

J. D. S.

John Cushing  
From the Rev. Amos

1/2 Nov



Mr. *Whitney's*  
DISCOURSES  
ON THE  
PUBLIC FAST,  
JULY 14, 1774.



The Transgression of a Land punished by  
*a multitude* of Rulers.

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CONSIDERED IN TWO  
DISCOURSES,

Delivered JULY 14, 1774,

Being voluntarily observed in most of the religious Assemblies throughout the Province of

MASSACHUSETTS-BAY;

AS A DAY OF

FASTING and PRAYER,

On Account of the DARK ASPECT of our

PUBLIC AFFAIRS:

And now published at the Desire of the HEARERS, to  
whom they are INSCRIBED.

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BY

PETER WHITNEY, A. M.

Pastor of the Church of CHRIST in *Northborough*.

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B O S T O N :

Printed by JOHN BOYLE in Marlborough-Street.

MDCCCLXXIV.

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# S E R M O N I.

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## P R O V E R B S XXVIII. 2.

*“ For the Transgression of a Land, many are  
“ the Princes thereof : But by a Man of  
“ Understanding and Knowledge the State  
“ thereof shall be prolonged.”*

**G**OOD civil government is one of the greatest temporal blessings which any people are favored with. Without this we cannot be safe and secure in the possession of any worldly good. Our virtue and happiness, our lives and property would be exposed to innumerable continued dangers from the unrestrained lusts and passions of mankind. One would lie at the mercy of another : and he who found himself possessed of the greatest strength and power, would sacrifice all that is dear to others, to his  
OWN

own will and pleasure. Where there is no law or government, every one will "do that which is right in his own eyes," as *they* did when there was no king in Israel. Government is as an "hedge about our persons, and about all that we have on every side," against the ravages and depredations of lawless men, men who have nothing to govern them, but their own wills, passions and appetites. Says St. Paul, † "We know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully ; knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient; for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for man-slayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for men-stealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine."

THE sin and fall of man gave occasion for civil government in societies, as a necessary curb and restraint to the corrupt lusts and vile affections of human kind. Had man never sinned he would not have been under the influence of unruly disorderly lusts and passions : he would not have been so disposed to transgress the eternal and unalterable rules of equity

† 1 Tim. 1. 8, 9, 10.

equity and truth ; but would have “ lived soberly, righteously, and godly in the world.”

It was evidently in compassion to a fallen degenerate world that God instituted and ordained civil government, and that he was himself, in a special and peculiar sense, the supreme magistrate in Israel, appointing subordinate officers and judges, more immediately to manage the affairs of their state, under his direction and guidance.

THE divine Being has, all along, abundantly manifested his approbation of civil government. He was *indeed* angry with his people of old, for rejecting him, who was King of kings, and Lord of lords; from being their king, and asking *him* to give them a king like unto the heathen nations round about. This was a sin in them : and the very thing they desired, became a snare and a scourge unto them. It had been well for them, and all succeeding nations, had their original form of government been strictly adhered to, gratefully accepted, and well improved. They sought a change, and God granted their request. Since when, *he* has been pleased, in his holy word, very particularly, to point out the qualifications of “ princes” and rulers, and the duty of the people, to submit to their  
authority

authority and laws, withal intimating that *good* rulers are a blessing, great benefactors to mankind. “ He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God ; and he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds ; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain,” ¶ says God.

No particular form of government has unerring wisdom pointed out, prescribed and directed unto. But mankind, in their various dispersions through the earth, and different nations, are left wholly to their liberty to agree upon their own plan and constitution, their particular model of government, and to depute whom, and as few, or as many, as they shall think fit, to rule and govern them, being to obey and submit to them, whom *they* have thus clothed with authority, “ not only for wrath, but for conscience sake.” The supposition of a divine hereditary right in some, to govern the rest, is glaringly absurd and groundless. God’s setting aside Saul and his family, and bringing David, the son of Jesse, to be the king of Israel, together with the parable of Jotham, recorded in the book of God, ‡ being well weighed and attentively considered,

¶ 2 Sam. 23. 3. 4.      ‡ Judg. 9. 7—15.



ed, prove that such right cannot be founded on the Bible. And where can we go to find and prove this doctrine of the divine hereditary right of particular persons and families to rule and govern others, if not to the revelation from heaven. A people may, if they please, make the kingdom hereditary, in a particular family, under certain limitations and restrictions ; (as is the case in England) ; and whoever claims a right to the British throne, contrary to such established rules, is a daring usurper, and impudent pretender ; and this has been the character of some of the inglorious and tyrannical Stewart family, ever since the reign of James the second. The people of England after various struggles and contests, and having tried many very different forms of government, at length happily united those three leading kinds, monarchy, aristocracy and democracy, which composed that excellent civil constitution, which has been the glory of Britons, and the envy of foreigners. Says one, “ All power has its foundation in compact and mutual consent, or else it proceeds from fraud or violence. Where the latter takes 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.—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 on 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 right of the other, it usually produces convulsions, which sooner or later overturn the state.” The king of England, at his coronation, is sworn to defend the rights of the people, and to govern according to the established constitution, the fundamental laws and statutes of the realm. The British constitution, in its primitive purity, is the most perfect form of civil government, because it derives and secures the greatest *good* to the whole nation, which is the end of all civil government: Finite beings can conceive of no other end, the divine Being could have in view, in the ordination and appointment of civil government, and setting some over their *brethren*, but the *good* of the people. Reason suggests



no other, nor does revelation speak of any but *this*. The scripture assures us that magistrates are appointed of God to be his ministers for *good* to the public. He did not appoint such an order of men, for the purposes of enslaving the rest, and involving the world in misery and wretchedness, nor surely to enrich and aggrandize themselves and families, at the unnecessary expence, and great damage of the public, as if God had a partiality for *them*. He did indeed intend, that princes and rulers, continually attending on this very thing, *the public good*, and seeking the welfare of the state, and the happiness of the people, should be honorably maintained, and distinguishingly supported; as but the just recompence of their faithful and important services for them. It is an apostolic injunction upon the people to support their rulers. “For, for this cause pay you tribute also; for they are God’s ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due; custom, to whom custom, fear, to whom fear, honor, to whom honor.” Where government subsists, it must of necessity be supported and maintained. This will create burdens for the people, but burdens which they will chearfully bear, and go through, while they feel the *benefit* of their rulers mild, reasonable; righteous, just

just and impartial administration. The people are bound in justice and equity to support them, who employ their time and talents in the public service. While serving the people, *they* ought to be maintained in ease and honor, according to their rank and station, and the degrees of service, by them, done to the community. They should have their minds freed from all anxiety and distressing concern, as to their own and their families subsistence in the world. That rulers should sacrifice their own estates and fortunes in the service of the people, is not just or reasonable. Men who serve others ought to be rewarded in proportion to the time they spend, and the *benefit* thence resulting to *them* for whom they labor. “The laborer is worthy of his hire.” And I see not why rulers, and others, who are wholly devoted to public business, and spend all their time, (if need be) and talents therein, ought not to be more than barely supported, and maintained in character; why they ought not to be enabled, in that way, to lay up for their families and children, in some proportion, as it might be supposed they probably would, by prudence, honesty and diligence in any other lawful calling. Parsimony in a people towards “princes,” and rulers, or the ministers of Christ, is a great sin, and has a natural tendency to defeat the designs of heaven, in  
their

their appointment to office. But with regard to the support due to civil government from the governed, there is a measure, beyond which, taxes imposed on them, are but extortion and oppression. "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, than when rulers needlessly deprive them of that which they have dearly earned, 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." Rulers should be men hating covetousness, as well as fearing God, otherwise they will sacrifice the rights and property of their subjects, and sometimes their lives, to gratify their pride, ambition and avarice. Naboth lost his life, through the covetousness of Ahab, who sought his vineyard. When magistrates neither fear God, nor regard man, instead of aiming at the public good (which is their main business) they will study to advance their own private interest, and that of their household, and do any thing

thing to keep in office. Sinister views govern and predominate ; such men are not to be trusted. Power in their hands is dangerous ; for they will sacrifice conscience and sell their country to gratify and pleasure themselves ; or they will do this to please those above them, on whom they depend. Such men are easily bought. How far this has been verified of late, in this land, I leave all to determine for themselves. Rulers seem to be mistaken, when they act with a view only to support and preserve their own greatness and grandeur. “ That the civil ruler and christian minister should engross the wealth of the world to themselves, as they have done in many ages and countries, and live in pride and luxury, on spoils violently extorted or sily drained from the people, is altogether foreign to the design of God in setting them up.” That they ought to be supported in ease and honor, we may collect from the sacred oracles.

