



*Mr. Prince's*  
**S E R M O N**

In the Audience of  
**The General Court.**



10  
**CIVIL RULERS** *Raised up by GOD*  
*to Feed His People.*

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A  
**S E R M O N**

**At the Publick Lecture in BOSTON,**

*July 25. 1728.*

In the Audience of His Excellency the GOVERNOUR,  
His Honour the Lieut. GOVERNOUR, and the  
Honourable the *Council* and *Representatives* of  
the Province: Being the *Thursday* after His  
Excellency's Arrival here.

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**By Thomas Prince, M.A.**

And one of the Pastors of the South Church.

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**B O S T O N** in NEW-ENGLAND:

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PSALM LXXVIII. 71, 72.

**T**HE meaning of the Text is plainly this --- that the most high G O D, who rules among the sons of Men and bestows the Government on whom He pleases, having an Eye to the advantage of his People *Israel*, and having chosen and qualified his Servant *David*; He by a special Providence conducted Him to the chief Seat of Power among them : To this He bro't Him for this great End, that He might *Feed & Guide* them ; and being thus advanced, He took care to answer it in his succeeding Government ; “ He fed them according to the Integrity of his Heart, “ and guided them by the Skilfulness of his Hands.

**BUT**

BUT in treating of the Words I shall not enter into an Historical Detail, either of the signal steps of Providence in conducting Him to so great a Charge, or of the various Instances of his wise and faithful Execution of it. I shall only take a transient view of the things most obvious in the *Passages now read*, and then propose *those Heads* to a more particular consideration which they naturally suggest, and that will easily direct us to *apply* them to our selves.

AND here are these 4 Things ---

1. THE Singular Relation between the Blessed GOD and that ancient People.
2. His special Providence acknowledged in raising up and bringing such a one as *David* to the chief Seat of Power among them.
3. THE principal and gracious *End* observed of this Providential Dispensation.
4. & lastly, *David's* wise and upright answering this great End in his succeeding Government.

1. *THE Singular Relation between the Blessed GOD and that ancient People.* And this is somewhat more emphatically represented by doubling the Expression, tho' with some Variety --- *Jacob his People, and Israel his Inheritance.*

By *Jacob & Israel* we know is meant the same; and by these Names are here meant the *People* issuing from that ancient Patriarch that bare them. In the Hebrew tis --- *in Jacob & in Israel* --- possibly to signify his administering among them rather as a Friend and elder Brother, then his ruling over them as a forreign and imperious Lord. And it is not simply said, in *Jacob* or *Israel* --- but in *Jacob his People*, and *Israel his Inheritance.* How often does the Blessed God delight to stile Himself in Scripture the *God of Jacob*, and the *God of Israel*? And here their singular Relation to Him as his People and Inheritance is very carefully observed, both as an Illustration.



tion of his special Favour to them in placing such a one as *David* over them, and of the Honour done to Him in setting Him at the Head of such a People.

2. WE have *his special Providence acknowledged in raising up and bringing so qualified a Person as David to the chief Seat of Power among them.*

IN the 70 verse, tis said, He chose and took Him; i. e. at first from his more private Station; and thro' various Providential Changes, now He brings Him to take the Chair of Government. Whatever means were used by *David* or his Friends; yet the principal Agency and Conduct of this Affair is here religiously ascrib'd to God. And the Expression strongly intimates, that in all this matter He had a special view to the Good of his People.

3. WE have then *the principal and gracious End observed in this Providential Dispensation.*

It was to *Feed & Guide* his People *Israel*. I add the word to *Guide*, because 'tis added in the following Passage. It was for this great *End* that God at first had chosen Him, as the Tribes of *Israel* themselves observed to Him, when they first assembled to receive his Government. 1 Chron. xi. 1, 2. *Then all Israel gathered themselves to David, unto Hebron saying; Behold --- the Lord thy God said unto Thee; Thou shalt FEED my People Israel, and Thou shalt be Ruler over my People Israel.* So in that Parallell Place to this, 2 Sam. v. 1, 2. where we have the same word in Hebrew, as well as in our Translation. It is true indeed, our English *Margin* to the former Place, for *Feed*, says, or *Rule*: But this is but a mere Comment quite besides the known meaning of the word in the Original: And the Design of the Translators must be rather only to give the Reader a general Idea, that to *Feed* a People is to *Rule* them, without explaining the singular Intention of the Metaphor.

AND

AND what can this imply, but that **Civil Rulers** have the weighty care of the People devolved on them: And their Superiour Office is to seek their Welfare, to lead them, and to be careful of them, as a faithful SHEPARD of his tender Flock.

4 & lastly, *Then we have David's wife and upright Answering this Great End in his Succeeding Government.* "So He fed them according to the  
" Integrity of his Heart, and guided them by the  
" Skillfulness of his Hands.

