

A. D. 5

S E R M O N

Delivered before the

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OF THE

Colony of Connecticut,

ON THE

Anniversary Election at Hartford,

May 14th, 1752.

By Ashbel Woodbridge, A. M.

Pastor of the first CHURCH of CHRIST
in Glastenbury.

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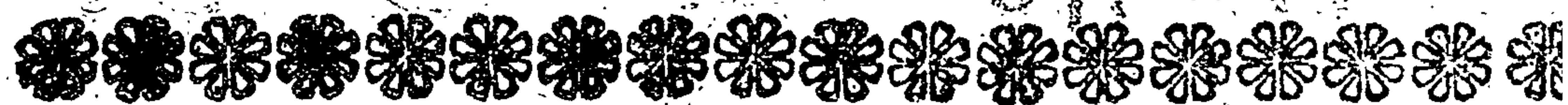
FROM,

Psalms LXXVIII. 72. So he Fed them according
to the Integrity of his Heart; and Guided
them by the Skilfulness of his Hands.

NEW-LONDON,

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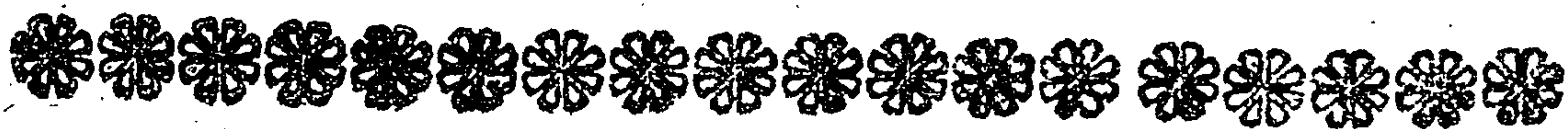


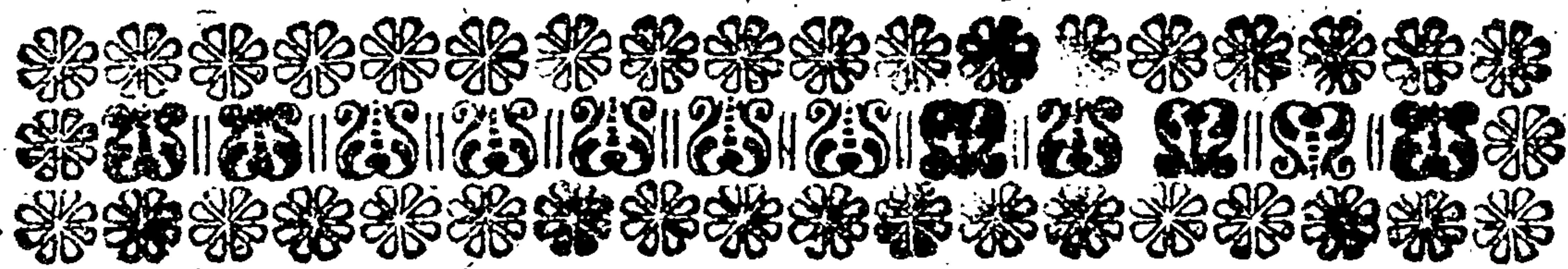
*At a GENERAL ASSEMBLY Holden at
Hartford, in the Colony of Connecticut in
New-England, on the Second Thursday of
May, Anno Domini, 1 7 5 2.*

Ordered,

THAT THOMAS WELLS *Esq*;
and Capt. JONATHAN HALE,
Return the Thanks of this Assembly
to the Reverend Mr. ASHBEL WOODBRIDGE,
for his Sermon Delivered (on the 14th Day
of *May* Instant,) before the Assembly, and
desire a Copy thereof that it may be Printed.

George Wyllys Secr.





An Election S E R M O N.

P S A L M LXXVIII. 72:

*So he Fed them according to the Integrity
of his Heart ; and Guided them by the
Skilfulness of his Hands.*

AMONG the signal Favours that
God Bestows upon Mankind, that
of civil Government Crowned with
civil Rulers, of the best Character,
must be look'd upon as none of the Least ;
a good Ruler comes not empty Handed to
his People ; but like a Ship, full Fraught,
and richly Laden, with variety of Necessaries,
Comforts, and even Ornaments of Life ; and
carries in it an argument of Favour from
Heaven, (a) with respect to the Weal, and
Prosperity of such a Nation, or People.

The Author of this Psalm (whoever he
was, (b) closes with a Recital of this Favour
to *Israel*, God's Church, and People ; after

(a) 1 Kings 10. 9. (b) 'Tis matter of some Doubt who
the Author of this Psalm was, unless we should rest in
Reading "of Asaph" not "For Asaph" vid. Roberts Key.

he has given an Historical Summary, of the many Favours, and Frowns, of Heaven towards, and against *Israel*; from their coming out of *Egypt* to *David's* Advancement; as also their Unbelief, Disobedience, and Ingratitude, notwithstanding, both Mercies, and Judgments; also of God's passing by the other Tribes, and choosin^g of *Judab*; Rejecting of *Shiloh*, and choosin^g of Mount Zion, for the place of his Worship; and Finally, (implicitly) of his Rejecting of *Saul*, and his Choosin^g of *David*, from the low, and humble Employment, of Feeding Sheep, to Feed, (Transferring this Character) God's People *Israel*. And all this Prefac'd with a moving Exhortation, demanding attention, both to Hear, Learn, and Teach, God's Law, to their Children, to succeeding Generations. ---

The Penman having gone through, with the Detail of God's Favours, &c. shews the Triumph of his Mercy, over the Sins of his People, closing the Psalm, with this Favour, and not with Judgments; making a Remark upon, and giving an Encomium to, King *David's* Government, Honourable to the same, and Explanatory of the Favour to *Israel*, "So be Fed, &c. Which shews that the Author carries his Tho'ts to the Finishing of *David's* Government; for the Remark looks back upon his Government already Acted,

Not

Not to Delay here further for opening the Words of the Text, which will (of course) be Explain'd in the Sequel.

I shall proceed, somewhat to Consider the two Summary Characters, in our Text, Descriptive of the Excellent Manner, of King *David's* Governing, of God's People *Israel*, viz. "According to the Integrity of his Heart, and by the Skilfulness of his Hands." According to the Integrity of his Heart, "may Import,

1. The Rectitude of a Renewed and Sanctified Heart. Which indeed lays the true Foundation of upright Acting and good Conduct, in both a private and public Capacity. The integrity or uprightness of Heart, so the *Dutch* Annotations reads it, which are justly Valued, for their close Reading of the original Text ; before this agrees well to the excellent Character of this King of Israel ; whose Heart was not only, truly Rectified, and Renewed, by the Sanctifying Influences of the Holy Spirit ; but he appears, by God's special and peculiar approbation to have been an Eminently holy Man : Being Styled by an inspired Samuel, (a) "a Man after, (his, i. e.) God's own Heart." And we may also be sure, that when God, (by the Prophet) gives him this Character that he beheld him ; not according to the outward

(a) 1 Samuel 13. 14.

