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**MR. GORDON'S**  
**S E R M O N**

**PREACHED before the House of**  
**REPRESENTATIVES,**

**JULY 19th, 1775.**

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# S E R M O N

Preached before the HONORABLE HOUSE of

REPRESENTATIVES,

On the Day intended for the Choice of

C O U N S E L L O R S,

Agreeable to the Advice of the

CONTINENTAL CONGRESS.

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By WILLIAM GORDON,

Pastor of the Third Church in Roxbury.

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W A T E R T O W N :

Printed and Sold by BENJAMIN EDES.



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In the House of REPRESENTATIVES,  
*July 19. 1775.*

**O**RDERED, That Mr. *Wheeler*,  
Dr. *Church*, Mr. *Hopkins*, Col.  
*Otis*, and Col. *Palmer*, be a Com-  
mittee to return the Thanks of the  
House to the Rev. Mr. GORDON, for the  
Sermon deliver'd by him in the Fore-  
noon, and to desire a Copy of it for  
the Press.

Attest. *Samuel Freeman*, Clerk.

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## ELECTION-S E R M O N.

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**I** HAVE no other apology to offer, for my venturing to appear here upon the present occasion, nor do I desire a better, than what arises from the concern which the late honourable Provincial Congress had in promoting it. I am conscious they could not chuse me to this service, in preference to my reverend fathers and brethren in the ministry, from an apprehension of superior abilities; but that it was owing to a special connexion with them, and their persuasion that I had a zeal, for the cause of liberty, the Continent in general, and the welfare of this Colony in particular, answerable to their own most ardent wishes. I shall endeavour to support the justness of that persuasion, by exercising a faithfulness that would have suited the earliest days of the Country's settlement; and shall flatter myself with the most candid allowances from so respectable an audience, as oft as my knowledge is surpassed by zeal, considering that the last should predominate, now that the times call for vigorous unabating exertions.

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The text, upon which I shall ground what I have further to say, you have in these words of the prophet *Jeremiah*, recorded in the 30th chap. 20, 21. ver. *Their children also shall be as aforesaid, and their congregation shall be established before me, and I will punish all that oppress them; and their nobles shall be of themselves*—the sentence is not perfected without the addition of—*and their governor shall proceed from the midst of them*—but the wisdom of the Continental Congress, in which we cheerfully confide, hath restrained me from making it a part of the text. In an abler hand, and some fitter time, it may of itself, single and alone, suffice for a complete text, Amen. So let it be.

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**S**IN having entered the world, depraved mankind, and given a pernicious bias to every human heart, the best constitutions, whether civil or sacred, do after a while degenerate, the spirit of them departs, they retain only their outward forms, and by degrees lose even those. That millenian state, in which many believe, could not continue vigorous and flourishing, through the period of a thousand years, without the constant miraculous interposition of divine power, in restraining and keeping down the corrupt disposition of mortal men.

The Jewish establishment, both in church and state, was the ordinance of heaven given in an uncommon manner, and, at the time, the best in the whole world; but it was soon corrupted, and at length so enormously, that the patience of God would not spare the people. The Jews were exercised with heavy divine judgments for their various

various transgressions in civil and sacred matters, and at last carried away captive to a distant country. However, it was not their destruction, but reformation that the Lord Jehovah intended; and therefore, to encourage their repentance, by letting them see that their case was not desperate, and keep them from fainting under their sore trials, the prophet Jeremiah is commissioned to deliver to them the following gracious soul-reviving message, viz. "Thus saith the Lord, behold, I will bring again the captivity of Jacob's tents, and have mercy on his dwelling places: and the city shall be builded upon her own heap---her former foundation---and the palace shall remain after the manner thereof. And out of them shall proceed thanksgiving, and the voice of them that make merry: and I will multiply them, and they shall not be few: I will also glorify them, and they shall not be small. Their children also shall be as aforetime, and their congregation or assembly (for they are synonymous terms) shall be established before me, and I will punish all that oppress them: and their nobles---leading men of rank, the intermediate persons between the assembly and first magistrate in the land---shall be of themselves; and their governor shall proceed from the midst of them, and I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me: for who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me, saith the Lord? And ye shall be my people, and I will be your God." Here it's promised the Jews, by Him, whose veracity might be relied on and whose power could accomplish the event, that their affairs should be brought back to their original state, that they should possess their

their old form of government, and that they should have the satisfaction of seeing those punished, who had instrumentally occasioned their calamities, for that the Lord himself would punish them.

