

June 4 1800

AN
Election Sermon,

DELIVERED AT CONCORD, JUNE 4, 1800,

IN PRESENCE OF

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR

John Taylor Gilman, Esquire,

THE HONORABLE

Council and Senate,

AND

**Gentlemen of the House of
Representatives.**

BY NOAH WORCESTER, A. M.
PASTOR OF THE CHURCH IN THORNTON.

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Election Sermon, 1800.

JUDGES III. 11. *And the land had rest forty years : And OTHNIEL, the Son of Kenaz, died.*

PUBLIC felicity is the great object of civil government. Men are formed for society, and much of their happiness results from social intercourse. But such are the dispositions and passions of men, that the restraints of government are necessary to their happiness. Anarchy is a state of society, more to be dreaded, than absolute monarchy. But elective government is preferable to either. Yet, whether the government be elective, hereditary, or assumed, the happiness of community ought to be its object. And assumed government, with public happiness for its object, is preferable to elective government if this object be disregarded.

UNDER any form of government, much is depending on the moral characters of those in authority. When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice : But when the wicked bear rule the people mourn. The truth of these maxims, has been illustrated in the history of many nations ; but in none more clearly than in the history of the seed of Jacob.

DIFFERENT, at different periods, were the forms of government to which that nation was subjected. But under either form the happiness of the people greatly depended on the moral characters of their Rulers. When they had good Judges, or good Kings, the people prospered and the nation was happy. But when the seats of government were filled with wicked men, calamity, depression and distress were the portion of the people.

OTHNIEL came into public view, as a ruler, when the people of Israel were in great affliction. They had done evil in the sight of the Lord ; therefore, the anger of the

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LORD was hot against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Chushan-rishathaim King of Mesopotamia. In their affliction they cried unto the **LORD**; and he raised up **OTHNIEL** as their deliverer. Soon he subdued the King of Mesopotamia, and delivered the children of Israel from their oppression. And in the time of his administration the land had rest forty years.

THIS rest included, it is probable, exemption from wars with other nations, internal peace, and national prosperity. And this happy state of the nation is to be attributed to **OTHNIEL** as an instrument in the hand of **GOD**.

AT the close of these forty years, **OTHNIEL** finished his course; and great was the loss the nation sustained when he left the world. For, with his death, the *rest* of the land expired. Soon the people did evil again in the sight of the **LORD**, and soon they were brought into tribulation. The text affords us two important ideas for illustration:

I. **THAT** the happiness of a people greatly depends on having good men in authority. II. That the best of rulers, as well as other men, are liable to death.

IN attending to the first of these observations, it may be proper, briefly to describe the moral character of a good ruler, and then show how the happiness of a community depends on having good men in authority.

IT will readily be granted that every good man is not qualified to govern. Rulers should be *able men*; men of extensive knowledge, strength of mind, and natural stability. But although this ability be greatly important in the character of a ruler, it cannot be *more* important than rectitude of heart, or a good moral character. For, however great this ability may be, it is all under the influence and direction of the heart. It may therefore be observed:

I. **THAT** the good ruler possesses a temper of heart suited to the great object of civil government—the greatest happiness of community. Such is the relish of his heart that public good is a source of personal delight. He seeks not his own profit, but the profit of many—and in the profit of many he finds his own comfort. This is true benevolence.

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PLEASURE is the spring of intelligent, voluntary exertion in all men, whether they be good or bad. An object, in contemplation, must please us, viewed as a good in itself, or as a mean of obtaining something which is viewed as a good, or we shall never exert ourselves to obtain it. When the public good is to the ruler a source of personal pleasure, he will pursue it with all his heart, soul, mind and strength. He will sacrifice every inferior object which stands in competition. He will not count even his life dear to himself, when the public good requires that it should be exposed.

A RULER of this disposition will make the affairs of government a principal object of his study. How can I best promote the happiness of those for whom I am appointed to act? will be his grand enquiry. Every measure which he views as tending to this beloved object, he will adopt and pursue. And that which he views as incompatible with the public good he will as carefully avoid; whatever private emolument he might obtain by deviating from the path of rectitude.

IN all matters of *property*, or *privilege*, which come under his consideration, the greatest good of the greatest number will be the mark to which his eye will be directed. Not what will be most for his personal interest, or the interest of the particular town or district with which he is more immediately connected. His personal interest he will subordinate to the interest of a town; the interest of a town to the interest of a county; the interest of a county to the interest of a state; and the interest of a state to the interest of the nation.

IN the great business of legislation, he will endeavor that no law shall be enacted which will, in its operation, be prejudicial to public happiness; and that every law shall be enacted which the common interest requires.

IF called to execute the laws of the state, the good Ruler will aim to be a minister of God for good. He will pursue such a line of conduct as is best calculated to render the laws energetic and useful. Therefore, he will carefully attend to his own heart, to the motives by which

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he is governed ; endeavoring to keep his eye single, that his whole body may be full of light.