As good rulers, God’s ministers for good to the people, are entitled to sufficient and honorable maintenance, so are they, to every mark of honor, esteem and respect from their subjects. “ Honor the king,” says St. Peter. And as there are no lawful powers, but who are ordained of God ; so St. Paul directs us to render to *such* their dues ; “ fear to whom fear,



fear, honor to whom honor," is due. Rulers and princes are entitled to the most respectful treatment from the people over whom they are placed. We may not "speak evil of dignities," nor "of the rulers of the people." To treat "princes" and rulers with contempt, indignity, and disrespect, is slighting and contemning an ordinance of God.

BUT not only are *good* "princes," and rulers to be supported and honored in their stations, but submitted to and obeyed. Reason will direct, and interest lead, all cheerfully to submit to the laws and government of *such* magistrates; and religion most strongly enforces the same duty. St. Paul, says, "Let every soul be subject unto 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 receive to themselves damnation. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake." And St. Peter exhorts, "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: Whether it be to the king as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them, that are sent by him." The civil ruler is the minister of God for *good* to the people. While rulers pursue the  
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end of their appointment to office, seeking the public good, they are to be obeyed and submitted unto. Rulers are men of like passions with ourselves; as liable to an undue bias and influence, and so to errors and mistakes in their conduct, as their subjects. It becomes subjects to point out the mistakes which rulers run into, at any time, in their administration; and when these are made to appear, *they* will, if they have the good of society at heart, immediately rectify them. We may not refuse submission to higher powers, because of lesser errors in government. Allowance ought to be made for rulers as well as others. It is the property of the divine Being only to be incapable of doing wrong. Every wrong step in rulers, may not proceed from a settled disposition to abuse their power and injure their subjects. But when they make use of their power and authority in a manner subversive of the end of their designation to office; when they encroach on the natural and constitutional rights of the people; when they trample on those laws, which were made, at once to limit their power, and defend their subjects; in such cases the people are bound not to obey them, but resist them as public robbers and the destroyers of mankind and of human happiness. Says the great Mr. Lock in his treatise



rise upon government. “ Wheresoever law ends, tyranny begins, if the law be transgressed to another’s harm. And whoever in authority, exceeds the power given him by law, and makes use of the force he hath under his command, to compass that upon the subject which the law allows not, ceases in that to be a magistrate ; and acting without authority, may be opposed as any other man, who invades the right of another.” And in these cases the people must be judge of the good or ill conduct of their rulers ; to the people they are accountable. It is the highest popery to affirm otherwise. “ The argument whereby the Apostle Paul enforces his exhortation of submission to rulers, and dissuades from resistance, is, that these civil powers are ordained of God, and ordained by him, ministerially to convey blessings from him to the people. So long therefore, and so far as *these* civil powers act agreeably to the design of their ordination, and do *good* in their stations, the people are obliged to subjection, and resistance will be blameable ; but if these powers forsake their proper sphere, thwart God’s design in ordaining them, disserve the people, and take measures which tend to ruin them, the Apostle’s ground of the people’s subjection ceases ; and, indeed, submission becomes a fault, and

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resistance

resistance a-virtue. If the people ought to obey well conducting rulers out of regard to the public good, it must be as much their duty, still governed by a regard to the public good, to oppose them, when pursuing destructive methods. To suppose it belongs to the Apostle's meaning, that it is a damnable sin to resist civil powers, *because ordained of God*, though they act entirely out of character; and thwart every kind purpose: God had in ordaining them, is in the class of most palpable grating absurdities. A pretence to ground such ideas, as those of indefeasible right, passive obedience, and non-resistance, on the Bible, is criminal—an high abusive scandal to the Christian religion, and its divinely inspired Promulgators. If God had given up mankind to the will of oppressors, not permitting the people, on pain of damnation, to attempt their own relief, it would not, indeed, have exceeded the demerit of a sinful world ; but would have been disagreeable to the general analogy of kind Providence.” As rulers, however *omnipotent* they may pretend to be, are not raised above a possibility of erring and mistaking in the exercise of their power and authority, so it is not absurd to suppose they may, in some cases enjoin and require things of their subjects contrary to the laws of nature, which are the laws of God, and contrary also to  
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the Christian religion ; in which case our duty is plain, “ We must obey God rather than men.” And, “ stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.” If any come in privily to spy out our liberty, which we derive from the Author of nature and the Author of our most holy faith, we may not give place to them, by subjection, no not for an *hour* ; that the rights of nature and of conscience, and the truth of the gospel, may continue with us. But not to enlarge in this way.

His present majesty, king George the third, has in my opinion, an undoubted right to the British throne ; but his right thereto is founded, if not wholly, yet principally, on the people's right to resist, and set aside evil and wicked rulers, rulers who trample on the fundamental laws of the state, and invade their subjects rights and liberties. Had not the people resisted and removed that unhappy and misguided king, Charles the first, the nation would probably, have been ruined. King James the second, brother of Charles the second, and son of Charles the first, so enraged the people, by his infatuated measures, as that he was forced to abdicate the throne, and flee his kingdom. Then William Henry and Mary,  
prince

prince and princess of Orange, were proclaimed king and queen of England. This *event*, called the revolution, took place in 1688. William and Mary dying without issue, the princess Anna of Denmark, second daughter of king James the second, was proclaimed queen. She died leaving no children, whereupon George Lewis, elector of Hanover, succeeded to the crown of Great-Britain. He was grandson of the princess Elizabeth Stewart, daughter of James the first, king of England. He was succeeded, in the throne of these kingdoms, by his son George the second, of illustrious memory, who was grandfather to George the third, the present rightful sovereign on the British throne. History shows us that the greater part of the kings of England, have come to the throne, not so much by right of inheritance, as by the *election* of the people, and the resistance they have made to them who were heirs apparent to the crown, or actually on the throne. ¶ If the people have

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¶ “ Archigallo, Emerian, Vertigern, Sigibert, kings of the west saxons : Beornred and Alured, kings of Northumberland, were all deprived of their thrones for their evil government, and such who were tho't more worthy preferred in their stead. King Edwin being deprived for his unjust government, the crown

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a right to keep out the next heir to the crown, because he is a papist, they have equal right to do so for any other as weighty cause, and to fix on the throne such a prince as they shall think fit.

WHAT has been said above respecting government and the great blessing it is to society, may serve to introduce what shall follow, agreeable to the purport of the text.

POWER is too intoxicating, and liable to abuse. As great a blessing as government is,  
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was given to his brother Edgar, who was one of the rarest princes, that the world had in his time both for peace and war, justice, piety and valor.

