

*A Servant of GOD dismissed from LA-
BOUR to REST.*

A
Funeral SERMON,
PREACHED

At the INTERMENT of his late EXCELLENCY
JONATHAN BELCHER, Esq;

GOVERNOR of his Majesty's Province
Of *NEW-JERSEY*, &c. &c.

Who departed this LIFE at ELIZABETH-TOWN,

August 31, 1757.

A G E D, 76.

BY THE LATE REVEREND
Mr. AARON BURR, A. M. *K*
President of the College of *New-Jersey*.

DAVID, After he had served his own Generation by the Will of
God, fell on Sleep, and was laid unto his Fathers, *Act. xiii. 36.*
—By it, he being dead, yet speaketh, *Heb. xi. 4.*

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EXHIBIT

REPORT

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To the Honourable
 Mrs. *Mary Louisa Emelia Belcher,*

Relict of his late EXCELLENCY
Jonathan Belcher, Esq;
 Governor of the Province of *New-Jersey,* &

M A D A M,

AS the following Discourse was delivered at your D^y fire, and is now at your Request, made public, one far inferior to its Author, it justly claims a Right to your Patronage. I therefore beg Leave to present it to you, in this disadvantageous Form of a posthumous Piece, hoping the Perusal may afford you an Entertainment not unsuitable to your present afflicted Circumstances. My sacred Character forbids, as I think my natural Temper disdains, the Meanness of descending to fulsome Strains of Flattery: but such I am confident it will not be judged by any who have been so happy as to be at all acquainted with the Merits of your Character, for me to say, that must be no small Satisfaction to you now, to reflect, with what conjugal Tenderhess and assiduous Care, you have for Years past, attended that dignified and excellent Person whose Virtues are illustrated, and whose Death is lamented, and improved in the following Sheets.—As that patient Watchfulness, with which you endeavoured to mitigate his various Maladies, and to relieve him under extream Weakness, and the growing Infirmities of advanced Age, have justly been the Admiration of all Observers; so, I doubt

not, it yields you solid Satisfaction upon the Review, that you have denied yourself so many of the fashionable Amusements, which Persons of your Rank commonly think they may, with Innocence indulge, for the Sake of suppoing a Life of so much Worth, and of such particular Importance to this Province. Next to the blessed GOD, unto you, *Madam*, our Thanks are due, that we have enjoyed our most worthy Governor so long. You have indeed been a distinguished Blessing and Ornament to his Family, the Affairs of which you have conducted with admirable Prudence and Oeconomy. But the Largeness of your Heart, hath prompted you to a more diffusive Benevolence,—a Benevolence, extending its Regards to all around you. This engages me to express the Sentiments of a grateful People, in acknowledging the hearty Concern you have always appeared to have, for the best Interests of those who had the Felicity to be governed by your much honoured Husband. The Sick and the Distressed, whom you have, with an unparrelled, but yet graceful Condescension, both visited and kindly ministered unto, will, I am persuaded, long retain a pleasing and thankful Sense of your truly Christian Compassion; and now, when you are about to remove to distant Parts, unite with Multitudes of others, who have beheld that amiable Assemblage of Vertues that adorn your Life, in sincerest Wishes that indulgent Heaven would take you under its continued Protection; favour your declining Days, with such Supports from Religion, and a Prospect of Eternity, as are far superior to any Thing which can be expected from a vanishing World;—and finally, grant you a peaceful Dismission from the Sorrows of this Life, to the Mansions of the Blessed. Which also is the Prayer of,

MADAM, *With the Urmost Respect,*
Your Most Obedient,
 Newark-Mountains, *And Very Humble Servant*
 10th Octo. 1757.

CALEB SMITH.

THE PREFACE.

IT would be great Injustice to the Public, as well as an Injury to the Memory of the worthy and amiable Author of the ensaing Discourse, not to inform the World, of the Disadvantages and unusual Circumstances which attended both its Composition and Delivery, and likewise the Manner in which all-wise Heaven hath made it necessary it should be sent abroad, if published at all. With this View, it may not be improper, or unacceptable to those Readers who had the Happiness of President BURR's Acquaintance, for me to go a little back, and give a short historical Sketch of that surprizing Activity with which he closed a most useful Life. Being in a low State of Health, he travelled a long Journey to Stockbridge, upon a Visit to his Father-in-Law, the Revd. Mr. EDWARDS*, which, tho' then a hot sultry Season, he dispatched in a few Days. Soon after his Return home, he came back to Elizabeth-Town, to wait upon the General-Assembly then sitting, to request, I am told, that the Students of the College might be exempted from an Attendance upon military Exercises, which some Officers of the Country Militia were about to oblige them to. With how much Honour, or with what friendly Regard to the Reputation and Interest of Learning, this and some other Embarrassments of a different Kind, have been thrown in the Way

* This Gentleman is chosen his Successor, in the Presidency of the College.

