The religion of Jesus enlarges the mind; it divests us, so far as it prevails, of every criminal prejudice; it makes us willing to deny ourselves, to sacrifice our worldly ease, our temporal interest, to the honor of God and the
good

good of men. It fortifies against temptation, it curbs our passions, it regulates our desires, it produces noble and generous sentiments, it inspires love and universal benevolence ; it teaches us to look not every one on his own things, but on the things of others ; not to confine our charity to ourselves, but to do good to all with whom we are connected, and especially to aim at the public advantage, in which the comfort and happiness of multitudes are involved.

This christian temper, which is produc'd by the Spirit of God, will more than any thing help us to distinguish between right and wrong ; when private interests and private views are removed, " the public good appears naked and open, free from all difficulties and embarrassments". When rulers have such a happy disposition, they will study the true interest of those they govern, which is the way to understand it ; they will watch against a little party spirit and every selfish sinister view ; they will suppress the dictates of pride, covetousness, and ambition ; and while with a manly firmness they support their own dignity, they will not invade the

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privileges

privileges of those who are subject to them; they will not hearken to the insinuations of flattery, nor meanly court the favor of the populace; they will not have respect to persons, nor take a gift; and will severely frown on those, who have the insolence to affront their virtue, or attempt to pervert their judgment. No motive, no temptation will allure them to join in making bad laws, or to wrest the true intention of those that are in force. Their whole ambition will be to discharge their trust with fidelity, and to make the people happy who are under their care.

I own there are other principles which may have very salutary effects. There is in some men a certain benevolence and greatness of mind, which leads them to do many worthy deeds, that others perform from a principle of religion. There are remains of conscience in men, who cannot be denominated sincere disciples of Jesus Christ. Even their ambition and self-interest may prompt men to actions which are greatly beneficial to the community, and to discharge the trust reposed in them with honor

nor and fortitude. But the better the principle, so much the greater, at least so much the more certain will be the effect. When the love and fear of God reign in the heart, men will rise to nobler heights, and to more distinguished acts of virtue, than from any other motive. When they consider the whole community as brethren, they will naturally seek the common good. When they set before them the example of our blessed Saviour, when they contemplate his ardent love to mankind and disinterested benevolence, their minds will be inflamed with a holy ambition, to emulate the virtues of this amiable, this excellent person. When the greatest men carry their thoughts to that important hour, when they must leave these transitory scenes, and their honors will be laid in the dust, how solicitous will they be that they may finish well, and have the approbation of their own minds, when they have nothing else to support them! When they look forward to that illustrious day, in which the Lord will be revealed from heaven, and the great as well as the small must stand before his tribunal; what a check is this to every sinister view and every iniquitous

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rous practice! What an incentive to justice, to integrity and universal virtue! If other qualities may render a ruler useful to society, yet surely nothing but religion, a regard to God in his public conduct, will ensure him the acceptance of heaven, and the plaudit of the great ruler and judge of all.

I am far from supposing that religion is the only thing to be regarded in a ruler. The most religious character will appear contemptible in a public station, if there are not other accomplishments: But whatever qualities a man has, it can by no means be safe, to entrust our lives, our estates, our liberties, every thing that is dear and valuable, to one who evidences by his conversation, that he has no regard to God, and is destitute of virtue and goodness. What can we expect, but that he, who will sacrifice his own most important interest, will sacrifice the interests of others, if at any time they are opposite to his vicious inclinations?

Fourthly, Another accomplishment very necessary for a good ruler, is prudence to conduct affairs in seasons that are critical and alarming. Such a season it was in Israel when

when Ishbosheth was slain. And then it was that the heads of Issachar discovered their understanding and address, by conducting with such prudence as to still every opposite faction, and bring their brethren quietly to submit to king David, which was the only expedient to save the kingdom from ruin. Affairs in a kingdom or in a province are sometimes brought to a dangerous and important crisis, from foreign enemies or internal tumults ; from the mistakes of those who wish them well, or the intrigues of designing men ; from their own vices and follies, or the wickedness of others. In such a critical situation, the friends of a people are called to arise, and to exert themselves to save them from impending ruin. This matter especially belongs to those who are in authority, the eyes of others are naturally to them, under that God who has the hearts of all men in his hand ; from them they expect relief ; and happy the people, whose rulers have at such time wisdom to discern, and virtue to pursue those measures, that tend to promote their welfare, and to prolong their tranquility.