For *Integrity* some translate it, *Innocence*, some *Simplicity*, some *Tranquility*, & some *Perfection*: (b) i. e. with a sincere, upright and honest mind: (c) Regarding more the Publick Good then his own advantage: (g) and governing with great Calmness and Moderation. By this excellent Example says a learned Expositor, Civil Governours may see that they are the Publick *Shepards* of their People; who are committed to them for Protection, and not for Servitude: nor is the Commonwealth to be accounted as their Property, but rather they are to be devoted to the Publick Interest (m)

**SKILFULNESS**, in the Original is of the Plural Number; and signifies both Understanding, Judgment, Prudence and Dexterity. (b) It is as if He had said, He guided them with the utmost Circumspection, that He might neither hurt nor neglect his People, (g) nor let others hurt them, and with the greatest Wisdom. (i) And 'tis said, with Skillfulness of *Hands*, to signify, that there was not only great Prudence in his Councils, but also in the Prosecution of them. i. e. He took care to act as wisely as He thought: and in short He manag'd all things in his Administration, as became a Wise and Skilful Governour. (a. i.)

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b. *Bib Polyglot*, & *Pol Synops*. c. *Castal*. g. *Gei in P. Synops*. m. *Muis in P. Synops*. i. *Jun, Trem & Ainsw*  
a. i. A. Jackson.

AND all this is doubtless mentioned as a Publick and Lasting Testimony, both of his own Fidelity and Honour, and of his People's Happiness, as well as of God's particular Regard and Favour for that distinguished Nation; and for a fair Example to Succeeding Rulers in all others.

AND thus much for the *Words themselves*--- We now proceed to those *general Heads* which they readily suggest, and that equally Concern every other People of a religious Character. And agreeable to the preceeding Articles; I propose to show you these four things;

1. ON what accounts may any be said to be the People and Inheritance of God
2. THAT his special Providence is to be acknowledged in bringing Persons to the chief Place of Power among them.
3. THAT it is to Feed and Guide them as a Shepherd that He thus advances them.
4. and lastly, THAT it is their own great and lasting Honour, as well as their People's Happiness, to answer the great Ends of their Exaltation, and to Feed and Guide them with Integrity and Skillfulness.

I. *ON what accounts may any be said to be the People and Inheritance of GOD.*

Now this was for many Ages limited to the House of *Jacob*. The People flowing from that illustrious Patriarch are in multitudes of places of Holy Scripture challenged by God Himself for his own Peculiar, in distinction from all others.

THE Ground of this no doubt was that special Covenant which God had firstly made with *Abraham*, confining it to his Posterity by *Isaac*; and then with Him, restraining it to his by *Jacob*; and then with Him, diffusing it to all his Offspring without Exception. Upon which account He often calls them by this distinguishing Denomination of *His People*, even while they were in *Egypt*, both in his Discourse



to *Moses* and in his Messages to *Pharaoh*; as in *Exod.* III. 6,---10. *I am the God of thy Father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob --- I have surely seen the Affliction of my People which are in Egypt --- and I will send thee to Pharaoh, that thou mayst bring forth my People the Children of Israel out of Egypt.* And *Chap. V. 1.* *Thus saith the Lord God of Israel; Let my People go, &c.* And as if this were not enough; He further tells them, in *Chap. VI. 6,7.* *I will redeem and take you to me for a People, and I will be to you a God, &c.*

UPON their coming out of the *Red Sea*, and their wonderful Deliverance from their mighty and pursuing Enemies, the peculiar Character increas'd upon them. And in the Prospect of it *Moses* sings thus triumphantly to God, *Exod. XV. 13, 16.* *Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the People, which Thou hast redeemed: Thou hast guided them by thy strength to thy Holy Habitation -- THY PEOPLE -- O LORD -- The People which Thou hast redeemed †.* And the same divine Historian tells them in *Deut. IV. 20.* *The LORD hath brought you forth out of Egypt, to be to Him a People of INHERITANCE, &c.*

BUT that which finished this distinguishing Relation, was the most publick, mutual Transaction between the God of their Fathers and the whole Body of that People, about Two Months after, in their Incampment in the Wilderness; and about Mount *Sinai*. “Then the LORD came to \* *Sinai*, He rose  
“ up from *Seir* unto them, He shined forth from mount  
“ *Paran*, He came with Ten Thousands of his Saints:” And then He told them as in *Exod. XIX. 5,---8.*

† So *Exod. XVIII. 1.* & *Deut. XXI. 8.*

\* *Deut. XXXIII. 2.* For so the Hebrew *Min* which commonly signifies *From* is sometimes put for *To* by the Interpretation of the Holy Ghost Himself, 2 *Sam. VI. 2.* 1 *Chr. XIII. 6.* [So *Isa. LIX. 20.* *Rom. XI. 26.*] So, 1 *King. VIII. 30.* 2 *Chr. VI. 21, &c.* See *Ans. 7.*