Of all our kings from the *Norman invasion*, the better half came to the crown contrary to the doctrine of the *divine unalienable right*. William the second put by his brother Robert, so did Henry the first. Stephen set aside, Maud the empress. King John did the same, by his nephew. Edward the third, outed his father, Edward the second. Henry the fourth, obliged Richard the second, to abdicate. Henry the fifth, and Henry the sixth, kept possession of the throne from the house of Mortimer, whose right it was by inheritance. Edward the fourth, removed Henry the sixth. Richard the third, served his nephew, Edward the fifth after the same rate. Henry the seventh, would never own his wife's title, and so on." See a treatise, entitled, *Vox populi, vox Dei*, being true maxims of government.

like all other blessings, it may become a scourge, a curse, and severe punishment to a people. "For the transgression of a land, many are the princes thereof," says Solomon. Intimating that to have many princes in a kingdom is a just judgement of God upon a sinful nation. These words may be variously interpreted. "For the transgression of a land, and a general defection from God, and religion, to idolatry, prophaneness and immorality, many are the princes thereof; many at the same time pretending to the sovereignty, and contending for it, by which the people are crumbled into parties and factions, biting and devouring one another." Or many princes successively in a little time, one cutting off another, or soon cut off by the hand of God, or of a foreign enemy." But this word "prince," need not be understood in so limited a sense, as intending the king, or first magistrate. It may most properly be understood here, as meaning the nobles, counsellors, and officers in a kingdom and land; any ruler and officer among people; any who are set over them to rule, order and govern them. And our text speaks of it, as a punishment upon a people and land to have a *multitude* of princes, or rulers and officers. For the entertaining just conceptions of this point, let it be observed:

That



That as government was ordained of God for the “good” of the people, and not for their destruction ; so to effect this most valuable intended end, it is necessary, that in every state there be as many “princes,” and rulers, of one sort and of another, higher and lower as shall be sufficient to all the purposes of good government ; both for the making and executing laws, conducive to the general felicity, and that the benefits and advantages thence resulting, may be seen and felt, in the remotest parts of the empire. In proportion to the extent of a kingdom, must be its number of “princes,” its legislative and executive officers. It is not possible for one, or a few, to carry on the great end of government, in a large and widely extended empire. Governors and officers must be sent forth into all parts to make and execute good and wholesome laws *for the punishment of evil doers, and for the encouragement and security of them who do well.* This will create proportionable burdens for the people : Because all serving the public, ought by them to be well supported. But multiplying of lucrative offices in a kingdom or state, beyond what is really necessary to promote, the *only* and great end of government, the general good of the community, as it must produce great and warm struggles for higher and more profitable posts among *them*, and  
 unavoidably

unavoidably increase the burdens of the people, so it may truly be reckoned a severe punishment, and heavy judgment upon a land. Innumerable, almost, are the evil consequences which take place in the state, from a needless addition of “princes,” rulers and officers in it, which prove the thing to be a sore scourge and curse to the land. Bribery and corruption will prevail ; and an increase of *taxes* and *duties* on the necessities of life, on lands, food and cloathing, whereby the people are reduced to straits and poverty, while these *Supernumeraries* live in idleness, affluence and luxury, on the labors of the honest and industrious. How noxious to society is this ! Whether Great-Britain and these colonies, being a part of the empire, are in that situation of having *many* more “princes,” rulers and officers therein, than are absolutely necessary to manage the affairs of government, *some* will doubtless venture to deny. But, so great is the number of “princes,” that is, placemen and pensioners in our nation and land, as that the stipend is they receive must, and will keep the nation in debt. An immense sum is annually paid in pensions, to persons who are out of public business, and *some* to persons in office, over and above their fixed income. This, together with the *necessary* ex-  
pences

ences and charges of the state, have created such a debt in England, as that after all the means and methods used to increase the national *revenue*, it can do little more than pay the interest of the debt, and the *annual* exigencies of government. ‡ That persons in high office, and ministers of God for *good to the public*, should be rewarded for their services, is but just ; and that they be maintained in honor and dignity, proportioned to their rank, and the importance and usefulness of their offices to the people, is very reasonable. But why one who was well rewarded while in office and business, must retire therefrom, with a pension of several thousands of pounds, only to make room for another person, we, in this remote corner of the world, see not. All this burden comes upon the laboring poor, and by this means they are so straitened, as scarce to be able to procure for themselves and families, the necessities of life. The generality of the common people in England and Ireland, fare much poorer, than the meanest servant, and most ab-

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‡ The interest of our *national* debt amounts to near upon five millions a year. Ten millions of pounds sterling is our present annual *national* income, and likewise our present annual *national* expence ; including what may at times be paid towards the discharge of the debt and the cost of collecting.

ject slave in this land. That men who have performed some signal exploit, and done something whereby special benefit accrues to the state should be distinguishingly rewarded, is but reasonable and just. All the wit and craft of men has been exercised, and their invention wracked to find out offices, posts and employments for them who have been seeking places, that there might be, at least, a plausible pretence for their receiving large salaries from the people. It is almost impossible, to reckon up the different "princes," rulers and officers, in the nation, or to compute their stipends ; the sum thereof is, almost, beyond account. New and unheard of officers and rulers have been made of late years, that so all may be provided with places and incomes.

FURTHER, a large standing army, consisting, perhaps of near an hundred thousand men in all parts of the British dominions, is kept up, at an amazing expence to the state. Some under half pay, others under full pay ; the higher officers have very great wages, while the soldiers have scanty allowance. This *army* is kept up to aid the civil power, it is pretended ; but were the requirements of civil rulers just and reasonable, there would be no occasion of having recourse to the powers of the military, to enforce obedience. When mea-  
sures

measures are to be carried, and can be carried; only by force of the soldiery, and the terror of arms, it is proof abundant that *they* are unlawful and unconstitutional. For however there may be persons of a factious, licentious turn, yet the body of a people are disposed to obedience and submission from a principle of self-interest, if nothing else. They are disposed to "lead quiet and peaceable lives." When there arises *general* uneasiness and complaint among a people, it is a certain sign things do not go well in the state, and that the measures pursuing are not just, right and equal. A standing army kept up, as they always are, in idleness, in time of peace, are the bane of religion, virtue and social felicity, and the nursery of the most exuberant growth of all kinds of wickedness and debauchery. This is a plan to fright people into a compliance with favorite measures, which the abettors are sensible mankind will not readily consent unto. And may it not be, because they are not just? This is a measure unnecessarily burdensome. For "a constitution which cannot support its own weight must fall;—it must be supposed essentially defective in its form or administration. Military aid has ever been deemed dangerous to a free civil state; and often has been used as an effectual engine to subvert it." A people



ple ought not to be forced or frightened out of their rights, liberties and property. When standing armies are improved, it may well awaken the jealousy of the people, and rouse their attention to their dearest worldly interests. When rulers and princes act in character as ministers of God for *good* to the people, and pursue the things which tend to the welfare and interest of the state, instead of their own, the people will easily perceive it. "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 let 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 burdens 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 sympathize 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." ¶

BUT

¶ Dr. Eliot's election sermon.



But to proceed, We, in this land, have seen and felt and still see and feel, the evils of a standing army posted among us in time of peace ; sent hither to force or fright this people to comply with acts of the British Parliament, which are generally looked upon as unconstitutional and grievous ; and they will probably be improved to force this people, if possible, to relinquish their chartered rights and liberties, which we hold by the plighted faith of former princes, and the crown.

BESIDES, new courts of admiralty have been, within these few years, erected, judges appointed with extensive jurisdiction and “ great power,” with large salaries annexed to their offices, without being obliged to reside in their respective districts; or perform any part of the service ; but do all by their deputies, who also have good stipends. Persons are liable to be carried, a great distance, for trial in these courts, and *there* the party complaining is in a sense both judge and jury. These, together with a new Board of Commissioners, and other officers, unknown to our fathers, compose that band of “ princes,” by whom this land is punished for its transgression. Nothing need be said here more than to mention these things, unless it be to add, that the  
Board

Board of Commissioners, and other officers are maintained in pride, idleness and luxury, at a vast and needless expence of public treasure. For, admitting it to be reasonable that a *revenue* be raised in America, it might be collected without maintaining such a multitude of officers, in the collection, as are employed, and which eats up most, if not the whole, of the profit. But enough has been said to show when government, instead of being a blessing, becomes a scourge, and a punishment to a people. It is so when its rulers or princes are many, and numerous, whereby unnecessary burdens are brought upon the people.