A state cannot be sunk so low as to exclude all possibility of emerging and again flourishing. There have been so many instances of the interposition of heaven, in times of the greatest extremity, that it is unreasonable to despair, when there are the most threatening aspects. Rome was scarce ever in so dangerous a situation as after the battle of Cannæ. Their army was annihilated, their allies forsook them, and they every moment expected the victorious Hannibal at their gates. But at this very time, when there seemed to be no resource, these noble republicans were so far from giving up all as lost, that, says the historian, no one dared so much as to mention peace: They even returned thanks to the consul whose temerity had reduced them to the brink of ruin, that he had not despaired of the common-wealth.* By such magnanimity

* *Nec tamen hæ clades defectionesque sociorum moverunt; ut pacis unquam mentio apud Romanos fieret; neque ante consulis Romam adventum, nec postquam is rediit renovavitque memoriam acceptæ cladis, Quo in tempore ipso, adeo magno animo civitas fuit, ut consuli ex tanta clade, cujus ipse causa maxima fuit, redeunti, et obviam itum frequenter ab omnibus ordinibus fit, et gratiæ actæ, quod de republica non desperasset; cui, si Carthaginiensium ductor fuisset, nihil recusandum supplicii foret.*

Liv. Lib. xxii. cap. lxi.

mity they rose out of adversity *, retrieved their losses, made themselves terrible to their neighbours, and laid a foundation for that astonishing grandeur to which they afterward arrived.

Nothing is so like to make our case desperate as to conclude it is so : This stops the springs of action, prevents all attempts to extricate ourselves out of difficulties, and to recover the community. Those of superior character ought to have superior steadiness, instead of determining that nothing can be done, they ought to enquire what is to be done ; what they can do themselves; and what Israel ought to do. Some men are very happy in finding out expedients in the most difficult cases ; they know how to steer in the most tempestuous times ; are able to counterwork those who

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secretly

* Dixitque tandem perfidus Annibal—

Gens quæ crematâ fortis ab Ilio,

Jaçtata Tuscis æquoribus sacra,

Natosque maturosque patres

Pertulit Ausonias ad urbes ;

Duris ut ilex tonsa bipennibus

Nigræ feraci frondis in Algido,

Per damna, per cedes, ab ipso

Ducit opes animumque ferro.

Hor.

secretly endeavor to undermine the state, or to give them a just view of things, who are in danger of doing hurt for want of better information ; to remove every unreasonable prejudice in the mind of those, who have power to injure us ; or to govern our tempers, and regulate our passions, that we may not destroy ourselves. This is a talent very different from that wisdom which is profitable to direct in a common state of things. A man may be a good pilot in a moderate gale, who can do nothing in a storm. Some men who would make very good rulers in a time of prosperity, are quite unfit to lead in times that are intricate and perplexed. They lose the possession of themselves ; they are timorous and irresolute, and so neglect to do what ought to be done ; or they are rash and violent, and by their imprudence precipitate the ruin they intend to prevent. It is of the greatest importance that rulers have understanding of the times in such critical seasons. While others are hurried by their fears and passions, and know not what to do, they ought sedately to consider the tendency and consequences of present events,

events, and should endeavor to guide into measures, that will be most likely to prevent the evils that are feared, or to make them tolerable if they must come.

There is one course, which if it will not be a certain cure, will yet be a great relief in the most dangerous state we can be in; and that is the practice of piety and universal virtue. Virtue does in itself tend to promote public happiness. Frugality, temperance, industry will extricate us out of most difficulties that can arise; and if we are actuated by religion, God will be our God, our protector, and friend; "it will be well with us and our children forever." Whatever he does else, if a ruler has understanding in the times, he will promote the fear of God and obedience to his laws.

I have now considered some of the distinguishing qualities of a good ruler. It is not to be expected, in the present imperfect state, that rulers will be free from mistakes or faults; whoever looks for such a behaviour from any man or from any set of men, will undoubtedly be disappointed.