*Ye have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bare you on Eagles Wings, and brought you to my self: Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my Covenant; then ye shall be a PECULIAR PEOPLE to ME above all People; and ye shall be to me a Kingdom of Priests and an Holy Nation --- And all the People answered together and said, all that the Lord hath spoken we will do. And now came forth the fiery Law, in the midst of Thunders, Lightnings, the Mountain burning, the Smoke ascending like the Smoke of a Furnace, and the Voice of God exceeding loud --- I am the Lord thy God, which have bro't thee out of the Land of Egypt, out of the House of Bondage; Thou shalt have no other gods but me, &c. ||*

How august & solemn is this Divine Confederacy! And 'tis to this no doubt that Moses afterwards alludes in Deut. xxvi. 17, 18. *Thou hast avouched the Lord this Day to be thy G O D; and the Lord hath avouched Thee this Day to be his peculiar People.*

ON these Accounts that ancient People were then distinguished from others. And that they might so continue, they were forbidden of God to mingle with other Nations; and not only to learn their gross Idolatries, but also their superstitious & uninstituted Rites and Customs. And the Reason alledg'd is this, in Deut. vii. 6. & xiv. 2. *For Thou art an Holy People to the Lord thy God: and the Lord thy God has chosen Thee to be a peculiar People to Himself, above all the Nations that are on the Earth.*

FROM this time forward they are perpetually call'd *His People Israel*, and *Israel his Inheritance*, and sometimes both together: And thus says Moses, Deut. xxxii. 9. *For the Lord's Portion is his People, and Jacob is the Lot of his Inheritance.* \*

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|| Exod. XIX & XX. \* So Deut. IV. 26, 29. 1 King. VII. 51.

AND they are call'd *His People* --- Because He separated them from the rest of Men to serve Him ; To them He reveal'd Himself by special Inspirations, to them He gave his lively Oracles, and by mutual and publick Consent he receiv'd them into a special Covenant : And --- *His Inheritance*, Because they were to be intirely his, to acknowledge none but Him ; and to intimate the dear Account He made of them, that he delighted in them, dwelt among them, would possess and keep and plead for them as Men their own Inheritance, and that not only they but their Children after them were also to be his successively, (a.j.) and *Blessed is the Nation whose God is the Lord, and the People He hath chojen for his own Inheritance*, Psal. xxxiii. 12.

BUT wherefore was it that the Blessed God confin'd his People to this single Nation ?

To this I only answer -- That the Reason of his singling out *this* numerical People for his own peculiar, is perfectly his Sovereign Pleasure. But the Reasons of his setting apart *some* particular Nation for Himself, may be such as these --- There was a special *Revelation* to be made for the use of the World, and the *Messias* was to be Born and known according to the ancient Promises, and after a long and earnest Expectation. In order to these great Events of universal moment to the World it was very requisite that He shou'd have a distinguish'd People of publick Worshippers and Prophets to receive his Inspirations and authentickly transmit them to the rest of Men. It was also fitting that the great *Messias* should be born among them with such certain Characters as were publickly known and look'd for, that the rest of Men might be more fully satisfied of his appearance. The Evidence of all which things could not have been so easily made out, had the religious & inspired People been dispersed here and there thro' the idolatrous Nations over all the Earth, and not collected into one Community.

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(a.j.) *A. Jackson* on D. u. XXXII. 9.

AND



AND the particular Reasons why the Sovereign God was pleas'd to separate *One Nation* only for his People, and not enlighten the rest for so many Ages, seem to be such as these--- That He might testify his high Displeasure at the first Apostacy and after Sins of Men ; That he might show the Insufficiency of Nature's Light to keep us from the grossest Errors, and the absolute necessity of special Revelations; that he might prepare the World for the glad Reception of them ; and lastly, That his Blessed Son incarnate might have the Glory of extending his saving Light & Kingdom unto every Nation.

AND now his People are no more confined to the Sons of *Israel* : But the People of every Kingdom, Country & Community that know and own Him in these special Revelations are accounted by Him as his People, and more eminently those that are devoted to Him in a Publick Covenant and obey his Laws. For to such dispers'd abroad, the Apostle says, 1 Pet. II. 9, 10. *But ye are a chosen Generation, a royal Priesthood, an holy Nation, a peculiar People ; that ye should shew forth the Praises of Him that has call'd you out of Darkness into his marvellous Light : which in time past were not a People, but are now the People of God.*

AND the happy time is doubtless hastening of which we read the Prophecy in Isa. XIX. 24, 25. *In that Day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a Blessing in the midst of the Land ; whom the Lord of Hosts shall Bless saying, Blessed be Egypt my People, and Assyria the work of my Hands, and Israel mine Inheritance.* Then all the Sons of Men shall know and own the Blessed God : His People shall be one great Company over all the Earth ; and as the Psalmist speaks, He shall *inherit all Nations*, Psal. LXXXII. 8. But whether this shall be, till the present Frame of these inclement Heavens and of this vitiated Earth shall be dissolv'd and refin'd by Fire, and the new Earth appear wherein dwells Righteousness,---I leave to be considered.

