

Mr. John Watson

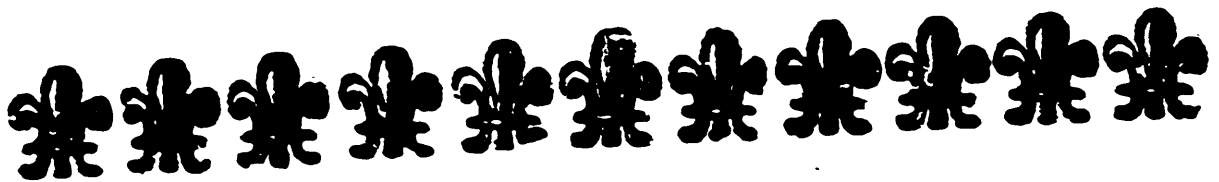


Mr. Thacher's
Election-SERMON,

May 25. 1726.



Left James P. Seimund



Massachusetts.

*At a Council held in the Council-Chamber
in Boston, May 28th. 1726.*

Ordered,

THAT the Honourable *William Tailer*
and *Samuel Thaxter Esqrs*; give the
Thanks of the Board to the Reverend
Mr. Peter Thacher, for his **SERMON**
Preached before the **GENERAL AS-**
SEMBLY, and desire a Copy thereof in
order to its being Printed.

Josiah Willard, Secr,



Wise & Good
CIVIL RULERS,

To be duely Acknowledged
By GOD's People as a great Favour.

A
SERMON

Preached before the HONOURABLE
The Lieutenant GOVERNOUR,
the COUNCIL & REPRESENTATIVES of the Province of the ~~Massachusetts~~
~~Bay~~ in ~~New-England~~,
May 25. 1726.

Being the Anniversary, for the Election
of His Majesty's *Council* there.

By Peter Thacher, A.M.

Pastor of a Church in BOSTON.

BOSTON : Printed by B. Green, for
Samuel Gerrish, at his Shop the lower end
of Cornhill. 1726.



A N

Election-SERMON.

PSAL. LXXVII. 20.

*Thou leddest thy People like a Flock, by the
band of Moses and Aaron.*



CIVIL Government is the Life of Publick Society ; a Constitution of Government formed to the just Liberties, and best Interests of human Nature, in Civil & Religious Affairs ; and animated by a wise & just Administration is the Strength of that Life : And the Agency of Sovereign Divine Grace, in giving it to his Own People, spreads an incomparable Glory upon the whole ; and makes a most powerful Motive of solemn Praise.

The latter part of this *Psalm* opens to us, with a Divine Eloquence, the Glory & Majesty of the GOD of *Israel*, in that Series of Wonders ; *Israel's* Redemption out of *Egypt* : Verse 15th, *Thou hast with thine Arm redeemed thy People ---* : And concludes with the Excellency of their Government, and Leaders, *Thou leddest thy People, &c.* In

In the Words observe the following things,

1. GOD *Himself* was *Israel's* Leader: *Their* *dearest* *to* *by* *People* Their Civil Constitution (as well as Ecclesiastical) was Extraordinary: There was a more immediate Interposition of GOD himself; in their Laws & Administration: therefore usually denominated a *Theocracy*. GOD by Himself broke the Iron Yoke; Formed their Government for them, Executed & Administred it when Formed.

2. The *Manner* of the Administration: *Thy* *People*, *as a* *Flock*. GOD the *Shepherd*; *Israel* his *Flock*: This carries an happy mixture of Tenderness & Authority; Power & Care; Protection & Discipline: Acted by the nearest Relations, special Propriety, and dearest Affection.

3. The *illustrious Instruments* used by Him; *Moses* & *Aaron*. Tho' their Government was a *Theocracy*: it did not exclude Instruments: But then the Instruments first employed in this singular Government were agreeable to it: Extraordinary and very Excellent Ones: Extraordinarily Called, Furnished Assisted & Supported by GOD. *Moses* & *Aaron* were the Two first Instruments used by GOD: the renowned Heads of the Two Orders, Civil & Religious. GOD raised them, furnished them, vested them with Power; and by his special, constant Presence with them, made them both, but *Moses* more remarkably, the most signal Blessings to their People, and Examples to all future Rulers.

How properly soever my Text would lead to it, as one special Branch of GOD's Government, to consider *Israel's* Constitution, and Rulers in Church,

Church, as well as State, I pass it ; and shall be govern'd by the occasion ; and confine my self to the Civil Constitution & Ruïers, as a fruit of GOD's merciful Government, and give you a few tho'ts upon the Blessing of *that*, when wisely and justly managed. I will give you my Subject in the following

D O C T R I N E.

IT is to be Notic'd & Celebrated, as an high Favour of G O D to his People ; when He leads them like a Flock, by the hand of Moses and Aaron ; or Wise & Good Civil Rulers.