But though you may not expect a perfect character, yet the great author of nature, whose tender mercies are over all his works, “has thought fit to mingle from time to time among the societies of men, a few of those on whom he is graciously pleased to bestow a larger proportion of understanding and integrity, than is given in the ordinary course of his providence to the sons of men. There are superior spirits, men who are born to guide, to instruct, and to preserve”; their abilities and their virtues denote that they were formed for the public good, and it would be a fault not to improve those talents, with which the great Lord of all has entrusted them. They ought not to let slip any opportunity that presents to serve their country, or to do good to mankind.

There are indeed arts and intrigues, by which some men intrude themselves into stations of dignity, which are below one of a great and generous mind, and which no consideration will persuade him to make use of. But to say that men ought always to avoid such stations thro’ a modest diffidence

dence of their own abilities ; or that a people ought to reject those, who discover a willingness to be employed, is to carry the matter much too far ; and a correspondent practice might have very bad effects. It might deprive societies of the best heads and hearts, and leave them a prey to crafty and ambitious men, whose only care would be to aggrandize and enrich themselves. A true patriot cannot do his country a more important service, than by taking it out of the hands of such devouring harpies. Conscious of his own superiority, and a generous regard to the public good, he ought to despise the little reflections of those who are only uneasy because they are not in place, and cannot accomplish their base designs. The history of Rome scarce affords a more illustrious character than that of Fabius Maximus. This great man, having finished the year of his consulate, when Rome was engaged in dangerous wars, found that the suffrages for a new consul were like to be in favor of one, who was quite raw and inexperienced. He stop'd their proceedings, set before the electors the danger of such a choice

choice at such a time, and drew a character of the person they ought to choose, which they could apply to none but himself; the assembly was convinced, recalled their votes, and unanimously elected him. Such was the exigency of affairs, says the historian,* that no one attended to the danger of the precedent, or had the least suspicion that the consul was actuated by a lust of dominion, but all rather extolled his greatness of mind, that when he knew the commonwealth stood in need of its greatest commander, and that he was without exception the man, he would rather run the hazard of the most invidious reflections, than miss an opportunity of serving his country.

It is however much more agreeable to a generous mind, to be called out by others to public service, than in any sort to offer himself: And a people who have any regard

* *Tempus ac necessitas belli, ac discrimen summæ rerum faciebant, nequis aut in exemplum exquireret, aut suspectum cupiditatis imperii consulem haberet, quin laudabant potius magnitudinem animi, quod quum summo imperatore esse opus republicæ sciret, seque eum haud dubie esse; minoris invidiam suam, siqua ex re oriretur, quam utilitatem reipublicæ fecisset.*

regard to their own safety, will endeavor to find out merit where ever it is hid, and to confer their honors on those who know how to improve them.

So far indeed, as government is by the constitution hereditary, a people are obliged to submit to the disposals of providence, and to pay homage to the lawful heir, whether his abilities are great or small : And in large communities, the advantage of hereditary monarchy is generally sufficient to balance every inconvenience ; and where it is not, it is in their own power to do themselves justice, as they have generally done sooner or later. Witness among other instances, the glorious revolution in BRITAIN, to which noble exertion of national virtue, we owe the preservation of our liberty, and the present happy establishment of the house of HANOVER.

When a people immediately appoint their own rulers, they are to the last degree infatuated, if they fix on those, who are not capable of seeing with their own eyes, but are obliged to move by the direction

tion of others, or who get into power to gratify their vanity, their luxury, or their avarice; and it requires no spirit of prophecy to foresee, that a community who are so lost to public virtue, are nigh to destruction. A people may be deceived, they may be betrayed, by men in whom they put confidence. But they deserve to be abandoned by providence, if they trust their interest with men, whom they know to be either weak or wicked.