Appearance ; for this is not the manner of God's seeing ; but of Man's seeing. (a) When the Prophet (in Reference to the uprightness and goodness of *David*, God taking his account of him from what he was within) says, “ but the Lord looketh on the Heart.” *David* also makes good this his sacred Character, in the main part of his outward, and practical Conduct, (b) “ because *David* did that which was Right in the eyes of the LORD, and turned not aside from any thing that he Commanded him all the Days of his Life, save only in the matter of *Uriah* the *Hittite*. ” Nor does this Insinuate that Regeneration is Essential to the Being of civil Rulers ; for this does not appear to have been the Case, as well of others, as of *David's* Predecessor in the Kingdom, tho' Constituted a King by divine Appointment, and hence stiled, “ the LORD's Anointed ”. 'Tis indeed said, that God gave him “ another Heart, ” but not a new Heart ; and he appears to have been under the Influence of a spirit of Prophecy, and other Influences of the Holy Spirit, (tho' wondred at) Hence that, “ Is Saul also among the Prophets ? ”) But the Scripture distinguishes between Gifts, and Graces, and their Connection with Salvation ; as is included in our LORD's making such a change of Heart indispensably Necessary to a Man's Seeing, & Entering into the Kingdom of God, (a)

(a) 1 Sam. 16 7 (b) 1 King. 15 5 (a) Joh. 3 3, 5, Ezek. 36. 26
Much

Much less does this intimate, an Approbation of that Wild, Enthusiastical, and Destructive Maxim of civil Polity, viz. That Dominion is Founded in Grace, broached in Years past in some Forein Parts. Yet so necessary are Qualifications of Piety, Virtue and Uprightness of Heart, in civil Rulers ; that no Christian Community (where it was in their Power to do, otherwise) wou'd willingly commit, so many of their most important Affairs, to their Trust where such Qualifications are wanting.

2. The integrity of Heart wherewith this most Excellent King of *Israel* is here said to Govern, may import his Probity and Faithfulness with Respect to his Betrustment. Civil Rulers are Officers in Trust, the Lives, Liberties, Properties, and Privileges of a People are very much Betruſted in the Hands of their civil Rulers ; whose care, is therefore to be Exercised, that they Enjoy them in Peace and Quietness, Secure, Promote and Encourage them in the Service of God ; or Duties of the First Table ; and Honesty, or Righteousness towards one another, (a) “ in all Godliness, and Honesty. ” Whether we understand, (as some) the Apostle as pointing out more immediately the Duties of Kings, and the civil Magistrate ; or Obliquely, rather, (with others) by Teaching the Privileges, that Christians, may justly, and ought to hope for

(a) 1 Tim. 2 2.

under their Protection : as the Reason, and Fruit of their Prayers, “ For Kings, and all in Authority. ” This Probity, and Fidelity, we may consider as having reference,

Either

(1st.) To God, from whom his Being, Authority, & Betrustments, were received. Kings and Princes, and all Earthly Powers, receive their Being, (as such) from Him who is “ the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, ” (b) The Apostle is very Express, and Comprehensive, (a) “ For there is no Power but of God, the Powers that be, are Ordained of God. ” Who from this Reason Enforces a conscientious and christian Subjection to civil Authority. And if we look back on *Saul*, that first King of *Israel*, (in manner and form,) (b) ’Tis said of him, (the Prophet Representing God Speaking, (*Hosea* 13. 11.) “ I gave thee a King, (tho’ ’tis added) in mine Anger. ” He was given to them, in Answer to their unwise, & heady Request, which impli’d in it a Rejection of, not only *Samuel*, their excellent Judge ; but of God from being their King, (God himself being the Interpreter, 1 *Sam.* 8. 7.) Which by the way, shou’d give People a Caution against being too stiff and heady, in pressing, uncon-

(b) *Prov* 8. 15, 16. (a) *Rom* 13. 1. (b) Notwithstanding *Moses* is stiled King, (Prince, or Ruler) in *Jerusalem*, &c. yet to be reckon’d, (rather) among those Excellent Judges in the beginning. Vid. *Dutch Annot.*
sider’d

sider'd Petitions on their Rulers ; or in resisting their wise & faithful Counfel : For what good can be expected in acting counter to Counfels, that are Wise & Faithful ? It also Instructs the civil Ruler with respect to such Petitions, if they must be complied with ; nevertheless let it be done with preceeding, faithful, & solemn Protestation. To return, if this King, aforesaid, was given of God, tho' in Anger, 'tis easier to believe that such a Ruler, & so great a Blessing as *David* was, must be given from him, from whom comes down every good, and perfect Gift : The very Ordinance of Civil Government, which must be Reckon'd not only among the Good, but very Precious Gifts of Heaven to Mankind ; appears therefore to have Descended from God the Father of Lights, &c. For whoever considers the necessity, and advantages of civil Government, must esteem it as, a most valuable Favour to Mankind ; nay the Disadvantages that arise thro' the want of it, are, an incontestible Proof of it's great Value, of which the Scripture Records, sad Evidence, (*Judg. 19th*, Prefac'd with that,) " When there was no King in *Israel*. " Which also we find Verified if we look into those Nations who have the least Government ; or proportionably where Government turns aside from its direct and good Designs, (in measure,) and pursues Avarice, Ambition, Power, and Tyranny, &c. Yet even where

Government

Government is under great Corruption, the latter is preferr'd to the former, *viz.* where there is none.

Finally, (In a short, and clear manner) our Saviour, points out to us the true Fountain of the Civil Officer's Power to be in God, when in Answer to *Pilate's* mistaken Talk of his own Power, He tells him that he cou'd have, no Power at all against him, Except it was given him from Above ; even when with inflexible Truth, & unmoveable Courage, he witnessed that " good Confession, " which the Scriptures Record to his Honour.

Therefore unto God the true Original, and Fountain, of all Power, and Authority is he Oblig'd to approve himself Faithful, and to render an Account of his Trust, that he may hear the Euge ! of " Well done thou good & faithful Servant, " and receive that glorious Reward of entring into " the Joy of thy Lord ".

Or,

(2^{ly.}) Unto Men, *viz.* those who are the Subjects of his Care, and Betrustment. Under the former head we have consider'd Kings and civil Rulers Oblig'd, in their Fidelity, to One that is Above them, and to whom they are Accountable ; but here we are to consider their Fidelity, as it respects those who are Below them, and to whom they are not Accountable : Notwithstanding the People are Sub-
jected to the civil Ruler, by divine Appoint-
ment ;

ment ; yet if we consider their mutual Relation, the mutual Duties of the Relation, do of Course, and necessarily Arise ; Consequently the Ruler hath his Duty to the People of his Care, Trust, and Government, to the discharge of which Fidelity is to be Exercised ; not only to God the Author of the Relation, and by whose Authority the duties of it are Enjoin'd ; but also, toward the Subjects of his Care, and Government, 'tis with Respect to those that his Vigilance, Care, Pains, and Talents, are to be employ'd in General, to seek & promote their Good, what in him lies, and within his Sphere, and proper Influence ; hence that of the Apostle (Rom. 13. 4.) “ he is the Minister of God to thee for good ” : By which we are led to see, in a short view, the matter of the civil Magistrates Duty, *Viz.* [the good of the People] which opens the way, for a Remark, *viz.* if the People were not subjected to the civil Ruler, for the sake of Supporting, Honouring, and Aggrandizing their Prince ; which nevertheless they owe to him ; but the civil Ruler is constituted for the People, *Viz.* ; for their Good ; which might not be, an unprofitable Consideration, for Kings, & Princes : The Capacity, of these Benefactors, to their People by Power and Authority being Large, the Exercise of it, ought to be Proportionable towards them : Considering the Mutual and Voluntary Obligations of both Rulers and their

B

People ;

People ; for this is Implied, whether the Relation be made by Government's descending by Succession, or Election. *Saul* was Voluntarily Received and Submitted to by the People ; so likewise *David*, (a) and where 'tis Elective 'tis more Evident ; for what can be a greater and more direct, Obligation, to a civil Ruler, who Fears God, than calling of God to be a Witness, to the faithful Discharge, of their Trust, as in the solemn Oath administred at their Election ?