Indeed the principal Blessing of GOD, and a People's most vital & fundamental Distinction, Honour & Happiness consists in their Excellent Constitution of Church-Government, formed upon the revealed Plan, the holy Scriptures ; and wise & faithful Guides to administer it : Churches formed by C H R I S T himself, with an exact agreableness to his own most wise & perfect Rules, filled with Ordinances, and all Instituted Officers ; and very particularly a learned and faithful Ministry : These are a People's Glory and Safety, (*Psal* 147 20.) what they should especially value, be thankful for, be concern'd to secure & improve. But the Occasion leads me to the Civil ; and that too is a very illustrious Favour of GOD. I will give you my tho'ts upon the important Things contained in this General Proposition ; under the following Heads.

PROP.

PROP. I. GOD is in an appropriate manner the *Leader* of a *Professing People*.

PROP. II. He leads them like a *Flock*.

PROP. III. He sometimes leads them by the *Hand* of *Moses & Aaron*; or of *Wise* and *Good Rulers*.

PROP. IV. This is to be acknowledged & celebrated as an *high Favour*.

PROP. I. GOD is, in an appropriate manner, the *Leader of a Professing People*. He was *Israel's* *Leader*; and he is the leader of every professing *People*. Every professing *People* is his peculiar *People*; and he leads them as such. Indeed they are not led by the same extraordinary, miraculous, immediate hand of GOD, that *Israel* was in their *Redemption from Egypt*, *Conduct thro' the Wilderness*, and their being put into *Possession of Canaan*. This is *Celebrated*, & *Confined* to to them: Deut. 4. 32, 33, 34. *Ask now of the Days, that are past, from the Day that God created Man upon the earth — Did ever People hear God speaking out of the midst of Fire? Or hath God essayed to take him a nation out of the midst of a nation, by temptations, by signs, by wonders, and by a mighty hand, &c.* But yet in every other professing *People*, there's the same *Relation of GOD* to them, as to *Israel*; the same *Grounds & Principles of Acting* towards & for them: and they express themselves in the same happy *Fruits*; tho' working after a diverse manner, viz. By *second Causes*. But here I will give you my tho'ts under two *Heads*, distinctly. (1.) GOD is the *supreme, absolute Lord of all Creatures*. (2.) In

a peculiar manner, he is the *Leader* of a professing People.

1. *G O D* is the supreme, absolute Lord of *all Creatures*. He is the universal *First Cause*; infinitely & absolutely Perfect; and therefore must have an unlimited, unalienable, perpetual and universal Dominion over all Creatures; particularly over all his reasonable Creatures; Personally, or Relatively: Singly, or in Society. No *Authority* can possibly be, but from *GOD*. All *Power* is limited by his most perfect Will, duly notified. No *Power* can be against him. These are all Truths most evident to Reason; and their Contraries draw after them the most absurd Consequences; nay flat Contradictions. And the Scriptures clearly exhibit them as such to us, Dan. 4. 24. *Till thou knowest that the most high ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.* Psal. 145. 13. *Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; and thy dominion thro'out all generations.* Psal. 135. 5. *I know, that the Lord is great above all gods; whatsoever the Lord pleased; that did he, in heaven, earth, seas, &c.* The universal Influence & Agency of *GOD*, here affirmed, includes a *Moral*, as well as a Natural or Physical Power; *Right*, as well as *Strength*. Once more, That celebrated, but very much vexed and abused Text is very clear & full Proof Rom. 13. 1. --- *No power but of God: the powers that be, are ordained of God.* 'Tis not possible there should be any, but what flows from this only Fountain of Being & Power: And it's equally impossible for *GOD* to deny himself, and give any Creature a Power against himself.

But I proceed,

2. GOD is in a peculiar manner the *Leader* of his *Own People*. Here I will mention to you, some of the *Distinctions & Characters* of this peculiar Government.

1. It's founded in special *Relations*, and peculiar *Works* of GOD. *Israel* became his Subjects, and he their Leader ; by new, near & endearing Relations & peculiar displays of his Wisdom, Power & sovereign Bounty. And thus it is in a Degree with respect to every professing People.

They are formed, redeemed, separated to GOD, by special displays of Divine Perfections : New and very near Relations between GOD & them arise from these special Operations. His Providence works very gloriously & distinguishingly, in preparing them for the honourable & happy Station : He so becomes their Father ; and they his Children, in an uncommon manner. They his Servants, and he their Lord, by a new & most endearing Claim : Deut. 32. 6. *Do ye thus requite the Lord ; O foolish people & unwise ? Is he not thy Father, that hath bought thee ? Hath he not made thee, & established thee ?* My narrow bounds won't allow me to go into the delightful particulars.

But again, His Condescensions are very wonderful, in his most free & gracious binding himself to them, by Word, Oath. most significant Covenant Rites & Seals, which contain the most precious Good, made over to them upon the best Terms. And they have deliberately bound themselves to a constant, faithful Compliance with these Terms. Isa. 43. 21. *This People have I formed*

formed for my self. Deut. 26. 17, 18. Thou hast avouched the Lord to be thy God, and he hath avouched thee to be his People. This Covenant is the special, formal ground & reason of the special Relation, and that peculiar Government here treated of. And this is discoursed of, & described under the Metaphor of the martial Authority and Marriage Union; which is the closest of any we know of among Men, between Two Persons. Jer. 2. 2. Go, and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, I remember thee the kindness of thy youth; the love of thine Espousals.