A people, when under national judgments or the iron rod of oppression, cannot help looking back to those times, when the constitution was in a prosperous and healthy condition—nor having an attachment to those modes of government, to which they had been long habituated, and which they had experienced to be peculiarly favourable to the common rights of human nature, and to have secured them a greater share of the same, than is enjoyed by mankind in general. And when they are encouraged by a divine promise, to look back to them as what they shall be re-possessed of, they must feel the most pleasing emotions, next to those arising from actual enjoyment.

The Jews are told in our text, that *their children should be as aforesaid*. The word *children* doth not necessarily refer to minors, being frequently used in a much larger sense: Thus the children of Benjamin means the tribe of Benjamin—the children of Israel and the children of Judah, the people of Israel and the people of Judah. *Their children* may therefore intend the body of the Jewish nation; and *their being as aforesaid*, their enjoying that former freedom and prosperity with which they were acquainted in the best days of their political existence.

The best times that the Jewish people ever knew were, I apprehend, those of the judges; be-  
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fore their taste for grandeur, and foolish fondness for being like neighbouring states, made them weary of their plain, simple modes and manners, and put them upon chusing a *royal* government. During the period of the judges, they were once and again, for their iniquities, given into the hand of oppressors : but when their vices did not bring them under the divine judgments, they were in the full enjoyment of liberty. Every man's house was his castle--every man's property was his own--he exercised a supreme authority under, and over his *own* vine, and his *own* fig-tree ; and, wherein he trespassed not upon the rights of his fellow creatures, nor interfered with the Mosaic establishment, did that which was right in his own eyes, without being subject to the controul even of a crowned head, much less of crown officers ; for in those days there was no king in Israel. He could plant or pluck up ; could build or destroy ; could go here and there ; could exercise dominion over the fishes of the sea, no less than over the beasts of the field ; and could trade where and in what he would.

The period of the Judges was not only a time of freedom, but a time of prosperity, viewed both in a civil and sacred light. Where fancy, the lusts of the flesh and of the eye, together with the pride of life, captivate the judgment, the Jews may be thought to have been in the greatest prosperity under the reign of *Solomon* ; when the king made silver to be in *Jerusalem* as stones, and cedars as sycamore trees that are in the vale for abundance ; when the Jewish court shone with a superior and



dazzling lustre; and when their public and private buildings were executed in the highest taste, and with the most costly magnificence, so as to be the wonder of mankind. But had it been really the case, would the people of Israel have united as one, in the commencement of the next reign, and have complained, to his son and successor Rehoboam, of his grievous service and heavy yoke? Would they have been so enraged with Rehoboam's answering them roughly, as to forget their fondness for his grandfather, and to revolt from him, crying out, "What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel; now see to thine house, David"? Would all the tribes have revolted except Judah and Benjamin, where the seat of government was established, court influence was the greatest, and the inhabitants monopolized the advantage of those taxes and imposts that were collected through the kingdom? There is a national prosperity consisting in superfluities that catches the imagination of the vulgar, whether in high or low life, but that weakens the internal strength of a people, and breeds many public disorders. And there is a national prosperity form'd out of the temperance, valour, firmness and virtue of a people, in easy though not affluent circumstances, having enough to make themselves safe and happy, though not to entice others into the attempt of making them a prey. Of this last kind was the civil prosperity of the Jews in the days of the judges. The nearer a state approaches to, and the more its confirmed in, this kind of civil prosperity, the safer and longer, in all probability, will

will be the enjoyment of its liberties. But besides a civil, the Jews were acquainted with a sacred prosperity in the days of the judges. Allowing for numbers, 'tis probable that religion in the powers of it, never flourished more among them, than in the beginning of that period. It is certain that Moses was not only a lawgiver to, but a judge in Israel. Joshua succeeded him in the exercise of all his power, subject to the observance of that law which Moses had given, by which even Moses himself was bound, having received it from God. The people said to Joshua, *all that thou commandest us we will do, and whithersoever thou sendest us we will go. According as we hearkened unto Moses in all things, so will we hearken unto thee.* And we further read, *that they served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that out lived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord that he did for Israel.* But we are told, *that after all that generation was gathered unto their fathers, there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel, so that the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim, and forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods.* The earliest days of a state are generally the most pure and religious. The prevailing principles of individuals at such a season, the providential interpositions that they are eye witnesses to, and are strongly affected with from the peculiarity of their situation, and the modes they are under a necessity of adopting, lead to it.