2. *THE good ruler is a good subject.* No man can be deemed properly qualified to rule over others, who is known to be a *rebel* to the lawful authority which respects himself. It must hence follow, that the good ruler is one who fears GOD and trembles at his word. He reveres the laws of the great Jehovah, and makes it his study and delight to do the will of his Father, who is in heaven. He is not ashamed to bow the knee to the *King of Kings* : nor to say, *practically*, How amiable are thy tabernacles, O LORD ! How can any man expect to be loved and venerated as a ruler, while it is known that he despises the authority of his Maker ? Can he reasonably expect to be revered as a Political Father, Legislator, or Magistrate, while he wantonly sports with the laws of heaven, and takes the name of GOD in vain ?

IT is, moreover, to be observed that in elective governments, rulers are under the laws of the state : And in this respect the *good ruler is a good subject.* When he has been engaged in the solemn business of legislation, or when he has taken the oath of a Magistrate, he does not feel himself at liberty to set the example of disobedience. If the laws of the state forbid fraud, injustice, defamation, drunkenness, gaming, adultery and profane swearing, the good ruler will keep himself pure from such vices. And will set an example of strict obedience to the laws which he has assisted in forming, or which he has sworn to execute.

WHEN a Ruler indulges himself in an open and habitual violation of the laws, his conduct has a direct tendency to the annihilation of government. Should his example be generally followed, of what avail is the law he violates ? And if *one* law may be trampled upon with impunity, why not *another* ?—Why not *all* ?

THE good Ruler is, therefore, a man of religion and good morals. And the irreligious and immoral Ruler belongs to the black catalogue of the followers of Jerobam the son of Nebat who made Israel to sin.—The pro-

priety of these observations may appear more clearly if we proceed to consider, how the happiness of community depends on having good men in authority.

As this is a point of great importance, you will indulge me the liberty of illustrating it in the most familiar manner. We will descend from states to families, which are the smallest societies, and may be considered as states in miniature. Three examples may answer the present purpose.

THE first example may be that of *Benevolus*. He and his wife are one;—one flesh, one in affection and one in sentiment with regard to family government. His heart is impartial and friendly, and his conduct is uniform. The good of his family lies near his heart, is the source of his delight, and, consequently, the object of his daily study, prayer and pursuit. He enacts laws for the government of his family, and every law he enacts is designed for the benefit of his household—He is punctual to see that his laws are duly regarded—For he very justly believes that it tends to enervate government to be remiss in executing any law he enacts. Thus he reasons upon the subject; If I allow one law to be transgressed, without evidencing any concern or displeasure, my children will be encouraged to transgress in another respect; and thus by degrees my authority will be lost, and my family exposed to ruin.

AMONG the judicious laws he has enacted, the following have their place, “No one of the family shall defraud or do injustice to another—There shall be no defaming, no drunkenness, no quarrelling, no gaming, and no profane swearing.” That these are conducive to the welfare of a family, very few will have the effrontery to deny. That *Benevolus* views them as good, he evidences to his family by his own example. For his family have opportunity to observe his deportment. They see him just in his dealings, faithful to his word, peaceable and kind to his neighbors, and to his household. And they never see him intoxicated, nor hear him swear. If any of the family are guilty of transgression, they are sure to be called to account. But when the good man reproves or punishes, he does it in such a manner as to evidence that he has still a

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father's heart, and that he aims at their good. Is it needful to add, that this family has *rest*? that they are happy? and that all the members of the family have a great veneration for *Benevolus*?

SUCH was the influence of OTHNIEL as Ruler in Israel—It is, indeed, possible that under the care of such a parent as *Benevolus* there may be some children of such a refractory spirit, and so strongly inclined to vicious courses, that the best mode of government will not be sufficient to restrain them—Especially if neighboring children are allowed to act without restraint. So it may be in a State under the government of an OTHNIEL. But the question is, what is the probability? Or, what is the tendency of having authority in such hands?

THE second example to be brought into view is that of the family of *Sobrietas*. He is, perhaps, as good a man as *Benevolus*; but he was not so happy in the choice of a companion. For the name of his wife is *Jezebel*. He is too good to quarrel with her, and patiently endures his trial. The laws he has established for the government of his family, were copied from the laws of *Benevolus*. And it would be the delight of his heart to execute them thoroughly. But, by the ill temper and evil example of his wife, his hands are weakened. It is severely trying to him to reprove, or correct, his children for acts of disobedience, while they tell him to his face that they have the example of their mother to justify their conduct.

SOME of the children are influenced by their father, follow his examples and obey his commands. But the greater part imitate the example of *Jezebel*, and bid fair for ruin. They murmur against the government of their father, wish him dead, and even conspire to take his life. For they aspire after "*liberty and equality*," in a modern sense of the terms.

THIS family, you will readily suppose, has but little *rest*. And this example illustrates the unhappy situation of a state, in which the rulers are divided in character, and opposed to each other.

