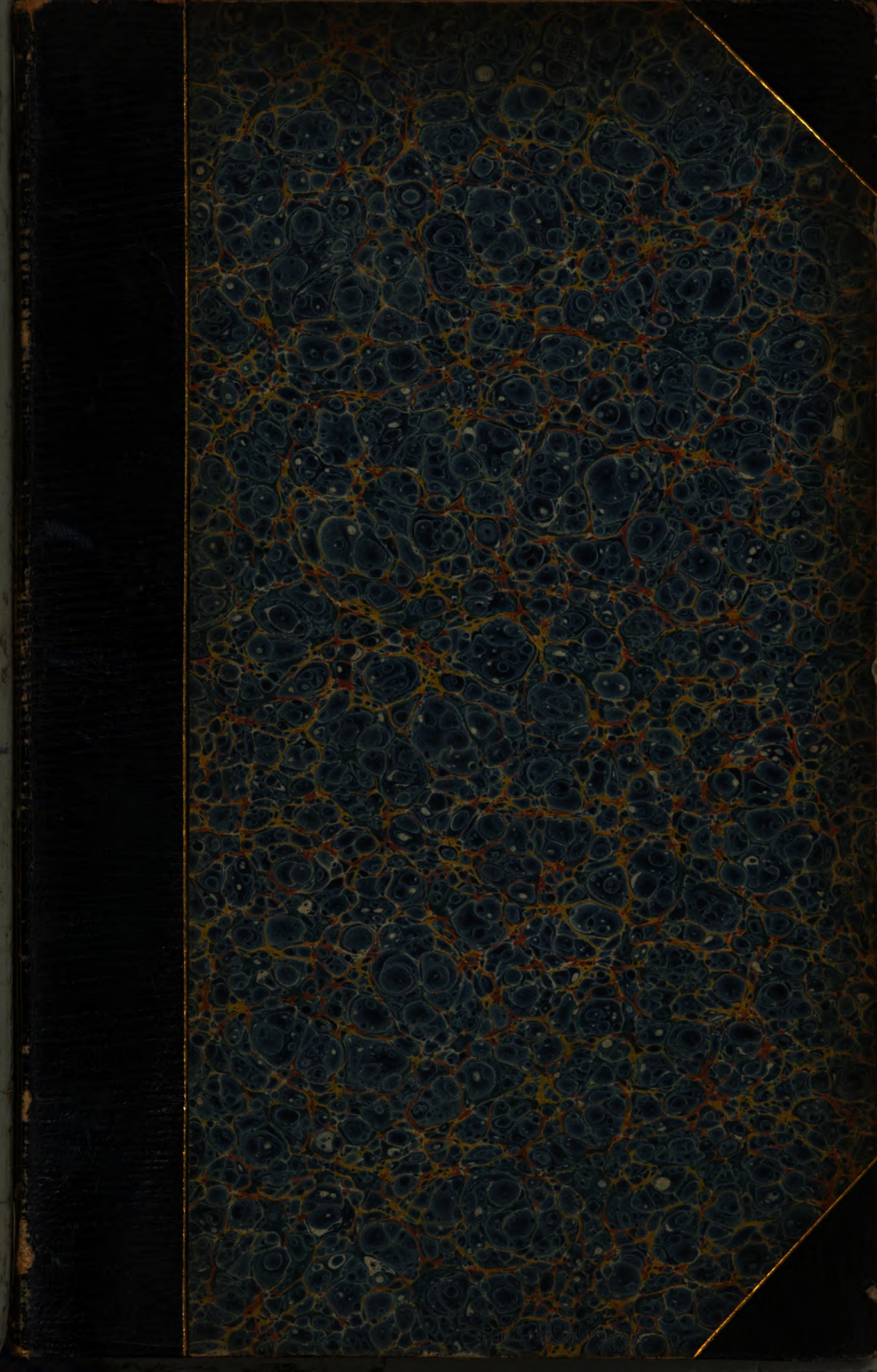




A
S E R M O N,
DELIVERED AT DOVER,
STATE OF NEWHAMPSHIRE;
BEFORE THE HONORABLE
GENERAL COURT,
AT THE
ANNUAL ELECTION,
JUNE 7th, 1792.

BY WILLIAM MORISON,
MINISTER OF A PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, LONDONDERRY.