Having consider'd the first sentence in our text, let us attend to the next, in which the Lord says, *and their congregation (or assembly) shall be established before me.* The Jews having a fixt code of laws, and a provision for consulting and knowing the mind of the Lord upon special occasions, they needed not as other free governments, an house of representatives or assembly. But they had three grand festivals annually, when all the males, whose age and health admitted, repaired to Jerusalem. The enjoyment of these stated seasons, calculated, to keep up the remembrance of what great things God had done for them, at the commencement of their national existence, to promote mutual affection by bringing individuals from the most distant part of the land into an acquaintance with each other, and to afford them an opportunity for promoting any schemes for public utility, was considered as a blessing and not as a burden by the wise and prudent. The restoration and confirmation of these seasons, after they had been interrupted by the captivity, is therefore enumerated in the catalogue of mercies with which the Jews were to be favoured. The congregation or assembly of the people, before the Lord in the capital of the country, should be fixt and confirmed; be made certain and perpetual. The Jewish festivals should be again observed with the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, without the hazard of a suspension; and should be even heightened by the exemplary punishment, that the Lord would inflict upon those that oppressed the Jews.

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Thus saith the Lord, *I will punish all that oppress them*. Was it absolutely unlawful for a people to wish for the punishment of those, who have been the instrumental occasion of their calamities, or to have a pleasing satisfaction in finding that they are punished, we cannot imagine that the same would be promised, in order to sooth the sufferings of the oppressed. Some may indulge a private revengeful malicious spirit against their oppressors, which neither scripture nor reason will justify: but an attachment to one's country, the cause of truth and equity, and the rights of mankind—the love of justice—a desire of benefiting the earth by public examples---and the expectation that the providential government of God will be thereby glorified, may lead us to hope that punishment will be inflicted, though not upon all, yet upon the chief promoters of our oppression, and that they will not be suffered to escape God's righteous judgments in this world; while in the spirit of true christianity we pray, that they may be brought to that unfeigned repentance and genuine faith, which by intertelling them in the righteousness of the blessed Jesus, shall procure them an escape from the punishments of hell, and raise them to the joys of heaven. While the Lord promises the Jews to punish all that oppressed them, He gives them no intimation of the manner in which he would do it. They might be apt to wish that he would punish in some certain particular way, preferable to all others: but in this they might be disappointed. Infinite wisdom often varies the mode of punishment. Providence shall see that the law of retaliation is executed upon

upon one oppressor as in the case of *Adoni-bezek* --- shall appoint a second to die by the established laws of the country, wherein the oppression hath been committed --- shall cut off a third in attempting to establish and perpetuate those cruel plans he hath projected and promoted --- shall catch a fourth by that pit and in that snare which he hath contrived and prepared for the innocent --- and shall torture a fifth for the remainder of his days, though life is spared, by overletting all his designs ; by causing his contrivances to produce those very effects he meant to prevent ; by taking away the mask and cloak under which he conceal'd himself, and so rendering him odious to former friends and acquaintance ; by leading mankind to slight and shun him as the pest of society ; by making him a by-word and a proverb ; and, in direct opposition to the strongest desires of his soul, filling him with a just apprehension that his name will be *infamous* to the latest posterity.