THE family of *Impiator* is the third and last example

now to be considered. His name is expressive of his character; for, he fears not God, neither does he regard the good of his family. His wife is bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. For fashion sake, *Impiator* has, professedly, adopted the laws of his neighbors just mentioned. And he affects to call them very good. But, by his example, he tells his children they are unworthy of regard. He forbids fraud and injustice; but his children see him practise both. He forbids railing and defamation; but his children hear him rail and defame. He forbids contention and wrangling; but he quarrels with his neighbors and quarrels with his wife. He forbids gaming and profane swearing, but he practises gaming by day and by night, and seldom talks five minutes without uttering some profane oath or curse.

UNDER the government of such a parent, as might reasonably be expected, the children frequently transgress; and that too in the presence of *Impiator*. But what, you will ask, can he say, or do, in such circumstances? He is, indeed, diffculted; but he has various modes of proceeding. Sometimes he laughs, and, fool like, makes a mock at sin—Sometimes he connives and pretends not to see nor hear. And sometimes, he pretends to reprove or to punish. But he has no government of himself, and often commits ten crimes in attempting to reprove or punish for one. He will *curse* his children for *swearing*, *quarrel* with them for *contending* with each other, and be *drunk* with *passion* while he punishes them for *intemperance*.

IN vain it would be for any man to affirm that this family has *rest*. And it is needless to observe, to this audience, that the family of *Impiator* is *Hell* or *France* in *miniature*.

THESE examples sufficiently evince that to have good men in authority is of great importance to public happiness. And it is time to turn our attention to the other idea.

Secondly. THE best of rulers, as well as other men, are liable to death.

THE truth of this observation is indisputable, and alrea-

dy obvious to the reflecting mind. It is, however, an idea worthy to be dwelt upon, and can never be too seriously contemplated. It is a truth suggested by our text; and it has been illustrated by the history of past ages.

HERE we might bring into view a long catalogue of eminently good Rulers who have lived at different periods, and in different parts of the world, all of whom are now numbered among the dead.—But need we review the pages of ancient history, or traverse foreign realms, for the illustration of this affecting truth? Has not the Sovereign Disposer of events impressed this idea upon our minds, in a manner indelible, by a recent event in our own land? By the *mortality* of the *immortal* WASHINGTON?—Though the days of formal mourning are ended, yet our hearts are pained at the recollection of that awful event. Never, perhaps, since the commencement of time, was a more general and unaffected mourning occasioned by the death of one man.

THOUGH it may be deemed inmethodical, it is presumed it will not be disagreeable, in this place; to make this serious enquiry, Why did the death of this illustrious personage occasion such a deep and extensive mourning?

IT may, in truth, be said, He was a man of great talents—He was Generalissimo of our forces during the revolutionary war—He was eight years President of the United States—At the time of his decease he was Lieutenant-General and Commander in Chief of the Federal Army.—To these it may be added, that he was a man of great wealth. But are all these things collectively considered sufficient to account for such universal lamentation? Indeed they are not! Perhaps men of as great talents and as great riches as WASHINGTON possessed, have left the world as Jehoram did, who *departed without being desired*. And how many Generals, Princes, Kings and Emperors have taken their flight to the general joy of mankind!

THIS shows that great talents, great titles, and great riches are not sufficient to endear a ruler to his fellow creatures so as to secure a tribute of mournful respect after his

decease. Great talents, great titles and great riches may, indeed, secure to a man a kind of servile and adulatory respect during his life and prosperity. And he may flatter himself that he is a man *greatly beloved*, while all the respect shown him, is bestowed upon the same ground on which the ancient *Banians* worshipped the devil. They believed in the existence of a good God, but they worshipped the devil because they viewed him as a malignant being, and capable of doing them great mischief. The death of a man, who is respected only on this principle, will ever occasion more joy than grief—He will assuredly depart without being desired.

THE elevated stations in which WASHINGTON had been placed, gave opportunity for the display of his talents, and for the display of his *virtue*. But, had he in those exalted situations evidenced the disposition of a Roman *Nero*, a *Syracusan Dionysus*, or a French *Robespierre*, the news of his death would have diffused joy through the WORLD.

WE are, therefore, naturally led to this conclusion that he whose death has occasioned such unparalleled grief, had manifested that his talents were under the direction of a friendly and amiable disposition of heart—that in discharging the duties of the eminent offices he has sustained, he made it to appear, that he sought the happiness of his fellow creatures—that their good was the source of his joy and the object at which he aimed—And, that, in this way he became the man *greatly beloved*, and, consequently *greatly lamented*.

HIS death, and the mourning consequent upon his decease, afford affecting and instructive lessons for all who are called to rule over men.