I am in the second place to speak of the duty of subjects to their rulers; and the illustrating this will show, at the same time, the happy influence which good government is like to have on the community. “The heads of Issachar were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do, *and all their brethren were at their commandment.*”

The duty of rulers and subjects is mutual; rulers ought to love their people and to seek their welfare; and the people on their part, ought to be subject to the higher powers, to obey magistrates, and to submit

submit to their lawful commands, both are necessary to the public happiness. If people will not submit to those who are placed over them, there is an end of government, and to all the happy purposes for which it was instituted; the whole is thrown into a state of anarchy and confusion, which will soon terminate in the other extreme, tyranny and oppression. Submission to authority is supposed in the very nature of government, it is founded in the highest reason; without it, the most perfect virtue in rulers will not answer any valuable end.

Obedience to rulers is a matter of so much importance, that our Saviour and his apostles, who meddled very little with the kingdoms of this world, thought it necessary to enjoin it on christians. "Render" says our "Lord, to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's"*.

“ Let every soul, says St. Paul, † be
“ subject to the higher powers; for there
“ is no power but of God, the powers
“ that be are ordained of God, whosoever
“ therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the
“ ordinance of God; and they that resist
“ shall

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* Matt: xxii. 21.

† Rom. xiii. 1. 2.

“shall receive to themselves damnation.” St. Peter directs, * “submit yourselves to every *human constitution* for the Lord’s sake; whether it be to the king as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him, for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well; for so is the will of God.” From such passages as these, some have argued the doctrine of passive obedience and non-resistance in all cases whatsoever; or that we are not to oppose those who are in authority, although they evidently act contrary to the design of their institution, and are bent to ruin the society, which it is their duty to defend and promote. A doctrine so big with absurdity, that one would think no one of common understanding could embrace it; certainly he must have the temper of a slave that can practice upon it. St. Paul very plainly teaches us how far subjection is due to a civil magistrate, when he gives it as a reason for this subjection, “for he is the minister of God to thee for good †.” The end for which God has placed men in authority

* 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14, 15. † Rom. xiii. 4.

thority is, that they may promote the public happiness : When they improve their power to contrary purposes, when they endeavour to subvert the constitution, and to enslave a free people, they are no longer the ministers of God ; they do not act by his authority ; if we are obliged to be subject, it is only for wrath and not for conscience sake, and they who support such rulers betray their country, and deserve the misery they bring on themselves. Happy would it be if it was confined to them !

I am sensible, it is difficult to state this point with precision ; to determine where submission ends and resistance may lawfully take place, so as not to leave room for men of bad minds unreasonably to oppose government, and to destroy the peace of society. Most certainly people ought to bear much, before they engage in any attempts against those who are in authority ; they ought to consider their rulers as frail and fallible men, who are liable to mistakes and faults, when their general aim is good and right ; they should overlook their errors, and even their vices, if they are not
such

such as tend directly to overturn the state, and to bring distress and ruin on the whole community. Better a particular person, yea many individuals should suffer, than to encourage civil broils and a public disturbance.

When rulers are wise and good, opposition is an high crime; men ought not to make their own jealousies, resentments, or private interest, a pretence for resisting authority, or to stir up factions and seditions against their rulers. Such men will be the faulty causes of the evils that follow, and will have an awful account to give at the bar of God; “whosoever resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God, and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.”

Men of such perverse and turbulent minds may possibly, by dark intrigues and false insinuations, raise suspicions of evil designs, and of schemes that never entered into any one's head but their own; and as rulers are imperfect, they may find opportunities from their mistakes, to fill the
minds

minds of people with prejudices and uneasiness; they may possibly prevail to raise tumults and disturbances; but very often they fall into the pit they digged for others; God in his providence brings to light their dark designs, and they become the objects of universal contempt and abhorrence.

People are generally capable of knowing when they are well used. Public happiness is easily felt. Men cannot but perceive, when they enjoy their rights and privileges; when they sit at quiet under their own vines and fig-trees, and there is none to make them afraid; when the laws of the land have their course, and justice is impartially administered; when no unreasonable burthens are laid upon them; when their rulers are ready to hear their complaints and to redress their wrongs; when they treat them with condescension, tenderness and affection; when they sympathise with them under their difficulties, and like their great master are afflicted in all their afflictions. Such a temper and conduct in rulers are easily perceived without any extraordinary penetration. It