IN the mean while, as I have already hinted, God's peculiar People are neither now confined to Lands nor Kingdoms, nor yet to any Sects or Parties among Professing Christians: But all that own and serve him according to the Scripture Revelations, are accepted of him.

AND since the Terms of our being *His People* and his being *our G O D* are mutual & reciprocal; let me take the Liberty of reciting a few Passages of the late excellent Bishop *Burnet*, in a Sermon Preach'd before the House of Commons on the first Publick Thanksgiving after the REVOLUTION, and re-printed in this Town Thirty-nine Years ago. They are from these Words, *Yea happy is that People whose G O D is the L O R D*, And are as follow,

“ THAT the Lord is *our G O D* signifies that we  
 “ adore and worship Him in Spirit and in Truth ---  
 “ that we adore Him in those Instances that become  
 “ this Relation of his being *our God*. And this we  
 “ do, when we seriously call upon Him and Pray to  
 “ Him: when we do intirely depend on Him, and  
 “ resign up our selves wholly to his Conduct, when  
 “ we do sincerely acknowledge, that all the Blessings  
 “ we receive come from Him; and when in a word,  
 “ we perform all those Duties to Him which we owe  
 “ to the Author of our Being and the Giver of all the  
 “ Good that we enjoy. But if we laugh at all that  
 “ is sacred, or set about the Performances of it in so  
 “ slight a manner as shew how little we Believe that  
 “ which we profess; if 'tis plain that Prayers and  
 “ Thanksgivings, Worship & Sacraments are only  
 “ Words or Rites of Form and if the whole Frame  
 “ of our Lives, and the Disposition of our Hearts,  
 “ shews that these things are only Marks & Disguises  
 “ put on to deceive those that have some regard to  
 “ them: then 'tis plain that the LORD is *not* our  
 “ God. And if He is not *our G O D* in this first  
 “ sence, we have no Reason to expect that He should  
 “ be our God long in the second sence of these  
 “ Words, that is, that He will Protect and Defend us!  
 “ He



“ *He is a Son and a Shield, and will give both*  
 “ *Grace and Glory ; but this Blessedness comes only*  
 “ *on those that trust in Him.* It is certain, that ac-  
 “ cording to the Phrase in the Psalms, *the shields of*  
 “ *the Earth*, i. e. the Defence of the Land, *belong*  
 “ *to G O D.* And how unworthy soever those that  
 “ have made Him *their* God, may have been of that  
 “ Relation ; yet till their Sins grow up to that Hight  
 “ that He will throw them off, He will continue to  
 “ watch over them with so distinguishing a Provi-  
 “ dence, that all the World shall see that *His Eyes*  
 “ *are upon those that fear Him and that hope in his*  
 “ *Mercy.*

BUT we must now pass on to show,

II. THAT *His special Providence is to be acknow-  
 ledged in Bringing Persons to the chief Place of  
 Power among them.*

So the People did in the Text before us, and here-  
 in have given a fair Example and pointed out the  
 commendable Practice to be observed by others. So  
 it as well becomes all other People in the like Events  
 of Providence, and the wise and pious will be inclined  
 to follow them. They will see a special Providence  
 at work in these great affairs, and pay their suitable  
 acknowledgments and adorations to it.

By *Special Providence* I mean the Blessed God  
 Himself, by his secret Influence on Second Causes,  
 conducting Men to Seats of Dignity and Power, which  
 He would have them both to fill and beautify.

AND that there is a Providence in General over  
 the whole Material and Moral World, is evident both  
 from *Scripture* and Reason.

THE Passages in the *Sacred Oracles* are number-  
 less to testify --- That as He made, so He constantly  
 upholds & governs all things by his almighty Power  
 and Wisdom : That He does whatever pleases Him  
 both in Heaven and Earth : That all the inanimate  
 Creation

Creation are under his Direction and fulfill his Word : and that He rules according to his will both among Angels & Men : That not a little Sparrow, nor yet a single Hair falls to the Ground without Him : That we live and move and have our Being in Him : And that He pulls down the Mighty from their Seats and advances others according to his Sovereign Pleasure.

