

A B M
616

Mr. Whitney's

S E R M O N

A T A

SPECIAL LECTURE.

September 12, 1776.

620
American Independence Vindicated.

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S E R M O N

D E L I V E R E D
S E P T E M B E R 12, 1776.

A T A
L E C T U R E

Appointed for Publishing the
D E C L A R A T I O N
O F
I N D E P E N D E N C E
P A S S E D J U L Y 4, 1776.

B Y T H E
R E P R E S E N T A T I V E S
O F T H E
U N I T E D S T A T E S O F A M E R I C A
I N
G E N E R A L C O N G R E S S
A S S E M B L E D.

And now Printed at the desire of the Hearers
to whom it is Inscribed.

B Y
P E T E R W H I T N E Y, A. M.
P A S T O R O F T H E C H U R C H O F C H R I S T I N *Northborough.*

S T A T E O F M A S S A C H U S E T T S - B A Y.
B O S T O N : P R I N T E D B Y E. D R A P E R, I N *Newbury-Street.*
M, DCC, LXXVII.

622

To the Honorable JOHN HANCOCK,
Esq; Major-General of the Militia of
Massachusetts-Bay, and President of the
AMERICAN CONGRESS.

May it please your Honor,

THE following Discourse, I beg
leave to present you, hoping,
however small and trifling, in itself con-
sidered, yet since offered in token of
respect and regard for your Honor, that
it will not be rejected. If not the exe-
cution, yet the goodness of the design
herein, which was to justify to an *im-*
partial world, the doings of the Right
Honorable the *Continental* CONGRESS,
and especially, in declaring these Colonies
“*Free and Independent States,*” will, I
trust, atone for presuming in a Dedication,
to make use of your name to give it a
currency. Your zealous, upright endea-
vors to save your country from tyranny
and oppression, from slavery and ruin, it
may reasonably be expected, will never
be forgotten, or pass unrewarded, by
this much obliged People, and by GOD's
blessing

blessing accompanying *them* and the
 strenuous exertions of the CONGRESS,
 and all other Patriots, may *America* soon
 emerge from her present depths of woe,
 rise and shine distinguished among the
 nations of the earth, and continue, what
 she has been declared, "*Free and Inde-
 pendent,*" till time shall be no more.
 That every needed good may be your
 portion while you live, and that, since
 blessed with an affluent fortune, and a
 liberal soul, you may continue, "*to do
 good, and be rich in good works,*" so "*laying
 up in store for yourself a good foundation
 against the time to come, that you may
 then lay hold on eternal life,*"

is the earnest prayer of

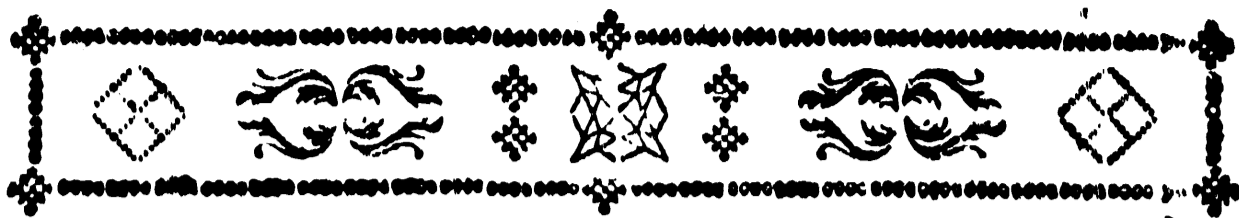
Your Honor's

Most obedient

And humble Servant,

PETER WHITNEY.

Northborough,
 Oct. 11.
 1776.



A

LECTURE SERMON.

Ist. Book of King's, XII Chap. 16 Verse.

“ So when all Israel saw that the King hearkened not unto them, the People answered the King, saying, what portion have we in David, neither have we inheritance in the Son of Jesse : to your tents, O Israel : now see to thine own house, David.”

THE Independence of the North-American Colonies, is a matter of great importance, and has been the subject of much dispute and speculation in times past. The debate is now closed, respecting this grand point ; for, after mature deliberation, the American Congress, necessitated thereto by the wanton, cruel, and unprovoked conduct of the king and parliament of Great-Britain, have declared these Colonies totally Independent on, and unconnected with that State, and now mean to consider and treat them like other nations

nations and states, as “enemies in war, in peace ; friends,”

* THE words of my text are peculiarly suitable for the subject of discourse upon such an event. The story of which, what I have read, is but a part, we have at large in the preceding part of this chapter. The sum of it is this ; Rehoboam reigned in the stead of Solomon, his Father, king over all Israel. Upon his accession to the throne, the people by the representatives of their several tribes, petition the king for redress of their grievances, they complain of the last reign ; they address Rehoboam for relief, and upon condition of its being granted, they will continue their allegiance to the house of David. Rehoboam consulted with them about him ; the grave experienced men of his council advised him, by all means, to give the petitioners a kind answer, and this would secure them in *his* interest, “ They will be thy servants for ever,” say these wise counsellors. But this counsel of the old men he regards not, he forsakes, and takes advice of the “ young men who were grown up with him, and who stood

stood before him," to *them* he adhered, who urged harsh and rigorous measures, and advised to the imposition of far heavier taxes. He answered the people agreeable to such weak and foolish counsels. He threatened not only to squeeze them by heavy taxes, but to chastise them with cruel laws, and severe executions thereof. Thus was Rehoboam infatuated in his counsels and measures, and hereby the righteous designs of the Supreme Ruler of the world were fulfilled. "It was from the Lord." He left Rehoboam to his own folly, and hid from his eyes the things which belonged to his peace, that the kingdom might be rent from him, agreeable to God's threatening, related in the preceding chapter. God often serves his own wise and righteous purposes, by the imprudence and wickedness of men, and snares sinners in the works of their own hands. When the ten tribes of Israel were thus roughly answered, and threatened, they all as one *declare* a revolt from Rehoboam, and the two tribes who adhered to him, and set up a separate kingdom, and independent state, as the text teaches us. They highly repented the