I go on to say very briefly, That “by a man of understanding and knowledge the state thereof shall be prolonged.” Religion and knowledge will prevent or redress the grievances, to which a land may be subjected, by a multitude of “princes” and rulers. A privy counsellor, or minister of state, or the principal rulers in a kingdom, if they are men of real religion and enlarged knowledge will use their influence and power to restrain and suppress, “the transgression of a land,” and pursue the best methods for healing the wounds thereof, that so the good estate thereof may be prolonged. It is scarce possible to conceive,

ceive, what eminent service one wise man may do for a nation in a difficult, critical and troublesome juncture. The wise man tells us in this chapter, where we find the text, that, "the prince who wanteth understanding is also a great oppressor : But he that hateth covetousness shall prolong his days." The love of money, and the want of due consideration, are the causes of the mal-administration of "princes" and rulers. A ruler who is covetous will neither do justly, nor love mercy, but the people under him shall be bought and sold. But rulers who are true fearers of God, and haters of covetousness, shall prolong their government and peace ; they shall be happy in the affections of their people, and the blessings of their God. Rulers who are wise and good, will never oppress and enslave their subjects, if they would consult their own interest, ease and safety. Tyrants and oppressors who sacrifice every thing to their covetousness, and ambition of an absolute, arbitrary power, generally suffer for their madness and folly, when an oppressed and enslaved people are roused. Such rulers often fall a sacrifice to the rage of mankind. When they who rule over men, are persons of understanding and knowledge, not only men discerning in the times and seasons, knowing what Israel ought to do, but  
men

men of real goodness and religion, are “just, ruling in the fear of God,” the state of that people will be prosperous, flourishing, and happy : Such rulers will be a God-like blessing. Says God by the mouth of his servant king David, “they shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even as a morning without clouds ; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain.” “The character and extensive beneficence of the faithful ruler, are here represented, who with a God-like ardor employs his authority and influence to advance the common interest. The righteous Lord, whose countenance beholdeth the upright, will support and succeed rulers of this character : And it is an evidence of his favor to a people, when such are appointed to rule over them. The natural effect of this, is quietness and peace, as showers upon the tender grass, and clear shining after rain. In this case a loyal people must be happy, and fully sensible that they are so—while they find their persons in safety—their liberties preserved—their property defended—and their confidence in their rulers entire.” The necessary expences of government will be borne with pleasure ; while justice holds the balance, and righteousness flows down their streets. Such civil state, according



ing to the natural course of things, must flourish in peace at home, and be respectable abroad—private virtues will be encouraged, and vice driven into darkness—industry in the most effectual manner promoted—arts and sciences patronized—the true fear of God cultivated, and his worship maintained. Happy must the people be that is in such a case—ye happy is the people whose God is the Lord.” ‡  
 “By a man of understanding and knowledge, the state thereof shall be prolonged.” But I need not enlarge here, since so much was said in the beginning of this discourse, of the great blessing of good civil government. Government, as great a blessing as it is, sometimes may become a scourge and punishment to a people. Is not this the case, at this day, with our nation and land?

OUR part, my hearers, is to consider what are the moral causes of our public calamities and troubles, humble ourselves before God, and, while his judgments are abroad in the earth, learn righteousness. “For the transgression of a land many are the princes thereof.” The consideration of this matter, together with some observations upon the  
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‡ Rev. Mr. Cock’s election sermon.

present state of this country, and directions and advice to the people respecting the same, will be the business of the next discourse. In the mean time, let what has been said, be well weighed and duely considered by us,  
 “ And the Lord give us understanding in all things.”

*End of the First* S E R M O N.

S E R M O N



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# S E R M O N II.

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P R O V E R B S XXVIII. 2.

*“ For the Transgression of a Land, many are  
“ the Princes thereof : But by a Man of  
“ Understanding and Knowledge the State  
“ thereof shall be prolonged.”*

**I**N the morning I expatiated upon the great blessing of *good* civil government, and considered the grand end and design of the institution——Then observed that, as great a blessing as civil government was, it might be so conducted as to become a curse, a judgment and punishment to a land : And it is so, when the “ princes,” or rulers “ thereof are many,” many more than are necessary to promote and effect the great end of government, the good of the community, and when by being multiplied in a land, the burdens of the  
people

people must be greatly, needlessly and very unprofitably increased, and *they* impoverished and enslaved : While men, or rulers of understanding and knowledge, rulers of religion and piety as well as great discernment, by their wise, prudent and righteous administration, will prolong the state, the tranquillity and happiness of the land.

BUT as the present state of the British empire indicates that civil government is made a scourge and punishment unto the people, to our part, my hearers, and the proper business of this day, is to enquire and consider what are the moral causes of this punishment, to humble ourselves before God, and while his judgments are abroad in the earth, learn righteousness.

THE present *multitude* of “princes,” or rulers in the land, and their enormous, gigantic strides after despotic government and arbitrary power, our text teaches us to consider as a just judgment of heaven, and a righteous punishment upon “the land” (as inflicted by God) for the many provoking sins, and daring “transgressions” of the people. “Our adversity is to be considered, as the effect of *providential* agency or permission—as a righteous parental chastisement of heaven,  
for

for our many provocations ; and a loud call for universal repentance and reformation, according to the gospel of Christ." While therefore, the language of this day's solemnities seems to be this, that with all humility we confess our sins to God, and " come boldly to the throne of grace that we may find mercy to pardon," and with fullest confidence are committing our cause to the God of infinite wisdom, putting up fervent prayers to that Being, who is able to save ; we should, at the same time, consider our indispensable obligations, and the necessity of " adding to" our prayers and supplications, true and unfeigned repentance, as ever we would hope to obtain audience of Him, " who loveth righteousness, and hateth iniquity." The psalmist tells us, that, " if we regard iniquity in our hearts, the Lord will not hear us." The voice of Providence, at such a time of trouble, and day of darkness, speaketh on this wise, to every messenger of the Lord of Hosts " cry aloud, and *spare* not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and their sins." \* This people should be taught what is amiss among them, be " shewed their *evil* works, and their transgressions, which they have exceeded." † And be earnestly

\* Isaiah 58: 1.

† Job 36. 9.

estly pressed and urged to repentance and reformation, as the only way to obtain deliverance from our present distress, and to cause the divine Being to avert those impending evils and punishments, which will, otherwise, fall on us, until God “shall make an utter end of us.”