of that flourishing Society, I shall not take upon me to decide; but leave the World to judge. This happened upon the 19th of August: On the 21st of the same Month, this pious and good Man, came to mourn with an unworthy Friend, upon one of the most moving, heart-affecting Instances of Mortality. On this sorrowful Occasion, he preached extempore (having had no Time for Preparation) an excellent Sermon from these Words, Willing rather to be absent from the Body, and to be present with the Lord. He then complained of being much indisposed; however, returned to Prince-Town, and within about a Week, rode another Journey to Philadelphia, to take Care of some Concerns of the College, upon the Welfare of which, he was ever intent. While he was on the Way, his Disorder seemed to put on the Form of a slight intermitting Fever; but according to his usual Engagedness, in pressing thro' Difficulties which to others would appear insuperable, he came home, and immediately was notified of the Death of Governor BELCHER, and that it was expected he would improve the Solemnity of his Excellency's Interment, and do Honour to his Memory, by a Funeral-Sermon. This, amidst all his Weakness and Faigue, he determined to undertake, contrary to the earnest Solicitations of Friends, and the tender Intreaties of an affectionate Wife, that he would spare himself. I take Notice, upon the Top of the first Page of the written Sermon, he dates it September 2, which left him but two Days to prepare, and make a Journey of about 40 Miles, to attend the Funeral at Elizabeth-Town, which was upon a Lord's-Day September 4. In all this Time, he had frequent Returns of Fever, even when he preached the Sermon, it was judged, he was fitter for a sick Bed, than to have been in a Pulpit; but his great Respect for the Deceased, and his ardent Desire to make Use of such an Opportunity for attempting to do Good, when there was a vast Assembly convened, and many of the principal Gentlemen in the Province present, bore him on beyond what his Health would allow. It grieved

ved his Friends to behold the Languor of his Countenance, and observe the Failure of his harmonious Delivery, not having Strength for that clear Utterance, or Spirit, for that free, lively, and animated Address, with which he used to entertain and charm an Audience. Notwithstanding his Malady increased, he returned home for the last Time; soon grew much worse, until his Disorder terminated in a fixed Fever, seated upon his Nerves, and brought on the inexpressibly lamented Dissolution of his much enfeebled Frame, September 24. Thus did this excellent Man tread the Steps of his divine Master, in going about doing Good; and willingly spent himself in Ways of Usefulness. He finished his Days, as he had led his Life, in a busy Scene of most active Services for his God, his Country, the Churches, the College, and his Friends. I am quite unconcerned at the Redicule which Persons of an indifferent unfeeling Turn of Mind, and of gay Spirits, may possibly be disposed to throw out upon this artless Narrative of Events, which to them may appear trifling: Their Hearts have never felt the Shocks of Sorrow, or been made to bleed! To such, whom Grief hath soften'd to Humanity, this pensive Story, with all its minute Detail of Particulars, may seem somewhat remarkable and affecting, nor indeed unworthy of a Place here, as it exhibits the very peculiar Circumstances in which the following Discourse was produced, together with the concluding Acts of a Life unspeakably dear to many Individuals, and in which the Public was greatly interested. The Reader will easily suppose, it was not possible there should be the utmost Accuracy in a Performance thus hastily effected under constant Illness. And as my much honoured Friend never had a Moment's Health afterwards, it has been unhappily denied the finishings of his masterly Hand. Upon the first View of Manuscript, I concluded, from the many Chasms and broken Sentences which were obvious in several Parts of it, that its Imperfections were such, it could not with tolerable Decency, be made to put on the Appearance of any Thing

Thing which had its Derivation from President BURR. But perusing it more carefully, I found the Character of his late EXCELLENCY drawn entire, the explanatory Part above half compleated, and but little wanting in the concluding Reflections; therefore as I had heard it preached, I consented, at the Instance of several Persons who had a great Value for both the Deceased, to revise, and fit it for the public View in the best Manner I was able. To what Purpose I have executed the Task assigned me, those who knew the Author's Manner of Writing, must judge; for my own Part, it would have been a much greater Pleasure to me, to have beheld the defective Parts filled up, and the whole published by a more judicious, correct, and elegant Pen, than I can make any Pretences to. The attentive Reader, I am very sure, cannot fail of remarking when he considers, how soon the Author was to be dismissed from all his own Employments, and discharged from the Trials of this Life, what an Air of Premonition respecting his own Lot, there appears in a Variety of Expressions throughout the Discourse. I have only to assure the Public, that the most shining of this Sort, were his own. While he was giving his last and dying Testimony for God and Religion, in a public Manner, to the World, and bewailing the Death of the chief Magistrate, or one of the principal Gods, he seems to have been preaching the funeral Sermon of the Father of the Sons of the Prophets, and the greatest Master in our Israel. If my Countrymen hearken to the last solemn Warning of this sagacious and faithful Watchman, I shall have Cause to bless God, I have been made an Instrument of putting it into their Hands. That a divine Blessing may attend it, upon the Heart and Life of every Reader, is the Prayer of One who accounts it a Favour he lived under the Administration of Governor BELCHER, and was admitted to the Friendship of Mr. BURR.

C. Smith.

A

Funeral SERMON, &c.

DANIEL XII. 13.

*But go thou thy Way till the End be ; for thou shalt rest,
and stand in thy Lot, at the End of the Days.*

WHAT I design from the Words, is,
I. To take Notice of the Character of the
Person to whom they were spoken, and
explain them as they were applied to him.

II. MAKE some Observations upon the Words thus
explained.

III. CONCLUDE with an Improvement suitable to the
present mournful Occasion.

I AM in the first Place, to take Notice of the Character
of the Person to whom the Words of our Text were spoken,
and explain them as they were applied to him.