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provocation

provocation which Rehoboam gave them, were incensed at his menaces, concluded that *that* government, in its progress, would be intolerably grievous, which, in the beginning, was so very imperious and haughty, and therefore resolve no longer to yield allegiance and submission to such a Tyrant. By the way, we need not wonder that the ten tribes of Israel fall off from the house of David, if the house of David fall away from the great end of their advancement to rule and authority which was “to be ministers of God, for good to the people.”

My view, in further discoursing upon this scrap of sacred story, is to apply the revolt of the ten tribes of Israel from Rehoboam, (as far as it will apply) to the Thirteen Colonies of North-America, renouncing “all allegiance to the British crown, and totally dissolving all political connection between them and the state of Great-Britain, and declaring themselves Free and Independent States, vested with the full powers, privileges and prerogatives belonging to separate states, and endeavour to justify this measure to the world. It is not to be supposed that these

these two cases are exactly parallel ; it is sufficient if they are so in the main points.

Let it then be observed, in the first place, that this foolish and wicked Rehoboam was the *third* king of that house and family. When the people of Israel foolishly and impiously asked God to give them a king, hereby rejecting the kingly government of the most high, God condescended to gratify their desire, after previously warning them of what would be the certain consequences of their unhappy choice ; they would be such as, if they had any reason left, and would consult their own interest, they would withdraw their petition, and desire rather to continue as they were. They notwithstanding, persisted in their demand, and God gave them a king, but in his anger, and as a great scourge and curse to them. The first king of Israel was Saul, the son of Kish, a Benjamite. He was a silly prince, infatuated in his councils, invaded by his neighbours, deserted by his soldiers, disordered in his own spirit, sacrificing in confusion, and rejected of God from being king. After this, God directs Samuel to anoint David king, the youngest

est son of Jesse, of another family. David was in the main a good king, though he had his faults.

SOLOMON, his son by Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, reigned over Israel, after the death of David. He was a wise and good king, and in general ruled well. Indeed he was led away, by his wives, from God, for which he threatned to rend ten tribes from him, and give to his servant Jeroboam, though not in his day. And further, it seems probable, there were some things in his reign greivous and oppressive to the people; for when Rehoboam son of Solomon, came to the throne of Israel upon his father's death, the people petition him to relax somewhat the grievous service of the former reign. "Thy father made our yoke grievous; now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us lighter, and we will serve thee." But Rehoboam hearkned not unto the people, but threatned them with intolerable burdens and impositions.

Let us apply this :

THE present king of Great-Britain is the *third* prince of the house of Hanover.

George

George Lewis, Elector of Hanover, succeeded Queen Ann. He was succeeded, in the throne, by his son George the second. The reigns of these two Georges were tolerably good. Passing by the cruel and oppressive measures adopted with respect to these Colonies, in the reigns of the inglorious Stuart family, from whence, under God, the Revolution delivered us; it must be observed that acts were made in the reigns of Georges, first and second, called Acts of trade, whereby our commerce suffered useless and oppressive restrictions: yet still we submitted without complaint or petition, for when the present king came to the throne, succeeding his grand-father, we did not request him to make "the grievous service, and heavy yoke, lighter," which his predecessors had put upon us: and had not "his little finger been thicker than their loins," we should never have disturbed the royal ear with petitions and complaints, nor would George the third, have left the bigger and better half of his kingdom. Had no measures been pursued with regard to these states, more grievous than were adopted before the year 1763. we had still owned George
for

for our rightful sovereign. For, as the people, at first emigrated chiefly from Great-Britain and Ireland, they ever (until now) held under the crown thereof, and acknowledged the same king, with the other tribes beyond the atlantic. But soon after he came to the throne of his ancestors, he discovered an haughty and despotick spirit and behaviour. He, like Rehoboam, forsook the counsel of the old men, and followed the impolitick advice of his young mates, and his preceptor. In the reign of George the second, the British empire was carried to its height and perfection in glory, renown, wealth, grandeur, and extent of dominion, through the wise counsels, and prudent management of that able statesman and counsellor, Mr. PITT, now Earl of Chatham, of immortal memory. He had the whole conducting of the last war, and by his sound judgment and skill, and uncorruptible patriotism, under God, enabled Great-Britain to conquer the united powers of France and Spain, to spread terror through the world, and add to her dominions an immense extent of territory in the East and West-Indies, and

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in North-America. He put it into the power of Britain to make the most honorable and gainful peace, at the close of the last war; but Lord Bute, the king's preceptor, sent plenipotentiary to the treaty at Paris, consents to the most inglorious terms.