NEW-HAMPSHIRE:
EXETER, PRINTED BY HENRY RANLET,
FOR THE GENERAL COURT OF SAID STATE—
AND SOLD AT HIS OFFICE—1792.

STATE OF NEWHAMPSHIRE.

*In the HOUSE of REPRESENTATIVES, June 7th,
1792.*

VOTED—*That Mr. J. MACGRE-
GORE, Mr. GAINS, and Mr. P.
WHITE, be a Committee on the part of this
House to join such of the Honorable Senate
as they may appoint, to present the thanks of
the Legislature to the Rev'd Mr. MORISON,
for his ingenious and elegant Discourse, deli-
vered before them this day, and desire him to
favor them with a copy for the press.*

Sent up for Concurrence.

JOHN S. SHERBURNE, Speaker.

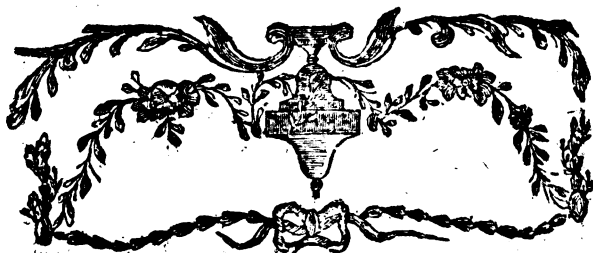
In SENATE, June 7th, 1792.

*Read and concurred—Mr. SHEAFE, and
Gen. PEABODY joined.*

A true Copy :

J. PEARSON, Secretary.

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S E R M O N.

R O M. XIII. 3.

*FOR RULERS ARE NOT A TERROR TO
GOOD WORKS, BUT TO THE EVIL.*

FATHERS AND FELLOW-CITIZENS,



THAT the religion of Jesus is the greatest ornament of our nature, and a source of sublime pleasures to men, will not be denied, by any, who know its author, understand its nature, or have felt its happy effects. The influence of christianity has the directest tendency to correct the errors of the heart, and to make the life better. Its doctrines and precepts are calculated to make us what we should be, to God, ourselves, and our fellow-men, in every relation of human life.

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It is, notwithstanding, very apparent, that, through the malignity of its opposers, christianity has been loaded with reproaches and calumnies ; and *especially* with the odium of being unfriendly to peace and good government, and an enemy to Cæsar. Hence, the public instructors of this religion, were stigmatized with every opprobrious character ; as turbulent fellows, fowers of sedition and strife, and treated by some, as common enemies to mankind.

THESE calumnies were greatly occasioned by the rigorous attachment of the Jews to a system of ceremonial observances ; in opposition to which, and agreeably to the purity and plainness of gospel worship, the apostles taught a glorious liberty in Christ, and charged christian professors not to be entangled again with that yoke of bondage.

To wipe away the odium of these *aspersions* groundless ~~assertions~~ from the best of causes, and to prevent a misconstruction of that liberty into licentiousness, which

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the apostles had preached among the people ; the author of this epistle takes occasion, in the chapter where our text is recorded, to enjoin subjection to civil government on all classes of men : and he enforces this duty, from the important consideration of its being an ordinance of God. Hence, " Let every soul be subject to the higher powers ; for there is no power but of God : the powers that be are ordained of God."

Thus, though civil government be a natural ordinance, it is also of divine appointment : therefore subjection to it, is enjoined, not only " for wrath," or fear of punishment ; but from christian motives, and " for conscience sake."

I PRESUME that the apostle does not *here* treat of the form of government, nor of the manner in which persons ought to be invested with power ; but of the origin and rise of government itself ; which he says is of God, and ordained by him.—Sometimes the way, in which persons arrive at pow-

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er, is by usurpation and oppression ; and such generally govern in a tyrannical and oppressive manner. This was the case at the time to which our text and context refer. This is no otherwise of God ; than as he permits it, for the punishment of national offences against himself. And though it must be acknowledged, that people have a perfect right to reform such a government at pleasure ; yet when the means of reformation and such as would justify resistance are not at all in their power, it is then their duty to submit so far, as may not offend conscience ; because government in some shape or other, is absolutely necessary to the existence of society.

To this purpose we may suppose, the apostle spoke, when he said, “ The powers that be, are ordained of God : and whosoever resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God : and shall receive to themselves damnation.”