And here,

I. THE Words were directed to that eminent Servant,
and Prophet of the Lord, DANIEL, who was carried Captive
to Babylon, when he was very young, in the Reign of
Jeboiakim, King of Judah. He was early chosen with
his three Companions, to continue in Nebuchadnezzar's
Court, where they were instructed in all the Knowledge

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of the *Chaldeans*.—**DANIEL** soon gave such Discoveries of an extraordinary Genius, and rare Qualifications, as distinguished him above the Rest, and raised him to Places of greatest Power and Trust in that widely extended Empire. And it was very remarkable, that he continued in high Favour at Court, under several succeeding Monarchs, viz. *Nebuchadnezzar, Evil-Merodach, Belsbazzar, Darius, the Mede, and Cyrus, the Persian*: These Princes loaded him with Honours, and trusted him with the most weighty Concerns of the State, notwithstanding he opposed the corrupt idolatrous Religion established by Law, refused to bow down to their Idols, and openly worshipped and prayed to the God of *Israel*; tho he was strictly commanded to pray to none other Deity, but the King himself, by a severe Edict, that was stupidly published, and as stupidly obey'd, by the Rest of the People. **DANIEL** was full in the generous Principles of Religious Liberty, and well knew, that no Authority short of Heaven, can bind the Consciences of Men; and that a corrupt and false Religion, is never a Whit the truer, or better, for being established by depraved and fallible Men.

WITHOUT taking Notice of him in his extraordinary Character as a Prophet, unto whom God gave much clearer Discoveries of his Designs, relating to the *World* and the *Church*, than to any of the other Prophets;—I would just remark on his Character,

1, *THAT* he was truly and eminently pious; he discovered, and recommended true Religion in the whole of his Conduct. He maintained a supreme Regard to the blessed God, and studied in all his Ways, to approve himself to the divine Acceptance: The Love and Fear of God, were the ruling Principles in his Heart, and they were so powerful, as not to be overcome by the Flatteries or Frowns of the World. He preserved Integrity, and resolutely maintained Religion in a most corrupt and wicked Time, and that in a Place where Vice prevailed, and rode triumphant, under the strongest Temptations, to viol-

late the *One*, and renounce the *Other*. The Favour and Friendship of his God, was what he valued, above the Favour of the whole World; and his Displeasure he dreaded more, than Death itself. He was therefore ready to sacrifice his Liberty, his Honour, and his Life, rather than the Peace of his Mind, and the Prospect of being finally accepted by his Judge. With what undaunted Courage does he address his royal Master: *Our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery Furnace; and he will deliver us out of thine Hand, O King: But if not, be it known unto thee, O King, that we will not serve thy Gods, nor worship the Golden Image which thou hast set up.** How noble and exalted a Character is this! especially when preserved in the Midst of the Grandeur, Honours and Temptations of a corrupt Court. This, *My Brethren*, is the Honour which comes from God. How much greater and more illustrious than that which comes from Men!

2d, *HE* was eminent for his *Wisdom and Knowledge*; not only that which is from above, that is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be intreated†; but he had a great Insight into the Times and Seasons; the Affairs of States and Kingdoms. Tho' *Babylon* at that Time, was the most remarkable Place for Learning in the World, and was full of wise Men; yet there was none among them comparable to *DANIEL*. For it is said, *As for these four Children,*

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God

* It is plain from the Quotation of this Passage, in such a Connection, that the Author supposed, from *DANIEL*'s known Character, as a determined Adherent to, and devout Worshipper of the true God, that he would not fail of joining his illustrious Companions in their heroic Remonstrance and Opposition against the prevailing Idolatry; which, to be sure, is highly probable, and can hardly be doubted; tho' it be confessedly difficult to assign any satisfactory Reasons for their being no Mention made of his Name throughout the whole of that memorable Transaction. However it be, this we know from his Conduct in similar Instances, that in a Case so circumstanced, his Sentiments and Behaviour would certainly have been of a Piece with theirs.

† *JAMES* iii. 17.

God gave them Knowledge and Skill, in all Learning and Wisdom, and DANIEL had Understanding in all Visions and Dreams: And in all Matters of Wisdom and Understanding, that the King enquired of them, he found them ten Times better than all the Magicians and Astrologers that were in all his Realm †. That the Wisdom of DANIEL was celebrated throughout those Countries, is evident from what God himself, by one of his Prophets, speaks ironically to a conceited proud Prince of Tyrus. Behold, thou art wiser than DANIEL; there is no secret that they can hide from thee.

3d, *WE* may remark his Love and Affection for his Country and People. This he discovers by his fervent Supplications for their Welfare, and his ardent Addresses at the Throne of Grace, for their Deliverance out of Captivity. He is represented as one of those extraordinary Persons, who, by their Intercessions with God, might save them, if any Thing could. How importunately does he plead their Cause, in the 9th Chapter of this Book, when he set his Face unto the Lord God, to seek by Prayer and Supplication, with Fasting and Sackcloth, and Ashes*. He did not forget them in the Hurries and Grandeurs of his advanced Station; and no doubt used his Interest at the *Babylonish-Court* for their Release. It is truly noble and Praise-worthy for Men in high Posts to be animated with a Love to their Country, in Times of publick Calamity and Distress.

4th, *HE* discovered great Integrity, and unspotted Fidelity, in the Discharge of his Duty as Statesman. His being advanced to be Prime Minister, in so wicked and corrupt a Court, is a clear Proof of this. Nothing but an high Opinion of his extraordinary Abilities and undoubted Integrity, could have induced them to prefer, and employ a Man, whom they hated, and persecuted for his Religion. He was the first of the three Presidents that were set over the 120 Princes of the Provinces. They knew that a Man

† DANIEL i. 17 and 20. || EZEK. xxviii. 3. * EZEK. xiv. 14.