2. He leads such a People, by a *special Providence*, regulated by the *Covenant* between GOD and them: In that they Promise to him an universal willing Obedience, according to his own revealed Will; and he binds himself, to bestow upon them, in that way, all the Blessings of the Covenant. He makes over himself, and all his Stores & Riches; and they are as sure of them, as if actually Possessed. 2 Cor. 6. 16, 18. *I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my People: and I will be a father unto you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord.* But he threatens the contrary Evils, if they are false to him. Deut. 23. *ibro'out.* Now GOD's Providence, in all it's smiles & frowns, is regulated by this Covenant: He dispenseth to them, agreeably to his Promises and Threatnings; with due Reserves for the exercise of his Patience, Sovereignty & Grace; which Reserves are fully provided for in this Covenant.

3. He feeds them by his *Word* and *Ordinances*. It was *Israel's* peculiar Privilege, as GOD's People, That GOD committed his Oracles to them ; gave them his Statutes, Judgments and Ordinances, *Psal.* 147. 19, 20. *Rom.* 3. 2.

And this Distinction & Privilege descends to every professing People. The Word & Ordinances are the Instruments especially wherein, and whereby GOD exhibits the Directions, Authority, Blessings & Advantages of that peculiar Relation and Government, which he hath taken upon himself, towards them.

4. He leads them by *the Hand of a Mediator*. The great Mediator between GOD & Sinners, is the appointed, universal Lord over all things. *Matth.* 28. 18. *All power is given unto me, in heaven, & in earth.* And it's a most joyful and endearing Character of this universal Empire, that it's given, received & exercised in it's whole vast Extent with a special Eye to his Peoples universal, & best Good, *Eph.* 1. 22. *Put all things under him ; and given him, to be head, over all things to the Church.*

But that which I am especially concerned here, to observe to you is this, *viz.* That the Redeemer is in a most glorious & delightful manner his Father's King in & over his Church, *Psal.* 2. 6. *Iet have I set my king upon my holy hill of zion.* All Government in & over the Church, whether Providential, formally & properly Ecclesiastical or Spiritual, is *Christ's* Government : The Church is his Seed, Family, Spouse, nay Body : And their whole Direction & Dispose belongs to him. He is most authentickly, effectively & solemnly

S E R M O N.

lemnly vested in it; Psal. 2. 7. *Thou art my son, this Day have I begotten thee.* GOD is in the midst of his Church, and his Rest there will be eternal & glorious: But he exerciseth this Sovereignty by that most excellent & lovely Delegate his own only Son, his own Image & Brightness, (and by his own free Consent) our Surety. This most wonderful & glorious Person, assumed our Nature; and in this Nature Travelled & Dyed in our stead, and for our highest Good: And in this Nature, with all it's essential Affections, he Reigns in & over his Church. He, or the Father by him, manageth the Kingdom of Providence and Grace to them. And how many delightful things doth this Contemplation suggest to us: Most certainly, This Administrator makes it a peculiar Government, and exhibits it such. GOD hath peculiar Designs with regard to them: A peculiar Treasure in them. He hath put them into the wisest & kindest hand, to Protect, Order, and to make them Happy; most safely to secure his Treasure, and exactly & fully reach his designs.

Thus I have given you some Tho'ts on the *First Proposition*, and proceed to the *Second*.

PROP. II. GOD leads his People *like a Flock*. This Proposition is but a farther Prosecution of the foregoing; a going into a particular display of the excellent Characters & Glories of God's appropriate Government. Here I shall not oblige my self to the Metaphor, with any critical Sollicitude; only keep the general Idea, conveyed by it in sight, as I pass along.

This

This of a *Shepherd*, is an Allusion which ancient Writers, Sacred & Common, have very much delighted in : They have set it in the most beautiful & advantageous Lights, to represent a well-regulated, wise & happy Government by ; and to give the best Instructions to the Conduct of Rulers. 'Tis a very lively & natural Emblem; and we find the supreme Ruler himself using it, to give us the just & honourable Ideas of his own Government.

In general, I have already observed to you, That the Metaphor of a *Shepherd* carries an happy mixture of Tenderneſs & Authority, Power & Care, Protection & Discipline.

GOD's ſpecial Government includes all theſe, we are ſure it muſt. We ſee all theſe things in the brighteſt light, when we conſider & contemplate it, in what we have already heard of it under the *Fiſt Propoſition*, viz. It's ſpecial Foundations ; ſublime Rules ; peculiar Providences ; and moſt glorious Adminiſtrator : Where theſe meet, there muſt be Tenderneſs & Authority, Power & Care, Protection & Discipline, moſt Perfect and Divine : There muſt be all the Qualities & Affections of a *Shepherd* exerciſed in Perfection, in all the proper Buſineſs, Offices & Work of a *Shepherd*.

And if we add to this, An Enquiry into Fact ; as upon infallible Scripture Record, we ſhall find GOD exerciſing this Tenderneſs & Authority all along, in his Dealings with his People.

Here it may be proper to go a little into particulars.