THE kingdom was a long time in coming to that pitch of grandeur and prosperity, to which, in divine providence, it was exalted at the accession of the present king: but it soon began to decline. The old men, the able counsellors who stood before *his* grandfather, and to whom the nation was greatly indebted, were discarded, neglected. Though they have ever given their best advice to the king, urging such mild, conciliatory measures as would have secured to him the allegiance and affection of all his subjects, yet their counsels were reprobated, while the young, inexperienced men, who grew up with him, he has ever consulted, and their advice he has steadily followed through the whole of his reign. The people of England and America have had constant cause for complaints and petitions; for his reign has been one continued series of oppressions,

sions, and usurpations. Bute, Hillsborough and North, with their detestable Junto, have advised to oppressive measures of taxation, in America, and when we have petitioned for redress, they have urged further harsh and vigorous methods, and when we have attempted to defeat the operation of their acts, they have advised to the most wanton and cruel punishments : So that we have had just cause of complaint ; to show which we need only mention what he and his parliament have done, leaving an impartial world to judge whether we have not sufficient reasons to reject him, as our king, and to set up as free and independent states, saying, “ What portion have we in George ? neither have we inheritance in the house of Hanover ; to your tents O Americans, and now see to thine own house George.” “ He has refused his assent to laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his governors to pass laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their Operation till his assent should be obtained ; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

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He has refused to pass other laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of representation in the legislature, a right inestimable to them, and formidable to tyrants only.

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved representative houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the legislative powers, incapable of annihilation, have returned to the people at large for their exercise; the state remaining in the mean time exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.

He has endeavoured to prevent the population of these states; for that purpose obstructing the laws for naturalization of foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new appropriations of lands.

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He has obstructed the administration of justice, by refusing his assent to laws for establishing judiciary powers.

He has made judges dependent on his will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of new offices, and sent hither swarms of officers to harrass our people, and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us, in times of peace, standing armies, without the consent of our legislatures.

He has affected to render the military independent of and superior to the civil power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; given his assent to their acts of pretended legislation :

For quartering large bodies of armed troops among us :

For protecting them, by a mock trial, from punishment for any murders which they should commit on the inhabitants of these States :

For

For cutting off our trade with all parts of the world :

For imposing taxes on us without our consent :

For depriving us, in many cases, of the benefits of trial by jury :

For transporting us beyond seas to be tried for pretended offences :

For abolishing the free system of English laws in a neighbouring province, establishing therein an arbitrary government, and enlarging its boundaries, so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies :

For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable laws, and altering fundamentally the forms of our governments :

For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated government here, by declaring us out of his protection and waging War against us.

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

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He has at this time transported large armies of foreign mercenaries to complete the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of cruelty and perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.

He has constrained our fellow-citizens taken captive on the high seas to bear arms against their country, to become the executioners of their friends and brethren, or to fall themselves by their hands.

He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction, of all ages, sexes and conditions.---A prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people."

These are some of the acts and doings of George the third, and the British parliament : but these are not all, neither can the baleful influence, and cruel operation of these be painted in full and proper

proper

proper color. These are all facts, not to be denied by any, neither do any pretend to deny, that *he* and his venal ministry, and corrupt parliament have done, or, at least, attempted to do all these things.

BUT some pretend to justify the administration in Great-Britain, - with saying, we have, by our abusive treatment of the king's servants, provoked government to treat us with such unexampled severity : Our troubles, say they, we have brought upon ourselves, and the various acts of king and parliament arose from our opposition to government. To this objection, let me answer, That, notwithstanding certain acts of trade which were grievous and oppressive, the people preserved due decorum, and were peaceable and submissive until 1764. The British administration began its attacks on our liberties with a stamp-act, but meeting with strong opposition, they thought fit to repeal it. This act threw the colonies into strong convulsions, and we rejoiced exceedingly on its repeal, fondly hoping we should enjoy future tranquility. But we were mistaken. They never intended to relinquish their design, but only to change

change their ground, that, which they first pitched upon, not seeming tenable. An American revenue granted by a British parliament was the object, and they never lost sight of it : for soon renewed their attacks, upon principles which they thought more favourable to their intentions : but they met with as little success in this as in their former attempt. If the Americans, in some instances, carried their resentment too far against some among us, whom they, not without reason, thought to be instrumental of such oppressive acts, they should remember the provocation given, pity and overlook any indecencies and lawless measures some few run into, knowing that, “Oppression maketh a wise man mad.” Admitting that some wrong steps were taken by some in certain places, in opposing revenue laws, this can never justify their punishing the innocent with the guilty, and attempting to deprive a whole province of its chartered rights, for the follies and freaks of individuals. But further, if those revenue laws were unjust, cruel and oppressive, and inconsistent with liberty, and the enjoyment of our property, it was the duty of this people to oppose them : and if this opposition could

could not be made in what some call, a regular way, we must take such measures as we could, and it was certainly wrong in them to punish us for opposing their acts, big with such fatal consequences to America. There was no oppugnation of government *here* until it became grievous, oppressive and intollerable, and then it was, and ought to be, opposed. Our opposition was misrepresented by our governors, and other crown officers, as proceeding from an impatience of any government, or restraint : every little riot or disturbance was magnified beyond all the possibilities of truth, and represented as the doing of vast multitudes. Thus, America was first oppressed, and for struggling and groaning under her oppressions, she was calumniated and loaded with more intollerable burdens.