AND if we apply to *Reason*, we may clearly learn a Providence, both from the very *Being & Perfections of G O D*, from the very nature of created Substances, and from the State and Order of things in these lower Parts of the Creation:

FOR as HE must have brought all things besides Himself, from nothing into Being, He must in this have acted as a wise and designing Agent : He must have given them all, their various Constitutions Powers and Qualities, and placed them in such Scituations, as through all their Successive Train of Changes, most exactly to answer his wise Designs. And the same Designs, accompanied with his almighty Power and Wisdom, must needs oblige Him to see them answered ; and in order unto this, to take effectual Care of all his Works both to Preserve and Govern them, till his Ends of making them are perfectly accomplished.

OR if we look into the *Nature of Created Substances*, we shall very easily discover, that both in their continued as well as first Existence and Operations, they depend on the active Power or perpetual Influx of Him that made them. For they could not possibly be any other then what his Power effected : and therefore when that Power shall cease its Influence, they must needs be where they were before. The Force of that active cause determining, to whose Influence alone they owe their Power and Being, they must needs return to Inactivity and Nothing.

AND if we strictly search into the *Natural State and Course of things* in these lower Worlds, we may clearly see the careful, constant, wise and mighty  
action

Action of the invisible God in every part of the perceptible Creation; to preserve it in it's proper State and Order. For all these curious and well adjusted Systems do intirely hold together and perform their Operations by virtue of certain new and prodigious Forces inspired every where in the same proportion into every Particle of Matter, when once remov'd out of it's proper Place, to reduce and keep it there again. Let but the minutest Atom thro' out this mighty Frame of Beings, be either plac'd too near to others, provided it don't unite, or too far off; it will immediately receive a new and amazing Force to turn it back into it's due Point of Distance; and even there will be a constant Power exerted, in such a certain measure, to preserve it from wandering or being easily driven away. By such Means as these the Regulation of this lower World is kept from Age to Age, and without them all things would quickly run into the last Confusion.

BUT I must restrain my self from launching out into this surprizing Argument. In short, *All Nature* bares her lively witness both to the Being, Attributes & Providence of God: and the farther we enter into her intimate Recesses, the more she shows us of his Presence, Care and active Influence & Government, like the universal Soul and animating Principle of all her Powers & Actions.

AND now shall we see these things, and not acknowledge & adore a Providence in all those Changes that affect *the Sons of Men* the noblest Parts of this lower Creation, and especially great Companies and Collections of them? Does the glorious God take care of mere Inanimates that cannot know & praise him, and not of us, and especially of those that are his devoted People? Are there none of the Sons of Men that own, adore & serve Him; or can He possibly be unconcerned for them? And is there any Temporal Thing, wherein He can so much express his Care, as in raising up Men of singular Integrity & Skill, and bringing them to the chief Place of Power among them?



I readily allow it, that in his righteous and holy Providence, He may also raise up either weak, or able Men, that shall yet be wicked and even skilful both to vex and ruin : And these He may set over a People He loves, for their Correction ; or a provoking People, for their dreadful Scourge and Punishment. And even in such Events as these, his holy Providence is still to be adored with deep Abasement & Repentance ; but in the other, with the highest Gratitude and Praise.

AND for the *Manner* of his over-ruling Providence in the *moral World* ; It is enough to say, that He has millions of *Angels* both Good & Bad at his Direction, the one to order and the other to permit, that have a near Access to the Minds of Men, and a vast but imperceptible Influence on them. Or if these mighty Intelligences can't suffice ; the Hearts of Kings and all others are in the Hands of God, and He can turn their Inclinations which way He pleases, and suggest the Thoughts that move & govern them, tho' they perceive it not.

BUT 'tis high time that we now show

III. THAT *it is to Feed & Guide his People as a SHEPARD, that He thus advances Rulers over them.*

WE have already hinted that these are *Pastoral* Allusions : and they can't be limited to the Particular Branches here specified, but carry in them all the Offices of a faithful SHEPARD towards his Flock. And how beautifully are they represented to us, even by *David* himself, in the following Passages \* “ He  
“ will not let them want : He maketh them to lie  
“ down in Green Pastures : He leadeth them beside  
“ the still Waters : He restores their Souls : He lead-  
“ eth them in the Paths of Righteousness : and in  
“ their darkest and most dangerous Hours He will be  
“ with them, with his Rod and Staff to defend and  
“ comfort them.

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\* Psal. XXIII.



WHAT an entertaining Comment might easily be made on this Discription : But I may only now observe in General, what Images of *Tender Care and Gentleness* are these ! and when applied to Rulers, as our Text directs us ; what great concern for their Peoples universal Safety, Welfare and Tranquility, and what Fatigues and Labours to promote them, are here shadowed out by these Poetical Expressions.

How inconsistent with the very *first & principal Idea* carried in this Allusion, are both Severity and Rigour on the one hand, as also Indolence and Negligence on the other, in Civil Rulers, to whom the Care and Welfare of a numerous People are committed. How blame worthy would Shepards be to treat their Flocks with Cruelty, which they are appointed to protect from every Injury ? And how absurd to give up themselves to Rest or Pleasures, when their very Business is to watch both Day and Night for their Security and Quiet.