Man who feared God, and made Conscience of all his Ways, might be depended upon. And how happy would it be for the World, if Men of this Character were always employed in the Courts of Princes!—But his Enemies gave the fullest Evidence of his being faithful to the utmost, by their malicious, tho' fruitless Attempts to find something against him. *The Presidents and Princes sought to find Occasion against DANIEL, concerning the Kingdom, but they could find none Occasion nor Fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any Error or Fault found in him. Then said these Men, we shall not find any Occasion against this DANIEL, except we find it against him concerning the Law of his God†.* It is hard to say, whether their Malice or Weakness was the greater; that they should try to fault, and find Occasion against him, for that which was the greatest Excellency, viz. A Reverence for, and steadfast Adherence to the Law of his God.

THIS leads me to open the Words as they were addressed to him.

BUT go thou thy Way, &c. This,

1. *SOME* have thought is a Discharge from his prophetic Office. As if the Lord had said to him, "You are anxious to know what will be the End of these Things, and to have further Discoveries of the future State of the Church, both as to its Trials and Prosperity. But no further Visions and Revelations are to be made to you; but for the future they will be made to other Prophets. *Go thou thy Way.*" However, it is by no Means probable, that God would deal thus with so faithful and eminent a Servant, as to dismiss him from his Office & Employment, before he left the World. I therefore,

2. *TAKE* the Words to be a Dismission by Heaven, from the present World. The Business and Employments, the Trials and Troubles of it, *q. d.* "as to the Times and Seasons of the Church, its future Trials and Triumphs;

† DANIEL vi. 4, 5.

"umphs; the Periods are fixed by unerring Wisdom.
 "They are sealed up and reserved in the Womb of divine
 "Providence, to be accomplished in their proper Time.
 "You must be content with the Discoveries you have al-
 "ready had;—you will not live to see the important
 "Events;—the Accomplishment of those interesting
 "Things you have prophesied of. And therefore,
 "you have no further Duty relating to Matters here
 "below, but are now dismissed from all your Em-
 "ployments in this State of Trial, and are called to a
 "State of Rest and Reward;—your Body shall rest in
 "the Grave until the Resurrection; and your Soul to be
 "joined to the *General Assembly of the first born, and the*
 "*Spirits of just Men made perfect*; there you will rest
 "till *Time shall be no more*. And you shall stand in your
 "*Lot at the End of the Days*, i. e. at the last great Day,
 "when God shall judge the World in Righteousness." The
 Righteous are represented as *standing in Judgment*, while
 the Wicked of all Ranks shall *hide themselves*, and flee for
 Shelter and Concealment, to the *Dens, and Rocks of the*
Mountains. Lot signifies ones State or Condition of Life;
 and seems to be an Allusion to the Land of *Canaan*, where
 the Inheritances were divided by Lot, when the *Israelites*
 first entered, and took Possession of that Country; which
 was a Type of that better Country, the heavenly *Canaan*,
 where all the pious *Jews* expected a Lot or Portion; so
 that the Meaning is, that he should in the last Day be ac-
 cepted by his Judge, and possess an Inheritance incorrup-
 tible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. What confirms
 this Explanation, is the advanced Age of this eminent
 Prophet, DANIEL being then near an hundred Years old;
 —we hear no more of him after the *first Year of Cyrus*.

II. This brings me to make the following Observations.
 1st OBS. *That Persons of the greatest Qualifications,*
and most eminent Usefulness, must be dismissed from their
Stations and Employments here below, and have nothing
more to do in them to the End of the World. However
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important the Work may be ; how well soever they may be qualified for it ; or, howsoever necessary their Continuance may seem for the World of Mankind, *They must go their Way.* Our Fathers, where are they ? And the Prophets, do they live for ever ? They have all finished their Course, and are called from their Labours here, to more noble Employments above. We are appointed here by the great Captain of our Salvation, and must watch and labour until he comes and gives us a Dismission. He has assigned us our Work, and fixed our Station ; and, according to the Time he has appointed, he says to one and another, *Go thy Way ;—take thy Rest ;—* let others succeed, and take their Turn.

SOME are called off in the Midst of their Days and Usefulness ; others, in a good old Age, having, like an Hireling, wrought out the whole Day. Of the latter Sort, were *Moses, David and Daniel* ; and of the former, I might mention *John the Baptist, Stephen*, the first Christian Martyr, and others, who seem to have been bidden to *go their Way*, before the Work was done in which they were engaged.

WE may here offer a few Reasons to solve the Difficulty that may arise in the Mind, at this Method of the divine Conduct.

1st REASON.

THE Good, as well as the Bad, the Greatest, as well as the Meanest among Mankind, are all subject to the common Law of Mortality. It is appointed for all Men once to die †. This is the unalterable Condition of human Nature in its present fallen State ; for as Sin is universal, so must Death necessarily be, because *Death is the Wages of Sin**. All of every Degree and Character, are Dust, and must, without Fail, return to Dust again. *There is no Man that hath Power over the Spirit, to retain the Spirit ; neither hath he Power, in the Day of Death, and there is no Discharge in that War ‡.* Now, as this is the Lot to

‡ Zech. i. 5. † Heb. ix. 27. * Rom. vi. 23. ‡ Eccles viii. 8.

which all are subject, the Servants of God may, with highest Reason, leave it with him to determine, when the common Law of Mortality shall take Place upon them; it is fitting God should appoint unto all, their Season and Work; and continue them *in*, or dismiss them *from* their Labour, *when*, and after *what Manner* seemeth Good unto himself.

2d REASON.