THE scriptures do not seem to direct men, to any one particular mode or form of

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government, ^{to} the exclusion of others. We are left to make choice of that mode of government, that may be most agreeable to our own minds ; whether Monarchy, Aristocracy, or Democracy. The dictates of reason and common sense teach us, that all men are originally equal and free ; that by the voice of the people, which we are to revere as the voice of God ; some men ought to be raised from the common level and invested with power, to act in the capacity of Rulers.

THE sacred page is very explicit in affording us information concerning the source of civil authority, which is of God : and concerning its end among men, which is their good ; hence Rulers are called God's ministers, and his ministers for good : and lastly concerning our duty to government ; which is subjection to it, and honor to its administrators. Agreeably to this view, the apostle farther enforces our duty to government by the words of our text ; which informs us, what rulers are in the end and ought to be in the exercise of their

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office. FOR RULERS ARE NOT A TERROR TO GOOD WORKS, BUT TO THE EVIL.— They are a terror, but not to good men. Whatever terror may appear about civil government, there is nothing in its genuine nature and design, of which a virtuous and well doing citizen need be afraid. Rulers are a terror to bad members of society only. The necessity of civil Government arises from the wickedness of men. Disorderly persons are enemies to society ; their conduct tends to injure mankind, and to dissolve the social union. Rulers are appointed for the protection of mankind, and the preservation of the social union ; therefore they are a terror to disorderly persons only.

CIVIL *Fathers* of the State, I am well convinced I have not been invited to this desk to explain State policy, or to investigate the government of nations. Any attempt of this kind would be arrogance in *me*, and a reflection upon the professional knowledge of the leaders of New-Hampshire. I hope therefore, I shall not be un-

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derstood in that unfavorable light, while I beg leave to submit to your candid attention, a few observations, in which I shall endeavor to show, how, or by what means, Rulers are a terror to bad members of society, and to them only. After which, I shall conclude, with some *suitable* improvement. I proceed then to observe,

Ist. THAT a good plan of government greatly tends to make rulers a terror to bad members of society, and to them only:

WHEN a constitution is founded on the true principles of moral government, the existence of a God, and the propriety of religious worship and formed according to the principles of equal liberty; virtuous rulers act with freedom and spirit against vice; virtuous citizens are encouraged; and the vicious part of society alone, are dismayed, and fear the consequences of such a fair foundation, for the administration of justice, in the suppression of immorality and vice.

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WHEN there are any remarkable defects in a form of government, bad men have their eyes fixed on those, as open, though back doors, at which they escape with impunity, in the practice of vice. Every good man, can boldly plead the benefits, and advantages of a good constitution ; and the ruler can with grace and propriety, protect him in the enjoyment of them. On the other hand, bad men are ever ready to plead the defects, and greatest imperfections of a bad constitution, in favor of their licentious conduct ; and in such cases, it is not always possible, nor easy at any time for the most virtuous rulers on earth to prevent bad consequences.

THE baneful influence of a bad plan of government seldom opens the door, for one species of oppression, and injustice, alone. Persecution for conscience sake, oppression in civil liberty, with acts of common injustice, and private injury, generally go together. They flow from the same source ; are carried on by the same means ; and are

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equally subservient in their turn, to the same wicked purposes of designing men.

A good constitution is formed for the preservation of men in their natural rights, and is calculated to secure them against the most distant fears of an invasion, upon what is valuable to men; whether as members of civil, or religious society, and is the best and most necessary foundation for the formation of good laws. Which in the

2d. PLACE, are equally necessary to enable rulers to be a terror to disorderly members of society. A code of laws, in unison with a good constitution, formed upon the voice of the people, is similar to a fortress upon a rock: It raises rulers above enemies to order and good government; and gives them every advantage, to display dignity and terror; or clemency and favor, as the happiness of society, or justice and reason may require.

THE protection of life, liberty and property, is the principal object of law and go-

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vernment. Could these be preserved without government, there would be no need of laws. These blessings are so inseparably connected, that one cannot be fully enjoyed without the rest. When liberty is lost, life grows insipid, and is not worth the wearing; for, in that case, we have nothing we can call our own. A lust after power and property, is natural to men in general, and a prevailing passion with bad men. It is therefore evident, that these important blessings, are exposed to constant invasion by such characters; and laws are absolutely necessary for their preservation. The more just and reasonable laws are; the more secure, may we suppose, the innocent and industrious citizen is, in the quiet and peaceable possession of all his rights, and enjoyments. In this view, laws are no terror to a good man; they are his safety, designed for his happiness as a man, and his prosperity as a member of society.