It is not without design, that the sacred historian speaks of the heads of Issachar and the rest of the tribe as *brethren*; and this suggests a good reason for their so ready subjection, “and all their brethren were “at their commandment”. When a people perceive, that they who have power in their hands still treat them as brethren, as partaking of the same common nature, and as having a right to their liberty and property; they will have a reciprocal affection to their rulers, they will be loth to grieve and offend them, they will be quiet and peaceable, and will do what they can, to render their administration easy, who improve their power only to make them happy. If at any time the people clamour and find fault, as they sometimes do under the best government, in consequence of real or imaginary misconduct, or when heavy burthens are laid upon them, they soon recover their temper, they forget the faults of their rulers, they remember only their good deeds, and there is danger that to make amends for their past mistakes, they will run mad with loyalty and submission.

Rulers.

Rulers have so many ways of keeping up their influence, that it is not easy to effect a general opposition, even where they have the most pernicious designs. A good ruler is almost sure of love and esteem, of submission and obedience. "Men love their happiness too well to destroy and ruin it, by opposing those from whom they know it is derived to them." Experience shows, that if they, who are vested with power, have but a moderate share of public virtue, they are admired and honored while they live, and their memory is blessed long after they are dead. Rulers therefore always have it in their power, to secure the people in their interest, and to gain a place in their hearts. By attending to their duty, they will promote the happiness of the people, and at the same time fix their own authority. If the heads of a community have understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do, they will be like to have all their brethren at their commandment. But where men are grossly of a contrary character, and pervert their power to tyrannical purposes; submission, if it can be avoided, is so far from being a duty, that it is a
crime,

crime. It is an offence against the state of which we are members, and whose happiness we ought to prefer to our chief joy. It is an offence against mankind, whose rights we meanly betray. It is an offence against God, who is good to all, and who has appointed government for the welfare and happiness, and not the destruction of his creatures.

How happy is GREAT-BRITAIN in a Prince, who accounts it his glory to reign over a free people, and who, we trust, will always make the laws of the land the rule of his administration ! How still more happy, in a constitution that scarce admits of tyranny, unless the people themselves become corrupt and venal ; and when that is the case, nothing but omnipotence can save them !

It is the safety of the British nation that it's monarchy is hereditary, as that right is now understood. It is a favor of heaven, that our lawful Sovereign is possess'd of virtues, which ensure him the love and obedience of his subjects. “ Because the Lord
“ hath

“hath loved his people he hath made thee
“king over them.” May that kind pro-
vidence, which has so often appeared for
our nation, still watch over it for good;
disappoint every attempt to subvert their
liberties, and preserve them from those in-
ternal vices and corruptions, which they
have more reason to fear than any foreign
enemy, or open violence!

The form of government in this pro-
vince is a little model of the British consti-
tution. Our commander in chief, who re-
presents the King, is not elected by our-
selves. We do not complain of this as an
infringement of our liberties; it rather
frees us from many inconveniencies, which
would attend frequent popular elections.
Especially may we esteem it a privilege,
while we have a Gentleman at our head, who
so well understands our civil constitution, and
who, we persuade ourselves, sincerely aims at
the happiness of the people he is appointed
to govern. May his Excellency's services
for the public always find acceptance with
an obliged and grateful people! and may

he have the approbation of his great Lord, when he gives an account of the talents committed to him !

The other branches of our legislature are chose by ourselves. It refreshes our hearts to see the return of this anniversary, and we hope fills them with thankfulness to God. The presence of our General Assembly, and the business of this day, put us in mind of the liberties we enjoy, while more than nine-tenths of mankind are in the most abject slavery, and multitudes of them, to the basest and worst of the human race. We conclude it is from the experience their constituents have had of their wisdom and integrity, that so many are returned to serve in the present assembly, who have formerly had a seat there. We cannot think this people are yet so corrupt, as generally to be influenced in their elections by other considerations. We trust that they, whom they have honored with this mark of their confidence, will have a sacred regard to their interest, and will not suffer any sinister views to byass or govern them.