Our ancestors, who first came into this country, and their immediate posterity, were a pious, a holy and a praying people, and God had a favor for them. But we, who have thus remotely descended from them have risen up in their stead, “a seed of evil doers, children that are corrupters, we have forsaken the Lord, we have provoked the holy One of Israel unto anger, we are gone away backward.” “Iniquity greatly abounds, and the love of many waxes cold.” Multitudes are “enemies to God and religion, in their minds by wicked works.” Have we not forfeited all our blessings into the hands of God? And are not rulers made the instruments, in his hands of depriving us of some of them, and thus punishing us? And are not most of the *evils* we now suffer, the natural and necessary, as well as moral, effects of our vices? And is there any reason to hope that we shall be a happy people, while pride and extravagance, luxury and intemperance are so prevalent among

mong us ? But further, to use the words of another, which are *peculiarly* emphatical, and expressive. “ Though greatly distant, we are sorrowfully infected with the irreligion and vices, which are predominant in England ; and which reign there to such a degree as that we can scarcely forbear applying such language as that in the Revelation, “ come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues : For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.” A *worldly* spirit, is discovering itself, in numerous immoral effects of avarice, in many instances of preferring private temporal interests before the good of the country, and as to some in an easy declension from the dissenting cause, and coincidence with a certain more *worldly*, and less reformed ecclesiastical establishment ; the immoral practice of gaming with lucrative purposes, chiefly among persons in that which they call *high* life ; a great neglect of public religious ordinances, in almost all parts of the land ; amazing profanity, especially in maritime places ; widely prevailing and highly excessive use of spirituous liquors, together with a variety of high-strained modes of extravagance and luxury, more especially in our larger and more wealthy trading towns.—

Things



Things which appear at such a day as *this* “exceeding sinful,” absurd and aggravated, are in the number of those sins wherewith our times are marked ; while some persons run off into the wildest excesses of sentiment, some “concerning faith have made shipwreck,” and others are tinged with the spirit of scepticism. And such irreligion and vice, whereby we offend our God, and “the God of our fathers,” and merit our misery at his hands, are, in a great measure, borrowed (with unaccountable fond embraces) of the very people from whom our sufferings proceed.—The reflection is sufficiently painful and confounding, without proceeding to observe that, persons may possibly be found, degenerate enough, to spread vice and wickedness among us, from a principle of *Balaamitish* policy, or to render as an easier prey, by means of the venality, carelessness and timidity which are the natural effects of luxury.”

“ But whatever may be justly said of their origination, certain it is, that by numerous offences against God, we merit a much deeper plunge of adversity, than we are now involved in ; and we are called upon, by the monitory language of divine Providence, to “consider our ways, and turn our feet unto his testimonies, and so to give glory to the Lord our God,

God, before our feet stumble upon the dark mountains ; and while we look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it ~~cross~~ darkness." †

BUT not to enlarge in this way. I will proceed to show, agreeable to what has already been hinted—That many of the evils and troubles we now suffer, are the moral, and also the natural and necessary effects of our transgressions and sins ; so that we may read our sins, in the way and manner of our punishment.

WITH regard to the duty laid upon India teas, I cannot help thinking, (though some possibly may call this superstition) that it is a just judgment, and righteous punishment upon this people, for their vile abuse, and prostitution of that article of foreign trade, and I may add, *needless* luxury. To me it appears, that by means of this article of tea, the people of this land, have run into excesses of wickedness, great beyond all account. Many have foolishly laid out their money for *this*, who could scarce procure the *necessaries* of life, and for no other reason, but because it was fashionable. And all orders, ranks and ages of people have been so devoted to it, as that they, many of

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† Mr. Turner's election sermon.

them at least, “ have worshipped and served this creature, more than the Creator, who is blessed forever.” Is it possible to tell how much time has been foolishly spent, principally, but not altogether, among them, who are above the common level of mankind? Much time has been lost, which might have been more profitably spent at home in their own proper business. Is it possible to say how much actual wickedness has been committed by people, (when visiting one another for the sake of tea, chiefly) in idle, vain and sinful conversation, in freely handling the characters of others, flandering and defaming of them; together with a pretence among many at such times, to a power of revealing secrets, or foretelling future events, which, in whatever light we view it, must be evil. For a knowledge of any future events comes not from God in that way. If any persons have this power it must be derived from some evil spirit. If none have this power of foretelling future events; pretending to it, may at least be reckoned among that “ foolish talking and jesting which” the apostle says, “ are not convenient,” and which by no means “ become women, professing godliness.” Besides, there are many other evils attending this fashion and custom of visiting, for the sake of drinking tea. It is no sin for persons,

persons, who are able, to use the produce of other countries either for food or cloathing : It is the excess in the use hereof, with other evils accompanying the same which is faulty ; and whether this article has not pretty universally been used to a great degree of faulty and sinful excess, is a question, I readily submit, for decision, to the sober and thinking part of mankind. While I shall scarce mention the damage done to this country, by the unexampled use and consumption of India-teas, in the vast sums of money annually sent hence to purchase it. Were the people in this land to use it as freely as heretofore they have done, the *revenue* arising from the duty laid on that single article, small as it is, no doubt, would annually amount to several hundred thousand pounds. It is to be hoped, that for the good of their country, the people will totally lay aside the use of that needless, not to say hurtful commodity ; for the duty hence arising, is chiefly, if not wholly spent, to support in idleness, or something worse, a set of men, many of whom, are not only needless, but noxious to society.

But to proceed, May not the late act of the British court for blocking up the harbour of Boston, be viewed in the light of a just frown of heaven upon the town and country,

for



for their excess in trade, and amazing extravagance in the consumption of foreign commodities. Though a free trade to foreign countries, well managed, may be a great benefit, yet it may be *abused*, and prove a real damage to the land. Many things absolutely superfluous are imported; things which tend only to feed our pride and vanity. Many things are imported, which might be manufactured among ourselves, vastly to our own advantage. It is greatly to the interest of any country to encourage all kinds of manufactures. But we have too generally contracted a distaste to what is home-made, and think we must go abroad for food and cloathing. This country has been overstocked with foreign goods, whereby the land is drained of it's money. Besides, multitudes in all parts are running into trade, which is a real damage to the community : were they employed in handling the plow, (a work many of them are much fitter for) and turning the wilderness into a fruitful field, they would do more eminent service to their country, and, no doubt, to themselves. However, I am far from thinking that this act of parliament, 'is a righteous and just act, as some do. It is an amazing stretch of power, replete with cruelty and oppression ; not to be paralleled in the records



of any court, even the Ottoman, and stands unexampled in all history. “ All who have seen or heard of it, say, there was no such deed done nor seen, from the day that the children of Israel came up out of the land of Egypt, unto this day : Consider of it, take advice, and speak your minds.” § Says God, “ Wo unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write grievousness which they have prescribed : To turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of my people, that widows may be their prey, and that they may rob the fatherless.” || But what may we not expect from a parliament, which hath resolved, it hath *full power, authority and right to make laws and statutes to bind the colonies, in ALL cases whatsoever* ? In that case, what end do the legislative courts of these provinces answer ?

AGREABLE to the above resolution, two acts have already passed the house of commons, and the house of lords, fundamentally subversive of our chartered rights, and civil constitution, whereby many of our municipal institutions and laws, which many years ago received the royal sanction, and which we have long been in the enjoyment of, are repealed, and the govern-  
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§ Judges 19. 30.

|| Isaiah 10. 1. 2.

ment here rendered despotic and arbitrary. Whether these bills have received the king's consent or not, is not yet certain. We have reason to hope in the mildness, tenderness and affection of our sovereign; but in assenting or not assenting to acts of the British court he, no doubt, consults his privy council. If these bills pass into laws, whether this people will submit thereto, or not, is a question which cannot be determined: But if they submit, liberty *here* will be at an end, we hold our rights, property and lives by the most precarious tenure. "The governor and council, hereby instituted with powers, with which the British constitution has not trusted his majesty, and his privy-council, have the means of returning such a jury in each particular cause, as may best suit with the gratification of their passions and interests. The lives, liberties and properties of the subject are put into their hands without controul; and the invaluable right of trial by jury, is turned into a snare for the people, who have hitherto looked upon it, as their main security against the licentiousness of power. We see in this bill the same scheme of strengthening the authority of the officers and ministers of state, *at the expence of the rights and liberties of the subject*, which was indicated by the inauspicious act  
for

for shutting up the harbour of Boston. ¶ It seems cruel and unjust to be deprived of our chartered rights and privileges ; and so it seemed to our forefathers, when the first charter was inhumanly murdered. Says Dr. Eliot, ¶ “ Our fathers dearly bought the privileges we enjoy. It is evident, when they left their native land, they thought their rights as 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 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

¶ See the Lord's protest against this bill. There were twenty in the house of Lords *against* this bill, their names will be handed down to all future generations, as the Patrons of liberty and America, and friends to mankind. Eleven of these noble Lords, namely, Richmond, Portland, Abingdon, King, Effingham, Ponsonby, Rockingham, Abergavenny, Leinster, Craven, Fitzwilliam, have in a protest, signed by them, said every thing which *need* be said against such a bill, shewed the impolicy and injustice of it.

