

T H E
C H A R A C T E R
O f a G O O D
R U L E R .

As it was Recommended in a
S E R M O N

Preached before his Excellency the
GOVERNOUR, and the Honoura-
ble COUNSELLORS, and Assem-
bly of the REPRESENTATIVES
of the Province of Massachusetts-Bay
in NEW-ENGLAND.

On May 30. 1694.

Which was the Day for Election of
COUNSELLORS for that Province.

By Samuel Ward, Teacher of a
Church in Boston.

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T O T H E

R E A D E R

Christian Reader,

I Am not Ignorant that we are fallen into a critical time, in which it is hard for a man to look or speak, without some odd reflection made upon him: I was therefore far from being ambitious of appearing on the Stage in this juncture, either in speaking on such an Occasion as produced the following Sermon; or in committing it to the World in Print; knowing how much I should be Exposed thereby. Though on the other side, I am not of that sullen Humour, to shun a Service, wherein I may expect to meet an Affront, when called by God to it, and an advantage is Offered me of doing good. I am none of these Flatterers that will paint a Vice with the Vizar of a Vertue upon it: Nor yet of those Male Con-

To the Reader,

tents whom nothing can please, but they seek to pick an bone in every thing that is done. I can bless God heartily for men in Authority, who seek to be weal of our Israel, making it their Study and Endeavour to Advance the Interest of Religion and Righteousness among their People: and can remember that they are men, and may mistake; and endeavour to cover rather than discover their Infirmities. I do therefore crave your candid Interpretation of the following Discourse. I counted my self bound in Conscience if I spake any thing, to Level it to the Occasion; and to that end, reckoned nothing more proper, than to represent, as in a Glass, the fair face of a Well-considered Government, with some of the advantages accruing therefrom, together with the inconveniences naturally consequent on the contrary; that all Ranks of Men in a Civil Capacity may be helped thereby in what they ought to pursue, and what to avoid. It is a Rule in Mathematicks, *Rectum est index sui et obliqui*. Here may we see our Duty and our Danger; the Psalmist saith, *Psal. 119. 105. Thy Word is a Lamp to my Feet, and a Light to my Path.* If any, whether he be in Place of Rule, or under Subjection, will try himself by this, and amend himself by the direction of it, I have all I aim at: if he shall improve it to Reflect upon others, the blame will be his own. I am sensible how unfit I was to Undertake

To the Reader.

in a thing so much too big for me: all that I can say is, that I studied to bring all as near as I could to the Unerring Scripture; and to husband a short time as profitably as I might. If what is thus emitted may be for Gods Glory, and the Benefit of his People in this Province, let him have the whole Praise: To his blessing I commend it,

Who am
the least and most unworthy
of Gospel Ministers

Samuel Willard.

The



THE
CHARACTER
OF A
GOOD
RULER.

II. SAMUEL XXIII. III.

*He that Ruleth over men, must be just, Ruling
in the Fear of God.*

WHether the Ordination of
Civil Government be an
Article of the Law of
Nature, and it should
accordingly have been
established upon the Multiplication of Man-
kind, although they had retained their Pri-
mitive Integrity: Or whether it have only a
Positive right, and was introduced upon mans
Circumstances; is a question about which all are
not agreed. The Equity of it, to be sure,
is founded in the Law natural, and is to be
be

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be discovered by the light of Nature, being accordingly acknowledged by such as are strangers to Scripture Revelation; and by Christians it is reducible to the first Command in the Second Table of the Decalogue; which is supposed to be a transcript of the Law given to *Adam* at the first, and written upon the Tables of his Heart. For tho', had man kept his first state, the Moral Image Concreated in him, consisting in, *Knowledge, Righteousness, and True Holiness,* would have maintained him in a perfect understanding of, and Spontaneous Obedience to the whole duty incumbent on him, without the need of civil Laws to direct him, or a civil Sword to lay compulsion on him; and it would have been the true Golden Age, which the Heathen *Mythologists* are so fabulous about. yet even then did the All-wise God Ordain Orders of Superiority and Inferiority among men, and required an *Honour* to be paid accordingly. But since the unhappy Fall hath Robbed man of that perfection, and filled his heart with perverse and rebellious principles, tending to the Subversion of all Order and the reducing of the World to a *Chaos*; necessity requires, and the Political happiness of a People is concerned in the establishment of Civil Government. The want of it hath
ever