By these Expressions then, both the *Offices, Design and Spirit* of Civil Rulers are very strongly represented. And to answer these grateful Characters and the chief End of their Advancement, they are carefully to attend the *Publick Welfare* : they are to look round about their People on every Side to see if any Danger threatens, and to defend them against all their Enemies : And in short they are to take such care of their People's Interest and Safety ; as that we may intirely confide in their Integrity and Vigilance, and as the Apostle speaks, *may lead a peaceable and quiet Life in all Godliness and Honesty*, while they are caring for us. 1 Tim. II 2.

AND as for *Gentleness* of Government, Endeavours to oblige their People, and even Patience under high Affronts & Injuries ; to imitate the admirable Example of DAVID, who appears to be one of the mildest Men in Government that ever was. I shall only give a single Instance of the last mentioned Virtue. He forgave his open Enemies & Rebels, and even those that sought his Life and curs'd him to his Face and in

the very sight of his own Army, upon their Returning to him in humble confidence of Mercy and professing their Repentance: and after a great and dangerous Rebellion, he severely chid the Sons of *Zeruiab*, for exciting his Revenge, and would not suffer a Man to be put to Death that Day in *Israel*, 2 Sam. xix. 22.

IN fine we must remember, they are RULERS of a RELIGIOUS PEOPLE that we are now considering. And it would be the plainest Contradiction therefore to the great Design of their being advanc'd by God to the Government of such a People which He calls his own, to neglect the *most precious Interest* of all others, of the greatest Moment both to the People and to the Rulers also, and which God Himself who raises them has the highest value for. By this I can mean no other, than the Interest of his Reveal'd Religion in the Purity and Practice of it. Not the narrow and confin'd Prosperity of this or that particular Church or Churches, too groveling and limited an Object for the Soul of any Generous Christian; But the Prosperity of every religious Company that professes their Subjection to the Laws of God, or rather the very Practice of these Laws themselves in the Lives of Men. And if *Righteousness exalts a Nation*, as the wisest of mere Men assures us, † It must needs be both the People's highest Interest and the Rulers greatest Business to promote it: and the Advancement of it will in the course of things redound to their mutual Satisfaction, Benefit and Honour.

AND here I need not say, of what great Importance tis, to promote Religion, that RULERS be themselves the *Shining Patterns* of it among their People, and distinguishing Incouragers of the Pious and Virtuous of all Perswasions; and especially of those that are of Charitable and Benign Principles to all about them.

THIS it is in part to Feed and Guide them as a Shepard: and this is the great design of God in

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† Prov. xi. 34.



bringing Men to Places of Power and Dignity among his People, as the Text implies. Nor is our Text a single Instance of this great End of their Office, in the sacred Writings. For of the ancient *Judges* of the Tribes of *Israel*, 'tis expressly said, That *the Lord raised them up*, in Judges II. 16. And having rais'd them up, He says Himself, that *He commanded them to Feed his People*, 2 Sam. vii. 7. and 1 Chr. xvii. 6. And agreeable to this are Rulers often called *Shepards* in the sacred Prophecies; their Office being in God's account like theirs, to order his People with Care & Tenderness for their best advantage, and not to rule with Rigour, or gratify their Pleasure to the Injury of any.

AND how agreeable is this to the notion we have of the *Goodness* of *G O D*? who must needs require that the great Men of the World, whom He raises to act as chief Officers under Him, should be as like Him as possible in their administration of Government. For ever awake and attentive to the State of his People especially: slow to Anger and plenteous in Mercy, ready to Pardon, and abundant in Goodness, even to the unthankful and evil. —

BUT we must hasten on to show in the

IV. and last place, *T H A T* it is their own great and lasting Honour as well as his People's Happiness, to answer these chief Ends of their Exaltation, and to Feed and Guide them with Integrity and Skilfulness.

To Feed them with Integrity of Heart --- is to manage all things among them with an honest and upright Intention, and this both with respect to God who raises them, as also to his People that are governed by them (m) It is to adore the Providence that conducts and carries them to their exalted Stations, to keep the great End of God in their constant View, and sincerely aim & labour the Fulfilment of it; so that

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(m) *Molter.*

they may throwout their whole Administration approve themselves to Him whose Eye is always on them, and who will surely call them to an account of the Execution of their Charge. It is also to level their Designs at the Publick Good: To preserve their Word as Sacred; and their Administration free from Partiality, Oppression, Wrong, or whatever is grievous to intelligent & sober People. And as their People should in Duty and Gratitude afford them such an Honourable Maintenance as may secure them from Temptations; so every Species of Bribery or disposing of Offices more for gain then merit, will be an abhorrence to them.