I. GOD

1. GOD *Directs & Prescribes* to his People, in a very *peculiar* manner. He shines to his own People, in the strongest Light, as absolutely Sovereign, and infinitely Wise & Good; in the Perfection of his Laws, which in the best manner possible, answer the great End of his Glory, and his People's Happiness. Micah 6.8. *He hath shewed thee, O Man, what is good, &c.* Psal. 19. 11. *Moreover by them is thy servant warned; and in keeping of them there is great Reward.*

2 He *Corrects & Restores* them, when they do amiss & wander. The Tendernefs & Wisdom of his Love won't suffer him to let their Sins pass, without proper Frowns; but then they direct the Corrections to the fittest Seasons; best manner & measure. He adjusts all their Troubles in the best manner, to their being humbled, purged, made wiser & better; and to their being restored to their former Station with advantage. He Acts towards them, with the Temper & Intentions of a *Shepherd*; and his ways are Analogous to the *Shepherd's* wisest & kindest Actions towards this beloved Charge. GOD don't grieve & wound willingly, and with Pleasure; but for necessary great & good Purposes, which they themselves will be Thankful for, when GOD's Dispensations are opened fully to them. Read, Deut. 8. 2. *And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy G d hath led thee, to prove thee, &c.*

3. GOD *bears with them*, with a *sovereign*, but *wise Patience*. He don't immediately strike upon every Offence. Involuntary Offences, arising from I. firmity, are covered with the Tendernefs of a Parent. GOD speaks, convinces, warns, useth

useth the most rational, gentle Applications, when these prevail, to bring back his People to themselves & Duty: He repents, & forbears the threatened & impending Evil. However, He glorifys his Patience, and proclaims his Name, *Long-suffering*, before he proceeds to his heavier strokes: Especially, before he puts the last hand of Vengeance to his strange Work. They are great Sins, and obstinately continued in, that draw down Vengeance. The Publick is concerned by a publick & heavy Guilt, where the Punishment is publick & heavy. Rom. 19. 21. *But so Israel he saith, All the day long have I stretched out my hand unto a disobedient & gain-saying People.* Hof. 11. 8. --- *How shall I give thee up, &c.* Jer. 7. 13. *I spake unto thee, rising early.*

4. He *Protects from Evils & Enemies*; with Infinite Concerns, Watchfulness, Power & Goodness. GOD's People are extremely hated. In proportion to the purity of their Principles, and excellency of their Manners, is the united Rage of Earth & Hell set upon it, to do all they can to Vex & Destroy them. And if the utmost stretch of their Wits & Powers, in the deepest Plots, and strongest Combinations can undo them, they shall be undone. That's the Cry of the Churches Enemies. *Psa. 83 thro'out*, particularly, *V. 4, 7, 8.* --- *Come & let us cut them off.*

But their Designs & Attempts are entirely under the Government of *Israel's shepherd*; shall accomplish his Designs, and go no farther. He can by no means leave the beloved of his Soul, to the blind Rage of their implacable Enemies.
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He restrains and bounds the Enemies Rage, and secures His own ; and so far, they are intirely safe : No evil can possibly come without his Knowledge ; none possibly against his Will. Consider the following Texts, Psal 2.1,2,3,4. *Why do the Heathen rage, the People imagine a vain thing ?* Psal. 76. 10. *Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee, &c.* Isai. 27 2, 3. — *A Vineyard of red Wine. I the Lord do keep it, &c.*

5. GOD as their special Governour *Preserves* and *Feeds* them. GOD Preserves and Continues his Professing People, his Church, in that distinguish'd excellent State of Being He gave them, when he made them his People. He maintains that Life, and supplies them with all that Good, which that Life demands. The Purchase of Christ, and the Promise of GOD, determines what that Good is : And their most faithful Shepherd sup-
plys & dispenseth to them, agreeably to that Purchase & Promise. And this comprehends all the Good that Societies are capable of ; Spiritual & Outward, Civil & Religious. Read, *Psal. 23d.* and you'll see the proper Office of a *Shepherd* ; and the Paternal Wisdom & Authority, with which GOD exhibits ; and in the present Instance particularly.

But I come to the *Third Proposition.*

PROP. III. GOD sometimes leads his People, by the hand of *Moses & Aaron* ; or of *Wise and Good Civil Rulers*. This Head is one very weighty Article, wherein, both the tender Care & sovereign Power of *Israel's* good Shepherd discover themselves.

Here I will observe the following Order ; (1.) Offer some general *Explanation* or *Illustration*. (2.) An Hint in *Proof* very briefly. (3.) Conclude it with the *Character* of a good Ruler.

I I will offer some general *Explanation*. Whensoever a People enjoy an excellent Form of Government & good Rulers, it's GOD's Gift. His Power & Favour are very remarkable in it. The Agency of the Sovereign GOD in this Affair, may be distinguished into *Extraordinary* and *Ordinary*. GOD gives as really & truly, when a People are in Possession of these Blessings, in the *Ordinary* Methods of Providence, as in the *Extraordinary*.

When the Understandings of a People are enlightned and directed to Contrive such a Scheme of Government, as best answers all the great Ends of Society & Government : And withal there's such a Concurrence of Circumstances and Inclinations, as to bring it in, & establish it ; GOD is as truly the Author of that Scheme & Form, as if declared by a voice from Heaven, and received & established by the most miraculous Operations & Appearances.