of a Good Ruler. 3

ever been pernicious, and attended on with miserable Circumstances. When there was no Governour in *Israel*, but every man did what he would, what horrible outrages, were then perpetrated, though *Holy* and *Zelous Phinehas* was at that time the High-Priest? and we ourselves have had a Specimen of this in the short *Anarchy* accompanying our late *Revolution*. Gods Wildom therefore, and his goodness is to be adored in that he hath hid in such a relief for the Children of men, against the mischief which would otherwise devour them; and engraven an inclination on their hearts, generally to comply with it. But this notwithstanding, mens sins may put a curse into their Blessings, & render their remedy to be not better, possibly worse than the Malady. Government is to prevent and cure the disorders that are apt to break forth among the Societies of men; and to promote the civil peace and prosperity of such a people, as well as to suppress impiety, and nourish Religion. For this end there are to be both *Rulers*, and such as are to be *Ruled* by them: and the Weal or Wo of a People mainly depends on the qualifications of these *Rulers*, by whom we are to be Governed. Hence that Observation, *Eccles. 10. 16, 17. Woe to thee, O Land? when thy King is a Child,*

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and thy Princes eat in the morning. Blessed art thou, O Land! when thy King is the Son of Nobles, and thy Princes eat in due season for strength, and not for Drunkenness. There is then much of Gods Kindness or Displeasure to be Read in his Providential disposing of this Affair. God saith of them, *Hes. i 17. 11. I gave them a King in mine Anger.*

We have therefore the Character of a Good RULER Recommended to us in the Word of GOD, and Exemplified in some who deserved that Epithete, not only to let men know when GOD favours them with such a Blessing, that they may return Him His deserved Praise for it; but also, both to Instruct such into whose hands it falls, how to Demean themselves in their Authority, so as to be a Common Good; and to direct those unto whose trust it is Committed, what manner of Persons they ought to introduce, if they would either Please GOD, or Consult their own and their Peoples Welfare.

Such a Character we find is given in our Text; and we may suppose David intended for an Instance of it.

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The words are introduced with greatest solemnity, to give them the deeper impression on the hearts of those that read them, and are concerned in them. They are the words of *Davids*, whom God had exalted to the Government over His People *Israel*, and instructed in his Duty: who was Gods own *Anointed* by an Extraordinary calling. And they are his *Last words*, Probably not that he ever spake, but some of his dying words, and the last that he uttered by a Peculiar Prophetic Inspiration, & they were not his own words, but such as the *Spirit of God* dictated to him, and spake by him, whereof he was only the Instrument of their being committed to record. They therefore came out of the Mouth of *the God and Rock of Israel*: and surely there must be unspeakable Importance in words Uttered in with so Majestic a Preface. I might here tell you the divers readings, occasioned by the curt expression of the *Hebrew Text*, but I shall not spend time in it, since the general current of Interpreters runs the same way with our Translation. And I need but briefly acquaint you that the import or sense of the words is variously understood: some apply them to God himself, and accordingly read the words as a continued description of him: *be that Ruler be just men;*

that ruleth men to fear God. Others apply them to Christ, as typified by David; and take them to be a Prophecy of his *Mediterranean Kingdom*: and then they read it, shall be just, ruling the fear of God: *i. e.* Divine instituted worship: pointing to the abrogating of the legal, and bringing in of the Gospel administrations: but then the Type also must be respected, at least under a shadow: and so they suppose that *David's Typical Government* is represented. Others take them according to the sense of our Translation, not to be a prediction but a precept, giving us to understand what manner of persons such are required to be, by the *Divine Mandate*, and that it was left as a Rule to them who should succeed.

In the words there are two things to be observed.