THE vicious and disorderly *only*, are afraid of good laws. For as the instru-

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ments of death, in the day of battle, are kept constantly pointed against the enemy; so are good laws directed against evil doers, as enemies to the common good. They are made to lay such characters under proper restraints, or to punish them, when the power of restraint fails to prevent their criminality. In this respect, the law is not made for the righteous ; but for the lawless and disobedient.

Good laws have, therefore, penalties annexed, suited to the nature and aggravation of crimes. The ablest Legislators in apportioning punishments in law to offences, must be guided by reason, and the degree of injury which they carry, in their nature and consequences, to society. To punish with less severity, than the nature of the offence requires, may be construed as an encouragement to offenders: To let the punishment exceed the nature of the crime, is to establish iniquity by law: besides to extend capital punishments beyond due bounds, frustrates their design, by destroying their terror, in making them too

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familiar to our minds : all extremes should be avoided.

YET no system of laws can be so perfect, as to leave no room for after amendments. Time and experience in the application of certain laws in society, best discover their imperfection, or their worth. In some instances, acts formed by very wise legislatures, have been found to have very different effects, from what were originally intended in their formation. Among such must be numbered all laws of human authority, establishing a preference of religious tenets and denominations. This conduct, according to the history of past ages, has ever been found, so far from answering the promotion of real religion and benevolence : that it has been, a fertile source of ecclesiastic oppression, and bloodshed.—Such laws have a tendency to contract, and distort the mind, to destroy benevolence in the heart, and preclude freedom of enquiry from the human understanding. God alone, is lord over the conscience, and good laws never, never assume the reins of government over it.

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BUT ideas of religious liberty should never be carried so far, as to drop religion altogether from government. To do this, is to drop the idea of the existence of God. For, the immutable and eternal principles of reason concur with revelation, in declaring, that God is an object of religious worship. We cannot realize his existence, without admitting his existence as an object of worship. To deny either, is to deny both, and at once destroys the foundation of conscience, and all moral obligation with it. No oath could be administered in a society of this complexion. A government of this character is a government for absolute atheists only. No man can plead liberty of conscience, thus far, without pleading against the very existence of conscience at the same time ; and surely it must be erroneous to argue for such a conscience, as does not consist with the existence of a moral world.—But not to digress.

WHEN experience, which has discovered the errors of some laws, has clearly evinc-

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ed the unnecessary nature of others ; it may be proper to expunge such, from the records of legislation. To continue laws of less importance, than can be carried into execution by the ruler, with dignity and reason, is tempting subjects to treat law with contempt, and speak evil of dignities. If they are continued, and not carried into execution ; they may sink into oblivion, in the minds of good men, and may sometimes be improved, by vicious and designing men, to injure the best of citizens. From these and the like observations, it appears very obvious, that the promotion of knowledge and literature, is a proper object of law and government. It has the greatest influence, to cultivate morality and virtue. Where the improvement of the human mind is overlooked, by those who ought to promote it ; the people sink into ignorance and vice, and ripen fast for barbarity and bondage.

ACCORDINGLY, in those states where the means of knowledge are supported by good laws, the people are enlightened : They

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know the excellency of virtue, and the odiousness of vice : They love and practise the former : They hate and despise the latter, as highly injurious to society—good laws are therefore essentially necessary.— They are a defence to society : are calculated to promote the happiness of mankind : wear the stamp of reason : are agreeable to the spirit of the constitution : are founded upon the voice of the people. They encourage knowledge, virtue, industry, and œconomy : They discourage ignorance, vice, and indolence ; and when properly administered, are a terror to bad men. This naturally suggests in the

3d. PLACE, that rulers are a terror to disorderly persons, by the justice and fidelity of their administrations. When these are wanting in rulers, the best laws on earth, may be wrested to injure and condemn the innocent, and to exculpate and even reward the guilty. In some instances, bad men fear not, so much the righteousness of the law, as they do the honesty of the judge. Hence, the proverb, “A

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man guilty of a crime, fears a judge, conscious of uprightness."

THE loss, arising from remissness in men of power, and from unfaithfulness in public officers, cannot be restored by the goodness of the laws, nor by the excellency of a constitution ; but the deficiencies of laws, and imperfections in a form of government, may be greatly made up, by the faithfulness and justice of rulers, in administration. To promote the interest of *society* is still more in their power, when the constitution and laws harmonise in their favor.