One of our valuable charter privileges is this day to be exercised. A privilege, to which it is owing, that the province has of her sons at the council-board; men who naturally care for our state, and who are deeply interested in the consequences of every public measure. God grant that this privilege may never be wrested from us! One way to prevent so fatal an event, is to make a wise use of this important trust, to choose “out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness;” who understand our interest, and have virtue to pursue it. If our present Councillors are such men, their experience in public business will doubtless give them a great advantage.

Wisdom and integrity are always necessary to constitute a good ruler; but when the state of a people is perplexed and difficult, it requires more attention, and a greater exertion of abilities; and by their prudence and steadiness at such times, rulers make it evident, that they are qualified for the trust reposed in them. Such a critical season, if I mistake not, is the present; and

and I cannot easily be mistaken, when all orders of men are so generally alarmed, in this and the other colonies, and apprehend their most valuable privileges in danger.

I am far from impeaching the justice of the British Parliament. If any acts have pass'd that seem hard on the colonies, we ought to suppose, they are not owing to any design formed against them, but to mistakes and misrepresentations.---To you, our honored rulers, it belongs to rectify such mistakes, in such ways as you shall think decent and proper.

Our fathers dearly bought the privileges we enjoy. It is evident, when they left their native land, they thought the rights of Englishmen would follow them wherever they sat down, and be transmitted to their posterity; and we hope their posterity have done nothing to forfeit them. It was kindly and justly said by Bishop Burnet to a New-England agent, as I find it delivered before his excellent Son and the General Assembly of this province *. "That
he

* Mr. Prince's Sermon preached before Governor Burnet and the General Assembly, July 25, 1728.

he would openly stand up for us, and notwithstanding all the obloquy that would be cast upon him for it, he would plead our cause; and when our charter should come to be considered in the house of Lords, he would there publickly declare, that there was a greater sacredness in the charter of New-England, than in those of the corporations in England; for those were only acts of grace, whereas the charter of New-England was a contract between the King and the first patentees; wherein they had promised to enlarge the king's dominions on their own charges, provided that they and their posterity might enjoy such and such privileges: and now they had performed their part, for the king to deprive their posterity of the privileges granted to them, would carry a face of injustice in it." Thus that great and good man.

We highly value our connection with Great-Britain, there is perhaps not a man to be found among us, who would wish to be independent on our mother-country, we should regret the most distant thought of such an event; we are grieved that there is any thing to create the least suspicion of want of
tendernefs

tenderness on their part, or of duty on our's. We hope there is no ground for either. We trust our King and his Parliament will yet hear us and confirm our liberties and immunities to us. And we earnestly pray that a happy union may subsist between Great-Britain and her colonies to the latest posterity.

Our rulers are a part of ourselves, they look on the whole community as their brethren, they have one common interest with us. We doubt not they feel for their people in this difficult day, and will exert all their abilities in the present exigency. Time has been, when even darker clouds hung over the British colonies than those which now threaten us ; and the God of heaven has appeared and dissipated them. His arm is not shortned that he cannot save, his ear is not heavy that he cannot hear. The friends of Zion will not cease to pray, that our rulers may be led in a safe and plain path ; and we trust they will themselves implore the direction and assistance of him, who “ giveth
“ wisdom to the wise, and knowlege to them
“ that know understanding.” Happy will it
be

be for you, our honored fathers, if you are the instruments of prolonging our tranquility. It will be an honor put upon you by the God of heaven : It will render you accepted of the multitude of your brethren : You will be esteemed and blest'd while you live ; and your names will be had in grateful remembrance long after you have enter'd the world of spirits.

But whatever aspect this important affair may have on our present or future prosperity, it is not all that calls for the attention of our rulers. He must have but little understanding of the times, who does not see that we are in more danger from our internal vices, than from any external impositions. Our luxury, extravagance and intemperance threaten our ruin. We live above ourselves, we have forsaken the simplicity of our fathers in our dress, our furniture and our tables. We import much that is absolutely superfluous, that tends only to feed our pride and vanity. Some little private efforts have been made to reform these evils, possibly the legislature may find out some more effectual method to suppress our vices, and to encourage industry, frugality and sobriety. There

There was much enquiry, I am informed, in the last assembly, how they might raise a revenue from the spirituous liquors that are expended among us. Can nothing be done to prevent the so free use of them? if not, the glory is departed, we need nothing else to make us a poor miserable people. †