¶ See his election sermon.

sidered in the house of lords, he would there publicly 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." † Says another, " The New-England charter, was not considered as an act of grace, but a compact between the sovereign, and the first patentees."

Our fathers plead their right to the privilege of it, in their address to king Charles the second ; wherein they say, " It was granted to them, their heirs, assigns and associates forever ; not only the absolute use, and propriety of the tract of land therein mentioned ; but also full and absolute power of governing all the

† In 1688 the house of commons voted the taking away the charters of the plantations to be a grievance.

Gov. Hutchinson's hist. vol. I. p. 389.



the people of this place, by men chosen from among themselves, and according to such laws as they shall from time to time see meet to make and establish, not being repugnant to the laws of England, they paying only the fifth part of the ore of gold and silver, that shall be found here, for and in respect of all duties, demands, exactions and service whatsoever." And from an apprehension, that the powers given by the crown to the four Commissioners || sent here, were, in effect, subversive of their rights and government—they add—" We are carefully studious of all due subjection to your majesty, and that not only for wrath, but for conscience sake." " But it is a great unhappiness to be reduced to so hard a case, as to have no other testimony of our subjection and loyalty offered us but this, viz. to destroy our own being, which nature teacheth us to preserve ; or to yield up our liberties, which are far dearer to us than our lives—and which, had we any fear of being deprived of, we had never wandered from our fathers houses into these ends of the earth—nor laid out our labors and estates therein." †

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|| For a full account of these Commissioners, and the reception they met with in the province, see governor Hutchinson's hist. vol. I. from p. 229 to 256.

† See Rev. Mr. Cook's election sermon.



BUT though they could thus plead, they pleaded in vain; that charter was vacated. As strong if not stronger pleas have been made by our friends in both houses of parliament, and by the people in this country in favor of the second charter, and against those bills, which have passed the two houses; but all to no purpose:—if his majesty has given, or does speedily give his assent to those bills, we shall be deprived of the greatest liberties and privileges granted to us, in our charter, and this province will by means of such an alteration and change in their form of government, naturally be thrown into a state of anarchy and confusion, for some time.

THIS province has always had its enemies, men who have looked upon its privileges, as a prey richly worth their seizing. Our enemies have generally been men born and bro't up among ourselves, who have been under every tie to guard, support and defend the rights of their native country. With respect to the measures which have been lately adopted by the British court, in regard to America and this province in particular, they have been contrived, promoted, and greatly urged, chiefly by natives of this land. Some of them are gone to the bar of God, in whose hands we are willing to leave them. All who have abetted

betted these measures we shall mark, and “the abhorrence and execrations of mankind will consign them to an infamous immortality.” † Is it not almost unaccountable that any children of this land should prove such monsters and prodigies of wickedness, such unnatural parricides and assassins as to stab the vitals of their own country? But what will not lust after power and dominion, or love of money, do? It “is the root of all evil, which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”

BUT in times of public calamity and distress, we may be too apt to overlook the *first*, the *moral* cause of the evils we suffer. We indeed cannot

† That *some* men, men of particular occupations and employments should formally return thanks to any *one* for his good services, who has labored to deprive us of our charter-rights, and to subvert our civil constitution, may be accounted for. Such may hope for some trifling promotion, and to build themselves up upon the ruins of their country. That the ministers of the church of England should do so, is not so easily accounted for, unless it proceeds from the favorable notice *such* may have taken of that church, and a hope that, if our civil government is changed, their ecclesiastical constitution may be established here. But that ministers of the congregational establishment should do thus, is altogether unaccountable *at present*.

cannot help taking some *notice* of the instruments of our griefs and sorrows. It is granted there is the permission, and, perhaps, agency of heaven in these evils, for “shall there be evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it?” Yet they who have been the voluntary instruments, in bringing these troubles upon the province, are not the less guilty; “thou couldst have no power against me, except it were given thee from above,” said our Saviour to Pilate; yet this did not prove him innocent, “in condemning that just One.” Divine Providence in such events is not to be impeached. The moral evils which take place in the world, are not to be charged on God. Nothing can justify, or excuse the contrivers and promoters of present measures: “Their guilt is of a scarlet color, and a crimson die.” But be their crime what it will, it becomes us to enquire *what we have done* to provoke God thus to visit us in his anger, and to chasten us *thus* in his hot displeasure. It becomes us to reflect with deepest contrition and penitence of heart, on our past conduct, whereby we have offended the majesty of heaven, and merited severest punishment. “For the transgression of the land” these things are ordered, or permitted as a righteous chastisement, designed “for our profit,” to bring us to true repentance

repentance and reformation. When I consider the way and manner of our punishment, I am ready to think, how much soever I may differ from some people, that we have greatly abused those very liberties and privileges, which, if these acts take place, we shall be deprived of ; that we have abused good government. May we not read our sins, in the face of our punishment ? I would here ask, have not some people, under the notion of zeal for liberty, run into the most excessive licentiousness, and been guilty, in one place and another, of the most lawless, unjust, and tyrannical proceedings, such as pulling down and destroying houses, abusing persons, endangering mens lives, destroying their property, breaking windows, delivering prisoners out of the hands of justice, ¶ and putting many into great fears ; all contrary to the good and wholesome laws of this province ? These things, many of them at least, are indeed but the natural consequences of a stretch of power in

¶ If there be any law of this province, allowing creditors to keep debtors in jail, as long as they please, even after it appears that they have nothing wherewith to pay, it is with all deference and modesty submitted to our legislature, whether such a law does not contradict the laws of nature and of Christianity, and if it does, whether it ought not to be repealed !



in rulers and “princes,” they are the common fruit of grievous, oppressive and unconstitutional acts of government. There was nothing of this kind among us, until the ever memorable *stamp-act* took place. Solomon has long since, observed, that “oppression maketh a wise man mad.” But such lawless measures are not to be justified; they ought not to be countenanced, or tolerated by any, nor have they been, by many. They do not always answer a valuable purpose, but evil generally comes thereof; they excite a spirit of revenge in the sufferers, and revenge has been pursued unto the utmost, the bitter and severe fruits whereof we are now reaping. In these times, when the general cry has been for liberty, have not some persons in the land, of a querulous, factious and licentious turn, slid into the dangerous extreme of despising all government, and endeavoured to put down all rule, order, government and authority, both in church and state? Has not reasonable, just and mild government, in some parts of the land, been trampled on and spurned at, and *good* rulers reviled, slighted and set at nought? Liberty, my brethren, is a precious and inestimable jewel, and ought to be used with utmost caution and delicacy. It may be as much abused as government and power, leading into measures equally tyrannical and oppressive. The  
people



people who resist and counteract well conducted civil administration, and trample upon the good and wholesome laws of the land, should consider that they "resist an ordinance of God, and they who resist shall receive to themselves damnation." It is not improbable, that some persons in the land *appear* rather favorers of the present oppressive measure of government, because they have seen too much of a factious, licentious and tumultuous spirit among some people.