ENERGY, accompanied with justice in government, is always pleasing to good men: and the contrary affords satisfaction to the basest part of society. To whom under God, the supreme governor, shall the virtuous part of the community look, for the exercise of both ; but to their rulers ? Want of energy in government, is anarchy, and want of justice, oppression ; but integrity preserves from both evils. Should the

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days come when the eyes of the judge can be blinded by a gift ; or men in place be swayed by prejudice and party spirit ; then may we see wickedness in the place of judgment ; and in the place of righteousness, that iniquity is there. — “ When laws are well made, they should be inflexibly executed.”

A good degree of a disinterested and public spirit is an important idea, to constitute a faithful and honest ruler. Man is not made for himself. The apostle, forbids looking to our own things on a narrow scale, and enjoins, that we extend our views to the things of others. Of all men on earth, a ruler in a democratic government, is the least made for himself : And with a lustre peculiar to his office, he shines under the influence of a disinterested concern, for the public good.

But I proceed to remark

4^{thly}. THAT penetration and abilities in judgment, are no less necessary to make

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rulers a terror to evil doers ; than a faithful and honest heart. The word of God pronounces misery upon the nation, whose rulers are weak-minded. "Wo, unto thee, O land, when thy king is a child." i. e. When he is weak, and devoid of the abilities necessary for the effectual discharge of his office. Enemies to peace and order, are not always confined to the class of inferior parts. Weakness does not always accompany wickedness ; though we may really wish it forever might. The latter is no infallible evidence of the former. We can easily conceive of a very vicious mind, endowed with great sagacity, and force of understanding. Besides, the advantages of a good education, are not bestowed on friends to morality and virtue, to the exclusion of others : these favors are frequently flung away, on men of dishonest hearts, and make them able in eloquence, and conspicuously great in argument. Rulers have often to combat powerful opponents. Men of inferior abilities, however honest in heart, are not equal to confront with dignity, and to confound with clearness, the sophis-

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tical arguments which may be advanced in favor of wickedness. Want of abilities in rulers, has an evident tendency to bring government into contempt; and a contemptible government, is hardly ever successful in doing good.

EVEN an offender is not struck with much terror, when he knows, that a well formed harangue, shall prevail, over the credulous and weak, though upright mind of his judge. Moreover, matters of a public nature, are sometime so complicated, that men of the best abilities, in connexion with undissembled faithfulness, find it difficult enough to concert measures answerable to the best ends of good government.

It was thought a severe judgment upon the Jews, when they made public officers of the meanest of the people; and there is no reason to consider it as any thing less upon any nation.

WHEN God is about to do any thing great, and good for a people; he raises up

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good and great men to govern in their public councils ; but, when he is about to punish a people for their crimes ; or to disgrace them for their transgressions. he has nothing more to do, than to permit the reins of government, to fall into the hands of the weak or the wicked : and in either case, the ruin of the nation is inevitable. We may further observe,

5thly. THAT rulers are a terror to disorder and vice, when their characters are adorned with a virtuous life, and conversation. The badges of state in a ruler, never appear to such advantage, as when united to the beauty of his virtues.

We may fear his power in the former, but, can never revere and respect his person, without the latter. Vice is the great disturber of public happiness : the devouring lion, that goeth about seeking our destruction : and those rulers alone, support the dignity of their character, and diffuse happiness among mankind, who oppose vice, and encourage virtue : who honor

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God by keeping his commandments, and subject their power to the sovereign laws of morality and reason.

THE conduct of rulers has a great influence on those, they govern. We naturally incline to imitate men in higher spheres of human life. When we have chosen men to govern us, it presupposeth our high esteem of, and expectations from them. We have conferred upon them the highest honors we had to bestow. It is not more natural for children, to look up with respect and honor to their parents, than it is for a virtuous people, under an energetic government, to honor and respect virtuous rulers.