IF so great a man as WASHINGTON has yielded to death no man may expect exemption on the ground of greatness or fame. As it may be doubted whether death in all its ravages ever mowed down a more eminent statesman, or General, so it may be doubted whether his superior is now living, among the many millions of the human race. Every ruler may, therefore, with propriety, say to

himself, As surely as WASHINGTON is dead, so surely I must die ! Nor would it be degrading to any ruler, in a view of this event, should he seriously attend to such an enquiry as this ;—Am I prepared for the solemn event of dissolution ? Has my conduct been such as a man, and as a ruler, that I could leave the world in peace ? Could the omniscient and all holy Judge say to me, *Well done, thou good and faithful servant ?*

AS the death of WASHINGTON is a solemn lecture on mortality to all rulers, so the mourning occasioned by his departure, may teach them what line of conduct to pursue that their memory may be blessed. Well may every ruler put to himself questions like these—Have I, by humble and faithful conduct, in the offices I have sustained, *endeared* myself to my fellow men, and thus laid a foundation for public grief when I shall be numbered among the dead ? Will the circle of my acquaintance have reason to feel my death as a public calamity, & to mourn that real worth has left the world ? Have I done any thing noble and praise-worthy which will ensure that my name shall be handed down to unborn ages and command veneration ? Have I not *perverted* my talents, used my power and influence for the purposes of mischief ? Has public tranquility and happiness been the source of my joy, the subject of my study, and the object of my pursuit ? Or, have I, like a *blundering incendiary*, kindled fires in community, that I might profit by the misfortunes of others ? Have I been diligent and faithful in discharging the duties attached to the offices which the public have bestowed on me ? Or, have I been a slothful servant, or drone, or a cypher ?—O how *lamentable*, that men of public characters should die *unlamented* ! But such has been deservedly the fate of multitudes who have possessed high and honorable situations.

BEFORE we quit this part of the subject, and lose sight of the venerable character of WASHINGTON, I must be permitted to state a few serious interrogations—Does the character of this BELOVED MAN appear *less* amiable on account that he was *not* a man of *profane lips* and *li-*

centious morals &—that he was *not* ashamed to profess a veneration for the character and government of the GREAT JEHOVAH, and the religion of our GLORIOUS REDEEMER? Do these things *now* appear as blemishes in his character? Should we esteem it ornamental if his Biographer should relate, that his conversation abounded with profane oaths and curses—that he devoted much of his time to revelling, debauchery and dissipation—that he was above the fear of GOD—that he made holy men and holy things the objects of his ridicule—And, that he did much to illuminate the world with the modern principles of infidelity? If such an account should be published concerning him, should we not view it as really *scandalous* and *defamatory*?

BUT if such things would have *stained* the character of a WASHINGTON, to *whom* can they be *ornamental*? Indeed any character must be sunk *below degradation*, if such things pertaining to it do not form an intolerable blemish.

O how do other names diminish, when compared with WASHINGTON! Let ten thousands of the most renowned *infidel* philosophers, *profane* generals, and *irreligious* statesmen be laid in an equal balance against him, and we should be constrained to cry out, What is the *chaff* to the *wheat*? What is the *dross* to the *gold*? Or let the whole race of profligate and irreligious rulers be seated in the temple of fame, then let the character of WASHINGTON rise up in their presence, and their glory would disappear like the *lamps of night* before the GREAT LUMINARY of the WORLD!

THE way is now open for some reflections and remarks.

1. HOW rich and abundant has been the goodness of GOD to our land!—To us he has given national existence, an admirable constitution, with invaluable privileges both civil and religious. And he hath blessed us with two ORPHANS, in succession, to preside in our national government; by whose firmness, wisdom and prudence our land has had nearly twelve years of *rest*.

TO see and to feel our obligation, in this respect, we should duly consider how we have been distinguished

from the unhappy people of France. The world can scarcely furnish a greater contrast of good and bad characters than what may be seen by comparing our WASHINGTON and ADAMS with the unprincipled *Vultures* who have successively governed in that nation, since the murder of their King.

FREQUENT have been their changes, and surrounding nations have been hoping that their changes would be for the better. But, to tell which of their *First Magistrates* has been the *best*, would, probably, be as difficult as to tell which of the same number of *ravens* is the *whitest*. Perhaps there has never been, in any nation, such a multiplied succession of rulers, to whom the inspired description of human depravity would apply *more literally*, with *more pertinency*, or with *more emphasis* than to the modern rulers of the French nation.

“AS it is written, There is none righteous; no, not one. There is none that understandeth; there is none that seeketh after GOD. They are all gone out of the way; they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood. Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known. There is no fear of GOD before their eyes.’

WITH such men at the head of government, no nation can be happy. Convulsions, tumults, insurrections, terror and destruction are but the natural fruits of having such ambitious, unprincipled and atheistical characters in office. To the influence of such characters it is to be attributed that France has been, for so many years, the “*Bedlam of the Universe*.”

THIS wretched nation have not only often changed their officers, but also their form of government. Repeatedly they have *revolutionized* their *revolution*. Still they have been like the troubled sea which cannot rest.

or late they have formed a new constitution under the influence of *Buonaparte*. He, accordingly, was so framed into the building, that the people, by accepting the constitution, raised him to the dignity of *Arch Consul*, or *Sovereign Dictator*. But if France has much rest under his administrations, without any change in his character, it may be deemed as great a miracle as the preservation of Daniel in the Den of Lions, or the rest of Shadrach and his companions in Nebuchadnezzar's furnace.

we need no better evidence of a character depraved, vain, unprincipled and unqualified to govern, than he has given in his speeches, letters, proclamations and general orders. As a specimen of his character we may notice, at one time he is paying hypocritical homage to his Holiness the Pope—Anon, with the same sincerity, he avows himself, and the French people to be followers of Mahomet—And again, with a degree of impiety and arrogance at which *Lucifer* might blush, you will hear him swearing by himself.