BUT to proceed: In the act for regulating the civil government of this province, it is proposed that towns should be deprived of the liberty, which the laws of this province have given them, of meeting when they please, and acting upon whatever to them, may seem meet and good. And here it may be asked, Have not some towns in the land sinned greatly, and highly provoked God, by an abuse of the liberty and power by law given to them? Has no town done things monstrously injurious and oppressive? And have not the "cries of the injured, entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth?" It is possible that, under color of law, and that plea that all must be bound in *all cases* by the vote of the majority, even things most unjust and unrighteous, may be transacted. It is very difficult, if not impossible,

possible, to frame laws in such a manner, as to prevent every species of injustice and iniquity. Are not towns therefore, which have been guilty of a perversion of their liberty, in judgment, and as a proper punishment, to be abridged thereof. Though, I grant, it looks most unreasonable and unjust, that innocent places should suffer with the guilty.

FURTHER : The manner of returning jurymen is by the above act to be altered, and the privilege granted, by our laws, to towns to return them, is to be wrested from them. And have not some towns sinned greatly in the sight of God, by trifling, in the most daring manner with this invaluable privilege, which has been looked upon as our main security against the licentiousness of power. Have not some places returned such persons, to serve as grand jurymen, and jurymen on trials, in most interesting and important causes, as neither fear God, nor regard man ? Persons, who not only have no religion, but are enemies to all religion and goodness ; men who can deistically reproach the excellent, well attested religion of Jesus Christ, and blaspheme its divine Author ? Men “ who fear not an oath ? Persons who have no regard to religion, to divine revelation, will never think themselves bound to regard an oath ; they can, and often do, trifle

trifle with it. Have there been no instances wherein persons of this cast, have been really picked, to serve a turn ? Are our lives, our interest, our property more safe in the hands of such persons, than they would be in the hands of a jury returned by the sheriff ? The remedy provided against this evil by the act of the British court, is as bad as the disease ; for although it may prevent some evils, it will create more. Some other, better and more effectual remedy, might be provided by our own legislature, and really ought to be ; for this is a “ crying iniquity in our *high places*.”

FURTHER, By the above mentioned act, the liberty of our choosing our own counsellors is to be taken from us, and put into the hands of the crown : This, if it takes place, must ere long, have a vast influence on our liberty, laws and religion. And we may expect that some alteration will soon be made in the form of choosing our own representatives. When these dearest liberties are threatened, does it not become this people, seriously to ask whether they have not, by an abuse hereof, offended the most high God ? We have all along had great and good men in the two houses of assembly ; men of great abilities, fearing God and hating covetousness. But have they all been of this character ? Have

none been elected to a seat in either house, who have been enemies to religion, peace, order and good government? We are in a most pitiful situation, if there are not men sufficient for all the places of government, who are well qualified therefor; men not only friendly to the rights and liberties of this people, but men discerning in the times and seasons, and knowing what *they* ought to do; men of religion and piety, as well as sound judgment and enlarged knowledge. Electors ought to have a regard to the religious and moral characters of the men, whom they appoint to rule over the people, as well as to other necessary qualifications. The direction of heaven in this case is plain; "Thou shalt provide out of all the people, able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them." \* Men of another character, men who will trifle with, and sacrifice, their own most important interests, will also sacrifice the interests of others, to serve their own sinister views and purposes. Has that due regard been paid to the moral and religious character of men, who have been appointed to places of civil power and trust, men whose business it is, to see that the laws of the land are well executed, which ought to be in all cases? But not to enlarge, have

\* Exodus 18. 21.



have we not too much reason, from the punishment which is threatned, to think that we have wantonly trifled with, and shamefully abused these our inestimable liberties and privileges, that our sins, in these respects have been very great, and most provoking to God ? But our sins, as a people, for which we now suffer severe judgments, (and severer we are threatned with), cannot be reckoned up in order. Suffice it to say, that so many and so great are our iniquities and transgressions, that we have reason to fear, destruction from the Almighty will come upon us to the uttermost. Nothing without timely repentance and amendment, so striving to recommend ourselves to the divine Being, can save us. Says God, “ 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.” †

HOWEVER faulty and guilty the instruments and agents in our calamities are, yet considering our impieties and sins, they are but a just and righteous punishment as coming from the hands of God, which may be averted by deep humiliation and hearty contrition for our offences ; offering, at the same time,



time, as we profess to do this day, ardent prayers to Him, who is able to save, committing our righteous cause to him, who so marvellously appeared for our fore-fathers in their day, and even for us in *our* day. “ His arm is not shortened that it cannot save ; his ear is not heavy that it cannot hear.” “ They who make mention of the Lord, should not keep silence, and give him no rest, till he establish, and make this land a praise in the earth.” “ For Zion, or *the churches sake* they should not hold their peace, and for Jerusalem’s sake should they not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.” † Is it not altogether unaccountable that any persons who acknowledge a Providence superintending, governing and ordering in all events, should be found backward to the duties of such a day of fasting and prayer ? For however we may differ in sentiments as to what are our calamities, this is certain, there is abundant occasion for deep humiliation on account of our sins, and the divine judgments brought on the land therefor, whatever we may think our sins and those judgments be.

THIS country seems to be in a most alarming and critical situation. So dark a day perhaps

† Isaiah 62. 1, 6, 7.

Haps. North-America never saw. There is scarce one gleam of light breaks through the darkness, to comfort our hearts withal. Indeed we might hope that, *that* God who so wonderfully owned and smiled upon *the* cause for which our fore-fathers came into this, *then* howling wilderness would still own and smile upon it; but our iniquities testify against us, and we must be sensible that for our abuse of the blessings of religious liberty, and the gospel, we have forfeited them into the hands of God. Our religious liberties are always endangered when the civil are invaded; and from present appearances we have all reason to fear they will fall together, and that it will not be long before *that* ecclesiastical hierarchy will be established here (and possibly that spiritual tyranny be exercised) from which our fore-fathers fled. It seems strange, that a deep concern of mind respecting this matter, should not be awakened in every friend to the dissenting interest.

WHAT are the leading springs and motives of the present measures of administration it is hard to say. We have reason to fear, at least, that a design is forming to dethrone his present majesty, king George the third, our rightful sovereign, and to introduce the Pretender, and with him the popish religion. Popery is,

no doubt, gaining ground in England. A high dignitary of the church of England, as we suppose, has declared, but a few years since, that “popish bishops reside *here*,” (*that is in London, or in England somewhere*) “and go about to exercise every part of their function, without offence, and without observation.” † “The papists, only in London, were by computation an hundred thousand, in the year 1745, since which their numbers are vastly increased there, and in other parts of the kingdom; the people being, as it is said, perverted by popish bishops, priests, jesuits, &c. by hundreds and thousands, if not ten thousands, yearly.” ‡ The good laws of England, it appears from hence, are dormant and unexecuted, against papists; nor would it be any reflection to say, that, possibly, some of this persuasion may be advanced to places of high power and trust in our nation. Certain it is, that his majesty’s council in Grenada, an American island, is composed partly, if not wholly of Roman catholicks. There is a popish bishop at Canada. This, it is said, was stipulated, in the last treaty of peace between England and

† See the answer to Dr. Mayhew’s observations, printed in London.