BUT, should vice actuate the ruler in his private life ; or ambition and avarice prevail in his public councils : he sullies his honor—his reputation is lost—his usefulness destroyed ; and the people left to bewail their disappointment, and to detest the object of their own election, as a terror to

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good works ; but none to the evil. When a selfish and vicious spirit stamps the character of a ruler, the selfish and vicious approach him, with a familiarity peculiar to a similitude of disposition, and they mutually strengthen each other in their wicked conduct. "The wicked walk on every side, when vile men are exalted." To these observations, permit me to add in the

6th. PLACE, that a just sense of religion, and the fear of God in a ruler contribute much to the terror of bad men. This is the fountain in the heart from whence all genuine virtue in life flows. How amiable is the ruler whose goodness as a man we admire and love, more than we dread his power as a magistrate ! How pleasing is that obedience, which flows from a united regard to the excellency of the citizen, and the dignity of his office ! Under such impressions, with what solemn, melting, death inspiring eloquence, does king David pray for piety to his son, and successor in the kingdom of Israel ! "Give unto Solo-

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mon my son, a perfect heart to keep thy commandments, thy testimonies, and thy statutes." Nor is he less particular in his charge to Solomon himself. Thus we hear the venerable monarch, with all the pathos of parental affection, soothing his dying pillow, in his last address, to one of the wisest of princes. "And thou, Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy fathers, and serve him with a perfect heart, and willing mind, for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts : If thou seek him, he will be found of thee ; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off forever." ; What heart, that is not hard as adamant, can read the following description of a pious ruler, and not feel the sensations of delight and joy ? "The God of Israel said, the rock of Israel spake to me ; he that ruleth among men, must be just, ruling in the fear of God ; and he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun ariseth, even a morning without clouds ; as the tender grass springing out of the earth

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by clear shining after rain." Civil rulers of this character, are here justly represented extensive blessings, as the sun and rain to society. The influence of their examples, flowing from a just sense of religion and the fear of God; will resemble the cherishing beams of the sun, and satisfying showers of rain descending from the eminence of their station, to nourish and fructify mankind. Good people will esteem them ministers of heaven, and ordained of God for good.—They are nursing fathers to the church of God: Setting a high value upon their own rights, as christian members of society, they are ever ready to defend the sacred rights of others.—Realizing the worth of religion to the community, they do nothing to hinder; but every thing in their power, and consistent with their office, to promote its general spread and preservation. Conscious that the nation cannot be long happy, or free, without its benign aid; they are willing and even zealous to encourage instructors of morality and religion. Being highly fa-

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vored with the advantages of christianity themselves, they dread as an unpardonable crime, the neglect of transmitting its blessed precepts, to succeeding generations. Being preserved from ignorance and infidelity, they fear the dismal consequences of suffering the youth in a community, to grow up under the disadvantages, peculiar to nations, not favored with public instruction. You will pardon my zeal, ye civil *Fathers* of the State ; if I say that the fear of God is a protecting, and nursing parent, for order and good government.—It unites the several parts of society, by the strongest ties of benevolence and love—it disposes all orders of men, to be faithful to their engagements abroad, honest and industrious at home—it sweetens the power of the ruler, and effectually secures a conscientious obedience from the ruled. From this mutual harmony, arise the strength, beauty, honor, and safety of a nation ; and public happiness is a promised blessing. “For righteousness exalteth a nation.”

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ON the other hand, ; What is it that ripens a nation for ruin? The sacred oracles concur with the experience of all ages in informing us, that "sin is a reproach to any people." The voice of the most high is, "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be destroyed."

THE conduct of providence, to public communities in this world, is frequently *very* different, from that which he dispenses to individuals. A veil of darkness covers the face of providence, in dispensing prosperity and adversity, to particular persons in this life. Sometimes a man of distinguished goodness, is oppressed with afflictions and poverty; while another is triumphant in wickedness, and possesses more than his heart can enjoy. There is, however, another life, in which all this apparent difference, may be adjusted. But, in a general way, national sins are punished with national calamities; and when vice becomes predominant among rulers; the infection

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goes by an easy descent, to the lower ranks of the people, and tends to their destruction. A disorder, in the vitals of the community is soon discovered in its remotest members, and indicates the political system to be in a mournful decay. Once more, in the

7th PLACE, the eminent nature of their office, affords rulers every necessary advantage, to discourage wicked and unreasonable men in the practice of immorality. They are God's deputies on earth.—They represent his moral government among men.—“ They are called gods.”—And it is said, that God standeth in their assembly, as in the congregation of the mighty, and judgeth among the gods. They are called gods, from the power with which they are cloathed by the people, from God, to make laws. They are awful, from their appointment by providence, to sit in judgment, and deliberately doom to death at the bar of justice. They are irresistible, to carry into the fullest execution, every degree of

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punishment prescribed by law, where government is in force and energy. Thus, civil rulers, whether legislative, judicial, or executive, are representatives of the Supreme Ruler, whom the prophet styles, our *Judge*, our *Lawgiver*, and our *King*.—The more agreeable the administration of government is, to the moral perfections of God, the greater is its terror to wicked members of society. And as it is an unquestionable truth, that God is terrible, to immoral men, both in time and eternity: it is equally obvious that rulers inspired with the spirit of their office, are a terror to injurious men, in every department of the community. Miserable and wicked men only, wish there were no God; and they are of the same description who wish there were no government.