TEARS of grief must trickle from the eye of humanity at the thought of having twenty five millions of people subject to the government of such a character. And can we, O Americans! with such a scene of horror before our eyes, be so ungrateful to the Father of Mercies, and so deluded respecting our own happiness, as to wish to exchange our amiable ADAMS for any man who is an advocate for *French characters* or *French principles*!

TO what has been said in favor of the characters of our illustrious Presidents, some may object, that neither of them have given universal satisfaction; and, that the tranquility of our land has been disturbed by the existence of a party opposed to their administrations.

IN reply to such an objection, it must be acknowledged that the rest of our land has not been perfect. And it would, probably, be very unjust to attribute a malignant, disorganizing spirit to all who have been dissatisfied. It is believed that by far the greater part of those who have appeared in opposition to government, have been influenced and misled by false information. And when it shall

be duly considered by what *agents*, and by what *means* the opposition to government has been promoted, this opposition may appear rather in *favor* than *against* the characters of the Presidents. When recourse must be had to falshood and invidious misrepresentation, to diminish public confidence in public characters, the candid mind is naturally led to this conclusion, that there is no *just* ground of accusation. As in the case of our Saviour, the suborning of false witnesses, with a view to his condemnation, was evidence of his innocency and uprightness.

THE disposition for malevolent slander, falshood and misrepresentation was abundantly charged upon the writers in opposition to government before the Sedition Act had existence. And the feelings of *some* who were friendly to government, were hurt by the freedom which others used in this respect. To say the least, it was so with *one*. But when the sedition act took place, it operated as a *test* as to the spirit by which the opposers of government were influenced.

THIS act, it is to be observed, did not aim to expose any one to penalty for uttering or publishing *any thing* which was *true* against the President or any in authority. The penalty was levelled *only* against such as should utter or publish *falshood* with *evil intention*.

NOW, had there not been, in the opposers of government, a disposition for publishing *false* and malicious slander, and a consciousness that the character of the President could not be sullied by telling the *truth*, why did they raise such a clamor about the liberty of the Press? Or why was the liberty of publishing *falshood* held so dear, if they had no desire to practise it, and if the practice did not pertain to their cause? Can a man feel himself injured by the existence of a law, which does not, in his view of it, interfere with the propensity of his own heart, or the object of his pursuit? No, it is impossible.

AND the sedition act, like the imperious decree of Buonaparte, selected a few favorite newspapers for continuance, and with one stroke suppressed all others, and also determined the suppression of those selected upon their

publishing any thing against Government, whether *true* or *false*, there would have been some ground for complaint. But, when men complain of an abridgement of liberty because a law exists against *false, invidious* and *seditions* slander, do they not tell the world that, according to their feelings, it would be a *precious privilege* to *lie* with impunity? Thus have the writers in opposition to government announced their characters to the world!— And if we have no reason to suspect the character of JEHOVAH on account that the *Father of lies* is opposed to his government, neither have we any reason to suspect the characters of WASHINGTON and ADAMS, on account that *men* who will *contend* for the *privilege* of *lying* have not been pleased with their administrations.

2. we may notice the vast importance of christianity in relation to civil government and the happiness of community.

IN this *age of reason*, or rather of *infidelity*, there are many who explode and vilify the Christian religion as useless, and even destructive to the freedom and happiness of mankind.— If it can be made to appear that this century is just, we will cheerfully join with those Philosophers in an attempt to exterminate the christian religion from the abodes of men. But let us first, in the exercise of candor, endeavour to ascertain what Christianity is, and what its tendency, lest haply we be found even to fight against God.

To determine the nature of Christianity we have something more to do than to *rake* the characters of those professors whose conduct is a scandal to the Christian name. It would be deemed a *jerry*

method of conduct if the inhabitants of neighboring states should censure our laws, as *bad*, because we have some *villains* in our community. Any person who should conduct on this principle we should esteem as very *ignorant* or very *wicked*. And we should be at no loss to point out to him a more rational method of ascertaining the nature of our laws. We should direct him carefully to examine the constitution of government, and the particular laws of the State, and observe what they prohibit and what they enjoin, and consider what would be their effect on society if duly regarded. So if we would ascertain the nature of Christianity, we must look directly to the spirit of the doctrines, and precepts of the gospel—and to the example of the GREAT REDEEMER. And, hence, learn what *temper* and what *practice* are inculcated on mankind; and what would be the effect on society if the principles of Christianity were reduced to practice.

BY such a scrutiny it would appear, that *pure benevolence* is the *essence* of *christianity*. To excite and promote this temper of heart among mankind is the great object of all the doctrines and precepts, promises and threatenings contained in the Bible.

IN the exercise of this temper Christ, who was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich. He possessed a truly public spirit—This he evidenced in his life and at his death.