I The Subject spoken of; *He that Ruleth over men. He that ruleth*] The word imports one that hath any Dominion, right, or authority over either Persons or things; and is here applicable to all those degrees of men that have any mark of Authority upon them; whether the *King* as Supreme, or any *Ministers* under him, under what Character or title soever:

Over men] the word [*Adam*] is frequently used to express the *Commonalty*, or
 People

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People are made to be Governed: but however, there is or ought to be a vast difference between the Government of Men and Beasts; though some brutish men may deserve to be treated as Beasts. Man is a Reasonable Creature, and of the same order or being with them that Govern him, and ought to be managed accordingly.

2. The Duty incumbent on such an one: *He must be just, Ruling in the Fear of God.* Some suppose that the double Office of the *Civ. Magistrate* is here pointed at, who is *Custos utriusque Tab. 12.* who is to maintain Justice towards men, & Piety towards God. Others suppose the latter Expression to be *Exegetical* to the former.

[*Just*] i. e. One that makes Conscience to observe and keep to the Rule of Righteousness in all his Administrations, he ought not to Exercise his Power Arbitrarily, and Arbitrarily, but in Conformity to the Law of God, and the Light of Nature, for Gods Honour, and the promotion of the common benefit of those over whom he bears Authority. And hence,

[*Ruling in the Fear of God.*] And if he doth not so, he cannot be just: and by the *Fear of God* we may either understand a lively *Reverential Fear*, entertained in his heart, which must Govern him, or else he will

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will never Rule well. For though every good man will not make a good Ruler, yet it is scarce to be believed that a man will Acquit this Office well without Piety. Or else it may be taken *Metonymically*, for the Rules of Gods Word, and those particular Precepts which direct men how to carry themselves in every Station: which are therefore called the *Fear of God*, because they serve rightly to Regulate our Fear of him. Where it is said *[he must]* it doth not suppose that all who have such Authority with them, do so Rule: w^oul^d experience too frequently proves the contrary: but that it is their Duty, and a matter of great Importance for them to attend it. Hence.

DOCTRINE

It is of highest Consequence, that Civil Rulers should be Just Men, and such as Rule in the Fear of God.

Where shall we find any one Text in Scripture Uthered in more remarkably than this? I may not tarry here to draw out this Character in its full dimensions, and give it all its Colours; but must only make some brief Glances.

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Civil Rulers are all such as are in the exercise of a rightful Authority over others. These do not all of them stand in one equal Rank, nor are alike influential into Government. There are *Supream* and *Subordinate Powers*: and of these also there are some who have a *Legislative*, others an *Executive Power* in their Hands; which two, though they may sometimes meet in the same persons, yet are in themselves things of a different Nature. There are *Superiour Magistrates* in *Provinces*, and such as are of *Council* with them, and *Assembly men*, the *Representatives* of the People. There are *Judges* in Courts, *Superiour* and *Inferiour*; *Justices of the Peace* in their several *Precincts*: and in each of these Orders there Resides a measure of Authority.

Now, that all these may be *Just*, it is firstly required, that they have a Principle of *Moral Honesty* in them, and Swaying of them: that they *Love Righteousness*, and *Hate Iniquity*: that they be *Men of Truth*, *Exod. 18. 21.* for every man will act in his Relation, according to the Principle that Rules in him: so that an *Unrighteous man* will be an *Unrighteous Ruler*, so far as he hath an Opportunity.

They must also be acquainted with the *Rules of Righteousness*; they must know what

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doth in his place. We find that in the Old Law, the *King* was to *write* a Copy of it with his own hand, and to make use of it at all times: *Deut.* 17. 18, 19.

If he hath any thing to do in the making of Laws, he will consult a good Conscience, and what may be pleasing to God, and will be far from *framing mischief by a Law*. And if he be to execute any Laws of men, he will not dare to give a judgment for such an one as directly Crosseth the Command of God, but counts it *ipso facto* void, and his Conscience acquitted of his Oath:

Yea the *Fear of God* will make him not to think himself Lawless; nor dare to bear witness, by Laws and Penalties, against sins in others, which he countenanceth and encourageth by living in the *Pracise* of himself: But to use utmost endeavours that his own life may be an exemplification of Obedience, and others may learn by Him, what a Veneration he hath for the Laws that are enacted for the good of Man-kind.