(3^{ly}.) Justice and Equity. This is a Truth that both the Light of Nature and Revelation agree in, viz. that " he that ruleth over Men must be Just ". (b) The Principles of Justice should be deeply Rooted in the Hearts of civil Rulers if we consider them in the Exercise of their Legislative Power, Justice, and Equity must run thro' all the Laws which they make, as so many Bands and Ligaments to hold the common Wealth together ; the strength of these must be their Justice and Goodness, or Suitableness to the common Wealth and their own Design, (*Prov.* 8. 15.) Or,

Again, In his Executive Power. Justice disposes him to make a right Application of such just and good Laws to all his Subjects, for promoting the common Good : Justice does this with an impartial Hand, without Distinction of High and Low, Rich and Poor,

(a) 1 Chron. 11. 3. see 2 King 11. 17. (b) 2 Sam. 23:3.

Friend

Friend and Foe, (a) Inflexible by Bribery, Fear or Flattery, - - "Just and Upright"; these are Enfolded together, (b)

(4^{ly.}) Truth & Sincerity. And (in a word) such other Virtues as more immediately go in to make a civil Ruler a Man of Trust and Confidence, a Trusty Man. Truth and Sincerity seem to have their more especial concern herein; not only are the words of his Mouth True as conform'd to the things he speaks of; but to what he thinks in his Heart; which makes him what is Styled, a true hearted Man; and is oppos'd to a double Tongued and false Hearted one; further he is Steady and Unmovable (in the Main) to what he Pretends, Promises, Purposes. - - - -

(5^{ly.}) A strict, steady, and conscientious adhering to the Laws of God and the Common Wealth in all the parts of Government, whether we consider it, as subsisting in the Law of Nature, and Dictated by it's Light; for 'tis Evident from what we find, in our own Breasts, that the Apostle speaks the Truth (c); but to assist the Defectiveness and Insufficiency of this Light, it has pleased God to give the civil Ruler, in the sacred Scriptures, in both the Old Testament and in the New, where his Commission, Power and Authority, the Nature and Design of his Office is sufficiently Tau't as well the General, as many

(a) Pro. 24, 23: Deut. 1, 16 Ex, 23, 3: (b) Job 12, 4 (c) Ro. 2, 4

particular Rules, of his Conduct, laid down, which may be seen in part, from such Texts as have been fore-cited, and many others here & there ; and the Body of Judicial Laws, which God gave to the Children of *Israel*, by *Moses*, which in their Day were accommodated to the *Israelitish Nation*, were, by far the most perfect & accomplish'd Body of Laws, to be found Extant in any Nation (besides) whatever ; which (doubtless) is a part of the Meaning of that Appeal & Remark, (b) : And still, for Substance, are, and will remain the most pure and perfect Fountain, [considered together with what the Sacred Writings do afterward afford, more Accommodate to the State of a Christian People] from whence, every Christian State and Nation, may draw forth such Streams of good & wholsom Laws, as may (if duly Executed) make Justice & Judgment flow down their Streets as Waters. As then the Civil Ruler is accommodated with the most excellent Laws of God ; Revealed in the Holy Scriptures : Which, when Fitted and Passed into the Laws of his Realm or State : 'Tis both Matter of Duty to him, and Interest of his Subjects, and particularly a part of his Integrity, strictly, steadily, & conscienciously, to Observe, and Adhere to them, (a) *David's* Encomium in the Text must needs imply such a strict Observance of God's Law and Adherence to it.

(b) Deut: 4: 8. Psal: 147: 19, 20: (a) Deut: 5: 32.

2ly. “ By the Skilfulness of his Hands. ”

This Character implies in it,

(1) Knowledge, and Understanding. Notwithstanding Knowledge, and Understanding simply Consider'd, do differ from Wisdom ; yet they are the Basis on which it Stands ; take away Knowledge, and Understanding, and the Superstructure of Wisdom falls to the Ground, it can't Subsist without them : Wisdom does therefore necessarily, Imply, and Suppose Knowledge, and Understanding, as Artful Musick, Vocal, and Instrumental, and Imply and Suppose, Voice, and Sound. A Knowledge of the Nature, and Design of civil Government, and it's just Limits, as likewise the Office of the civil Ruler, his proper Business, and Work of Humane Nature, and the Subjects Ruled by him, their Rights, Properties, Privileges, and particular Circumstances, of his Dominions : The Knowledge of the Divine, and Humane Laws, particularly the Laws, and Statutes of his own Realm ; and in a word, of whatsoever leads, and is conducive to Government, its Reaching the End and Design of it, in it's importance, & in the extent of the good it aims at : And on the other hand, of the many Ways, and Means whereby it may fail hereof, or be Defeated either Secretly or Openly, by its Adversaries. This Knowledge, and Understanding shou'd be large, and extensive, Deep, and Penetrating, Particular, and Correct. --

The civil Ruler, here may be Resembl'd by one who has Ascended some Eminence, as *Moses* upon *Pisga's* Top where with strengthened Eyes he beheld the Land of Canaan in its Length, and Breadth; or to a General in such Situation, where he can Survey his whole Army at one View, see and hear his Officers give and receive their Commands, observe their Motions, whether Regular, or Irregular, Expert or Inexpert, observe their Obedience or Disobedience, &c.

(2) It consists in a wise Administration of Government---Wisdom and Knowledge, altho' they are Connected together, and Wisdom is Founded on Knowledge, yet they are distinct and not always found together; every Man of Knowledge is not a Wise Man. If we take Wisdom in a more strict and limited Sense; whether we speak of Divine or Humane Wisdom, we see (by daily Observation) that men of good speculative Knowledge concerning God, his Being and Glorious Perfections, and that indeed there can be no other true Object of our Happiness; when they also have such a knowledge of the way and means of coming to the Enjoyment of him, by Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ as Revealed in the Gospel, a Faith whose genuine Fruits are Holiness, and Righteousness, yet they do not Conduct themselves accordingly, tho' 'tis their Profession; and when they know these Things, cannot

cannot be perswaded to pursue after Happiness, in(wisely) doing of them ; cannot be perswaded into Wisdom's Ways. Likewise in Humane Affairs we may observe too many Instances, where there are good, & some where there are, (it may be) great degrees of Knowledge, and, yet if such Persons are put to Project, a suitable, and fit Medium, to bring about some good & valuable End they are not able, have not Wisdom and Skilfulness of Heart for the same, or of Hands to perform it ; but on the other hand, will project very unsuitable & unlikely Means, to their purpose ; As *Reboam*, and his young Counsellors to procure Allegiance and Submission from the Subject. And hence we may suppose it frequently arises that so many schemes to advance mens Interests fail and prove Abortive, because where Men, may be endued with Knowledge ; yet not with Wisdom : Nor yet do we find that always the best projected Plans and Schemes, the best humanely Contrived, and such as have (for a while) the fairest Prospects, when they have been practised upon, do take place ; some unforeseen Turn and Interposition, (not Maraculous) of divine Providence, (which by the way affords an argument of such a Providence ruling over the affairs of Men) and hinders their taking Effect, or breaks the Bands of their well concerted Measures, asunder, ruin the fairest Prospects, and levels their raised