THE morals inculcated in the gospel are such as naturally flow from this benevolent spirit. If rulers were uniformly governed by the principles of Christianity, all their conduct would be aimed at

the greatest happiness of mankind. If subjects were influenced by the spirit of the gospel, they would give honor to whom honor is due, and cheerfully obey civil ordinances for the Lord's sake—And if all mankind were duly influenced by the laws of Christ, wars and fightings, broils and strifes would cease from among men, and peace and felicity would fill the world.

IT is worthy of remark, that those persons who are properly denominated *good rulers*, or *good subjects*, do either *really* act from the spirit of christianity, or *appear* so to act. They are possessed of that benevolence the gospel enjoins, or they put on a counterfeited appearance of it. True philanthropy, or true patriotism, is true christianity—But that philanthropy and that patriotism which lead men to trample on the rights of God and the rights of the REDEEMER are counterfeits easily detected. They always originate in *selfishness*, and commonly end in ruin.

LOVE of gold, love of pleasure, and love of fame, may carry persons great lengths in pretended philanthropy or pretended patriotism—To obtain one or other of these objects, persons will make great sacrifices, and subject themselves to great inconveniences, all under the pretext of love to mankind, or love to their country—But upon the same principle, if they are made to believe that more gold, more pleasure, or more fame may be obtained by a change of conduct, they will as readily sacrifice the rights of their fellow men and the rights of community as they now do the rights of God and the rights of the REDEEMER. For men will ever be governed by the supreme relish of their hearts. To what surprising lengths did a counterfeited patriotism lead the American Judas, Benedict Arnold! With what a dauntless and impetuous spirit did he rush into dangers under a pretext of love to his country! But as soon as a prospect of more gold was pretended, he would sell his country, and sacrifice the good of millions on the infamous altar of private ambition.—On the same principle, many forward and boasting patriots, upon some check, or disappointment in regard to office or otherwise,

have had all their patriotism *wither and die* like *Jonah's Gourd*.

BUT that wisdom which is from above, or that patriotism which the gospel enjoins, is first pure; then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without *partiality* and without *hypocrisy*. The man who is influenced by his spirit will not change character with a change of prospects. He will go through good report and evil report, and still remain the same. Being defamed, degraded, disappointed, or ungratefully treated, will not extinguish his love to the happiness of his fellow men. And the highest prospects of private emolument will not induce him to sport with the rights or the happiness of others.

THOSE, therefore, who wish to exterminate, or suppress christianity, must be viewed as ignorant of the nature of it, or as enemies to the happiness of mankind. For it is obvious, that, for a person to seek not his own profit but the profit of many, or to make the felicity of others the source of personal delight, is the spirit of Christianity.— And it is not less obvious that the prevalence of such a temper would be the best support of civil government and the greatest mean of happiness in community.

3. IT is highly desirable that civil rulers and gospel ministers should treat each other with respect, and unite their influence for public good.

THESE two classes of men are indeed called to act in separate departments. But when they act consistently their separate influence, like different rivers, will empty into one common ocean of general felicity. While the civil Legislator is devising and enacting laws for the benefit of society, the gospel minister is inculcating the spirit of obedience to the laws of God and to the laws of the State, and enforcing his instructions by motives of infinite magnitude. Nothing, then, can be more imprudent, or more impolitic, than for civil rulers and gospel ministers to endeavor to degrade and counteract each others influence. And we may, with safety, affirm that good rulers and good ministers will not thus fall out by the way.

4. IT is important that we should pay a sacred regard to the privilege of election. The privilege of electing our own rulers is of great magnitude—We are at liberty to elect such men as in our estimation will seek our happiness—And the frequency of election gives us opportunity to displace those who, upon experiment, disappoint our expectations. And it is much to be regretted that this privilege should be so frequently neglected, or abused. Men are too frequently chosen into important offices by a small number of votes, compared with the number of electors. And in too many instances ballots are *wantonly* given for such characters as the electors have no desire should obtain an office.—“*My vote can make no odds among so many*”—and “*there are enough to vote without me,*” are the common excuses with such negligent, and such sportive citizens.—But should the constitution of government be so altered as to exclude them from the *privilege* of being electors, would it then *content* their minds to be told that *there is enough to vote without them*? Such negligence and such sport have a most fatal tendency; and should they prevail, we may soon be reduced to the dreadful dilemma either, finally to relinquish the privileges of freemen, or expose our lives to regain them. So exceedingly delicate is the affair of election that the negligence, or folly of *one* private citizen may be the occasion of raising a worthless character to the most important office in the state, or even in the nation. And no man when he resolves to neglect his privilege, or to sport with it, can calculate the degree of injury his remissness or his folly may occasion to himself or to community. *One sinner destroyeth much good.* But *how much* good one sinner may destroy, or how much mischief one sinner, in a public office, may occasion, no tongue can tell.

such addresses as the subject and the occasion dictate may now have their place.