In a word, he is one that will take care to promote *Piety* as well as *Honesty* among men; and do his utmost that the true Religion may be countenanced and established,
and

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and that all Ungodliness, as well as Unrighteousness, may have a due Testimony born against it at all times. So he resolves *Psal. 75. 10. all the horns of the wicked also will I cut off; but the horns of the righteous shall be exalted.*

It then follows that we enquire of what great moment or consequence it is that these should be such: and there is a three-fold respect in which the high importance of it is to be discovered by us.

I. In respect to the Glory of God.

Civil Rulers are God's Vicegerents here upon earth; hence they are sometimes honoured with the title of Gods, *Psal. 82 6. I have said ye are Gods.* Government is God's Ordinance; and those that are Vested with it, however *mediately* introduced into it, have their rightful authority from him, *Prov. 8. 15, 16. By me Kings Reign, and Princes Decree Justice. By me Princes Rule, and Nobles, even all the Judges of the Earth,* and they that are from him, should be for him, and ought to seek the Honour of him who is *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*: which they only then do, when they manage their whole Interest and

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what is Just, and what is Unjust, be *Able men*; Exod. 18. 21. For, though men may know and not do, yet *without Knowledge the Mind cannot be good*. Ignorance is a Foundation for Error, and will likely produce it, when the man applies himself to act: and if he do right at any time, it is but by *guesses*, which is a very poor Commendation.

Again, he must be one that respects the Cause, and not the persons in all his Administrations, *Leut. 1. 17. Ye shall not respect Persons in Judgment*, &c. if his *Partialities* Overstay his judgment at any time, they will be a crooked *Lias*, that will turn him out of the way, and that shall be Justice in one mans case, which will not be so in another.

Farthermore, he must be one whom neither Flattery nor Bribery may be able to remove out of his way, *Leut. 16. 19. Thou shalt not receive Judgment, thou shalt not Respect Persons, neither take a Gift*; and hence he must be one who hates both Ambition and Covetousness, *Exod. 18. 21. Hating Covetousness*; which word signifies, a *Greedy Desire*, and is applicable to both the fore cited Vices: for if these Rule him, he will never be a just Ruler.

Finally,

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Finally, he must be one who prefers the publick Benefit above all private and separate Interests whatsoever. Every man in his place, owes himself to the good of the whole; and if he doth not so devote himself, he is unjust: and he who either to advance himself, or to be Revenged on another, will push on Injurious Laws, or pervert the true Intention of such as are in Force, is an unjust man: and he who is under the influence of a *Narrow Spirit*, will be ready to do so, as occasion offers.

Nor is this *Justice* to be lookt upon as separate from the *Fear of God*, but as influenced and maintained by it. He therefore that *Ruleth in the Fear of God*, is one who Acknowledgeth God to be his Sovereign, and carries in his heart an Awful Fear of him: who owns his Commission to be from him, and expects ere long to be called to give in an Account of his managing of it: which maketh him to study in all things to please him, and to be afraid of doing any thing that will provoke him.

And accordingly, he is a Student in the Law of God, and *Meditates in it Day and Night*; making it the Rule into which he ultimately resolves all that he

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Power with a Design for his G'ory; & accordingly manage themselves in all their Ministrations by the Statutes of his Kingdom; which none will ever do, but they that are *just; Ruling in the Fear of God.* Righteousness and Religion flourishing in these, will be as a Torch on an Hill, whose Light and Influence will be vastly extensive: every one will be advantaged to see their good works, and to Glorifie God for and in them. Their very Example will have the force of a Law in it, and win many by a powerful Attraction, to the avoiding of sin, and practising of Righteousness. They will be a good Copy, that many will be ambitious to write after: and their faithful Administrations will render them a *Terror to Evil Doers, and an Encouragement to them that do well;* which will advance the very end of Government. Whereas the Evil Deportment, and Ill Management of *Rulers,* who are unjust, and void of the Fear of God, is an open scandal, and of a more pernicious tendency than the wickedness of others; inasmuch as their Example is a discouragement to them that are well disposed, and animates those that are set in their hearts for iniquity, and they are thereby emboldned to shew their heads, and to declare their sin as *Sodom:* hence that