Expectations

Expectations with the Ground, and that whether the Ends or Designs aimed at by the Projectors are Good or Bad. The Scriptures confirm this, (a) *Ahithaphel's* Good (because Wise) Counsel was Defeated by such a kind overruling Providence: And our *Fifth of November Gratitude*, has frequently Reminded us of the same Kindness (never to be Forgot) with respect to the Protestant Liberties and Privileges, of our Nation. And thus, as the Counsels against the Church and People of God have been; so we have ground to hope they yet, shall be Defeated. (b) Here, in the Exercise of this Wisdom, the Eye of the civil Ruler is Fixed on the end of Government, viz. [The Good of the People] Pointed out to him by the Apostle when speaking of the civil Ruler says to the People "He is the Minister of God to thee for Good". (c) I say then on the true End of Government the good of the People, in Subordination to the Glory of God, [and on the Extent of this Good,] which may also be seen, measuring of it, by the Apostles Expressions, shewing the Privileges of the Subjects of civil Government, under good Kings and Rulers (1 Tim. 2. 2.) Where the subjects are consider'd not only as Reasonable and Capable of Living, Quiet and Peaceable Lives; but as capable of, and actually possessed of the Privileges of

(a) Pro. 19, 21 Eccl 9, 11. 1 Cor. 1, 19 (b) Mat 16, 18 (c) Ro 13, 4
Religion,

Religion, and therefore under it's Obligations, "in all Godliness" i. e. in all Duties and Services which Men and Christians owe to God, and Jesus Christ their Lord. "And Honesty" i. e. in all Duties of Righteousness towards one another. Thus do the Holy Scriptures teach the Mark at which the civil Ruler Aims; nor can we conceive, that consistent with the Scriptures, that the Apostle shou'd intend by the Religion he makes mention of contain'd in the first and second Table of the Law; but as referring to, and included in the Christian Religion, as now perfected by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ under the New-Testament.

The next Thing that Employs the Wisdom and Skill of the civil Ruler, is to discern the fittest, and most proper Means (within his Province) to reach the good End propos'd, and in view. Some of which may be hinted at.

As,

1st. Well chosen, and just Laws. We are not to suppose that the civil Ruler has a boundless Liberty to devise Means; but as his End, and the Designs of his Government are limited, so have also the Means of attaining it their limits. He is here also to keep within his own proper Sphere & Province. The Light of Nature (indeed) must be the Rule of Government to such Princes as have not the Superior Light of Revelation: But to those that have, (of whom
we

we are Considering) the Light of God's Holy Word must be had a strict Regard to.

For the civil Magistrate, who as a Christian govern'd himself by the Holy Scriptures, making these "the Man of his Counsels," is still to look upon himself, only a Christian in public Capacity ; and still making the Word of God, the Man of his Counsels : And as he receives his Authority from Him, "by whom Kings Reign," and holds his Office (consequently) under Him, and Rules for Him ; can it be Doubted whether he shou'd receive Directions, & Rules of Governing from Him also ?

If *finally*, the Holy Scriptures contain the best and most Excellent Rules, Precepts, Directions, and Laws for Government, (as before was Observ'd) tho' his Wisdom will Direct him in Consulting the Laws, and Rules of Government in other States ; yet especially to keep his Eye on the Holy Bible, for his best Directions, and not admitting any Rules, & Maxims of Polity, that were inconsistent with, and not approved by the same. This Teaches that all his Maxims of Government, must be kept within the Limits, of Righteousness, suited to the good of the Subject, wherein Justice is well tempered with Mercy. Concerning which Wisdom seems to direct that such Laws or Rules should be few in Number, their Meaning and Expressions not doubtful ; but plain and perspicuous ; yet in their proper Terms, that
the

the Subject may not Ignorantly offend, nor plead it in Excuse ; nor the Judge be at a loss, and perplex'd ; their Expressions short, and comprehensive, as the *Laconick* Style, fully published, and made known, strictly observ'd, and honour'd by the Ruler himself: These Things the wisest States have observ'd, as *Greece*, and *Rome* in it's Glory, &c.

2ly. That these wise and good Rules, or Laws be carefully Applied to the common Benefit, of the Subject ; or faithfully Executed. Where Legislation hath wisely performed it's Part, and the salutary, and wholsom Laws are prepared for Use ; yet unless they are, with care, and faithfulness Applied to the proper Use of the Body Politick, as their need calls for from time to time ; what would this profit more than for Families or Persons to have the best medicinal Preparations, to recover a sick, weak, or disorder'd Body, or for prolonging of Life, safely laid up, and kept in their Chests ? Or the Christian his Bible so Deposited, without Reading, or the Reader without Practice ? Or as some have fitly Remembled this to a trusty Sword kept in it's Scabbard, when it should be wielded for the Defence of the Orderly, and Obedient, and Well-doing Subject ; and to the Terror of Evil-doers ? In a word, the very Life of good Laws, and their Usefulness to the State, lies in their careful, steady, impartial, & faithful Execution ; and this part lies more immediately

mediately at the Door of the Executive Ruler or Judge, and Officers Subordinate to him.

3ly. The Wisdom of the civil Ruler, consider'd as the supream Authority, is seen and exercised in Constituting (as the Form of their Government will allow or direct) the Subordinate Authority, Men that share a good Part of the same Character of Wisdom & Faithfulness with themselves; and this to descend, in some good Degrees, to the very lowest Officers made use of by civil Authority : As there is room for some degrees of Wisdom & Skill, to Manage the lesser Offices which adhere to civil Government; so there is Need of them, and of Integrity always. The prudent and faithful Management of the under Officers has a good Influence, in it self considered as it proceeds forward & looks backward, as it honours their Masters who Betruſted them, and makes an easie Way, for the Circulation, of their Government. Thus a good Ministry at Home, in a Nation, Recommends both the King (as such,) and his Government also to his Subjects, who feel the happy Influences of his Care and Government in such Ministers : So likewise such Ambassadors, sent Abroad, make a good Return Home ; many ways “ a faithful Ambassador is Health, &c. ” (a)

To conclude, When Officers are not Solid Friends, whether Qualified, or not, as such,

(a) Prov. 13, 17, 25, 13.

are

are not Complimented, with them ; or on the other hand, bought by those that have them ; nor Busy and Ambitious Men, who are Tampering with Others for Advancement ; or such as have the Art of Insinuation, as *Abfalom*, are put into Office ; but nothing short of the real Qualifications of a good Officer, Ruler, or Judge prevails. If Wisdom & Integrity were put into contrary Balances, Integrity ought to prevail. So *Nehemiah* seems to have preferr'd *Hanani*, more for his Integrity, than for his Wisdom. (a)

4ly. Dexterity, great Dexterity, in the use of governing Wisdom, as is Imparted and in measure Express'd in the original Text ; particularly in the outward and practical Application of it, (b) This seems to set forth *David*, as a consummate Politician and Ruler ; what seems to have laid the Foundation for, and Concurred to Finish and Compleat, the Character of this Great and Good King, this Upright and Skilful Ruler, was, God Bless'd him with a good Understanding and Genius, which he Improv'd and Enlarg'd in Divine, Civil, and Military Knowledge ; his Innocent

(a) *Neh.* 7, 2. (b) *Dutch Annot.* " And led them with a very great Understanding of his Hands. " *Heb.* with the Understanding of his Palms If the Hand had been Described by the Fingers ; I should have tho't it an Allusion to it's Dexterity on the Harp ; but being Describ'd by the greater Part, of it the Palm, the tho't is a little check'd. - - - -

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and

and Contemplative Calling ; both Invited and gave him Leisure, for the First, and God seems early to have Sanctified his Knowledge and Wisdom, in Directing and Enabling of him, to make Choice of God as his highest LORD and chiefest Good, whose divine Writings, abundantly shew this his Choice ; God also gave him a martial Genius, and Spirit ; which, in addition to his Skill in the art of Musick, was an occasion, of giving him some Taste of, and Improvement in both the civil and military Life, in the King's Court ; he also was early (about 20, or with some 25 years of Age) set apart, tho' more Secretly, to the Office of King, by *Samuel's* sacred Oyl ; and had a Kingdom in View and Reversion ; and (no doubt) improv'd his Talents for the same ; where also 'tis reasonable to suppose, that God who call'd him to his Office, assisted and bless'd his Improvements to that End : Furthermore, by an Extraordinary Providence (even when he gave proof to all of his public Spirit, incomparable Courage and Valour, and of his singular Dexterity in Slaying the Philistine of monstrous Size ; thereby Delivering Israel from their Reproach and Fears) the way was open'd for his Advancement to public Service, and thereby to have opportunity to Improve both, in Military Skill, and in the art of civil Government ; and when his Advancement to the Kingly Office, fully and openly took Place, when

when Time, Observation and Experience, had put to their helping Hand, they finished his Character, which was the Ground of the Encomium on his Government “ So he Fed them, &c. and Guided them by the *Skilfulness* of his Hands.”