IT remains that we finish this discourse by the proposed improvement. And

LET me remark, if I have said any thing in the foregoing observations, worthy the

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notice of rulers ; upon proper reflection, we may find something suitable for the attention of the people. When a society is happy, each member of the community endeavours to know his duty, and to act his part, with fidelity and reason.

My friends and fellow citizens, since the establishment of a free government does us honor, let us never do dishonor to ourselves, by disobeying its legal and constitutional commands. Let us never discover an impatient disposition under the necessary restraints of good government. These restraints are our safety. Resistance to a government like ours tends to ruin. Neither let us be meanly jealous of men whose political existence is but temporary, and derived from the people. Let us guard our elections well, and stigmatize with contempt, every mark of bribery and corruption. But when we have chosen men to rule by a clear majority, let even the minority trust them with a man-

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ly charity, and treat them with respect and honor.—This is their due.—It is much to the dishonor of a free community, to resemble an ill bred family, by quarrelling among themselves, or speaking evil of dignities. We may rest assured, our rulers have many motives to excite their faithfulness ; but few, very few to lead to the contrary. Every principle of duty and interest conspire to make them what they should be. It cannot be expected, but, that the characters of candidates for places of power and trust, should undergo an inspection by the public eye. If they are found fair, they have the better prospect for public honor, in new elections : but if not ; candidates know that they will, and know that they ought to be neglected, if not despised. In a republic, the majesty of the people is great, and their bar tremendous. If we know and exercise the power that belongs to us under God as the foundation of government, rulers can never be lost to us, unless they are lost to themselves. This leads

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2dly. To observe, that as the promotion of knowledge and literature is an object of law with good rulers; so it also ought to be an object of universal attention among the people. Ignorance is the greatest enemy to the happiness of any nation. It puts an end to purity of manners, real religion, and good government. Wicked and designing men, go abroad without fear, as beasts of prey in the night, to destroy under the clouds of ignorance.— Knowledge is necessary to give us a proper view of our rights as men, and of our duty, as members of society.

AN ignorant people, even in the full possession of their rights, are apt to carry liberty into extremes, and soon degenerate into anarchy and confusion. Impatient of delegated power to rule them; they assume the reins of government themselves, and as a celebrated statesman observes, make laws for the representatives, debate for the senate, and pass sentence for the

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judge.* When this is the case, the virtue and comfort of a republic are departed.— The principles of Democracy being very pure, are easily corrupted, and need to be carefully preserved on every hand. Licentiousness is as great an enemy to its true genius on the one hand, as despotism is on the other. He is as real a political robber, who would fire a nation against a free government by the former, as the tyrant that would assume government without their consent, on the latter. A lust of boundless power and liberty, is the source of both their wickedness. The libertine would fain do what *he pleases* against good government by corrupting the people ; and the despot would fain do what *he pleases* against good people by corrupting the government : and they unite in being equally destructive to both people and government. Invest a libertine with power and he is a tyrant ; divest a tyrant of his power and he is a libertine. The true spirit of Democracy is equally distant

* MONTESQUIEU, SPIRIT OF LAWS.

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from these extremes, and knowledge is the best preservative from them. Where the cultivation of the human mind is neglected it is distressing *indeed!* Zeal degenerates into fury—religion into superstition, or atheism—reason into sophistry—courage into cruelty—industry into sloth and avarice—and government into absolute sway. Every enemy to public instruction, is an enemy to the political happiness of his nation, and every opposer of christianity is unfriendly to the “best foundation for order and good government in the hearts of men.”*

AGAIN, let it not be thought inconsistent with the spirit of my present duty, or offensive to your delicacy to hint, that it affords satisfaction to every good mind that the necessary expences of good government be discharged with cheerfulness. “Render to all their due, tribute to whom tribute is due.” He that repines at the performance of this part of his duty to

* CONSTITUTION OF NEWHAMPSHIRE.