THIS may be intended to shew us, that God can carry on his own Designs, in governing the World, without such Instruments as we may be ready to think needful. The World is apt to run into two Extremes, in Regard to Persons who have been employed in Affairs of great Weight and Importance; either on the one Hand to despise them, and set light by their real Worth; or on the other Hand to idolize and raise them above the Condition of mere Instruments, supposing that without them the grand Concerns they have had the Management of, must inevitably sink, and go to Ruin. Now, when the latter is the Case, God is pleased sometimes to say, by the Voice of his Providence, to such Persons as have been *thought of above*, what they ought, "*Go ye your Way, I will teach the Children of Men, that I am able to conduct the Affairs of my Kingdom, without the Aid of those Instruments which they have fondly imagined to be so necessary for the Purposes of my Government.*" The Lord is jealous of his own Honour, and when by the Success that has attended the Undertakings of eminent and useful Men, the Eyes of People are drawn off, and their Regards diverted from God himself; he sees fit to grant them a *Quietus*, with this View, to vindicate his own Sufficiency, to manage and execute his Designs without them.

3d REASON.

GOD thus dismisses those Servants of his, whose Labours he has crowned with the greatest Success, that others may succeed them, whom he designs to raise up, qualify for, and employ in the same Service. It is easy to observe, how
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the Glory of God, and the Lustre of his blessed Name, is conspicuously manifested, by his distinguishing Numbers of Persons with those excellent Endowments which are requisite for filling elevated Stations in Life; then bringing them upon the Stage, and giving them an Opportunity of displaying those Qualifications, and improving those Talents and Gifts wherewith he himself hath enriched them. It seemeth Good to the glorious God, to employ Numbers of Persons in the same Service, by which Variety, he exhibits to the View of the World, the Riches of his own Fullness, whereby he is abundantly able to qualify and furnish Instruments according as his own Work calls for them. Thus, when a celebrated *Moses* dies, a pious, wise, and magnanimous *Joshua* is raised up in his Place, and conducts the vast *Israelitish* Host, into the promised Land. When *Daniel* is laid in Dust, the Lord's People shall not want Prophets, *Haggai* and *Zechariah* are raised up to stand in his Stead.

4th REASON.

A farther Reason for this Measure in divine Providence, is the Kindness and Love which God bath to his People, in calling them from a State of Affliction, to a State of Happiness. Tho' their Labours may be needed by the World, and their Services be greatly missed, yet, as to their own particular, their Dismission will be highly advantageous. St. Paul was willing rather to be absent from the Body, and be present with the Lord†. He had a Desire to depart, and be with Christ, which was far better than to live in the Flesh. It would indeed be a most gloomy Consideration, if the Lord's Servants had nothing to look for, but a perpetual Abode, amidst the Labours, Sorrows and Temptations, of the present Life. But I shall anticipate a*

2d OBS. I would make, which is, *That when God dismisseth his People from their Employments here, he calls them to a State of Rest in a better World. They go their*

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† 2 Cor. v. 8.

* Phil. i. 22, 23.

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Way to a Land of Quietude, and perfect Tranquility. For there remaineth a Rest to the People of God§. The Servants of the Lord, like Lazarus, here have their evil Things; but at Death, they shall receive their good Things in Abraham's Bosom, in the Paradise of God. Blessed are the Dead, which die in the Lord, from henceforth, yea saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their Labours, and their Works do follow them†. The Servants of the Lord having Rest, implies a Freedom from all those Things which have hitherto deprived them of it, and a being brought to the Enjoyment of that which will fully satisfy their Souls, and render them compleatly happy. Here, 1st, It implies a Freedom from those Things which have hitherto deprived them of Rest; a few of which may be hinted at. As, 1st, They rest from Sin, and all the Burthen and Perplexity which arises from it. This often fills them with great Anxiety here, and makes them drag on their Lives heavily, with Hands hung down, and feeble Knees: It is indeed the grand Source of all the Trouble the People of God are exercised with; hereby they are forced to struggle and fight, and to maintain an unremitting painful Warfare. Many Times when they would do Good, Evil is present with them, for which Reason they are obliged to Self-Denial and Mortification. Sin makes them cry out, O wretched Men that we are, who shall deliver us from the Body of this Death‡. Their Inn-Dwelling Corruptions cause them great Heaviness, and continual Sorrows of Heart; the Flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the Flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that they cannot do the Things that they would. This is their sad and distressing Case here; whereas in Heaven, Sin, that worst of Evils, will be wholly done away; the least Remainder of it will not be found in them; they will entirely put off the old Man, at Death, with all his Affections and Lusts. When they lay down these Tabernacles of Clay, their purified*
Spirits

§ Heb. iv 9. † Rev. xiv 13. ‡ Rom. vii 24. * Gal. v 17.

Spirits enter the Regions of Light without any corrupt Dispositions, or the least Inclination to Sin; neither will be found any more Place for Temptation.

2d, *THEY* will rest likewise from all the Crosses, Disappointments and Troubles of the World. The Saints, even those of the most dignified Character, and of the highest spiritual Attainments, are here subject to the like Sorrows and Distresses with others; similar Events happen to all. Yea, God sees fit sometimes to prove his own Children, with peculiar Calamities, and they are almost ready in the Anguish of their Spirits, to adopt the Complaint of *Asaph*, *Verily we have cleansed our Hearts in vain, and washed our Hands in Innocency; for all the Day long have we been plagued and chastened every Morning* †. But when God gives them a Dismission from this World, a full Period will be put to all the sad Scenes and trying Disasters of the Life that now is; no more dismal Changes shall they be called to pass thro'; their *Treasure neither Moth nor Rust shall corrupt, nor Thieves break thro' and steal*. The City into which they shall be brought, hath unshaken, everlasting Foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God. There will be no disappointed Hopes, no frustrate Purposes, no Blasts of Fame or Falls from Honour; no piercing Bercavements, nor indeed any kind of grievous Tribulation. All will be stable Peace, and uniform Serenity, for the Enjoyments of that World are permanent, and for ever abiding.