Again, When in the Ordinary ways of Education, Experience, &c. Men are qualified for, spirited to, and introduced into the proper Stations & Opportunities to employ them for the publick Good ; it is as really GOD's Work as if they were Inspired, and called out extraordinarily, by Name, to the honourable Business.

Once more, When the Designs of subtle & powerful Tyrants against a People's just Liberties are dashed, and their valuable Rights are preserved or restored, it's GOD's glorious Work
and

and precious Gifts when done by Ordinary, as well as Extraordinary Methods.

In these mentioned Instances, there's GOD's Stamp : they are established by his Approbation and Authority, as well as bro't to pass by his Providence ; not only the Agency of the first universal Cause, but the Authority of the supreme Lord & Lawgiver. The renowned *David* is an Instance of both the Ordinary & Extraordinary manner of Introduction. GOD furnished and spirited him to Government, by Extraordinary & Immediate Impressions ; but withal he formed him to it, by bringing him into the King's Service ; and accustoming him to War, & publick Business. GOD appointed him King by an *immediate* Designation ; but yet the Tribes Chose him. This is the Excellent Man of whom GOD says, Psal. 78. 71, 72. *He chose David, &c. He bro't Jacob to feed his people.*

2. I come in a word to the *Proof*. You observe I express my self in a restrained manner ; *viz. GOD sometimes leads, &c.* And I speak in this manner, because there's the exercise of Sovereignty in this, as in all other temporal & outward Blessings. But tho' I thus Guard ; yet I suppose upon the strictest search & the best Judgment, it will be found, that generally, and for the most part, these Blessings are given, when a People in Covenant, are Upright & Faithful in it. Were it at all needful here, I could for Proof draw together very many Instances, from the most unquestionable Records, Sacred & Common. Particularly, It would be easy to fill up the Proof from the holy Scriptures ; and mention to you

Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, Ase, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah & Josiah; all illustrious Instruments in GOD's hands of very peculiar Blessings. But there being no necessity at all to Labour this Point, I come to the *Third*, which my Subject especially requires.

3. I come now to the *Character* of the Good Ruler. My Text offers a very just & lively Pattern in *Moses*. We'll then enquire into his Character; and by that, Answer the Demands of this Head: And upon search we find *Moses* illustrious for the following excellent Things, viz. (1.) His governing *Wisdom & Skill*. (2.) His *Meekness & Patience*. (3.) His *Justice*. (4.) His *Publick Spirit & Paternal Tendernefs*. (5.) *Steady Authority, & Courage*. (6.) GOD's *Image*, in an high & glorious Degree. (7.) *Great Interest in GOD's Favour*, and *Power with GOD by Prayer*.

1. The Ruler must like *Moses*, be furnished with *Wisdom & Skill* in Government. Every Business hath it's essential Qualifications, for the effectual & sufficient management of it. Governing *Wisdom & Prudence* is such, to the Conduct of Publick Affairs. This *Wisdom* takes in a great Variety of Things; and I don't pretend here to a perfect account of them. I will only hint in a word, That this Vertue is qualified for, conducted & actuated in Government, by an extended Knowledge of Men & Things; and particularly, the Methods of Government: And might I at all go into particulars, I would mention the Advantage of the distinct Knowledge of the People to be Govern'd, in their History, their Constitution

in

in Church & State, their Laws, Customs, Dispositions, Manners & Circumstances. And to add no more, There must be a Dexterity in the Application of this Knowledge to it's End. If you Enquire, You'll find this one Remarkable in *Moses's* Character: There's no question to be made of it, but he had large measures of Prudence, by special Impressions from above. But besides this, we find him trained to Government, by his Adoption & Education, by *Pharaoh's* Daughter; and his intimate Acquaintance with the *Egyptian* Learning. Read, *Exod.* 3. 11, 12. *And he said, who am I. -- And he said, Certainly, I will be with you.* *Exod.* 4. 10, 11, 12. *And Moses said, I am not Eloquent. And the Lord said, Who hath made man's mouth; now therefore go, and I will be with thy Mouth.* Once more, *Acts* 17. 21, 22. *Pharaoh's Daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son, and Moses was learned, in all the learning of the Egyptians.*

2. He must like *Moses*, be remarkable, for *Meekness & Patience*. Meekness & Patience are Qualifications essential to a wise & happy Administration. Among the best People, there's always enough to exercise these, in the Ruler.

But there are high Degrees, and a constant Exercise, necessary in the Government of some People, and in some Seasons & Circumstances. *Moses* was bro't to the Government of an head-strong People; very sordid & untaught in some regards: Accustomed to the Discipline of Slaves; who when bro't into the Condition of a Free People, hardly knew how to use their Freedom with moderation, and to bear the necessary Restraints.

The

The wise Conduct of such a People required an uncommon Meekness & Patience. Again, *Moses* was to lead them thro' Wants & Difficulties, and innumerable Hazards. These to the low & animal, but especially, the corrupt Inclinations, are strong temptations to Discontents, Murmurings, Rebellions against Rulers; and must require an invincible Patience, and steady Calm in Rulers, to Master them, and to prevent the infinite Mischiefs that arise from them.