‡ See Dr. Mayhew’s second defence of his observations, p. 71.

and France. There is a popish priest at Nova-Scotia, who is supported by England, as I have been informed. These things, so tolerated and countenanced, may well lead us to fear that some secret designs are planning against the crown, and protestant religion in England, the abettors whereof may, not improbably, ere long boldly show their faces, and openly own their cause. However that be, these things forebode no good to the civil constitution, or ecclesiastical, of Great-Britain. The principles and tenets of papists are such, as that it is not safe for any protestant government to tolerate them. The dissenting interest in America will doubtless suffer, if popery should ever overspread England. We in this land have abundant reason to fear and be alarmed; and especially when we consider how barren and unfruitful we have been while planted in the Lord's vineyard, and favored with divine manurings and cultivations; and have, like Capernaum, been exalted, unto heaven, in point of spiritual privileges and advantages;—we have reason to fear lest the gospel kingdom should be taken from us, and given unto a people, that will bring forth the fruits thereof. But God is merciful and gracious, and long suffering to us ward, not willing that we should perish, but desirous that we come unto repentance, and be saved. The  
monitory



monitory language of divine Providence at the present day, seems to be like that admonition long ago sent to the church of Ephesus: “Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen; and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.” || O that, when such are the judgments of heaven we feel and fear, this people would learn righteousness. “Righteousness exalteth a nation.” Says one, whose words may very fitly be used here.—“Could we see people in general, humbling themselves under the mighty hand of God, in the evils that are come upon us—could we see a general disposition in them, to break off from their sins by righteousness, and from their iniquities by turning to the Lord—could we see practical piety and religion prevailing among all ranks of men—how much would the prospect brighten up? God would appear for us, “who is the hope of his people and the Saviour thereof in the day of trouble.” And “if God be for us, who can be against us?” He can work deliverance for us in a thousand ways to us unknown. Then our peace shall be as a river, when our righteousness is as the waves of the sea. Mutual harmony and affection shall be restored between Great Britain

|| Revelation 2. 5.



and her colonies, and between all orders of men in them. The burdens under which we groan shall be removed. We shall no longer be so unhappy, as to be suspected of wanting loyalty to our king, or of having the least disposition to refuse a constitutional subjection to our parent country. The great evils which we now suffer, in consequence of such groundless suspicions, shall be removed. We shall sit quietly under our vines and fig-trees, enjoying the fruit of our fathers unremitting labors, and of our own, and have none to make us afraid. We shall behold our settlements extending themselves into the yet uncultivated lands. "The wilderness shall become a fruitful field, and the desert shall blossom as the rose." Our navigation shall be freed from its present embarrassments; and trade recover a flourishing state. Our rights and privileges shall be established on a firmer basis than ever. Every revolving year shall add something to the glory and happiness of America. And those that behold it shall see occasion to say, "Happy art thou O people! Who is like unto thee, saved of the Lord! The shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thine excellency."

"WHOSE breast doth not burn with desires to see his dear native land in such a state, the happy reverse of its present one! Who would

not be ambitious of contributing something towards it ! This we have all power to do. Let us up, and be doing, and the Lord shall be with us." ¶

The present alarming situation of this whole land engages our attention, and demands the united exertions of this people, in the methods justifiable in the sight of God, for our deliverance. It would be unpardonable in us tamely to submit to slavery and chains. Freedom is the gift of God ; he has given us right and means to assert it. We may reasonably ask and expect his gracious assistance, in the reasonable and righteous employment of those means. It would be most stupid and highly criminal in us to look for deliverance, while we sit still only asking divine help. This would be to expect miracles. Unanimity in all orders and ranks of people, is necessary at the present alarming crisis, to give weight, force and strength to all attempts to save this sinking land. They who endeavor artfully to divide, are attempting to destroy us, and must answer for all the ill consequences. " That the people should be divided, and some of them disengaged from such a *cause* as that of their country's freedom, by small private piques and prejudicing contentions ; or influenced by  
little

¶ Rev. Mr. Haven's election sermon.

little hopes and fears about *worldly* promotions and interests, should treat it in a nugatory manner, is entirely astonishing ! But our surprise abates, when we consider, how capable human nature is of trifling in the most immediate concerns of religion—in reference to eternal life, and everlasting misery.” Those inhuman and barbarous miscreants who have been plotting their country’s ruin ; those fordid wretches, who, preferring their own private interest, to the salvation of their country, can “ rejoice at” *her* “ calamities, will not go unpunished” by heaven, and justly merit the abhorrence, detestation and total *nèglèç* of this suffering people.

LAWFUL and justifiable means of redress are within our power. “ Other nations have contended in blood for their liberty, and have judged the jewel worth the price that was paid for it. These colonies are not reduced to the dreadful necessity. So dependant is Great-Britain on us for supplies, that heaven seems to have placed in our hands means of an effectual, yet peaceable, resistance, if we have sense and integrity to make a proper use of them. A general agreement between these colonies, of non-importation and non-exportation, *an engagement among this people, not to consume India-teas, or British manufactures,*  
faithfully

faithfully observed, would certainly, under Providence, be attended with success." But in all attempts of this kind, we should carefully endeavor, not to distress any fellow creatures, unless our own self-defence and the preservation of our country, make it necessary. This is a measure towards obtaining relief, which violates no law of God or man. No law obliges us to go to another country for food or cloathing, or any thing besides, if we can do without. If the present acts of parliament take place here (and subsequent ones we may continually look for) we must be driven, of necessity, to live more within ourselves; we shall not have the means of procuring British goods, and in that case England must sink; ruin and bankruptcy to all the trading part of the nation, will be the consequence. The greatest source of national wealth to Great-Britain, is her trade to these colonies. We maintain a far greater number of people, in England, than we do heré. These colonies, are to England, as the pillars were to the house which Sampson brake, whereby *the house fell on the Lords and all the people*. If we fall the whole British empire will fall with us; and possibly that may fall while we stand. Nothing will save the nation from ruin, if America does not. Ireland, groaning under Egyptian-like bondage, is stretching forth her hands, and calling

calling to us for help and relief. What will be the issue of the present commotions throughout the whole British empire, it is not easy to foretel. It was long ago prophesied, by the great Montesquieu, that "As all human things have an end, the state we are speaking of (England) will lose its liberty, will perish. Have not Rome, Sparta, and Carthage perished? It will perish, when the legislative power shall be more corrupt than the executive." We may fear that this prophecy is near its accomplishment.

Be that as it may. While we are suffering the loss of many valuable blessings, we should not forget that, of the unmerited mercy of God, we still are in the possession of a rich variety of inestimable favors. Let us endeavor to make all suitable returns of love, gratitude and obedience, to that Being, "from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift," herefor; while, at the same time, we are constantly looking to God, by prayer, for the removal of his judgments, under which the land groaneth, for the averting those evils which may be impending, and for the bestowment of every blessing, "that he would remember us, with the favor he beareth unto his people, and visit us with his salvation, that we may see the good of his chosen, that we may rejoice



rejoice in the gladness of his nation, and that we may glory with his inheritance." † Let us carefully follow the direction of the Psalmist. "Fret not thyself because of evil doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity : For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb : Trust in the Lord *and do good* ; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed : Delight thyself also in the Lord ; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. : Commit thy way unto the Lord : Trust also in Him, and he shall bring it to pass. And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noon-day. Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him : Fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath : Fret not thyself in any wise to do evil. For evil doers shall be cut off : But those that wait upon the Lord they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be : Yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. But the meek shall inherit the earth ; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace." ‡

To

† Psalm 106. 4, 5.

‡ Psalm 37. 1—11.

To conclude. While struggling for deliverance from arbitrary human power, and for civil liberty, let us remember that we are in voluntary slavery under the usurped dominion of lust over reason, and let us exert ourselves for deliverance from the bondage of corruption, and that we may be vindicated “into the glorious liberty of the children of God.” We must not expect refined happiness in this present *evil* world. Infinite wisdom sees meet to exercise us with various trials in this state, that we may be disengaged from a too fond pursuit of worldly felicity, and be excited to seek those things which are above. There is a better country before us, even an heavenly ; be this the main object of our desires, pursuit and endeavors. Let us manifest, by all our life and conversation, that we are seeking a city which is to come, which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. In a little time death will translate us to another world, and “seeing we look for *this*, let us be diligent that we may be found of our Judge in peace, without spot, and blameless ;” and then we shall be forever happy in that state where “the wicked cease from troubling, and we shall no more hear the voice of the oppressor.” There an eternal circle of uninterrupted happiness, large as our wishes, awaits us, to which we shall, at length, be admitted, of the mercy of God, in Christ Jesus, our Lord. AMEN !