Thus having pointed out in some measure, the descriptive Characters of a wise & faithful Ruler; let us proceed to make some Use, and Application, agreeable to what has been said, relating to the Character, of the Civil Ruler.

I. *By way of I N F E R E N C E.*

Hence we are led to see the Happiness of such a State, Nation, or People, who have *Men of Wisdom, and Integrity to Rule over them; and are favoured with the Privilege of Choosing such Rulers.*

The degenerate, and corrupt State of Mankind make civil Government of great Necessity; not only to Guard against secret Frauds, and open Violence; but to Improve & Enjoy their Rights, Properties, & Privileges, (whether Civil, or Sacred) with undisturbed Freedom.

It seems then, as it were, by Necessity, gradually to have Oblig'd Men into some sort of civil Government; and as Time, & Experience (those good Instructors of Mankind) had taught them gradually (also) to Ripen their Judgments, they came into better Forms of Governments,

of which sort may, well be reckon'd those that are found, between the two Extrems, of *Supream Power lodg'd in the People*, on the one hand ; and *Despotic Monarchy* on the other : And such a Form of Government seems to have the Preference, where the Interests of the People are best, & most equally Divided, and where the weilding of Government is easie, ready, and, safe ; but not to Enlarge.

I would observe, That whatsoever be the Form of Government, altho' of the best sort ; yet if the Ruler, or Rulers (if more than one) be not of the best sort also, *viz.* a Man, or Men of *Wisdom* and *Integrity*, the crowning Happiness is yet wanting. A Government tho' not of the best sort ; yet if well Managed, will far better reach the End of Government, *viz.* *The Common Good of a People* ; than the best Form with ill Managers & Management. Thus, a Ship but meanly Built, and illy Rigg'd, yet if there be a skilful Man, and thorough at Helm, and Hands properly plac'd, both Below, and Aloft, of the same Character ; how much more likely is such a Ship, so well Mann'd, & Managed, to reach her desired, & design'd Port, with all her Passengers, than the best Built, & Rigg'd Ship, with Men, that were either Ignorant and Unskilful, or Wicked & Unfaithful to their Trust ? This seems to put them in as fair a way to all the Happiness contained in the Nature and Design of civil Government ; which
indeed

indeed is very great. I may here allude to the words of the *Queen of Sheba*, speaking of *Solomon's* Wife and Prosperous Government, (a) and Congratulate those States, and Nations, and that People who are blest'd with such Kings and Rulers; and really Apply those, in *ver. 9th* with respect to such Rulers, and the People whom they Govern: Which Congratulation, I may also Transfer to our own Native & Dear Land (I mean this Colony in which we were Born, & where we Dwell) from which, by our Constitution, our own Rulers Annually do arise, agreeable to that Favour of God's Professing People, promised by the Prophet, (b) " And their Nobles shall be of themselves, & their Governour shall proceed from the midst of them ". A complicated Favour, carrying many Advantages in it; which Privilege we have by Royal Favour, and most amply & favourably Express'd, not only given to our pious and worthy Progenitors, who Liv'd with and were of the Number of the first Patentees, but secured to be Transmitted down to us their Posterity, & to our's after us from Generation to Generation, as contained in our most Valuable, three Leav'd Parchment Roll, by royal Favour did I say? I mean also to Acknowledge Heaven's Favour to this, (then little) Colony, which by God's Blessing, has Flourished & Increased unto this very Day, a good Day, & on which proper

(a) 1 King 10. 7, 8 (b) Jer. 30. 21

to Acknowledge this as well as many other God's Favours to this Government ; where then is our Gratitude to God ? from whose kind and indulgent Hand, our Privileges came, was it not He, in whose Hand the Hearts of Kings are, who disposed the Heart of our gracious KING, to allow us this His Royal Favour ? Nor may we overlook it in this light, as the Royal Favour ; but give Testimony of our Gratitude, in our Allegiance & all ready Obedience, to His Successors the KINGS of *Great-Britain*, which as we always have ; so at Present most gladly do, to our most Gracious Sovereign *King George II*, under whom we hold all our Privileges, and whose Important Life we desire may be Prolonged, at least to see our Young & Rising *Prince of Wales* (bearing His Name) further prepared ; both by Years, & all Princely & Regal Qualifications to Succeed in the Throne of *Great Britain* ; and have Reason to conclude, that our Posterity after us, will not only out of Gratitude, when ever they behold this Royal Favour in their hands ; but also for the necessary Dependance, as the small Branches upon the Tree, from whence it receives it's Being, Life, & Support, be effectually Secured in their Allegiance also ; and cause them to Desire & Ask of Heaven, the Welfare, & Flourishing of both our KING & Nation. Nor may we finally, Overlook the Instruments, or Instrument at whose Solicitation, Cost, & Pains they were Procured, & Transmitted to us ; and here

no Rival appears to share this Honour with our Noble *Wintbrop*; *Wintbrop*, Was this thy Generous Cost and Pains? Heaven Reward thee; for 'tis not in our Power: Thy Name shall always be held in high Esteem in our grateful Hearts, & thy Memory on our Tongues: Is there no Honour that we who Enjoy these Privileges, can yet pay to thy Name & Memory? or any Service to thy Surviving Family? We are ready to a grateful Acknowledgement; of the Obligation, and Performance of it; or else our Ingratitude will Testify against us. And here I would have enquired, who he was? and how, he shou'd have had some share in our Gratitude? if any one can tell him that was the Drafts-Man, when our *Charter Privileges* were Granted: For surely Kindness & Friendship were not wanting, even there, or must it be left to that Day, when many more secret Offices of Love & Kindness which have been perform'd to our LORD JESUS CHRIST, or his Followers, even to a *Cup of cold Water*, shall not loose their Reward.