HIS Excellency the GOVERNOR will be pleased to accept the first address—

SIR—To address you in the language of adulation, it is presumptuously would be as discordant to your feelings as

it would be incompatible with the dignity of the ministerial office. However, gratitude to the Sovereign Disposer of events, constrains us to acknowledge that, under your administration, this state has had rest—Greater evidence than this cannot be exhibited in favor of the mildness, vigilance and fidelity of your character—And your having, for such a number of years, the suffrages of a free people, must be better evidence to your mind of the high esteem in which your character is holden than any declaration I could make.

BUT, Sir, the high office you sustain, and the degree of confidence attached to your character, afford you an opportunity of being extensively useful, or of doing extensive mischief, according to the disposition of your heart.

TOO feelingly sensible you never can be that it is God who maketh one to differ from another—that he looketh on the heart—that at his tribunal you must render an account for your improvement of the distinguished talents with which you are favored; and that where much is given, much will be required.

O HOW important is stedfast and persevering fidelity to God, and to the people over whom his providence has placed you! This is important, not only as it respects the happiness of the people and your final destiny; but as it respects your reputation and happiness in this life. It has required a long course of approved services to obtain such a character as you possess in the view of your fellow citizens. But in a short time negligence or unfaithfulness in you would level this fabrick with the dust. Should pride fill your heart and divert your attention from the public to a private interest;—or should you but indulge the idea that modern infidelity, immorality and dissipation would form no blemish in your character, the earnings of *six*, or *sixteen* years may be wasted in a less number of months.

THE many striking instances of apostacy from religion, patriotism and good morals are enough to make a considerate person tremble for himself, lest he should fall under the same condemnation. And they justify the applica-

tion of this solemn warning, Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

It is, Sir, our hope and our fervent prayer, that your name may never be enrolled with those unhappy apostates. And that, at your decease, the *printing presses* may not *groan being burdened* with falsehoods, fabricated to retrieve a good character lost by pride and dissipation.

It is also our hope and our prayer that love to God, and to your country will predominate in your heart and influence all your conduct; that by piety and virtue you may rise in the esteem of your fellow men till with ORNIEL and WASHINGTON you are numbered among the dead. But what did I say! GILMAN among the dead! How affecting the thought! But how certain the event! And how rapidly it hastens!—May your path be that of the just, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day;—that at your decease the world may feel the shock and mourning fill the LAND.

THE Honorable COUNCIL and SENATE and GENTLEMEN of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES will indulge a few words respectfully addressed to them.

AS an expression of the confidence your constituents have in your characters they have exalted you to seats of honor. To you we now look up, as to Fathers, for such *laws* as will give *rest* to the State, and for such *examples* as tend to *enforce* the laws you enact. It is desirable that you should ever feel that your authority is derived from the people, and that to their happiness all your official conduct should be directed. If you lose sight of this object, your *labors*, their *confidence* in you, and their *money* for your support will be worse than lost. And however wise and good the laws may be which you enact, if you neglect to honor the laws by your own examples, you may reasonably expect that they will be despised and violated by others. The people *feel* and have a *right to feel* that the laws you enact are laws for *yourselves* as well as for *them*.

AS Fathers and Elders let me entreat you, in the most solemn manner, never to forget that He who ruleth over men should be just; ruling in the fear of God.

NEVER lose sight of that illustrious example which GOD hath set up in our land. The example of HIM whose death has occasioned such universal mourning. Men who are so callous to good impressions, as not to be influenced by such an example, nor moved by the tribute of respect which has been paid to his memory, may justly be deemed unfit to hold a seat in government.

It is probable you have all been forward to show respect to his character and grief for his death. But the best tribute of respect which can be paid to his memory is that of *imitating his virtues*—his regard to GOD and religion—his benevolence and clemency—his moderation and firmness, his indefatigable efforts and his unparralleled perseverance in promoting the welfare of the nation. Happy would it be for our land, and happy for all who hold offices, if all in authority should copy his example. And, after we have so abundantly, and so publickly, manifested our approbation of his character, how can we answer it to GOD, or to our own consciences, if we practically set at nought those virtues by which he became, as an instrument, the DELIVERER, the GUARDIAN and the GLORY of our land.

THE discourse may be concluded by a few words to the whole assembly :—

My FATHERS and FELLOW CITIZENS,

THROUGH the rich and long-suffering goodness of that GOD by whom States and Empires rise and fall, we this day possess the inestimable privilege of a free government. Our eyes behold an august body of men who have derived their offices and authority from our suffrages as a free people—But these political privileges, though purchased at great expense, are precarious blessings.

By the *pains*, the *groans* and the *blood* of many thousands of our countrymen the way was prepared for us to enjoy the blessings and sweets of freedom. But how long we shall enjoy these invaluable blessings is a matter of great uncertainty.—It depends wholly on the Sovereign Pleasure of HIM in whose hands all nations are as clay in the hand of the potter.

VAIN is all our confidence in the increased population of the States, or the vast resources our country affords ;—vain is our confidence in the valor of our soldiers or seamen, or in the skill and bravery of our military or naval Commanders ;—vain is our confidence in the wisdom, firmness and magnanimity of the illustrious **PRESIDENT** of the United States ;—vain, vain are all our objects of confidence if the **Lord of Hosts** be against us.