The last article in our text, which remains to be considered, is, *and their nobles shall be of themselves*. The persons, occupying the first posts of honor, trust, profit & importance, should be of themselves, either as they should be natives, instead of foreigners and strangers, appointed and set over them, by those that oppressed and kept them in subjection : Or, as they should be of their own choosing and approving, and not forced upon them. In some few rare instances strangers may be equally useful, friendly and acceptable with natives ; but in general, the latter are more likely to possess the confidence, to understand the prevailing temper

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per and to accommodate themselves to it, to study the interests, and to promote the happiness, of the people among whom they reside. 'Tis also desirable that the choice, appointment and continuance of their own nobles should rest in and remain with a people, that there may be the firmer reliance upon them, and the fatal influences that they might be otherwise under may be the more effectually guarded against. Evils may ensue at times, from a nation's having and exercising this right ; but these evils, in the present state of human nature, will not, in all probability, be so many, great and permanent, as where 'tis not enjoyed. Applicable to the present case is that trite observation, that absolute monarchy would be the best government in the world, were monarchs and their successors perfect and infallible ; but being imperfect and fallible, they are not to be trusted with an unlimited power ; and the best form of government is *that*, which provides best against the abuse of power in rulers, while it entrusts them with a sufficiency thereof for the good of the public.

We have gone over the promise made in our text to the Jews ; we cannot view it as a divine promise made to ourselves, but it may lead us, to conjecture how it was with this people in the earliest days of their existence---to search into their degeneracies, for which we may conclude that they are now under the correction of heaven---and to remark, that a reformation in principles and practices, will be likely to procure the approbation of the supreme ruler, so far as to warrant our expecting,

ing, that, through the orderings of his providence, the children of this colony shall be as aforesaid, and their congregation or assembly shall be established before him ; that he will punish all that oppress them ; and that their nobles shall be of themselves.

Suffer me, ye worthy Representatives of the People, and this respectable audience, to spend a few minutes in conjecturing how it was with the colony in the earliest days of its existence. The love of liberty, but chiefly of religion, induced the first settlers to venture across the atlantic, and to take up their abode in this then inhospitable wilderness. They were under the strong influence of the most noble principles ; though not perfect, and tinctur'd with the prevailing notion of the age, that religious errors were to be opposed by the sword of the magistrate as well as of the Spirit, which produced those baneful effects, that have stain'd their annals, and that their posterity pretend not to justify : But may I not say, that those who with rancour condemn them in the lump, without allowing for their misconduct, from the temper and ignorance of the times as to the rights of conscience, know not of what spirit they themselves are, and would be in danger, under the like temptations, of falling into the same mistakes. The most valuable diamond is not without it's flaw. And a change of circumstances may prevail upon different religious sects, to give up what they once viewed as leading and essential tenets in their profession ; so that even those who are the most peaceably disposed, may at length think with So-

*lomon*, that there is a time of war, as well as a time of peace ; and that every thing is beautiful in its time.

The first settlers being under the strong influence of the most noble principles, we may suppose that, in their private capacity, they exercised a benevolent disposition, and assisted, instead of preying upon, and taking an advantage of each other under their respective difficulties, being mindful of the apostolic direction, *bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.* Gal. 6. 2 --- that they treated religion as a matter of importance, and were not indifferent to it---that they had their families under a proper regulation, and discouraged all intemperance, impiety and uncleanness---and that they were strict in their morals. We may suppose, that in transacting public affairs, they were disinterested, were not actuated in the choice of Representatives or Councillors by low selfish motives, a view to their own particular advantage, or the aggrandizing their own relations ; that, when they sought to the Lord by prayer for his guidance in their elections, they were not absolutely and unalterably determined, right or wrong, for whom they would vote, tho' they might have thought the matter over before, and talk'd upon it among themselves, in order to their being the better prepared for proceeding in the business with proper expedition and regularity ; that they considered the qualities requisite for the persons designed to fill the several departments in the state, and whether such individuals were so qualified ; that they had a regard not only to abilities, but

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integrity and morals, having an eye to *Jethro's* advice, whereby *Moses* was counselled to provide out of all the people, such as feared God, men of truth, (true men) hating covetousness, whom to place over them for rulers and judges. We may suppose, that they did not needlessly entertain jealousies of each other, and suspect those of being traitors, who did not think exactly with themselves, as to the methods to be adopted for the service of the public; that they were not bent upon having their *own* way, but in their debates and consultations were in search of light to direct them in the *best*; that there was the least degree possible of all kinds of bribery and corruption; that the strictest care was taken, that the commonwealth should not suffer damage; that they willingly submitted to all necessary expences to provide for its safety; that they did not, through either a timid or penurious narrow contracted disposition, hazard either its existence or liberties: in a word that next to the glory of God and the interests of religion, they laboured to serve the public, and not themselves of it.