Again, I shall proceed to two or three particular Addresses, to the different Orders and Degrees of Men in our Government. In the first Place,

1. *To the Honourable the Governour, Deputy-Governour, and Worshipful Assistants, together with the Gentlemen Representatives, who compose our General Assembly.*

Your

Your Honours, are sensible that the Eyes of this, your People are still upon you, to fill the same Seats & Places of Government, and to take upon you the civil Trust for the Year Ensuing, as you have done in the Year past ; in reference to which suffer me to remind you of the high Stations (amongst us your People) that divine Providence places you in ; for you, (doubtless) consider, that “ Promotion cometh not from the *East*, nor from the *West*, nor from the *South* ; but God is the Judge, he putteth down one, and setteth up another. † ” In consequence of which the Eyes of God, and his People are upon you to fill up the Places of your different Trust, in the discharge of the Duties of the same, in the “ Integrity of your Hearts, & by the Skillfulness of your Hands.” Let the excellent Example of *David*, both admonish, & animate you, to improve your Talents of Wisdom to know the Duties which are before you in your several Places, the proper Time, & advantageous Manner of their Performance. Consider also with what Views, Sentiments, and Resolutions you ought to undertake your several Offices, & Trusts. Let also, your Integrity, guard you against all sinister Views, neglect, or evil conduct, & male-Administration. Let your Views be upright, aiming at the Glory of God, who Entrusts you. That’s a very general Rule of Direction. “ * Whatsoever ye do, do all to

† Psal. 75 6, 7 * 1 Cor. 10. 31.

the Glory of God. ” Also the Good of your People, in Subordination thereunto, as God’s Ministers to them for Good; (a) And this you may expect will Terminate, both in the Peace, & Weal of your Subjects; as well as in the Peace & Comfort of your own Souls: For this is the general Fruit of Mens Faithfulness & Uprightness in the discharge of their Duty: Hence that “Well done thou good, & faithful Servant, &c.” Particularly, let your Care, & Guardianship be still afforded to us your People, & Subjects, in all our holy Religion, our Religious Rights, & Privileges, as a Christian People, as Granted to us in the Gospel of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. The end & design of the civil & sacred Ministry, do not seem to differ, as the Means they use to reach their End, [*the Good of the People,*] here they are together, they are one in their general Design; and yet very different, & really Distinct, in the means of Prosecuting the same general End; even within their proper Province, and Sphere. You have indeed, Labour’d to make an Hedge about the Churches, of our LORD JESUS CHRIST in our ecclesiastical Constitution; and as “Nursing Fathers,” to it the civil Government has taken it into their Bosom, viz. Where the Worship is such as appears to you most agreeable to the Purity & Simplicity of the Gospel of JESUS CHRIST our LORD; for so, both your Profession, & Practice, (in attending on the same)

(a) Rom. 13 4.

make it Evident ; yet you have not imposed an *Uniformity* on any ; but have *Tolerated*, all that *soberly Dissent* from the Establishment which you have made. *Liberty of Conscience*, [that tender Point] not being Infringed by you herein ; this being the great Motive to our Fathers to cross the Seas, & come over to this *American*, & then *Wilderness Land* : A Liberty (they tell us) not then to be Enjoy'd in their native Land, which Reason thou'd Sway with us their Posterity, why we thou'd always Treat others, with Tenderness in this *Critical Point* ; it being the natural right of all reasonable & religious Creatures, it being not only at the Bottom, of the *Protestant Religion* ; but of all *True Religion*, in as much, as the Worship of no Reasonable Creature, can be Acceptable to God, unless offer'd to him, according to the Dictates of his Conscience ; yet on the other Hand, no false Worship can be acceptable to God, tho' performed according to the Dictates of a man's Conscience ; for Men may be under the Power of an Erroneous Conscience, as the Zealous, but Ignorant *Jews* ; as the Apostle Teaches us, (b) as himself also whose Conscience seems to have Dictated him in Persecuting the *Christian Cause*, & that to great Length & Violence, for he says (c) “ I verily tho't with my self that I ought to do many things, contrary to the Name of Jesus of Nazareth ”. Yet this gave no Sanction to his Service perform'd (as

(b) Rom. 10. 2. (c) Acts 26. 9. see v. 10, 11

he tho't) for God, nor turn'd what was Bad ;
nay very Bad, into Good. The Question, then
might be, *What is the way of Duty to the Christian*
Magistrate where the Subject pretends Conscience,
and it may be, really is under the Power of an
Erroneous one, & what his Conduct shou'd be
toward such his subjects? the Answer may be,
that the inward Sentiments & Principles of men,
being out of his Province, as well as Sight ; yet
his Outward and Overt Acts, falling within his
Province, & Observation, and being Faulty as
other offending Subjects, they must without Re-
gard to the inward principle, of Action, be ani-
madverted upon, unless (perhaps) the wisdom
of the civil Ruler, (where the case Required)
shou'd Defer Punishment, till such Religious
Fervors as caused them to Err, might Cool, or
Time (if there shou'd be a prospect of it)
might Rectify the Judgment.

Yet let *your Honours Wisdom and Fidelity* be
employed, in Reference to the just limits of your
Toleration, particularly to our Brethren of the
Church of England, who Inhabit with us, whom
our Legislature, have in their Goodness & Indul-
gence towards them, moved by a Regard, to
their Friends at Home ; as well as to themselves
who are your Subjects ; and that (I suppose)
you might make it Evident to all ; that you were
not inclin'd to Infringe any of their just Rights
& Privileges ; but to Indulge them with all they
cou'd Reasonably Expect from you : Have
Enacted

Enacted Laws in their Favour, particularly to *Levie & Gather*, (*viz.* of their own Perswasion) an *equal Tax*, in common with the rest of your Subjects, in the several Districts, or Parishes where they Inhabit, for the Support of their own Ministers. Now, tho' I wou'd not speak a single Word against, but for, their Enjoying their free Liberty of Conscience, in the manner of Worship, they Espouse, with all the Privileges of a Toleration, in full Tale, || Yet no further: If it be interwoven in their Ecclesiastical Constitution to be an Enemy to ours; considering the Situation, & Circumstances that they, & we are in, † If by lifting them up, we do at the same Time, depress our selves; as the Bucket, where there is Two, on the Windlass: Therefore, (if I mistake not) our Legislature have indulg'd them herein, beyond what they cou'd have Reasonably, asked; for, *Tolerations*, so Circumstanced, (I apprehend) shou'd stand on their own Legs, & not lean upon the civil Magistrates Establishment,

|| See the Rev'd Mr. Hobart's first Address, &c

† Being desired to Explain here. I mean to say, they draw their nourishment from our Bowels, which of course and more directly consume us, while they take of our Sons and Daughters to make the Materials, for Building of their Churches. Our Sons &c; (I say) who are Born in a Land of (Gospel) Light, who are Baptiz'd in their Infancy, Taught in our Families, the Commandments of God, and the Principles of the Christian Religion, trained up in our Schools, to read the Holy Scriptures, and finally

Establishment, & Support, in Conjunction with, and yet in Opposition to his own ; for two Establishments, thus opposite cannot consist together, (as the Rev'd Mr. Todd Remarks con-

in our Churches, where the Gospel is constantly & plainly Preached to them ; & therefore (at least) are *needle/sy* drawn ever to their Communion ; which by the way does not look agreeable either to the design of those charitable Legacies, or Donations which were left for the needful Propagation of the Gospel, or of the Venerable Society for Propagating the Gospel, who have the Disposal of the same (See Mr. Hobart's 2d Address.) The Question might here be put, *What difference is there, as to our safety, in their going over to the Communion above said, & the interchanging of Congregational & Presbyterian among us ?* Answ The Interest of the two latter with respect to our Privileges, is one & the same ; so that the number and balance here is of little more Consequence than which of the two Glasses, that compose the hour Glass hath the greater number of sands to Day, or shall have to Morrow, but not so here, for the consequence of the increase from our Children to their Communion ; so as to give the Balance, tho' but by a single Suffrage making a majority in the number of Votes, has a total tendency, to our Privileges, both Civil & Sacred ; for if process of Time shou'd (by the permission of divine Providence) bring forward that unhappy Day, that 'tis their Interest, stands in as clear a light as that it will be in their Power, to commit our invaluable Privileges to the Flames, or otherwise to deprive us & our Posterity of them ; which when we are so Deprived ; of course wou'd change the form of our civil Government, & subject our Churches to the Hierarchy. Thus may we looke what our Fathers have dearly Purchased for us, at the expence of their Estates at home, their Sweat & Blood in this rough unconquer'd Land, most kind and indulgent Providence still Continues to us.