GOD made and sent them, a *Moses*, the most signal stroke, and special Glory of whose Character, was his *Meekness & Patience*: *Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men that were upon the face of the earth.*

3. Like *Moses*, he must be *very Just*. Justice is certainly essential to the grand Basis of Government; one of the grand Pillars upon which it rests; without which, Power degenerates into Tyranny and Self-Interest. Prov. 14. 34. *Righteousness*, very particularly in it's Rulers, *exalteth a Nation*. Prov. 16. 4. *The Throne is established by Righteousness*. It's given us therefore among the most vital Parts of a Ruler's Duty, 2 Sam. 3. 23. *The Rock of Israel spake to me; the God of Israel said, He that Ruleth over men must be Just*. This Vertue enobled & exalted by Grace, shone very bright among *Moses's* Excellencies; and we find it very solemnly recommended in *Jabro's* Advice, Exod. 18. 14, --- 21. *Moreover, Thou shalt provide Men of Truth.*

4. Like *Moses*, of a *Publick Spirit & Paternal Tenderness*. The due & happy Exercise of the Publick Trust requires an uncommon Generosity and

and Largeness of Soul. Nothing so proper, so lovely, so God like. 'Tis the Expectation both of GOD and Man, that Rulers be Fathers and Benefactors to their People : put on the Tenderness of Fathers ; and express it, in their being governed by the Publick Good, in their whole Administration ; and in their exquisite sense of the Publick Prosperity & Adversity. A Private, narrow, selfish Spirit in a Publick Person, is most loathsome to GOD & Man ; brings Infamy, and a Curse upon the Guilty, and innumerable Oppressions & Mischiefs upon the People. GOD shews us the Good Ruler, in a very beautiful light, in those Two renowned Patriots *Moses* and *Nehemiah* ; the one *Israel's Founder*, the other his *Restorer*. *Nehemiah's* Tenderness to the Publick was truly great ; and his Story fully makes out that Character, Neh. 2. 10. *A man to seek the welfare of the Children of Israel.* But *Moses* was Extraordinary & Amazing : He entirely forgets himself & all his own Interests for them, their Safety & Good. Read, Exod. 32. 32. *If not, I pray thee blot me out of thy book.* And, Numb. 14. 12, 13, 14, 15.

5. Like *Moses*, of steady *Authority & Courage*. Authority in a Ruler's management ; I mean a due exerting the coercive Power lodged with him for the Publick Safety & Honour, is always necessary in some Degree, let the Times be never so Calm. *Resolution & Courage* are the Guardians of this Authority and it's Life & Spirit ; and a degree of these is always requisite therefore in the smoothest Time. But at sometimes, and in some Circumstances, which their People may be thrown into,

into, they become peculiarly Necessary; and they must exert themselves with Vigour. Without very resolute Counsels & courageous Executions of them, all would be lost in some Junctures. An happy Union, and prudent Exercise of these, are then a People's very Life.

Let us enquire, and we shall find *Moses* the Meek & Tender Father of his People; to whom his People was dearer than himself; yet when the Honour of GOD, and the Publick Good required it, we then find him a Man of Majesty, armed with Terrors.

Government can't be insulted, & so weakned, without inexpressible Damage & Hazards to the People; (the great End of Government.) 'Tis for the People's sake, not their own, that Rulers must exhibit this Coercive Power, and use the Sword of the Revenger; and not willingly suffer the Lawless at home, or Enemies abroad, to despise and trample on them. Look upon *Moses* in that most seasonable & holy Transport, *Exod. 32. 26. And Moses said, Who is on the Lord's side, Who?* And, *Exod. 17. 9. And Moses said to Joshua, and go fight with Amaleck.*

6. It's very desirable, that like *Moses*, they have GOD's Image, and in it's most high & eminent Degrees to Sanctify them. This will Exalt all their Faculties & Qualifications for Government. This excellent Image crowns all other Qualifications; infuseth an holy & excellent Ferment into all that directs & stimulates them to their great End.

Moses was a renowned Man of GOD, for his uncommon measures of true sanctifying Grace.
And

And Rulers should so Excel, as to be Examples to all about them, of every gracious Disposition and Action to GOD & Man. You see *Moses's* true Temper & Spirit, in his deep Concern for GOD's Honour; the surest Sign of Grace that can be. Numb. 14. 13, 14. *And Moses said, The Egyptians will bear it —*.

7. Like him, Men of *Prayer & Power* with GOD. *Moses* was so, very gloriously; and so should all Rulers. Jer. 15. 1. *Tho' Moses and Samuel stood before me.* Numb. 21. 7. *And Moses Prayed for the People.* Thus they may do more for the Publick Good, than by all their Wisdom, Authority, Courage, nay, than by the united Strength & Riches of their whole Government.

Thus I have finished the *Character*; the thing principally in my Design, and will go more briefly thro' what remains.

PROP. IV. It is to be Notic'd & Celebrate'd as an *high Favour* of GOD to his People, when he leads them *like a Flock*, by the hand of Wise and Good Rulers. GOD's taking upon himself the Relation of their *Leader*, in so peculiar a manner as you have heard; and his exercising that Government as a *Shepherd*, carries most admirable Grace in every Article of it, as might be shown, would my Bounds allow it: But passing the Rest, I shall consider the peculiar Favour of His Government, which appears in excellent Civil Privileges & Rulers; and this under Two Heads. (1.) These Privileges & Government are a most *free & great Favour*; even to the *best* People. (2.) It is to be *Noticed & Celebrated* as such by them.