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that Remark of the Psalmist, *Psal. 12. 8.*
The wicked walk on every side, when the just men are exalted. Those that would bear their Testimony against Impiety and Debauchery, are frowned on and neglected; and such as would Notwith them are Countenanced: and either good Laws to suppress them are not provided, or they are laid by as things Obsolete, and of no Service: and thus all Abominations come in upon a People as a Flood, and the Name of God is wotully dishonoured by this means: and hereupon the last and most excellent end of Government comes to be frustrated, and what is there that we can conceive to be of greater weight than this? if this be lost, the Glory of such a people is gone.

2 In regard to the weal of the People over whom they Rule.

A People are not made for Rulers, Put Rulers for a People. It is indeed an Honour which God puts upon some above others, when he takes them from among the People, and sets them up to Rule over them, but it is for the Peoples sake, and the Civil felicity of them is the next end of Civil Policy; and the happiness of Rulers

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lers is bound up with theirs in it. Nor can any wise men in authority think themselves happy in the Misery of their Subjects, to whom they either are or should be as Children are to to their Fathers: We have the Benefit of Government expressed, *1. Tim. 2: 2. a quiet Life and a peaceable, in all Godliness and honesty.* and it lies especially with Rulers, under God, to make a People Happy or Miserable. When men can enjoy their Liberties and Rights without molestation or oppression; when they can live without fear of being born down by their more Potent Neighbours; when they are secured against Violence, and may be Righted against them that offer them any injury, without fraud; and are encouraged to serve God in their own way, with freedom; and without being imposed upon contrary to the Gospel precepts; now are they an happy People. But this is to be expected, from no other but men just and pious: they that are otherwise, will themselves be oppressors, and they that are influenced by them, and dependent on them, will adde to the grievance. They that should look after them Will Do it ill enough: Yea every one will usurp a License to do so, to his Neighbour upon an advantage: and such a people must needs groan under an intollera-

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ble burden. Besides, it is a great Truth, that the Mercies and Judgments of God come upon a people, according as their Rulers carry themselves in managing of the Trust which God hath committed to them. Just and Zealous Rulers, are men that *Stand in the Gap*, and keep off Judgments from a sinning people; God fought for *me* such, *Ezek. 22. 30.* they turn away *wrath*, when it hath made an inroad, so it is recorded of Phinehas that he did, *Pf 106. 30.* and God is wont to bless such a People, as He did *Israel* and *Judab* in the days of *David*, *Solomon*, *Jehoshaphat*, *Hezekiab*, and *Josiab*: whereas when these fall into such sins as God is Provoked at, the People are like to smart for it. There is such an Influence with the Prevarications of these men, that, in the righteous judgment of God, those under them suffer grievously by it. This the Heathen observed in the course of Providence, and made that remark upon it, *Delirant reges, pœduntur Achivi.* Thus *David* numbers the People, and Seventy Thousand of the men of *Israel* die for it, *2Sa. 24.* Yea such may be the influence of the Male-administration of Rulers, though done without malice, and in an heat of misguided zeal for the People of GOD; as *Saul's* act in Slaying the *Gibeonites* is recorded to
have

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have been; 2 Sam 21 2. that the Guilt may
ly long upon a Land, and break out in
Terrible Judgments a great while after, and
not be expiated till the sin be openly con-
fessed, and the Atonement sought unto.