I shall not go on with my suppositions, lest I should trespass upon your patience; but shall proceed to enquire into those degeneracies, that have got footing in the community since the earliest days of its existence. However some, mistaking the sense of *Solomon*, may object; *Say not thou, what is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this*: Yet I have the best authority, that of the late Provincial Congress, for asserting that  
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as a people we are chargeable with *sinful declensions*, and a *great abuse of those inestimable blessings* which God hath *bestowed upon us*. What those sinful declensions are, the Congress did not mention; but, I humbly conceive, the general voice will justify me in remarking, that a strange degree of *fecklessness* has crept in among us, leading us aside from that golden rule, whereby we are directed to do unto others, as we would that others should do unto us—that the importance of religion has been most sadly overlooked—that the very form of it has been neglected by multitudes, while the generality have given themselves no concern about the powers of it—that ordinances have been slighted. Sabbaths profaned, and the name of the Lord blasphemed—that families have not been properly taken care of; the heads of them have not called them together to worship from day to day; due restraints have not been laid upon children and others, who have been left much to their own guidance, in stead of receiving line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little, and there a little, through the help of which they might learn to flee youthful lusts, to mortify the deeds of the body, and to approve themselves unto their heavenly Father. Were cursing, swearing, drunkenness and debauchery of various sorts proportionably prevalent in former times? Were there the like immoralities among the first settlers? They that are acquainted with the history of this country will not venture to assert it. I may also remark that it has been complain'd of, that there has been great faultiness in the management of public affairs—that improper men, from sinister

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designs,

designs, because of family connexions, and to serve a turn, have been chose, put into, or continued in places of trust or power—that proper ones have been opposed and kept out, through an unwarrantable prejudice, and because they would not be so the slaves of a party, as to be led, or commanded, or act without being convinced or seeing, their own selves, good reason for what they did---that modes of corrupting have been adopted with success---that representatives, instead of being in their place, attending the service of the public, agreeable to the expectations of their electors, have been spending the time in transacting their own business---that it has been evident, that many, in their votes and elections, have not been directed by judgment and conscience, but by other motives, and that by praying to God for his guidance, they have been only increasing their criminality, by the addition of the most daring hypocrisy. These things have been complained of, and reported from one and another. It is well known, that I have not been long enough in the country, and cannot be sufficiently acquainted with the characters of individuals, and the secrets of government, as to venture upon asserting that these complaints are in general, or in divers instances just. They may have sprang chiefly from disappointment, vexation, malice and envy ; though I cannot but fear, that the complainants have had, in past years, some foundation to go upon.

Our degeneracies, we must conclude from the light of nature and revelation. have contributed to bring us under the present calamities. God, the infinitely

infinitely wise Governor of the universe, may (and I trust, almost to a degree of assurance, doth) design, by the contest now existing between Britain and the Continent, to establish us in the enjoyment of our liberties, besides favouring the several Colonies with an enlargement of them. But the divine wisdom could have contrived to have secured us these blessings, without making us acquainted with the horrors of war ; and it becomes us to impute it to our transgressions, that we must pass through a scene of difficulties, ere we can be brought to the enjoyment of them. That same all-perfect Being, who, as Creator, hath so wonderfully made mankind, that vicious courses should produce, and be punished by bodily disorders ; hath, as moral Governor of the world, so constituted nations, that the like courses should occasion public diseases and convulsions, for their correction, and, if not reformed, their destruction. Do we desire, that our contest would finish in the manner just now hinted at, and that we may soon come to the end of our troubles, and not be destroyed, we should certainly repent and reform.

You have had it already remark'd to you, that a reformation in principles and practices will be likely to procure the approbation of the Supreme ruler, so far as to warrant our expecting, that, through the orderings of his providence, the children of this Colony shall be as aforesaid, and their congregation, or assembly, shall be established before him ; that He will punish all that oppress them ; and that their nobles shall be of themselves. This remark remains to be insisted upon.