1. It is a *free & great Favour* of GOD, even to the best People, to give them such *Privileges* and *Rulers*. I must say a word or two to the *Greatness*, and then to the Divine *Freedom* and *Sovereignty* in them.

(1.) *Civil Privileges*, and a *good Government*, are very *great* Benefits to a People. These very nearly & vitally affect all the Particulars of a People's Welfare. It might be Instanced at large, were it proper here; in their Religion & Morals; and in their external Order, Peace, universal Prosperity. The happy Fruits are *Good Laws*; prudent, steady, tender, but yet *resolute Execution* of them: *Learning & Arts* flourish: *Industry* is encouraged: *Trade, Husbandry, Manufactures* encrease: The Publick *Prudentials & Exigencies* faithfully & wisely Conducted. All these have a most direct & *natural* Influence upon their Honour & Safety. And to conclude, Such Rulers do abundance to engage the *Divine most gracious Presence* with such a People. Indeed their Prudence & Holiness, and fervent Supplications won't do alone, without agreeable Dispositions & Deportment in the People; but they do a great deal with GOD, to keep off Judgments, and to procure Publick Blessings. They have great Power with GOD *by their Prayers*, to open his Infinite Stores. Deut. 9. 18, 19. *Let me alone, that I may destroy them:-- But the Lord hearkned to me at that time also.* They do abundance by *holy Examples*, and powerful *Influences*, in their eminent Stations. to prepare the People for a *Covenant-Enjoyment* of these Blessings; as the History of the reformatting Kings of *Judah* assure us.

(2.) They

(2.) They are most *Free & Sovereign* Benefits, even to the *best & purest* People. No People can have any Claim to these Benefits, but by GOD's most sovereign Promise. 1 Sam. 12. 22. *For the Lord will not forsake his People, for his great Name sake ; because it hath pleased the Lord to make you his People.* And a People's Claim by a sincere Performance of the Covenant-Terms, is the glorious work of sovereign, irresistible Grace. Jer. 31. 3. *Yea. I have loved thee, with an everlasting Love : Therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee.*

2. These *Free & Great* Returns must be *Noticed & Acknowledged*. I only just mention the Heads which might have been enlarged on, if the bounds of a single Sermon would have allowed it. Duty, Gratitude, and Interest unite to press their Obligations, and set them in the strongest Light.

A People's Notice & Acknowledgement is all the Return they can possibly make. GOD the Giver being Infinitely above them : They being entirely dependent on him : And He being absolutely incapable of any real Addition & Benefit.

1 Cor. 4. 7. *Who maketh thee to differ ?*

GOD will notwithstanding graciously Accept, thro' *Christ*, His People's sincere Acknowledgements. He graciously lets us know, He accounts himself Honoured by them, and is highly pleased with them, *Ps 150. 23. Who so offereth praise glorifyeth me.* And we are sure he will Reward our grateful Offerings, with the Magnificence of the only & blessed Potentate, the King of Kings, in the most illustrious Benefits.

And now I should have proceeded to have said what these Returns are, which a People must make to GOD for these Benefits; and which must be agreeable to the Perfection & Majesty of GOD; and therefore such as himself requires: And these might have been Described at large under the following Heads.

1. A People must offer solemn & hearty *Praise* for them, *Psal.* 50. 23.

2. They must be wisely improved to their *Ends*, viz GOD's *Honour*, the promoting our own *Spiritual & Outward Good*.

3. All wise *Endeavours* must be used for their *Continuance*. Particularly, Those Iniquities must be Mourned for, Reformed & Watched against, which dishonour & provoke the Sovereign GOD to Frown upon a People, and Remove them: What these are, it becomes all, both Rulers and People, diligently to search out, and resolutely destroy.

A P P L I C A T I O N.

All that I will say by way of *Application* shall be in Two Articles, (1.) A Call to *Thanksgiving*. (2.) A word of Advice to the *Rulers & People of New-England*.

1. We see hence, what abundant reason of *Thankfulness* We, and the Nations we derive from, have unto GOD. His Favour to them, and us, is very great; and should be acknowledged with most humble, sincere, solemn & practical Returns to him.

(1.) Our *Nations* have abundant reason to be very Thankful to GOD, and *We* in and with them, for GOD's uncommon Favours to them; in
the

the mentioned Instances particularly. We see them, by a Series of Wonders, in Possession of the *Protestant Religion*; of a most happy Civil Constitution, formed with great Wisdom, to the just Liberties & best Interests of Society; an happy Settlement of the Succession in the *Protestant* Line, and Illustrious House of H A - N O V E R : The Constitution animated by a K I N G renowned thro' *Europe*, for his Wisdom, Justice, Courage, Paternal Disposition to his People, and all Royal Virtues & Qualities; very glorious in a Circle of his own illustrious Issue; giving a long, delightful Prospect to the Nations. This excellent K I N G, hath been remarkably continued to us, by GOD's wonderful Care. May the same Divine Care be extended to him & his, for a long course of Years! Once more, We see them flourish under a just liberty of Conscience to *Protestant Dissenters*. These among many others, are the weightiest motives of Praise to us as well as them.