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government, has not justly estimated its value, and betrays his ignorance of its real worth. The support of government should be without regret in the subject, and bear some degree of useful proportion to the dignity of the office and nature of the employment in the ruler; but let us never encourage the luxury, pomp or ostentation of monarchical governments. These are the ensigns of pride, wickedness and vanity.

LET us my dear countrymen, rejoice this day in the possession of a free government; where our eyes behold our rulers, not as a terror to good men; but to the evil. While clouds of hereditary rights, shadows of aristocracy, and the darkness of monarchical governments involve other nations in slavery, we are free. Let us rejoice that rays of our rising light and national liberty are darting to other nations and promising a benign influence over the world. O, blessed land of light and liberty, where every genius has a spring and acts itself. Our heart should heave with

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gratitude to God, the giver of every good, and governor of nations!

BUT, let all orders of men guard against the abuse of privileges. When the Jews kept the covenant of their God, they triumphed over their enemies. But when they forsook him, he forsook them, and they were carried captives to distant nations. Public vice and irreligion may soon ruin us. The declivity of public vice, is like a declivity of ice, and hurls headlong to destruction. It is much easier to shun than to get safe off the slippery precipice. Let not the tables of intemperance, luxury, or gambling, which end in huts, hospitals and gaols, enslave our souls from our God, or steal our time and talents, from our duty. And may we ever stamp that iniquitous spirit of avarice and speculation, wherever it appears, with every sign of contempt, that has lately done dishonor to a principal city* in our continent, ruined some private citizens, and even threatened to injure our

* NEWYORK.

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character as a nation. Public virtue and religion are ornaments to the human mind, and cannot fail to show their effects on society. The boasted glory of ancient Rome is ascribed to her public virtue and her fall to her vices. Her rulers are said to have payed the greatest attention to the public good. They renounced private ease for the welfare of the commonwealth. It was high treason to employ the public revenues for any other purpose than the interest of the republic—the rose—empires depended upon the voice of the senate, and all nations revered her resolves.

ON the other hand, her fall in which she left her offspring the slaves of a race of tyrants is ascribed unto the following vices. A selfish mind takes place of a public spirit. Ambition advances by intrigue into public trust without any regard to merit. Intemperance weakens her bodily strength and debates her once renowned courage—cruel avarice plundered her provinces to support the pride of individuals. All orders of

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men become venal. The seeds of disorder are universally sown in Rome—her senators betray her—her generals deny their aid, and turn the edge of their swords against her that bear them—she is deluged in the blood of her own children. The mistress of the word meanly bows—“sues for chains and owns a conqueror.” The experience of all nations may teach the necessity of public virtue and religion to give permanency to our government; and to prolong our happiness as a nation.

FINALLY, my fathers in government, if I have not already quite exhausted your patience, suffer me to observe, that as the great concerns of the community are committed to your care, no one class of men has the increase of our happiness, or misery so much in their power. You are a source of universal joy or grief, in proportion as you are qualified for, and faithful in your duty or not, “When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice—but when the wicked bear rule, the people mourn.” What political blessing can any

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people reasonably expect from their rulers, that we your constituents may not expect from you, considering your advantages for being a terror to evil doers ? What pains can we feel or fear of political evils ? You are acting upon the firm basis of a constitution founded under God upon the voice of the people. You are in the possession of a code of excellent laws, with full power to amend whatever your experience and superior discernment may see amiss in them.

By the free suffrage of your fellow citizens, you have the fullest evidence of the confidence of your country in your abilities and faithfulness for government. A powerful part of the community will consider it as ominous of continued prosperity to our state and nation, that you enter on the important business of legislation, in the fear of that God, whose ministers you are, and whose moral government you represent.

ANIMATED by such noble motives, you will realize the superintending presence of

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the *Supreme Ruler*, to whom you are accountable in all your deliberations. In this way, you will answer the benevolent design of your honorable office, in being a terror to every species of political wickedness and other vices among men ; and a praise to virtue.

ACTING on the political stage of your country under the influence of such sublime principles, you will shine as lights while you are on it ; and obtain the highest applause of your constituents when you leave it ; and O ! Fathers, when the moment arrives, that you must forever renounce seats of honor on earth, your memories will remain, embalmed in society when the name of the wicked shall rot.— And the testimony of a good conscience will enlighten your chambers in death—scatter the gloom of the grave—direct and sweeten your passage to seats of honor and glory immortal. 9 7 49

AMEN.