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I have not mentioned in it the word *repentance*, but a reformation in principles and practices necessarily includes the thing itself. There can be no such reformation without a change of mind, and our entertaining different thoughts of past conduct, which will of course lead us to repent of it; and no repentance is genuine and godly, that does not produce a reformation in principles and practices. We are now in an unusual way called upon to wash ourselves, to make ourselves clean, to put away the evil of our doings from before our eyes, to cease to do evil, to learn to do well, and to seek every kind of judgment. But considering that the fast recommended, much to the satisfaction of the religious of all denominations, by the Continental Congress, is at hand, when these matters will of course be fully discours'd of, I only touch upon them; at the same time observing, that an alteration of practice must flow from a change in principles, or our relief will most likely prove no better than a temporary expedient. The sovereign of the universe may so far honour, in the sight of the world, an outward reformation of manners, as to grant deliverance upon the account of it; but where there is nothing beyond such outward reformation the deliverance will probably be neither complete nor permanent. Indeed should we make thorough work of it, and reform in principles as well as practices, we have sufficient warrant to expect, that God will gratify all our wishes, wherein they are just and proper, he having once and again declared in his holy oracles what is tantamount hereto, though I shall quote the following passage only, out of the 18 of Jer. 7, 8. ver.

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*At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up and to pull down and to destroy it ; if that nation against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.* On the morrow there is, in some respects, to be a new thing under the sun, that hath not been already of old time, the several united British American colonies are to humble themselves under the mighty hand of God. May the spirit of the Lord prepare and carry us all through the right discharge of so reasonable a service, then may we hope, on the most rational grounds, that the children of this colony will be as aforesaid ; that their assembly will be established before the Lord ; that he will punish all that oppress them ; and that their nobles shall be of themselves.

A man of a timid make, of little faith, no way conversant with or forgetful of historical facts, may be apprehensive, that, though our assembly is gathered, and we are about to have our Nobles of ourselves, this mode of government will not be established, and that the present appearances are only like those sudden revivals that frequently preceded the total extinction of life. He may tremble at the thoughts of that power with whom we are to contend. He may be terrified with the notion, that sooner or later we must fall before it ; and he may therefore be willing to compound for life and the precarious tenure of a little property, with the same surrender of his liberties. Was the cause of the Ministry the cause of Great-Britain, supported by the united endeavours of the nation,  
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instead of being execrated by persons of the first character, for wisdom, courage, experience, nobility and piety, and opposed by multitudes waiting for advantages against administration. Was there not an immense debt of more than 130,000 millions sterling, hanging like a millstone round the neck of the public—an exhausted treasury---a decaying trade---and the most alarming prospects to the merchant, trader and manufacturer. Were not the internal distresses of the state, through a multiplicity of poor, the dearness of provisions and a load of taxes, exceeding great. Did the interest and policy of France and Spain require their remaining in peace with Britain, during a civil war between her and the colonies, instead of the contrary. Had not the wide Atlantic set us at so great a distance from Europe, and the American winds and seasons promised us their assistance in their respective months. Had the colonies been less united or zealous. Had not officers of courage and conduct, conversant with the arts of war, and warm for the liberties of mankind, offer'd their assistance, and readily undertook our defence. And had not the individuals of the Continental Congress, regardless of threats and wrath like the roaring of lions, boldly ventur'd to engage in maintaining our common rights, upon forming and supporting a Continental army, and in appointing able Generals to command it, in whom we can confide and do rejoice, but whom we cannot compliment to any advantage, by reason of their being so superior to every thing we can offer of that kind. Had they not adopted those measures, which will expose them to suffer as rebels, unless success prevents--

prevents---Then we might have had a fearful looking for of fiery trials for a long continuance ; and might have felt great discouragements : But, when, besides the favourable circumstances already hinted at, we reflect, upon the military spirit that the Lord of hosts hath providentially diffused through the Continent, so as in some to overcome the most powerful prejudices of education and denomination : that the British ministry have not succeeded in any one part of their plan, but have been involved in greater difficulties every step that they taken : that God has wonderfully appeared for us, crowning our military operations with unusual success, and disconcerting those of the enemy : that the British troops, instead of ranging at large without opposition; or driving the country before them and being at liberty to riot upon the fat of the land, and to gratify their brutal lusts upon our wives, daughters or more distant relations, are confined within narrow limits, and cut off from the enjoyment of divers comforts, by those they have been taught to consider as infamous cowards : that our people, who have suffer'd the most, lost very considerably, and been reduced to many difficulties and hardships before unknown, have been strangely preserv'd from dejection and fainting, as though by the special interposition of heaven, and, so far from murmuring and complaining wherever they have gone, have been in common cheerful and pleasant--though strangers before to the desolations and cruelties of war, they have born them as if they had been familiarized to them. When we further reflect, upon the importance and goodness of our cause ; how