But, say some, if these acts of parliament, measures of administration were grievous and oppressive, we did not take the right course for redress : we should have petitioned therefor in a regular way, by the three branches of the legislatures. This, I would answer, was always attempted, but never could be obtained ; for
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when governors found the two houses of assembly ripening petitions to the king, they were immediately adjourned, prorogued, or dissolved. Whenever the several houses of assembly, in their separate capacity, sent petitions and remonstrances, then they were rejected, because they were not proper acts of the court. At this time the assemblies found they had not suitable agents at the court of Great-Britain; the governors would not consent to the choice of such as the two houses could confide in as friendly to their interest and rights; from that time they had separate agents. Our agents could not be heard, because they were not the agent of the *whole* court, and governors were instructed not to consent to any grants for their services. Thus there be no petitioning in what some affect to call, *the regular way*. When the representatives of this state wrote circular letters to the other states, soliciting a union in remonstrating and petitioning against some late acts of parliament, this and several other assemblies were dissolved. Thus things went on until 1774, when the colonies chose delegates to represent them

them in one grand Congress, who, being met, drew up a most humble and respectful petition to the king, wherein they say, “ From this destructive system of colony administration adopted since the conclusion of the late war have flowed those distresses, dangers, fears and jealousies, that overwhelm your majesties dutiful colonists with affliction; and we defy our most subtil and inveterate adversaries to trace the unhappy differences between Great-Britain and these colonies, from an earlier period, or from other causes, than we have assigned, had they proceeded, on our part, from restless levity of temper unjust impellers of ambition or artful suggestions of seditious persons, we should merit the approbrious terms frequently bestowed on us by those we revere. But so far from promoting innovations, we have only opposed them, and can be charged with no offence, unless it be one to receive injuries and be sensible of them. — We ask but for peace, liberty and safety. We wish not a diminution of the prerogative, nor do we solicit the grant of any new right in our favor. Your royal authority over us, and our connection

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with Great-Britain, we shall always carefully and zealously endeavor to support and maintain.---We present this petition only to obtain redress of grievances.---We therefore beseech your majesty, that your royal authority and interposition may be used for our relief, and that a gracious answer may be given to this petition.”

In the second address of the Congress to the king, the last year, they say, “Attached to your majesty’s person, family and government, with all the devotion that principle, and affection can inspire; connected with Great-Britain by the strongest ties that can unite societies, and deploring every event that tends in any degree to weaken them, we solemnly assure your majesty, that we not only desire the former harmony between her, and these colonies may be restored, but that a concord may be established between them upon so firm a basis, as to perpetuate its blessings, uninterrupted by any future dissensions, to succeeding generations in both countries.” After mentioning the new system of statutes and regulations adopted with respect to the colonies, they add, “We therefore beseech your majesty

jesty that your royal authority and influence may be graciously interposed to procure us relief from our afflicting fears and jealousies, occasioned by the system before mentioned, and to settle peace through every part of your dominions, with all humility submitting to your majesty's wise consideration, whether it may not be expedient for facilitating those important purposes, that your majesty be pleased to direct some mode by which the united applications of your faithful colonists to the throne, in presence of their common councils, may be improved into a happy and permanent reconciliation : and that, in the mean time, measures may be taken for preventing the further destruction of the lives of your majesty's subjects, and that such statutes as more immediately distress any of your majesty's colonies may be repealed." Thus these colonies have, by their representatives in Congress, unitedly and in the most humble, respectful manner, repeatedly petitioned the king, for redress of grievances. They have asked only for relief from cruel and oppressive acts made since 1763. But the king's ear has been deaf to our requests, and humble suits.

I know it is said by some among us, that those petitions could not be heard, because they came not from a constitutional body. But I would reply, that every way of remonstrating, and petitioning was tried, before this, but was ineffectual, or was attempted, but was frustrated; necessity therefore, if nothing else, would justify this measure of petitioning by a general Congress. But besides, what method could have been taken to obtain the sense of all the colonies, and collect the whole force and strength thereof united in humble, earnest petitions for relief, but this, of choosing men in all the colonies, by their respective assemblies, to sit in one grand Council, to consult, and deliberate upon matters respecting their common safety and happiness. To me, it appears, no assembly could be more constitutional, or absolutely necessary, and no petitions could come with greater weight, or have, (all things considered) a more likely tendency to gain audience, than when coming from all the colonies united therein. But these have been trampled under foot: all our humble petitions every way, and
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from every quarter, have been answered only by a repetition of injurious abuses and insults. The king and ministry have been obstinately bent upon carrying their design into effect, for taxing these colonies, overturning our free constitutions and establiſhing an abſolute tyranny over us, otherwiſe he would have heard us, when we have ſo often called for relief, for mercy, for juſtice. The real truth appears to be this. They were determined not to hear us, if we called ; accordingly they cut off all poſſibility of petitioning in what they pretend is the only regular, conſtitutional way, and then reſuſe to hear us, becauſe we do not preſent our petitions in *that* way. The neceſſity therefore, we have been under, of throwing off our connection with Great-Britain, renouncing king George, and his evil counſellors, and ſetting up as independent ſtates, plainly appears. We could get no relief : if we had ſubmitted to their uſurped juriſdiction, we muſt have been in a ſtate of the moſt abject ſlavery and wretchedneſs ; and becauſe we *could* not ſubmit, we are threatned to be devoured with the ſword. We have not been raſh and haſty in declaring

claring ourselves independent ; as the ten tribes were in their revolt from Rehobam ; but we have waited even unto long suffering. These thirteen years have we been suffering from the cruel hands of tyrants, and merciless oppressors ; “ in every stage of these oppressions we have petitioned,” entreated, *cried* for relief, but they have made their hearts as an adamant stone, that they might not hear us. When such a long train of abuses, and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object evinces a design to reduce us under absolute despotism, it is our right, it is our duty to throw off such government, and provide new guards for our future security. The king, ministry, and parliament of Great-Britain have by their foolish, mad, and infatuated measures, lost by far the greatest part of the British dominions, and that which was a constant source of wealth and strength to them. He surely must be either a very weak or a very wicked prince, who could perseveringly conduct in this manner. If he has been *led* by his ministers and counsellors, contrary to his own inclination, he must be very foolish and weak.