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cerning

cerning Establishments, in his *Election Sermon*) which is Justified by what our LORD lays down in general “Every City or House divided against it self shall not stand”. (a) I hope no one will Interpret this, as arising from any other Principle, than that of a proper & just self Defence; or spoken, but, within the Law of Benevolence.

Again, That your Honours will continue and exercise a wise and faithful Care, towards the rising Generation, that their Education may lay a good Foundation for their Religion, Order, Usefulness, & Prosperity. Smile, on our Nursery of Learning, Recommend it still to the care (as you shall see it needful) of its Overseers (if they cou’d add any thing to their Care) that it might answer, the great & good Designs of our Honourable & Pious Progenitors, in Founding of it, viz. of Producing a Learned, & Orthodox Ministry, for our Churches; Able & Faithful Men for our State; and to guard it from the Errors that are Creeping in upon us from every Quarter; particularly from Imbibing the Arminian Tenets, so reviv’d & receiv’d in our Day, I say, if they can add any thing to their Care; for I doubt not, of a great deal of Care & Pains, taken by both it’s Overseers & President under whose more immediate Inspection & Care it is Placed.

Again, That Peace, good Order, & a public Spirit, Industry, & Frugality, Husbandry, & Trade may be Encourag’d & Promoted in your Go-

(a) Mat, 22. 25

vernment, so necessary to the Subsistence and Flourishing of every State.

Again, That our *Military Affairs* be well Devised, & wisely disposed of, encourag'd and well Executed; so necessary a part of the Strength, Glory, and Defence of any State.

Again, That your Authority may be Courageously, & Steadily against *Prophaneness*, in *Swearing*, *Cursing* & *taking God's Holy Name in Vain*, *Sabbath Breaking* many ways, against *Vice*, and *Immorality*, the Sins of *Injustice*, *Fraud*, & *Oppression*, the Sins of *Intemperance*, & *Uncleaness*, which like a Flood overspread our Land: For which things sake the Judgments of Heaven, overspread such Lands also, & come "down upon the Children of Disobedience". (a) Particularly, that your Wisdom, & Integrity be Employ'd to find some Expedient, to cure, & prevent, the *Sin of Fornication*, in our *Negro Servants*: Here lies Guilt, at some, if not at almost all our Doors; nay, our Land is Defiled, not only by this Sin, in our selves; but in our Servants: This seems to call for some thorough, & wise Expedient, & vigorous Hand of the civil Magistrate. They themselves see, & say no Notice is taken of them, by the civil Authority, and are hardned in their Sin. --- 'Tis here Objected (by some) *they are not Christianiz'd*. An w. But since they are Servants, & within our Gates, the Question is not to be ask'd at the Bar, where

(a) Eph. 5. 6

the civil Sword is to be a Terror to evil doers but runs thus, *Guilty? or not Guilty?* There are indeed it's great Difficulties ; but this is not a Reason, why their Sin shou'd go Unpunished, & Unreformed. Is it not in the Power of the civil Magistrate, to Oblige their Masters to *Teach*, and *Christianize* them? (some Instances excepted of the more ignorant & stupid Sort) This Duty is more immediately with the Master, (a) “ He that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger which is not of thy Seed, &c. must needs be circumcised. ” But if thro' the Gain & Profit of their Labour, they will not allow them Time, or bestow Cost, & Pains on them, to this End ; 'tis in the Magistrates Power to Oblige them to it : Or other ways there are, which, their Wisdom should be exercised to find out : *Marriage* ought to be allow'd them as a Remedy against this, in (b) “ Nevertheless to avoid Fornication, let every Man have his own Wife, (*i.e.* whether *Bond*, or *Free*) and let every Woman have her own Husband. ” And what is it but the Gain that hinders? Tho' sometimes fought for the same Reason. But shou'd not the Ruler, put to his Hand here some way to prevent this Sin? 'Tis far better for us to have them prevented being bro't over into our Land, by great Duties on them, that might be turn'd to their Instruction, who were bro't ; or by short Servitude, &c. than to have the profit of their

(a) Gen. 17. 12. 13. (b) 1 Cor. 7, 2.

Labour & Lade, our selves, or our Land with this and other, their Sins; and let them Perish in a Land of Light; for this, is in that black Catalogue of gross Sins, which shut men out of Heaven(a). 'Tis true there are some who take a Pious Care of their Souls, & put them as far in the way to their Salvation as they can; but the Neglect is too general a thing among us.

Finally, That your Honours, the Legislative Body, wou'd Employ your Wisdom, to devise some way to *Propagate the Gospel among the Heathen*. 'Tis matter of everlasting Honour, to the *English Colonies*, first Setled in *America*, that they were Founded upon a Religious Design, particularly this *our own Colony*. Let it have some Influence upon your Government, that from it's Beginning, as well as now, it's Inhabitants were *Christians*; CHRIST's profess'd Subjects, as well as your own: Let it Animate your Minds to this Noble & Religious Purpose; and at least not to Neglect any good Opportunity presented by others to put to your Hand, & to put us your People forward in so good a Design.

I shall shut up this Address, by Repeating this, as Express'd in our CHARTER, viz. *Whereby Our said People, Inhabitants there, may be so Religiously, Peaceably, & Civilly Govern'd, as their good Life, & orderly Conversation may win, & invite the Natives of the Country, to the Knowledge & Obedience of the only true GOD & SAVIOUR*

(a) 1 Cor. 6, 9 10.

of Mankind, and the Christian Faith, which is Our Royal Intentions, and the Adventurers Free Profession, is the Only and Principal End of this Plantation. In the next Place,

II. I would Address myself to the sacred Order of the Gospel Ministry among us: But here a solemn Pause demands our attention, relating to the Absence of our venerable *Whitman & Whittelsey*,* whom Death, in the current Year, has Removed from us; not only making their Seats necessarily vacant here; but in their own Houses & the sacred Desks in the House of God; “the places that once knew them, shall know them no more” May I not say with the Prophet† “your Fathers where are they? and the Prophets do they live forever?” I shall not attempt their Character, whose praise is in the Churches; and as they had wrought long in their Master’s Vineyard, ’tis reasonable to suppose their Reward is the Greater; for we Charitably Hope they have sat down in Christ’s Heavenly Kingdom; which sets them above our Pity or our Praise. Wherefore (*Reverend Sirs*) since our Ministration is necessarily Interrupted “for we are not suffer’d to continue by reason of Death” || As the Apostle remarks of the *Priesthood under the Law*, let us improve, both the Ar-

* The Rev’d Mr. Samuel Whitman Died the Night after the 21st of March, 1752. The Rev’d Mr. Samuel Whittelsey the Evening after the 15th of April, 1752.