(2.) We in *New-England* have abundant Reason of Praise. By a train of uncommon Providences, we enjoy a pure Religion & Ordinances; many signal Civil Privileges; good Rulers, seeking our Welfare: These, with innumerable other Smiles of GOD, are very delightful Reasons of Praise; and we shall be inexcusably Ungrateful, if we don't suitably Praise GOD for them; Prize and Improve them to his Glory.

And here, As an Expression of our Thankfulness to GOD, We take leave to Address Your H O N O U R our Commander in Chief, in a very particular manner; and the rest of our Honourable

Honourable Fathers in the Government ; with the publick Profession of our dutiful & grateful Sense of the Wisdom, Care & Faithfulness of your Administration. We Bless GOD for that gracious Presence, that hath so remarkably assisted & succeeded your Endeavours for the Publick ; and do, & shall constantly Pray, That he would continue & enlarge it to you ; make you more & more Blessings ; & encrease upon Us, (your Charge,) abundantly the Motives of Joy & Praise.

2 I Conclude with a solemn word of Advice to all whom my Discourse especially Concerns ;
 (1.) To those concerned in the *Choices of this Day*.
 (2.) To those vested with *Publick Trusts*, of one kind or another. (3.) To the *People*.

1. To those in whom the *Elections of the Day* are vested : The Discourse gives Direction to your Choice. It must not be Prejudice, & Party, & private corrupt Affection, that determines you ; but a sincere regard to the known worth & fitness of the Persons Chosen. They must be such as you may reasonably hope, GOD will be present with, and work by. GOD and your Country have put a great Trust upon you ; expect your wise and faithful Management of it, and you must give an Account to GOD.

(2) To you who are put into *Publick Trusts*. The Exhortation from GOD (your Supreme) is, Endeavour to be, & manage in your several Trusts, as GOD would have, & directs by the shining Pattern now exhibited. The Charge committed to you is very weighty : Every publick Care is so ; but of GOD's peculiar People his Treasure, especially. GOD expects it, that as Fathers, you be tender of
 their

their *Religion*, their *Morals*, their *Privileges*, their *universal Good*. He demands it, as a leading Article, That the Rulers of *New-England* take a singular, tender Care, of the Pure, Scriptural Religion of *New-England*, that excellent, pure Doctrine, Worship & Discipline, which GOD hath planted here, and which our Fathers purchased this Land for ; (and by infinite Labors, Hazards & Expences too,) that they might enjoy it themselves, & transmit, as an invaluable Treasure to their Children. This will make you the delight of the present, & the praise of future Generations ; and which is infinitely better, will secure the smiles of GOD. Again, That the Rulers, according to their Advantages for it, smile upon Learning & the Ministry : These are very vitally linked with Religion. Religion will soon decay without Learning ; & even dye without a learned & faithful Ministry ; so that *our All* very much turns upon an effectual wise Care to see them well supported.

GOD expects that you lead his & your People, by a bright Example, in his ways. And particularly, That you exemplify the beauty & advantage of a wise Union among your selves, upon the best Principles. That you exhibit with the brightest Evidence, your generous, publick Spirit & Principles. That you unite with your spiritual Guides and godly People, in most fervent Supplications, That you may like *Moses* & *Samuel*, stand in the Breach ; & be Princes with GOD. In a word, That you become the happy Promoters of their *leading peaceable & quiet lives, in all godliness & honesty*.

3. I Conclude, to the *People*. It's of infinite Importance, that you come in with your Part :
That

That your Tempers & Carriages be agreeable. The publick Good can't be attained without you. The Wisdom & Care of Rulers will be in vain, without your compliance with their Endeavours.

Particularly,

1. *Pray earnestly for them.* Their Cares are great, their Qualifications high; the Consequence of their Actions reacheth great Numbers, and in their very weighty Interests; their Temptations are very many. They entirely depend on GOD, (with the meanest & weakest of their People,) for all they want. Never forget them in Secret, Private or Publick. Besiege Heaven for them, by effectual, fervent Prayers constantly; That they may be Blessed, & made Blessings, very signal ones: That they may be assisted, succeeded, rewarded by infinite Grace in Christ. Join with them in *Solomon's Prayer*, 2 Chron. 1. 10, *Give me now wisdom & knowledge; that I may come in, & go out, before this thy People.* Jam. 1. 5. *If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God.* 1 Tim. 2. 3. *For Kings & all in Authority.*

2. *Carry it suitably to them.* Love and Reverence them as Fathers; and let them see and feel that you do so. Make the publick Cares easy and delightful to them, by an honourable Support, a proper Submission to their just Authority, and a chearful Union with them, in your Stations, for the Honour of GOD & the publick Welfare.

Thus, if Superiors & Subjects Unite, it will be for our unspeakable Advantage; and it may be said of us, as in Psal. 144. 15. *Happy is the People, that is in such a case: yea, Happy is that People, whose God is the Lord.*

F I N I S.

ERRATA. P. 7. l. 7. For martial, r. *Martial*. P. 20. l. 25. add *it*.