And

And we may here apply the saying of a much wiser king,* “Wo to thee, O land, when thy king is a child, and thy princes eat in the morning.” Also that other proverb I speech.† “Better is a poor and wise child, than an old and foolish king, who will no more be admonished. For out of prison he cometh to reign, whereas also he that is born in his kingdom, becometh poor : on the other hand, if these measures were agreeable to his will and inclination, and approved of by him, if he has all a long chosen, and kept in office, such men as he knew would favor and support his measures, he has been very wicked. Either of these characters is not very honorable. They must both, in some degree, belong to George the third : we therefore cheerfully renounce him, as totally unfit and unworthy to be our king and head : let them who like him, take him, and make the best of him. It is pity, that some way could not be discovered, whereby the few in these states, who appear peculiarly fond of such a king, might be transplanted to Great-Britain, *there* to participate in the fruits
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* Ecclesiastes, 10, 16,

† Ecclesiastes 4. 13, 14.

of his tyrannical reign. Such as have an ap-like disposition as Issachar, who would willingly couch down between two burdens ; who think, a quiet life, in a good land, though accompanied with slavery and bondage preferable to large sacrifices and great struggles for the sake of enjoying freedom and liberty, ought, if possible, to be gratified. It is a natural remark we may here make, that it had been easy for George to have retained these states in allegiance to his crown, and hearty affection to his person. Let a prince consider what it is that moves a people principally to affection, and dearneſs towards their ſovereign. He ſhall ſee that there needs no other artifice in it, than *to let them enjoy unmoleſted, what belong to them of right* : if *that* has been invaded, and violated in any kind or degree, whereby their affections are alienated, the next conſideration for a wiſe prince, who would be happy, is how to regain them : to which three things are equally neceſſary : to reſtate them in their former liberties : to revenge them of the authors of thoſe violations, and to ſecure them from the apprehenſions of the like again.

But

But to return.

What has been said above, shows that we have adopted independency of necessity, not of choice ; to which some object, and pretend to charge us with *aiming* all along at independency, with being seditious, and impatient of any government. To this I reply in the words of the Congress, in their first address to the inhabitants of Great-Britain. “ Be assured that these are not facts, but calumnies. Permit us to be as free as yourselves, and we shall ever esteem a union with you our greatest glory, and our greatest happiness: we shall ever be ready to contribute, all in our power, to the welfare of the empire: we shall consider your enemies as our enemies, and your interest as our own.” In the last address to the inhabitants of Great-Britain they say. “ It has been said that we refuse to submit to the restrictions on our commerce. From whence is this inference drawn ? not from our words ; we having repeatedly declared the contrary, and we again profess our submission to the several acts of trade and navigation passed before the year 1763, trusting, nevertheless, in the equity and

E justice

justice of parliament, that such of them as, upon cool and impartial consideration, shall appear to have imposed unnecessary, or grievous restrictions, will at some happier period, be repealed or altered. And we cheerfully consent to the operation of such acts of the British parliament as shall be restrained to our external commerce for the purpose of securing the commercial advantages of the whole empire to the mother country, and the commercial benefits of its respective members, excluding every idea of taxation internal or external, for raising a revenue on the subjects in America, without their consent." "We ask not (say they in their address to the people of Ireland) for pensions, for wealth, or for honors, but for the humble boon of being permitted to possess the fruits of honest industry, and to enjoy that degree of liberty, to which God, and the constitution have given us an undoubted right." Governor Johnstone in his speech in parliament vindicates the colonies from this aspersion, of aiming at independence. He says from his knowledge, and from conversation with Americans, friends to administration,

ministration, " That America is unanimous in resisting the power of taxing them by the British parliament where they have no representatives: that they will never yield this point: that in case they were made easy on this point, and secure as to their charter, on which their property depends, they would immediately return to their duty and obedience. This, I aver to be the universal report and opinion of men, with whom I have conversed, from America. If any one disputes the truth of my assertions, I now defy him to bring any evidence to contradict me, and I now undertake to bring men of the best character in support of what I aver,---I maintain that the sense of the best and wisest men, in this country, is on the side of the Americans: three to one, in Ireland, are on their side: the greatest characters in this country consider them as contending in the glorious cause of preserving those institutions which are necessary to the happiness, security, and elevation of the human mind." I add, if certain individuals were zealous advocates for American independency, it was by no means the voice of the Congress, nor of the body of the

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the people, in any of the colonies, until all hope of a reconciliation with Great-Britain was entirely cut off, but upon the terms of asking pardon for crimes we had never committed, and absolute unconditional submission.

It has been said, we have dared England to fight us, have bid them a challenge, and now complain of their cruelty and inhumanity because they accept it. Now this, if from any thing, must be collected from the *public* petitions and addresses of the Congress. I have attentively and impartially reviewed them all, and I find nothing bearing such an aspect. They have mentioned our grievances, and petitioned for redress. They have stated our rights, and declare their firm resolution to defend them to the last, and if Britain means, by force, to attempt to compel us to submission to her unrighteous edicts we shall endeavor to repel force by force. This is the most we have said, and does this look like a challenge? surely no. The Congress in their declaration setting forth the causes and necessity of taking up arms, say. “ We are reduced to the alternative of choosing an unconditional submission