3d, *THEY* will also rest from their Toil and Labour. Tho' Heaven will not be without its proper Work; yet the Business and Employments of it, will be attended with no Manner of Weariness or Fatigue; whereas the Contrary is too often the Case with the best of Men when engaged in Services here, that are most pleasing to their renewed, sanctified Nature. Every Thing toilsome and laborious shall be quite done away; there the *Wicked cease from troubling, and the Weary are at Rest*.

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2d, *THEIR*

2d, *THEIR Rest shall likewise consist in having the Desires of their Souls fully satisfied.* What renders the Saints restless in the present World, is, that they come so far short of the Glory of God, are so defective in their best Services; have no more Life, Vigour, and steady fervent Engagements in the Ways of Godliness; that they know and enjoy no more of God, and live at such a Distance from him; have no more Conformity to his holy Image; that they love him no more, and serve him no better: These, and the like Things, render their Souls restless, and obstruct their Happiness. But when they have obtained Leave to go their *Way*, and *rest till the End*, they shall be presented Faultless before the Presence of divine Glory. Their Natures shall be restored to perfect Rectitude, and refined to unspotted Purity. They shall have a sweet Complacency in themselves, for a blissful Harmony shall reign within them. They shall be fashioned after the Similitude of Christ, *by seeing him as he is*; the beatific Vision of *Jehovah*, shall transport their Souls, and fill them with ineffable Extasy; and they shall have perfect Satisfaction, when they *awake in the Likeness of God*; while nothing shall ever disturb or interrupt; their perpetual Blessedness.

IMPROVEMENT.

THIS brings me to the mournful Occasion of our convening together, which is to pay our last Respect to the Remains of our ever honoured and worthy GOVERNOR, whose funeral Obsequies we are now attending. It is not my Talent, and very far from my Inclination, to adorn the Sepulchers of the Dead with empty *Panegyrics*, which have no other Meaning, but to please Survivors. I know that Persons void of all Merit, and even sometimes such as have been the *Pests* and *Plagues* of the Earth, have been the Subjects of high Encomiums and lavish Praises at their Death; which would almost tempt one, out of Modesty, to say nothing on such Occasions. But to pass over in Silence, true Merit, when rendered conspicuous by the

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Honours and Dignities of this World, would be Injustice to the Living, as such Characters, when set in a fair Light, attract the *Esteem*, and engage the *Imitation* of others. The great Disadvantages in which I am called to officiate on this Occasion, will prevent my doing Justice to the *Character* of our late excellent GOVERNOR. Yet I am persuaded, what I shall say, will be allowed by all to be within the Bounds of Modesty and Truth.

HE was descended from one of the most honourable Families in this Country. His Father was the famous ANDREW BELCHER, Esq; one of his Majesty's Council in the Province of *Massachusetts-Bay*, justly esteemed an Ornament and Blessing to his Country. He took peculiar Care about the Education of so promising a Son, upon whom the Hopes of his Family were fixed. He was early instructed in the learned *Languages*, and liberal *Arts* and *Sciences*, in which he made good Proficiency. While at *College*, by his open, free and pleasant Conversation, joined with a manly and generous Conduct, he rendered himself agreeable to all his Acquaintance. After receiving the *Honours* of the *College*, and all the Advantages of Education, which his native Land afforded, he travelled abroad to furnish himself with useful Observations on the various Characters, Customs and Manners of the World. Which Method of acquiring Knowledge, hath its peculiar *Advantages*, and peculiar *Temptations*; he wisely improved the *former*, while he cautiously avoided the *latter*. He remarkably distinguished himself from too many of the young Gentry of the present Age, (who return from their Travels, replenished with the corrupt Principles, and Proficients in the scandalous Vices, and debauched Practices of the Places they have visited) as he preserved his *Morals* unfulled, and kept himself free from these Pollutions which so much abound in the gay World, whereby unexperienced Youth are often betrayed into Ruin; and even maintained a sacred Regard to that *holy Religion* which he made an early profession of.

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THESE excellent Endowments of the *Mind*, were set off, by a peculiar Beauty and Gracefulness of Person, in which he was excelled by no Man in his Day; tho' this was in a great Measure lost, when he came amongst us. There was a certain Dignity in his Mein, and Deportment, which commanded Respect. This, joined with the frank, open and generous Manner in which he treated his *Friends*, his polite and easy Behaviour towards *Strangers*, rendered him the Delight of the *One*, and the Admiration of the *Other*. The *Scholar*, the accomplished *Gentleman*, and the true *Christian*, were seldom ever more happily and thoroughly united, than in him; which could not fail of procuring him Esteem at home and abroad. He was received and treated in the most obliging respectful Manner, by the Princess *Sophia*, on whom the Hopes of the *British* Nation were then fixed, for the Preservation of the Protestant Succession. At his Departure, he was presented with a *Gold Medal*, as a Token of her peculiar Regard. There he first became acquainted with her worthy Son, the late excellent King *GEORGE I.* which laid the Foundation he afterwards had in his Royal Favour.