Our

† “Of all the miseries and plagues” says the late excellent Dr. Stephen Hales, “that unhappy man has been incident to, none was ever so effectually destructive as this, not even those three sore judgments of war, pestilence and famine; which after having raged for some time, cease. But this evil spirit is an unrelenting merciless enemy, that threatens destruction from generation to generation.—And yet, has not this calamity made a surprizing advance within twenty or thirty years? And is it not daily spreading far and wide, both at home, and in our colonies abroad? What then must be the end thereof (avert it good God!) but the final ruin of this great and trading nation.”

The Dr. adds the following note: The terrible destruction of human lives by the prevailing use of *Spirituos Liquors*, appears from the following accounts.

In the year 1680, the christenings, within the	}	12747
bills of mortality, were no more than —		
From which number, in 1700, they rose to	}	14639
And, more remarkably, in the year 1712, (not-		
withstanding Queen ANN's long war) they	}	15660
were advanced to — — — — —		
From that time they continually encreased till	}	19370
the year 1724, when they amounted to no		
less than — — — — —	}	14320
But from that year, when the use of <i>Spirituos</i>		
<i>Liquors</i> became so common, as to occasion a	}	14320
public representation from the college of		
physicians the year following, instead of in-	}	14320
creasing as formerly; they have continually		
decreased, till they are now reduced, at a me-	}	14320
dium for the three last years, to		

Our fathers in the civil government can scarce be sensible how far and wide intemperance has spread, especially among the lower sort of people. I doubt not their readiness to apply a remedy, if it is in their power; whether any can be found, is not for me to say.

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While

So that the year 1750 produced fewer christenings than the year 1700.

The Children likewise that are born come into the world, with such bad Constitutions, that being sickly and feeble, they die in prodigious numbers under five years old. And many children, instead of being nourished by wholesome food, are soon consumed by these inflammatory Spirits, which must necessarily destroy a fabric so very slight and tender.

In London, the christenings for the last ten years, were at a medium,	14457
The children who died every year under five in the same Period, were at a medium,	10590
Whereas, according to Dr Halley's Calculation, the deaths under six should have been no more than	6317
The annual loss by premature deaths of weakly children	4273
By fewer births	5050
This loss, in one district of the kingdom only, viz. not all the city and suburbs of London, is every year	9323

N. B. The above account of the destruction of the human species, relating only to children under five years of age, is exclusive, of ALL that prodigious number of English subjects above that age, who continually die by the same cause.

While our rulers are consulting the public good, and enquiring what this people ought to do, it becomes us to submit to their authority, and to lead quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty ; we ought to be subject to these ministers of God, not only for wrath but for conscience sake. Obedience to rulers enters into religion ; by an unreasonable opposition to them, we displease God by whose providence they are placed over us.

The business of rulers is difficult enough in itself, we ought not to encrease their difficulties by a factious turbulent behaviour. No good ruler will be averse to have his public conduct examined, or find fault with decent remonstrances when they act contrary to the sense of the community. But it is hard, when they have done their best, to be censured and reviled, and to have government made uneasy by the jealousies and intrigues of discontented men, who think nothing right but what they do themselves ; and delight to raise suspicions of designs which are the product of their own vain imaginations. We should remember that rulers are men of like passions,
and

and are in a state of peculiar temptation. We ought not to magnify their faults, but to bear with their infirmities and overlook their mistakes, when we have reason to think they do not proceed from a bad heart. When God has honored them by making them instruments of good, we ought not only to reverence, but to esteem and love them for their works sake.

It would be well, if both rulers and people would consider the brevity and uncertainty of human life, and that account which they must all give of the things done in the body. What a happy influence would this have on their temper and conduct! It would lead rulers to improve every talent to the honor of God and the good of men. It would lead subjects so far as is possible, and as much as in them lieth, to promote peace and union. It would make us all solicitous to approve ourselves to God, and to get that spiritual understanding, which only can make us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.

PAGE 20. at the bottom, read, where so much depends, and the consequence of acting wrong is like to be so fatal to &c.