3 With Reference to *Rulers* themselves.
It is, as we before Observed, a Dignity
put upon them, to be preferred to Govern-
ment over their Brethren; to have the
oversight, not of Beasts, but of Men. But
as there is a great Trust devolved on them,
so there is an answerable Reckoning which
they must be called unto: And however
they are settled in Authority by men, yet
GOD, who Rules over all, hath put them
in only *Durante Beneplacito*: they are upon
their good Behaviour; they are *Stewards*,
and whensoever GOD pleaseth, He will call
for a Reckoning, and put them out. GOD
sets up, and he puts down; and he hath a
respect to mens Carriages in his dealings
with them. Godly and Zealous *Phinehas*
got a Blessing for himself and his Posterity,
Numb. 25. 11. &c. Whereas *Saul* procured
for himself a Rejection, and the laying aside
and almost Extermination of his Family. We
have this also instanced in *Sebnia* and *Eliakim*
Ijs. 22. 15. &c. Yea, what did *Jeroboam*,
what did *Abab*, and many others procure

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for themselves, by their ill Government, but the utter rooting out of their Names, and Posterity? The *Fourth Generation* may Rue that ever they derived from such Progenitors. The only sure way for Rulers to build up their own Houses, is to be such in their places as *David* was, of whom we have that Testimony, *Psal. 78. 71, 72. He brought him to Feed Jacob his People, and Israel his Inheritance. So he Fed them according to the Integrity of his heart, and guided them by the Skillfulness of his hands.* And although GOD doth not always peculiarly put a Brand in this World upon Impious and Unjust Rulers, yet there is a Tribunal before which they must stand e're long as other men; only their Account will be so much the more Fearful, and Condemnation more Tremendous, by how much they have neglected to take their greater advantages to Glorify GOD, and abused their Power to His Dishonour, by which they had a fairer opportunity than other men.

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U S E.

All that I have to Offer by way of Improvement, shall be in a Three-fold Commendation of this TRUTH to us.

I. Let me propose it to such in whose hands it is to Appoint the Persons that are to bear Rule over this People; whether for the making of Laws to Govern by, or the putting of such as are made into Execution: Whether *Congressors, Assembly-Men,* or *Judices of the Peace.* Let this be your duty in exerting of this right. Civil Government is vested in no particular Persons or Families by a Natural right, neither hath the Light of Nature, nor the Word of GOD determined in particular, what Form of Government shall be Established among men, whether *Monarchical, Aristocratical,* or *Democratical:* much less, who are individually to be acknowledged in Authority, and accordingly submitted to. Nevertheless the *Divine Providence of GOD* pre-
sides

of a Good Ruler. 21

sides in this matter; sometimes, by a more *Immediate, and Extraordinary*, pointing to the Persons and Families: when by *Revelation* he declares his pleasure in it. Thus was *Saul* set up over the Kingdom of *Israel*; and afterwards *David* was thus chosen of God, and an *Urtail* made of the Crown on his *Posterity*: but this way hath long since ceased. Sometimes it is more *mediate and ordinary*, and that is, either *Forceful*, when God *Judicially* delivers a People up to the will of their enemies, and the Conquerour gives Laws to, and appoints Rulers over such a People at his pleasure, and they are compelled to accept of them, little to their content: which, as is not *Legislate*, so neither is it wont to be of duration: things violent are not to be *Permanent*. Or *voluntary*, which is by the free consent of a People, orderly, and without *Compulsion* establishing the *Fundamentals of Government* among themselves, and the *methods* of introducing Persons into authority: which *methods* are not prescribed in *Scripture*, but remain points of *Prudence*, and may *Lawfully* be divers here and there. There are yet general Rules which both *reason* and *Religion* do point men to attend in this *Case*; and the weal or wo of a People do

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very much depend thereupon. And as it is a thing very grateful to men to have some hand and consent in the appointment of their own Rulers, so they do either make or mar themselves by the using or abusing of such a liberty. When this power is *Immediately* devolved upon some persons, they have great advantage to procure either the happiness or misery of their People. Such Electors therefore are under the obligation to be very wary in the application of themselves to the *Nomination* of the persons for such a trust. A good *Charter* is Doubtless Preferible to a bad one; it is a great Privilege to be secured from being hurt by any but our selves: but, let *Charter Privileges* be never so Excellent, Good Rulers only can make us Happy under them: and if they are not so, we suffer notwithstanding.