AFTER his Return from his Travels, he lived for some Time at *Boston*, in the Character of a Merchant, with great Reputation; was chosen one of his Majesty's Council; and thought by the General Assembly there, the fittest Person to represent the Province in their Difficulties, at the *British Court*. Soon after his Majesty *King George II.* was pleased to appoint him to the Governments of *Massachusetts-Bay*, and *New-Hampshire*; over which he presided, with much Honour and great Acceptance, for many Years. While he maintained a religious Regard to his Oath, and the Instructions of his *Royal Master*, on the one Hand; he shewed a tender Regard to the Liberties of the People on the other. His noble generous Soul, disdained the sordid avaricious Methods of enriching themselves and Families, which *Governors* have too often taken at the Expence of their Master's Honour, and the true Interest
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of the People. His unshaken Integrity and Uprightness, in all his Conduct, his Zeal for Justice, and Care to have it equally distributed, have rendered him the Admiration of the present, as they will of future Generations. The Prospect of worldly Interest, earnest Solicitations of Friends, or Fear of Loss, seem to have had no Influence to move him from what appeared to be his Duty. Many Opportunities of enriching his Family, which the World would have called just, he religiously refused; least receiving Favours, tho' not under a Notion of Bribes, even in a Way in which it was usual for *Governors of Provinces* to receive them, might possibly influence him in any Part of his public Conduct. No Man was ever more thoroughly Proof against all Kinds of Corruption and Bribery. His steadily opposing a corrupt designing Party (tho' tempted by Prospects of Gain to himself and Family) who were raising their Fortunes on the Ruins of the Province, by bringing in large Sums of *Paper Currency*, laid the Foundation of those false and ill-natured Representations, which were made against him at the *British Court*, and caused his Removal from those Governments; so that it is hard to say, whether his *Advancement* to, or his *Removal* from them, was the greater Honour. Providence designed *Governor BELCHER* for more extensive Usefulness in another Province; for as soon as he had it in his Power to represent his Case to the Ministry at home, he was justified in every Part of his Conduct, and promised the first vacant Government in the *King's Gift*; which, happy for us, proved to be this.

WHEN he first arrived, he found the *Province* thrown into the utmost Confusion, by Tumults, and riotous Disorders, which had for some Time prevailed; these he laboured with his whole Power to prevent, and suppress. The above *Confusions*, joined to the unhappy Controversy between the *two Branches* of the *Legislature*, rendered the first Part of his Administration peculiarly difficult.

But by his steady, wise and prudent Measures, these Difficulties have been happily removed.

THO' we have not been favoured with the Prime and Flower of *Governor BELCHER's* Days, when he could have gone thro' the Fatigue and Burthens of his Station, with more Sprightliness and Activity; yet we have had the Advantage of the Experience, and Observation of his riper Years; when the Virtues which adorned his Life shone, tho' not with a sparkling, yet with a steady and attracting Light. It has been surprizing to many of his Acquaintance, that he could apply himself to the Duties of his high Post, with so much Assiduity and Diligence, and go thro' Business with so much Dispatch, under the many growing Infirmities of his advanced Age; as also that he has conducted the *Affairs of Government* so well, since the publick Calamities of the Land have rendered them so peculiarly difficult and perplexing.

THE Interest of the Province has always lain near his *Excellency's* Heart, which he stedfastly pursued, with unwearied Pains, and disinterested Views. His Ears were always open to real Grievances. The Cause of the Poor the Widow, and the Fatherless, as well as the Rich and Great, was by him favourably heard, and the Wrongs of all readily and impartially redressed; and I doubt not, the *Blessing of many ready to perish, have come upon him*. He endeavoured to distinguish and promote Men of Merit and Worth, without Partiality; and indeed, was a *Minister of God, for Good* unto his People. *A Terror to evil Doers, and a Praise to those that did well.*

NOR should I pass over in Silence, what will distinguish *Governor BELCHER's* Administration, not only in the present, but I trust, in all succeeding Ages. I mean his being the Founder and Promoter, the chief Patron and Benefactor of the College of *New-Jersey*; an *Institution*, calculated to promote the important Interests of Religion, Liberty and Learning. He lived to see his generous Designs of doing Good in this Respect, have something of their

their desired Effect. But how far the *College* is like to answer the Ends of its first Institution, and what are the Advantages derived from it, both to Church and Commonwealth, I would chuse should be said by others, and had rather leave for Time to declare.

AND if we should now view him in the *Religious*, as we have in the *Civil Life*, he will shine with more distinguishing Brightness. True Religion is the more amiable and excellent in Persons of high Station, not only because it is so *rare*, but because their *Examples* have a commanding Influence, and the World around them are engaged to follow their Steps. When the Graces of the Christian Life, are connected with the Lustre of earthly Dignity and Power, they constitute a most lively Character, and such Persons become *Ornaments* and *Blessings* to the Age in which they live.

THIS was eminently the Case with our *worthy departed Friend*; his distinguishing and unaffected Piety, spread a Glory over all his other Endowments, and rendered him a peculiar Blessing to the World. It was evident his Religion was not a meer nominal, formal Thing, which he received from Tradition, or professed in bare Conformity to the Country where he lived; but real and genuine, such as commanded his *Heart*, and governed his *Life*. He had such clear Views of the glorious Majesty, and Holiness of God; the Strictness and Purity of the divine Law; his own Vileness and Unworthiness; as made him disclaim all Dependence on his own Righteousness, and lay the whole Stress of his Salvation on the Merits and Righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, who appeared in his Eyes an All-sufficient, suitable, and glorious Saviour, to whom he continually repaired, as the *only Refuge set before him*. He would express in the humblest Strain, the Sense he had of his own Meanness, and the high, exalted Thoughts he had of the rich, free, and glorious Grace offered in the Gospel to Sinners. His *Faith* worked by Love, and produced the genuine Fruits of universal Obedience; discovered itself in a Life of Piety and Devotion toward God;