WE have been taught by a recent event that **God** can easily remove the pillars of our national existence. By the fall of the **FIRST** the whole building was made to tremble to its very foundation. And from the ordinary course of nature we are led to fear that the fall of the **SECOND** is not at a great distance. Let us unite in humble prayer to the **SUPREME ARCHITECT** that the hour may be delayed till another is formed and erected of equal firmness and excellency.

THE probability of having our privileges continued greatly depends on the returns we make to our Divine Benefactor. If we forget or despise the Father of our mercies ; if we prostitute our freedom to the vile purposes of faction, or licentiousness ;—if we convert our seasons of election into scenes of strife, or scenes of revelling and dissipation ;—if, after we have elected men into office, we make them the objects of our envy, railery and abuse, we shall prove ourselves to be unworthy of the privileges of a free people, we shall provoke the Lord to jealousy, and may expect to feel the effects of his displeasure.

HE can change the times and the seasons, and disappoint our most flattering expectations. It is,

indeed, a fearful thing, for nations, as well as for individuals, to fall into the hand of the living God. Should we provoke his vengeance, we, who now boast of the privileges of freemen, may soon, in the style of scripture, be *sold* into the hands of a foreign power. Or instead of that *rest* which we have so long enjoyed we may be distressed, weakened and destroyed by internal factions and civil wars. And in many other ways we may be made to feel the anger of God for our impiety and ingratitude.

IT, therefore, behoves us all to feel our dependence and be humble before God ;—to repent of our iniquities and render praise for divine benefits ; to revere the perfect laws of heaven and the salutary laws of the land ;—to forbear the sin of speaking evil of dignities ;—to pray for such as are in authority, giving honor to whom honor is due ;—to suppress in ourselves the first risings of a factious spirit, and to cultivate that friendly affection which is the essence of true religion, the basis of public peace and felicity, and the preparation of the soul for eternal blessedness.

I HAD calculated to add no more ; but the exigency of the times demands a *special* caution — Our OTHNIEL is *dead* ! and there is danger that the *rest* of our land will not only be disturbed but destroyed. Therefore, as a watchman, I feel constrained to warn you, my fellow citizens, to *Beware of Men*—of men who wish to alienate your affections from our government, and to persuade you to embrace the demoralizing and disorganizing systems of France.

Do you wish to see tumult and terror spread through the nation? and your fellow citizens, without regard to sex or age, arrested by thousands and cast into prisons; then with a mock trial, or without any trial at all, dragged from prison, stripped, crowded into boats, chained down, and sunk in rivers or lakes? Would it afford you pleasure to see the *guillotine* erected in our land, and to be witnesses of its fatal operations? Would it be to you a delightful employment to be the managers of this deadly machine, or to be the carriers of human blood, in buckets, from morning to evening?—Would it please you to see assassination and massacre depopulate our cities by myriads in a week? Are you prepared to join the *shouts* of joy when it shall be publickly “announced that the highways are impassable by reason of the number of the dead,” who have been slain by indiscriminate carnage? Would it be a pleasant sight to behold our towns and villages laid waste and plundered by French soldiers; and your *mothers*, your *wives*, your *sisters* and your *daughters*, from seventy down to twelve years of age, in the most brutal manner, *ravished* before your eyes? Would it add to your happiness to see——but I forbear a further allusion to deeds, at the thought of which *modesty* must *blush* and *humanity* *shudder*! But if your feelings recoil at the mention of such scenes of horror, beware of the *principles* which lead to such measures, and of the *men* who would persuade you to embrace them.

CAN it be that any in this audience have embraced these deleterious principles, and wish to propagate them in our community? If so, in the fear of God, I would ask what benefit *you* can expect

if this system should operate in our land as it has done in France? If you are rich, French principles will, for this very reason, mark you out as victims for speedy destruction. If high offices be the objects of your pursuit, it is possible you may obtain them for a moment. But it is to be observed that *all* cannot be in office at the same time; and others of *your principles* and *your disposition*, seeing you exalted, would envy your state and aspire for "*equality*." And as the *end*, in their view, would sanctify the *means* the probability is that they would soon cause you to be assassinated, or guillotined, or banished without the form of trial and sent beyond the seas—It is devoutly to be wished that all our countrymen who are fond of this *system of destruction* might have their eyes opened to see their madnels and folly;—and if nothing else will answer the purpose it is desirable that they should, all as one, go over to France, where their beloved system reigns with *all its comforts* and in *all its horrors*; and leave this happy land to those who wish for REST.

NOTE,

IT has been suggested that the observations in the preceding Sermon upon the French government have been understood as implying disapprobation of the conduct of our government in the late attempt for negotiation. The author, therefore, takes liberty to observe that he had no such intention. Though he has *very little* confidence in the *integrity* of the Arch-Consul, he has *much* in the *wisdom* of our President.—He would further observe that he has no wish to excite hatred to the French nation, nor to any of his own countrymen; but to the principles and spirit which appear to have governed in the French revolutions he would gladly excite universal and everlasting hatred.