the number of our enemies has been wonderfully kept down from time to time, notwithstanding the reinforcements they have been frequently receiving ; how they on the one hand appear to be greatly dispirited, while on the other our forces are animated ; that on the side of administration have been all manner of lies, deceit, wicked cunning, corruption, profaneness and blasphemy ; but that multitudes are continually supplicating the divine favour and blessing for us. I say, when all these particulars are considered, we are justified in hoping, that the proceedings of this day, instead of being the last of the kind will prove the renewal of our constitutional privileges, and that this mode of government will be *established* before the Lord. We should certainly rebel against the Sovereign of the universe in his providential dispensations, and reject the divine council communicated to us by that medium, did we not resolve to persist in our present opposition to the wicked designs of an arbitrary ministry. And let but the several members of this honourable house of Representatives exert themselves in their public legislative and private capacities, to bring back the manners of the people to what they were originally, so that our children may be as aforesaid, virtuous, disinterested, patriotic and pious ; and to extirpate those vices that have crept in unawares among us. Let them approve themselves the genuine descendants and successors of those that composed the most early assemblies, keeping out from among them all those evils, that have been complained of in past years : and we may be almost certain, not only that our assemblies will be

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established, and our nobles continue to be from among ourselves ; but that the Lord will punish those that oppress us, in some way or other, as to him shall seem best, and lead the world to cry out, *Verily there is a reward for the righteous : verily He is a God that judgeth in the earth : Yea, we may probably live to see our governor proceed from the midst of us.*

I shall detain this venerable audience no longer than just to mention the few following observations.

No member can consistently take his place, or be admitted to sit in the house of Assembly, who *hesitates* about setting up government, seeing, that the Continental Congress advised to the latter, no less than the choice of Representatives in order to it ; and that there is the like original authority for the one as the other.

He that does not mean to bear a part in the public burdens of the day, but to escape wholly unhurt in person and property is no patriot ; while he that, instead of serving, designs only to serve himself of the public, to acquire riches and raise a fortune out of the general calamity, must be really one of the worst of men, cannot deserve the protection of the state, and when discover'd must be detested by every true son and daughter of liberty, as being a most odious character.

There is not an individual but may be aiding and assisting to the common cause one way or other.

The wicked and unrighteous may help it materially, the one by forsaking his wickedness, and the other his unrighteousness. The godly by their inwrought fervent prayers, which avail much with their heavenly Father; thus may pious women contribute to the success of those arms, which the feebleness of their sex will not admit of their bearing. Infants may be helpful by moving their parents to exert every nerve, and strain every sinew, rather than train them up to be bond-men and bond-maids to haughty tyrants and merciless oppressors. The aged and expiring, by encouraging all about them not to surrender the best part of that fair patrimony which they are now leaving behind them. The martial and courageous by their personal bravery. The timid by concealing their fears, withdrawing themselves whenever their fears would be apt to appear and produce a baneful influence, and when they discourse upon public affairs, by insisting upon the divine interpositions with which we have been favoured, and the goodness of the cause wherein we are engaged. The poor may assist by determining, that tho' poor they will be free; and that if they cannot have riches, they will not wear chains. And the rich by the loan of their money, that so the necessary expences may be supplied, and the defence of the country may not fall through, for want of the requisites for carrying it on. Nothing can be more faulty than for the rich to decline hazarding their cash, while exempted from hazarding their persons; nor more simple, than for them, through fear of losing some of their riches, to endanger the losing them all, together with  
their

their liberties. Could the state be secured, a person would be provoked by such preposterous conduct to say to each of them, confining the words to the body only, *Thy money perish with thee.* May heaven influence every one of us to contribute our best abilities, according to our several stations and relations, to the defence and support of the commonweal ! Amen.