AND how well is *Skilfulness* joined with *Integrity*? without which the former cou'd not deserve the sublime name of Wisdom, but the mean character of Deceit and Craft for their own Interest. For *Wisdom* in a Ruler is a Publick Virtue, that deliberates according to Conscience, Reason, Justice and the Nature of things, and then determins on those Actions that are honest, honourable and for the Good of the Publick. And to *Guide with Skilfulness of Hands*--- is to get a true and thorough Intelligence of the State of their People, to penetrate as far as possible into all the multiplying Tendencies of present Appearances, to compare as many Circumstances as possible together; and then to apply their utmost Skill and Labour to prevent all threatning Evils, and to Guide the Publick Affairs to the best Advantage, and this not only for the Present but also Future Generations.

AND here I might mention several excellent *Heads* of Publick Wisdom recommended both by Gentile and Christian Moralists --- Such as to secure the Character of Moderation, Justice, Honesty and a Concern for the Good of the People; and thereby acquire their Love and Confidence, without which there can never be an Administration happy. To prefer the more momentous things to those that are indifferent, and that which is honest to that which is profitable.

To



To pry into the Councils of Enemies. To be cautious of great & needless Innovations. To guard against Misinformers, Flatterers, and all those Persons who easily speak evil of others, or seek to raise a Prejudice and promote Divisions ; especially of a Publick Nature. To be Terrors to those who are of no Reputation for Virtue, who are the general offence and contempt of the People ; and to smile upon Persons of Wisdom and Credit. And in fine, To encourage Religion, Justice and Temperance, the natural and fruitful Source of all Prosperity.

In such things as these no doubt did DAVID excell as the Text implies, and agreeable to those excellent *Rules* He propos'd to Himself at his Entrance into his Government, as we find recorded in the *CI. Psalm*.  
 “ I will behave my self wisely in a perfect way: I will  
 “ walk in my House with a perfect Heart : I will set  
 “ no wicked thing before mine Eyes : I hate the  
 “ work of them that turn aside, it shall not cleave to  
 “ me. A froward Heart shall depart from me : I will  
 “ not know a wicked Person : whose privily slanders  
 “ his Neighbour, Him will I cut off: Him that has a  
 “ high look and a proud Heart will not I suffer.  
 “ Mine Eyes shall be upon the Faithful of the Land,  
 “ that they may dwell with me: He that walketh in  
 “ a perfect way, He shall serve me: He that works  
 “ Deceit shall not dwell in my House: He that tell-  
 “ eth Lies shall not tarry in my sight. I will early  
 “ destroy all the wicked of the Land ; that I may cut  
 “ off all wicked Doers from the City of the Lord.

AND now --- How *Happy* were the People, think you, under his wise and upright Administration ! while He was seeking the Wealth and Defence of his People, speaking Friendship and Peace to them, and ruling with Faithfulness and Equity ; Judgment rolled down among them as Waters, and Righteousness as a mighty Stream : Peace was within their Walls and Prosperity among their Palaces : And they have here reported his auspicious Government to his Renown and Honour in all Ages.

ON the other hand, look into the Books of the *Kings & Chronicles*; and how offensive and contemptible do the *Wicked* Governours of the Tribes of *Israel* appear? They that were given up to Atheism and Licentiousness on the one hand, or biggotted to Idolatry, Superstition & uninstituted Rites of Worship on the other. Religion languished, and therewith all manner of enormous and destructive Vices grew bold and rampant, till every thing was thrown into Confusion, and the People bro't to the Brink of Ruin. But when an ASA, an HEZEKIA, a JOSIAH rises ---- How lovely do the Men appear! Religion now revives, and therewith Justice, Honesty and every Publick and Private Virtue, the Civil State is restored and settled; and the People with their Rulers flourish in Success and Riches. And what Superiour *Honours* are thereby reflected on those wise and upright Governours? They were the Joy of their People while they liv'd, were greatly lamented when they came to die: their Memories are precious for ever, and their very Names are mentioned with pleasure in every Nation.

AND thus have we in some measure *illustrated* these observable Passages.

AND now what remains, but that we IMPROVE them by considering seriously our own high and holy RELATION to the Glorious GOD, as the GOD of our Fathers, and our as well as their Covenant GOD and Redeemer; with the multiplied and solemn Ingagements we are under to love and honour him, and to observe all his Laws and Institutions for ever.

THAT we also adore his distinguishing Favour in providing for us so many excellent GOVERNOURS, that have faithfully served this People in those noble Interests which they always accounted their greatest from the very Beginning, viz. the Interest of Scriptural and sincere Religion and Liberty both Civil and Sacred; which will render their Names most dear and honoured to all Posterity. AND

**AND** with our hearty Thanks to our **LIEUTENANT GOVERNOUR** and late **Commander in chief**, for all that tender affection He has born to this People, His example and countenancing Virtue and Piety, His Impartiality and Moderation of Government, and the Care, Zeal, Fatigue, Circumspection and Diligence, wherewith He has attended the Publick Affairs, and fought our Safety and Wellfare ; that we follow Him now with our most grateful Blessings and Honours as long as He lives.