Here then you are told what qualities are to be eyed in those whom you fix your *Choice* upon. Whatsoever other Rules discretion may point to be observed in this affair, yet these must always be of the *Quorum*. It is true, there are none without their failings; nor can we expect that the best of men will never do amiss; but yet the

the

of a Good Ruler 23

the Best are to be preferred, as they that will do it *freely*, and never of design. They that *Fear God* will be afraid wilfully to hurt men; they that are *just* will do justice, & that can wrong none. This is it which advantageth all other gifts, whether natural or acquired, to be truly serviceable to the promoting of the welfare of a People: without this, all the other men have of these, they are so much the more advantaged to do mischief. There is no misery greater, or less pitiful, than what men foolishly bring on themselves: and none will be equally blamed for it, as they who were the guilty occasions of it, or more deserve it. Choose such men, and then you may expect to be so Govern'd: if you desire that *Holiness*, and *Righteousness* may be promoted and encouraged, this is the best streak that you can give to it: if you have a mind that *Profaneness*, and *Debauchery* should take place, and bear all down, here is the readiest way for it.

And if you will keep to the Rule prescribed in our Text, beware of being misguided by *Special favour*, *Bribery* or *Faction*

When Persons shall be crowded in, because
cause

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cause they are our Friends, or have gained a room in our affections, without any respect to their meanness, but what our blind passions judge of; or that they may have a way to support themselves by the Government; it is easy to tell what is to be expected.

When places of Trust in Government are bought and sold, and he shall have them that will give most for them, we may well conclude that such a People are bought and sold too, and must only live to make a good Market of.

When a People are divided into Factions; Just, and Wise, and good Men are renounced, & not thought worthy to be made use of, because they favour not the Party that can sway; and such as are bold & zealous for the design, are counted, meerly by that zeal sufficiently qualified, and to be of all most worthy; this will not promote the Publick Good, but only gain to the one side a little more of advantage to do hurt.

2 Let me humbly offer this as a Copy for all that either are, or may be in place of Rule, to Write after, *Allow me the Liberty*

of a good Ruler 25

erty to say this from GOD ; that by whatsoever Titles of, *Excellent, Honourable, or Reverend*, you are known ; you not only Rule under such as are your Superiors on Earth, unto whom you are accountable for what you do ; but under GOD also, who is your Great SOVERAIGN. Your Authority is from Him, and ought therefore to be for Him, else will you be found false to your Trust. You Rule over His Subjects, and that not only upon a common account, as the whole World is His Kingdom, but one more *Special*, as the People under your Watch, are the Subjects of His GOSPEL KINGDOM: if you do that which is Right to them, He will be Pleased. but if you should do otherwise, their APPEAL is open to Him, and there is a COURT that will be called, wherein their CAUSE shall be Heard, and Adjusted.

Be you entreated, to measure all your administration by this Rule : *Do all justly and in the fear of God.* This is the way to be Blessings in your places, and to be the *Blessed of the Lord.* By this curse you will make your people an happy people, and you your selves shall be Established. Thus shall you pull down a blessing on your own heads

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heads, and upon the Land year-well in
This is the way to be the *Restorers of breaches*
es, and the Restorers of paths to dwell in.

To this end, he entreated to take care
that Religion may flourish; the True *Fear of*
GOD, and Right *Administration* of His Or-
dinances may be Promoted and Secured: that
Righteousness may be done for men; and
that *Impiety* which defiles a Land, and pulls
down Wrath, may be purged away: that
Drunkenness, and Swearing, Fornication, and
Sabbath-breaking, and whatsoever hastens
the Calamity of a Professing People, may
be duly born Witness against. Let this
be your sincere Unbiased Aim in all that
you do.

Carry this with you, & let it Rule in the
making of Laws: let the Word of GOD be
consulted, and the Common Utility of the
Subject be designed: For, though there be
not a Body of Civil Laws drawn up in the
Scriptures, to which every Policy is to be
confined; yet there are sufficient general
directions, & Rules, to be gathered from
thence; which may Regulate in this
Affair.