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sion to the tyranny of imitated ministers, or resistance by force. The latter is our choice. We have counted the cost of this contest, and find nothing so dreadful as voluntary slavery. Honor, justice, humanity forbid us tamely to surrender that freedom which we received from our gallant ancestors, and which our innocent posterity have a right to receive from us. We cannot endure the infamy and guilt of resigning succeeding generations to that wretchedness which inevitably awaits them, if we basely entail hereditary bondage upon them. Lest this declaration should disquiet the minds of our friends and fellow subjects in any part of the empire, we assure them, that we mean not to dissolve that union which has so long, and so happily subsisted between us, and which we sincerely wish to see restored. Necessity has not yet driven us into that desperate measure, or induced us to excite any other nation to war against them. We have not raised armies with ambitious designs of separating from Great-Britain, and establishing independent States. We fight not for glory or for conquest. We exhibit to mankind the remarkable spectacle

tacle of a people attacked by unprovoked enemies, without any imputation, or even suspicion of offence. They boast of their privileges, and civilization, and yet proffer no milder conditions than servitude or death. In our own native land, in defence of the freedom that is our birth-right, and which we ever enjoyed, till the late violation of it, for the protection of our property acquired solely by the honest industry of our forefathers, and ourselves, against violence, actually offered, we have taken up arms. We shall lay them down when hostilities shall cease on the part of the aggressors, and all danger of their being renewed, shall be removed and not before." Thus we have bid no challenge; we have only declared we will maintain our rights; we only fight in our own defence: some among us indeed endeavor to persuade themselves, and others, that the oath of allegiance which many have taken, bind them to submit to those acts of administration we complain of, or by no means to resist them:---That if they resist they are guilty of perjury, and the most awful violation of their oath. To this, as they imagine, waughty and plausible

ble objection, I beg leave to reply ; that allegiance and protection are reciprocal duties, is due to rulers from their subjects while *they* are protected and secured in the enjoyment of their just rights, liberties, property and lives (which was the only design of the institution of civil government) but if rulers, instead of thus protecting and defending their subjects, use their power, influence and authority, to enslave, ruin and destroy their fellow-subjects ; allegiance is no longer due, whither men have expressly, or only implicitly taken the oath of allegiance and submission to the government. Between rulers and their subjects, there is always a covenant expressed or supposed, and rulers are under oath to govern according to the constitution, and fundamental laws of this State ; and the people even where they have taken express oaths of allegiance to their rulers, are thereby bound to obey them, no further than they govern and rule agreeable to the settled constitution. But when rulers, by leaping the bounds of constitution, violate the covenant or compact, between them, and the people ; the people are discharged from their oath of allegiance

giance, and it then is their *right*, their *duty* to oppose and resist them. In all covenants, contracts or compacts, where one party violates them, the other party is no longer held thereto, or bound thereby. For this reason is it, that although the government is under obligation to secure to every subject, the enjoyment of property, liberty and life ; yet when subjects rebel against lawful authority, are guilty of treasonable practices against good rulers, or the state, they are no longer entitled to protection, they have forfeited property, liberty or life, and the government may lawfully take either away, according to the nature and degree of their offences. Besides, this objection, if it has any weight in it, would at once support those justly exploded doctrines of passive obedience, and non-resistance ; doctrines directly contrary to the practice of the apostles, who yet preached up all *due* submission to civil government. For, if the oath of allegiance, which many actually take, and all are supposed to be under to their rulers (bind as they pretend) there must be ready submission yielded to all their commands, there must be no resistance offered to them in any cases, even
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where they enjoin and require things contrary to the constitution, to the nature and reason of things, inconsistent with the design of government, the well-being of the State, or repugnant to the express will of God. Whereas, "we are bound to God rather than men." I further add, this objection, if it proves any thing in the present case, proves too much ; it proves that GEORGE the third, has no *right* to the British crown, but that *that* is the right, the inheritance of the immediate heir of JAMES the second, or somebody else, no mortal can tell who.----But after all it is impossible to satisfy some people.

There are among us, men who professed to be friends to their country, and who *say*, they look upon the acts of the British parliament, we complain of, as cruel, unconstitutional and oppressive, and yet find fault with every step we take, with every measure we pursue, and endeavor to discourage people from attempting deliverance therefrom. But how can such men reconcile their profession and their conduct? They point out no other way wherein to look for, or expect relief. If they must find fault let them suggest some steps and mea-

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sures for public consideration, which they think adviseable to take. But it is not a little vain and arrogant for men, totally unacquainted with public affairs, the affairs of the State, and with the world, and who seldom go beyond the smoak of their own chimnies, to pretend to arraign the wisdom of the Congress, the wisdom of the Continent. We are remarkably united in the measures taken : We have petitioned, we have remonstrated : We have tried every way for relief : We have been driven to arms : We have been forced to an independency. Still the men cry out ; nothing is conducted as it ought to be : We are all undone ! “ Doubtless they are the men, and wisdom will die with them.” I grant all men have a right to canvass public measures, and to speak their minds. But then there is a deference due to the public judgment. Individuals, who dissent, should do it with modesty and self-diffidence, as not being certain but others may know *as well*, if not *much better* than they. If they protest, let them give their reasons, otherwise they had better be totally silent.

But not to enlarge. From what has been said above, from plain undeniable

facts

facts, it is evident these colonies *will* and *must* be justified, by the whole candid and impartial world in declaring themselves free and independent States, absolved from all allegiance to the British crown, and totally disconnected with the British empire.

I shall now make a few reflections upon, and inference from what has been offered.