† Zech. 1. 5. || Heb. 7. 23.

gument it self ; as well as the special Enforcement of it, in the Instances now mentioned, which are as the mouth of two Witnesses testifying to the truth of the breach upon mans Life in General ; but particularly to that of the sacred Order, respecting both their Life and Ministration. Oh ! that we might so number our Days, & estimate our Work as to apply our Hearts to Wisdom. The Wisdom & Integrity of the civil Ruler, is our Theme this Day ; shall not the sacred Minister take occasion from hence to direct & excite his own Ministration ? When we have heard something of that Wisdom & Integrity, which Adorns & Crowns the Character of civil Rulers, shall we not transfer them to ourselves ? Are not *Wisdom & Fidelity* the crowning Excellencies, also of the Gospel Minister ? Our Saviour when he Sums up his Character, puts it in those two Words : “ who then is a *Faithful and Wise* Servant whom his Lord hath made Ruler over his Household, to give them Meat in due Season ” . (a) Should not the Wisdom of the Gospel Minister be Exercised to find out & serve up, that good wholesome & suitable Food for the Church, *our Lord's Household* ? who are to be Fed with *Knowledge and Understanding*. (b) We had need to be well Studied in sound & orthodox Divinity, and not strangers to the controverted Doctrines of the Day, & to be competently Furnished with the Knowledge of the original Languages of the sacred Scriptures both of the Old

(a) Mat. 24 45 (b) Jer: 3: 15

40 *An Election* S E R M O N.

and New-Testament : Especially when Errors are so Rife in our Land, -- Particularly, *Arminianism*, &c. which are spreading themselves like Waters over our Land ; I wish they do not (like that Curse) enter like Water into our Bowels & like Oyl into our (very) Bones. Which appear to be Propagated, by some Later, Fashionable Writers in Divinity, whose learning, sense and smoothness of Style, takes with men of higher Taste ; whether such men write well or ill upon the Subjects they Treat of. We have need to be well Furnish'd to detect such unsound Doctrines, & labour'd Errors both with Wisdom & Integrity (+) In a word, wou'd not the Wisdom of

+ Not meerly is Arminianism caution'd against, but what is smoothly st, I'd Free thinking, & Deism, Infidelity, &c. But because I suppos'd the former was foremost Invading of us, & consequently we are to be look'd upon, in greater danger of being drawn aside by the same from those Principles which we have already Possession of, and which when we compare with the holy Scriptures, we have no Reason to think, but the Articles of Faith, which have been deliver'd to us from our pious Progenitors, are in the main (particularly that, which for it's Importance is wont to be stiled, *Sanctis et cadentis Eccl-sie Articulus*, viz Justification freely granted to us only by the Righteousness of Christ, imputed & received by Faith.) In the main (I say) especially the same which were once, or originally deliver'd to the Saints. Why must it then be tho't more reasonable that the *Christian Religion* ; not even in it's purest Times, was ever rightly Explained till these men have now done it ? or that our Lord should specially pitch upon those, to do it, who have so much Detracted from the Glory of his Sufferings, and Destroy'd that of his Divinity ?

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the Gospel Minister be seen in it's further and most advantageous, amiable, & edifying Light : If to the Extensiveness of his Knowledge & Understanding in Divinity, the soundness & orthodoxy of his Faith : There was added that most necessary & profitable Part (both to Himself and his Flock) of his Character, *viz. Holiness of Life*. Does not our LORD in his Character Temper the *Wisdom of the Serpent*, with the *innocency & harmlessness of the Dove* ? † What a Seal & Confirmation to our LORD's own Ministry, did the unblemished Holiness of his Life give ? so proportionably in his Ministers ; for this wou'd more easily afford, a constant Evidence, both of the sincerity and excellency of the Religion, they Profess, not only to the unprejudiced part of Mankind, & such as are more friendly to the Christian Religion ; but carry a more secret Conviction hereof even into the Breasts of it's Enemies ; tending to silence their Clamours against it : But on the other Hand, (as it has been observ'd) it wou'd be difficult to perswade our Hearers that we were indeed, in Earnest for the Salvation, of their Souls ; whil' it we were more apparently careless of our own. We have Reason to Bless GOD, for so much of this Support of the Dignity of the sacred Order among us, and the Advantage, it gives to the Efficacy of the Ministry : Notwithstanding the uncharitable Aspersions which have been cast upon the same ; who

† Mat. 10. 16.

mov'd

mov'd by Enthusiastic Zeal, supposing themselves to be of superior Holiness to those they left behind, have separated from our Churches; who were also of sanguine Assurance, of being soon Follow'd by others (perhaps) till they had Extracted the Good from the Bad: But they have had time to see that the Churches of CHRIST among us, are not Built on a Foundation so easily remov'd; which Mistake of theirs might well be Improv'd by those who continue to separate themselves as an argument (among others) of their Return, to the several Flocks of CHRIST'S Churches, from which they have Strayed: Especially, considering they have not the Example of their Pastors to Follow herein; for I cannot Recollect the Example of a single Instance of any Pastor properly belonging to us; even of those that were the most Zealous; that has ventur'd to set his foot over the threshold of God's House, to separate from the standing Churches among us.

To Conclude, "Let us as Christians *be Steadfast, and Unmovable, always Abounding in every good Work; knowing our Labour in the Lord is not in Vain.*" Let us as Ministers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, be Animated & Encouraged in our Work, from the promised Presence of our Lord and Master, who has Commission'd us, and said, "Lo, I am with you alway, even to the End of the World, Amen." In the last Place,

III. I shall Conclude with a brief Address, to the People of this Government Assembled on the Occasion,

Occasion, the joyful Occasion of this Day. I congratulate you, as an happy People in your civil Privileges; and highly favour'd of God herein: We yet see with joyful Eyes, (oh! that we could do it with thankful Hearts to God, the free and kind Bestower, of all our Favours, *Spiritual & Temporal*) our *Rulers proceeding from ourselves*, our *Governours from the mid'st of us*; who are Men known in our Tribes, Men of Wisdom & Integrity, whose Temporal & Religious Interests are bound up together with our own: We are on this Account one of the most happy People on the Earth, & therefore under the strongest Obligations to God, & our LORD JESUS CHRIST, from & thro' whom & his kind Providence, we have both receiv'd & still hold all our Privileges; and particularly these our *Charter Privileges*, continued to us & which we hope (in God) may be handed down to our Children, & Childrens Children. Oh! that our Behaviour towards God, & our Lord Jesus Christ, then may be such as gives evidence of our Gratitude in all Holiness, Love and Duty. And as a further Testimony of our Gratitude; let us yield all due Respect and Honour, Love & Obedience to our Rulers. Seeing (*my Brethren*) we have all these Privileges, nay & must render an account of them at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, (whom we expect from Heaven) as some of his special Favours, "what manner of Persons ought ye to be in all holy Conversation & Godliness?" You will consider that
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Christianity which we Profess requires it ; and where it takes Place in Mens Hearts ; carriest them forth to all personal & relative Duties, not only makes men good Rulers, but good Subjects, let us then (Isay) yield all due Honour & Obedience to God, unto whom 'tis our great Privilege to stand in Covenant-relation, that he will condescend, thro' our Lord Jesus Christ to allow us to call him our God ; but let us also Honour & Obey our *most Gracious King Georgell*, & all that are set to Rule under him & over us ; particularly those whom God in his Providence shall set over us, as well, for the year Ensuing ; as also from Time to Time, Not meerly, as our interest obliges us ; but “ for Conscience sake ” *i. e.* in obedience to God ; for if the Fear of God be before our Eyes, this will Influence to Honour the King, “ Fear God & Honour the King. ” Are we desirous of good Rulers, Let us not only ask them of God, *by whom Kings Reign* ; using our best & unbias'd Judgment, in our Choice of them ; but also let us become good Subjects, in order hereunto Let no Murmurings, Divisions, or Party Spirit, be found among us ; but a Spirit of Unity, Obedience, & Charity prevail in the midst of us : So shall we ourselves find & enjoy Benefit of our Privileges, & the more likely transmit them to our Posterity after us, “ For an House divided against it self can't stand. ” To conclude, let us Study to know more, the Privileges which we Enjoy, & to have a juster Value for them, and Improve them to their good and design'd End. *A M E N.*

F I N I S