**THAT** we most heartily welcome our **PRESENT COMMANDER IN CHIEF** into our Province, and to the Principal Chair of Government in it : that we adore the hand of **GOD** in bringing a Person of such eminent Talents to watch over & guide this People, and take care of our Interests : that we treat Him with Honour as becomes his Birth, his Person, his Commission and Dignity : that in our several places we study to render his Government easy to Him, and happy to us and our Country : that his Councillours give Him their true Informations & faithful Advices : that our Commons in asserting our Liberties, may do it with Decency : that the People be Quiet as the Apostle exhorts them \* and that we be all submissive to his legal Authority. In fine, that we continually Pray for the Spirit of Grace and Wisdom to be poured out upon Him in the most plentiful measures ; that He may Feed and Guide this People with an upright Heart and with a skilful Hand.

**AND** for **YOUR EXCELLENCY** ---

We sincerely Congratulate Your safe Arrival. We receive You as a Governour sent both from **GOD** and the **KING**, to Feed and Guide us. We behold and value you as the Son of a **FATHER** --- illustrious for his open and steady Zeal for Liberty both Civil and Religious, and the Protestant Succession on which i:

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\* 1 Thes. IV, 11.



depends ; for the great part He bare in the glorious Revolution ; for his Generous and Catholick Charity ; for his earnest Breathings after a farther Reformation ; for the Indignities He suffered for all these things ; and for his great Expressions of Kindness to this Country in the Day of our Distress. In particular, when He told our Agent, † “ That 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, then 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 Pa-*  
 “ *tentees* ; wherein they had promis’d 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 perform’d their  
 “ Part, for the King to deprive their Posterity of the  
 “ Priviledges therein granted to them, would carry  
 “ a Face of Injustice in it.

AND as we cannot doubt, but that YOUR EXCELLENCY is in the same noble Sentiments ; so we trust our present Privileges will be precious to you, as well as the Royal Prerogative, and safe in Your Hands. and this more especially still, since we are a People known for our universal and most hearty Attachment to the present happy SUCCESSION IN THE PROTESTANT LINE.

THAT Your Excellency will protect THESE CHURCHES, which differ chiefly from the CHURCHES OF ENGLAND in these *two* things, that our Clergy do nothing in our Administrations without the Consent of our People, and that we take the inspired

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† Dr. Increase Mather ; as I have heard Him often say.  
*Scriptures*



*Scriptures* for our only Canon of Ecclesiastical Institutions: whereas in their 20th Article, they assume the Power of adding other Institutions not prescribed in the Sacred Writings; and their Clergy don't allow their own People those Liberties which we apprehend that by the Laws of CHRIST and *Nature* they have a Right to Claim. And we rather confide in YOUR EXCELLENCY'S Smiles upon us for *our extensive Charity*: that while many of their high-flying Members confine the Validity of Ministerial Orders to their own Community and deny it to ours; we make no other Return then this, tho' we were Here above threescore Years before them, and are as I suppose in this Country above a hundred Freeholders to one of them, that we readily own the Validity of theirs as well as of all other Protestant Orders whatever, and desire to live in Peace and Charity with them.

THAT YOUR EXCELLENCY will also Favour our COLLEGE, which our Fore-fathers began to provide for within Seven Years after their Arrival in this part of the Country, and for this *Ninety Years* has Flourished in Learning, Virtue and Liberty; and Preserve it from every Incroachment that may be attempted against it, contrary to the known Intentions of its Original Founders and Successive Indowers.

BUT above all, and so to Conclude --- It is our greatest Concern that YOUR EXCELLENCY, will countenance VIRTUE & PIETY not only with us, but also in Persons of every other Denomination among us. That so this which we account our *Glory* may continue to dwell in our Land, that Mercy and Truth may meet together, that Truth may spring out of the Earth, and Righteousness may look down from Heaven, and the LORD our GOD may give that which is Good, and our Land may yield her Increase.

AND

AND for these great Ends --- as the *People* and *Priests* of ISRAEL, in their Salutations of DAVID in the Courts of the Tabernacle, when He first appeared as their Ruler among them ; so we earnestly pray, --- *Save now we beseech Thee, O LORD ! O LORD we beseech Thee send now Prosperity : Blessed is He that cometh to Feed this People in the name of the LORD, and we wish you a Blessing out of the House of the LORD, Psal. CXVIII. 25, 26.*

AND with the Prayer of DAVID to GOD for his People, let us all now chearfully unite & close --- Psal. XXVIII. 9. *Save THY PEOPLE, and Bless THINE INHERITANCE : Feed them also and lift them up for ever.*

*F I N I S.*