It is a natural inference from sacred story, and from what has been said above, that kingly government is not agreeable to the divine will, and is often a very great evil. The will of God as made known by Gideon ; and the prophet Samuel expressly disapproves of government by kings. “ Near three thousand years passed away from the Mosaic account of the creation, *before* the Jews under a national delusion, asked a king, ---’ Till then their form of government (except in extraordinary cases where the Almighty interpolated) was a kind of republic administered by a judge, and the elders of the tribes. Kings they had none, and it was held sinful to acknowledge any being under that title but the Lord of hosts. And when a man seriously reflects on the
idolatrous

idolatrous homage paid to the persons of kings, we need not wonder that the Almighty, ever jealous of his honor, should disapprove of a form of government which so impiously invades the prerogative of heaven." No form of government but kingly or monarchical, is an invasion of God's prerogative; this is. It will be vain to alledge, in proofs of the divine approbation of kingly government, that we are commanded to *pray* for kings, and to *submit* unto kings. For, when in their folly, and "strong delusion," a people fix upon kingly, monarchical government, they must make the best of it, *pray* that their king may reign in righteousness and rule with judgment, and must submit to his rule and authority, *so long* as it can be done consistent with their duty to themselves, to posterity, to mankind and to God. The most high over all the earth, gave kings at first, to the Jews (as he sends war) in anger, and as a judgment, and it may be affirmed, that upon the whole, they have been a scourge to the inhabitants of the earth ever since. We in these States, are now evidently under the frowns of heaven for our many and great transgressions

transgressions : it is to be hoped we shall not “ add to our sins, this evil to ask us a king.”*

Again, we may infer that however faulty the king may be, and although he has forfeited the allegiance, and affection of this people, yet they who have advised him to such acts, and to such harsh and rigorous measures, as have divided the kingdom, and brought us into this condition, are veryly guilty in the sight of God, and must, with the king, answer another day before God, for all the evil consequences of their wicked advice, and rash conduct, and especially for that torrent of human blood with which our land is deluging. The acts of the British parliament, and the measures taken against us, have been mostly suggested, contrived, and urged by the notoriously infamous
Hutchinson

* It may be observed that new truths are often struck out by the collision of parties, in the eagerness of controversy, which otherwise would have lain hid. The divine disapprobation of a form of government by kings, I take to be one of this sort of truths. The times have led to a free inquiry into the origin, nature and design of civil government, and into the various forms which have obtained in the several ages of the world, and into the divine hereditary right of kings. And, I am fully convinced, the more this subject is controverted and considered, the clearer it will appear to unprejudiced minds, that kingly government is in fact contrary to the mind and will of God.

Hutchinson (late governor of this province) and his minions of this country, and furthered by men in place and power in Great-Britain. Leaving our *other* enemies ; the crimes of such as are of this land, who have been plotting their country's ruin, seem to pursue these bloody men, they are fallen into the pit they were digging for others, they are the most and *greatest* of them banished their native land, and fair inheritances ; many of them destitute, afflicted, tormented, and the voice of their brethren's blood, shed greatly by their means, crieth unto God from the ground. Nor are they entirely guiltless, let me here say, who, among ourselves, seem to think the war in which we are engaged, not just, or the attempt impracticable, and therefore will not assist in our defence when our *all* is at stake, but stand aloof from our troubles, and wish well to the cause of our adversaries. They who decline the service, and will not lend an helping hand, while we are struggling for life, must expect to meet with some heavy judgment* " Curse ye Meroz (said the angel of the Lord) curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof, because they

* Judges vi. 23.

they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty." If our cause be good and just (and who can deny this) if heaven has conducted us to an independency, if this "cause is from God," as the revolt of the ten tribes was, if when the salvation of our country calls for our aid, we refuse it, thro' opposition, cowardice, or any other cause, the curse of God will pursue us. "Cursed be he that doth the work of the Lord deceitfully, and cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood."†

Once more, As we have been necessitated to separate from Great-Britain, we must make the best of a state of Independency. Notwithstanding we give up that *state* with reluctance ; yet I am fully convinced that Independency is, in every view, the interest of America. If any among us are desirous of being satisfied that this is our interest, and that we are able to support ourselves therein, under the patronage of that infinitely wise Being who has brought us hitherto, let them divest themselves of prejudice and prepossession, and read that incomparable pamphlet called "*Common Sense*," with its additions,

† Jeremiah XLVIII, 10.

ditions, and they will have all the satisfaction they can reasonably demand. Some among us think we do but dream, when we talk of supporting ourselves as a separate people :---They have thought so in other instances, and lived to see, what they called our dreams, come to pass.

Let me here subjoin, that since this mighty revolution has taken place in America, there must of necessity be a change in our modes of civil government ; and this is a matter of the greatest consequence, as to this life, and ought to engage our closest attention. It will be unpardonable in us to submit to tyranny and oppression within, when we are hazarding every thing dear to us, to defend ourselves against it from without. A plan of government will soon be laid before the people of this State, for their consideration. Let us not hastily adopt any one form ; and while we reject the defects, let us preserve the virtues and excellencies of our ancient mode. Let us coolly examine, and thoroughly weigh the plans already adopted by any sister States, and improve upon them. And whatever form we fix upon, let us be peculiarly careful that

that every part of the State is fully and freely represented in our legislative Assembly. A large and full representation of a people, is of the greatest importance to the State. The people ought to retain in their own hands a check upon the legislative powers, by having their elections very frequent, at least, once in a year. This is a *right* we should be peculiarly tenacious of, nor *ever* upon *any* consideration, give it up. Power is too intoxicating, to be committed for *any* great length of time, to the hands of *any* man, or *any* body of men, Long parliaments are fountains of corruption and venality, are totally inconsistent with liberty in the people, and in time, fail not to work the ruin of a State. Further, if the form of government we shall adopt, consist of more than one branch, each ought to be entirely independent of, that it may not in the least be influenced by the other. Hereditary succession in legislatures, this people must be greatly deluded ever to admit of. In a word, the plan of government ought to be noble and generous, securing equal liberty and happiness, both civil and religious, to every individual ;

that foreigners may find among us an asylum from tyranny, slavery and persecution. *