That

of a Good Ruler 27

Take heed of any sinister Aims in whatsoever Laws do pass: Laws made to strengthen a particular separate Interest, never did Good, but Hurt to a Body-Politic: that which may serve the present turn, may in a little time prove more Mischievous, than ever it was Advantageous. Remember, you cannot Repeal such Laws, when you will, or when you have advanced a design with them. Look then forward to the after Issues. It will be no small Aggravation of our Trouble, to be Wounded with a Shaft of our own making. Look for Changes in a World of Mutability, and lay in, as far as innocent Prudence may direct, for your Own, and your Peoples Safety.

Keep to this also in all your Administration or Application of Laws. Maintain a good Conscience in it, and let the *Fear of God*, and a Principle of *Justice* make you lay aside all sinister Respects. Let not Persons but Things Sway you in all your Dispensations; and when the case is the same, let the same sentence proceed from you: let neither Riches nor Poverty turn the Scale; neither Friendship nor Enmity Spoil the Sentence. Take no Gift in secret

to stop or Pervert Justice; nor misapply your power to take private or personal Revenge. When Cases are plain, do not obscure them; and when they are dubious Search them out: and let not flattery or Impudence prevail over you, but take his advice in 2. Chron 16. 9. Thus shall you do in the fear of the Lord, faithfully, and with a perfect heart, Deal courageously, and the Lord shall be with the good.

Remember the cause is Gods, and he will have the calling of it over again; where he will either applaud your fidelity, or condemn your unfaithfulness.

Do so also in your Exemplary conversation. Do not do that in your selves, which you ought in Duty, and oath, to punish in others; Embolden not wicked men to transgress by your example, and to excuse themselves upon your account. That Man who Will Violate the Laws which He is to Rule by, will soon neglect to Execute them on others, and bring reproach on himself where he doth.

Let it afford matter of Instruction to us all.

Are

of a Good Ruler 29

Are these the Eminent Qualifications of good Rulers? it is no small concern that we have in this affair. It tells us that we ought Earnestly to Pray to God that we may have such always: and we pray for our selves when we do.

Whatsoever other influence we may have into the appointment of those that are to Govern us, there is none that can hinder us of this but our selves. God Overrules the Lot, he Determines the Hearts of men, and he can make *men after his own heart*: he Presides over every Election; and if we can prevail with him by importunate Prayer, our business is done. It is one of the Blessings that he will be sought unto for, by the House of Israel.

It calls us to be thankful to him for such when he bestows them upon us. God not a little displays his kindness to a people, when it is thus; and expects their gratitude to him for so Comprehensive a Mercy: there is nothing will sooner lose us this benefit than Ingratitude.

Let us Encourage them that are such, and that by Cheerful acknowledgment of

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of them, Contentation under them, and candid Interpretation of them.

We are Governed by men of like infirmities with ourselves, wonder not if sometimes they discover something of them: but when we know that their cordial endeavours are to do that which is right, and promote our peaceable and Godly Living, let this please us.

And beware of Murmurings; GOD will not take it well of us, and can easily let us know a difference: and it is an Observation that seldom misseth; *That they who are most addicted to, are soonest weary of Changes.*

In a Word, let us beware lest we provoke an Holy and Jealous God to anger so as to give us *men of another Spirit* to Rule over us, or to withdraw His Spirit from them that do, and leave them to do things inconvenient.

Evil Rulers, and the Male-Administrations of good ones, are punishments which GOD doth inflict on a people that have provoked him to Anger against them, GOD gave Saul to Israel in his Wrath; and he left David

of a Good Ruler

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to Number the people because His Anger was kindled against Israel.

If we Apostatise from GOD, and grow weary of his ways, he knows how to Scourge us after this manner; and hath, not seldom, done so by his people on such occasions.

But if we be a people Fearing GOD and Keeping of His Commandments, He will Delight in us to Bless us, and to do us Good: and to give us Rulers after his own Prescription, *Just Men, and Ruling in the Fear of God.*

F I N I S.