Finally, Since we are become independent on an earthly power, we eminently need the divine favor, smiles, protection and blessing, and should be concerned, therefore to conduct in such a manner as to secure the same. As our revolt is, undoubtedly, of God, he is saying to us this day, as he said to Jeroboam and the ten tribes of Israel, "It shall be if you will hearken unto all that I command you, and will walk in my ways, and do what is right in my sight, to keep my statutes and commandments, that I will be with you, and build you up." To establish ourselves in our Independency let us not take ways and measures which are sinful, as Jeroboam and the ten tribes of Israel did. Let us be careful to profess, maintain, encourage, and promote the Protestant religion, as far as
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* It is the duty and interest of a people to grant free and full liberty of conscience, in religious matters, to all sects, parties and denominations, to whom it can be allowed, consistent with the safety of the State. Religious intollerance in any sect, is a sufficient, and the only reason why that sect ought not to be tolerated. This might easily be made evident, but would require a treatise by itself. They who want further satisfaction upon points of this nature, I would refer to that inestimable volume, entitled "*The Palladium of Conscience.*"

in us lieth, in opposition to Heathenism, all Idolatry. That we may be supported, let us not too much countenance, and encourage such neighbours and states, as are enemies to the Protestant cause and interest ; lest, if we should, we be tempted to depart from the living God. God has ever been the friend and patron of the American Israel, and he will continue so, if we act up to our character and obligation. “ The Lord is with you, while you be with him, and if you seek him, he will be found of you : But if you forsake him, he will forsake you.” * As said Azariah unto Aza, and all Judah and Benjamin. It is of more importance for us to keep in covenant with God, and to be upon good terms with heaven, than to be in league and friendship with the most potent States. Let us be careful to keep up among us, the religion of Jesus Christ pure and uncorrupted by human additions or mixtures, and the worship of God unadulterated, and then the God, “ In whom our fathers trusted, and were delivered,” will delight to build us up, and to plant us ; he will give us success in the present war, he will rebuke the king and people

* 2 Chronicles xv. 2.

people of Great-Britain, with their allies, and say to them, as he did to Rehoboam and the two tribes who adhered to him, when they were about to levy war upon the ten tribes ; “ Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren, the children of Israel ; return every man to his house, for this thing is of me.” He will disappoint the devices of our enemies, and make them to be at peace with us.” “ If God be thus for us, who can be against us.” We shall be safe and happy. * “ There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms : and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee, and shall say, Destroy them. Israel shall then dwell in safety alone : the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine, also his heaven shall drop down dew. Happy art thou, O Israel : who is like unto thee, O people saved by the LORD, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency ! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee, and thou shalt tread upon their high places.”

* Deuteronomy xxxiii. 26, 27, 28, 29.

places." We are ready to anticipate those happy times, when these days of tribulation shall be at an end ; when our brethren shall return from the high places of the field, when we with them, shall set under our own vines and fig-trees quietly enjoying the inheritance our Ancestors have left us, and the fruits of our own hard labor, and honest industry, and have none to make us afraid. " Safe from the enemy of the wilderness ; safe from the griping hand of arbitrary sway, and cruel superstition ; here shall be the late founded seat of peace and freedom. Here shall arts and sciences, the companions of tranquility and *liberty*, flourish. Here shall dwell uncorrupted faith, the pure worship of God unawed, uninterrupted ; here shall it extend itself, and its benign influences among them, who have hitherto " Sat in darkness, in the region, and under the shadow of death." " Truth shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness shall look down from Heaven : Yea, the Lord shall give that which is good ; righteousness shall go before him, and shall set us in the way of his steps." New sources of wealth shall continually open
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upon us, our trade shall flourish and increase, this land shall be the Mart of all nations ; here shall we become great among the powers of the earth, by growing numbers ; for this vine, which the Lord hath planted, shall extend her branches from sea to sea, and from the rivers unto the end of the earth. Here shall we enjoy the most perfect freedom and liberty, while we live, and transmit the same, as a good inheritance, to our children, and they to theirs, 'till time shall be no more ; for “ The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting, upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children’s children, to such as keep his covenant, and to them who remember his commandments to do them.”¹² Let us rejoice that the Lord reigneth, and let us patiently trust in him, and wait his time for compleat deliverence. And may God fulfill to us his ancient promises, delivered in the noblest strains, by the enlightned prophet, with which I close.

* “ O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted : Behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colors, and lay thy foundation with sapphires, and I will make thy

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¹² Isaiah LIV. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, — 17.

thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones. And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children. In righteousness shalt thou be established : Thou shalt be far from oppression, for thou shalt not fear, and from terror, for it shall not come near thee. Behold they shall surely gather together, but not by me : Whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake. No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper," * " For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron. I will also make thy officers peace, and thine *exactors* righteousness. Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, waiving nor destruction within thy borders ; but thou shalt call thy walls salvation, and thy gates praise. Thy people also shall be all righteous : They shall inherit the land forever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands that I may be glorified. A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation : I the Lord will hasten it in his time."

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* Isaiah, LX. 17, 18, 21, 22.