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Justice, Truth and Kindness toward Men; Meekness, Humility and Chastity in himself. He greatly prized, and diligently searched the *sacred Oracles*, felt the Truth, saw the Excellency and Importance of what God had revealed therein. These he made the *Man of his Counsel*, the only unerring Rule of Doctrine and Worship. By his sacred Regard to the *Lord's Day*, his steady and conscientious Attendance on all the publick *Ordinances* of his House; he has left a noble Example, worthy the Imitation of all Rulers in a Christian Land. He resolved, with that pious Governor *Nehemiah*, that he would not forsake the *House of God*, so long as he lived; and with the Psalmist, *desired one Thing of the Lord*, which he continued to request, *that he might dwell in the House of God all his Days*. This Practice he continued, even when his great Weakness of Body, and growing Infirmities, would have been thought by every Body, a sufficient Excuse for his Absence.

HE was truly exemplary in his Family, *reading the Scriptures*, and *praying* with them as long as his Health and Strength would possibly admit. And how conscientiously he has maintained devout Intercourse with Heaven, in his secret Retirements; how carefully he has daily redeemed Time from the Hurries of Business and Company, for the important Concerns of another World; and how devoutly he has spent such Seasons, will appear, when his heavenly Father, who saw him in secret, will reward him openly. In a Word, *whatsoever Things were true, whatsoever Things were honest, whatsoever Things were just, whatsoever Things were pure, whatsoever Things were lovely, whatsoever Things were of good Report; if there was any Virtue, and if there was any Praise, he thought on these Things*. Phil. vi. 3.

THO' he was very far from having any Thing affected or ostentatious in his Religion, yet he was not ashamed to profess and practise it, in the open View of a corrupt and degenerate Age, when Religion has been treated with great

great Contempt, and a Person who had any real Regard to it, would hazard his Reputation; but he resolutely maintained a sacred Regard to our holy Religion, in the Midst of all the *Insults* and *Scoffs* from *Infidelity* on the one Hand, and the *Allurements* of the *fashionable Vices* of the Times, on the other. He was not ashamed of the *Gospel of Christ*, which he knew to be the *Power of God* for the *Salvation* of immortal Souls. The *Welfare of Zion* lay near his Heart, and he long'd for the *Prosperity of Jerusalem*. It gave him sensible Joy when ever he heard the Interest of the Redeemer's Kingdom was advanced.

In his declining Days, he seemed to ripen fast for the heavenly State; had his Conversation much in Heaven, and would frequently speak of the Things of another World, as Things that were quite familiar to him; his Letters to his Christian Friends breathed the same excellent and pious Spirit.

His approaching Dissolution he kept daily in View, lived in a continual Expectation of it, and would often express his Desires, that it might be hastened. It hath pleased his blessed Master, the last Week (after a tedious Illness) to dismiss him from his Employments, Labours and Trials here, and call him to that *Rest which remains for the People of God*; for we doubt not, at the *End of the Days*, he will stand before his Judge with *exceeding Joy*, and be received with a, *Come you blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World*. Matth. xxv. 34.

THE Subject and solemn Occasion, would furnish me with various useful Reflections, which might properly enough be enlarged upon; but I shall content myself with touching on two or three.

1st, *IF the Servants of God are dismissed by him, none of them die too soon or too late*. He that has assigned them their Work and Employment, has fixed the Time of their Dismissal. Indeed, to us it may appear to soon; for the

Death of eminently useful Men, is a great publick Loss; we may much need their Service, their Wisdom and Fidelity; their Zeal for God, and their Country's Good. But their Work is done, their Business in Life accomplished, and they have finished their Course. The Time and Manner of their Departure, infinite Wisdom hath appointed, *for there is not a Sparrow that falls to the Ground, but it is by the Will of our heavenly Father.* And tho' we may greatly regret, and it is right we should, the Removal of such as God hath made distinguished, extensive Blessings in the World; yet, for our Support and Encouragement, we should consider, that *the Lord's Hand is not shortened. The Residue of the Spirit is with him,* who made them useful in their Day, and he can raise up others in their Room, who shall like them, serve their Generation faithfully by the Will of God.

2d, *WHAT Comfort may we well take in the Death of our worthy Friends, who have been distinguished by Faithfulness to God, and Usefulness to their Fellow-men.* They are released from their Burthens and Sorrows, delivered from all their bodily Infirmities; for all Pain is done away at Death, and *all Tears shall be wiped from their Eyes in Heaven.* They are called from the Labours and Trials of this Life, to the more noble Employments of the heavenly State. This may particularly serve as Matter of Consolation, in the Decease of that most *worthy Person*, to whose Memory I have been endeavouring to offer some small Tribute of Honour. We have Reason to bless God, who has continued him so long, and lengthened out his Usefulness to a good old Age; that he has made him so great an Ornament and Blessing to *Church and State*; and crowned even the Close of his Days, with the Honour of doing Good, and being serviceable in the World. Yet, all who have the Welfare of their Country, the Cause of Virtue, and the Interest of Religion at Heart, can't but be deeply affected at the Departure of so great and good a Man. May God sanctify this mournful

ful Dispensation to the Province in general! And especially may all who are more nearly concerned, have Grace to make a right Improvement of such a grievous Stroke.

3d, *HOW* much does it concern us all, to take such a wise Notice of the public Dealings of God, as that we may be excited to a faithful and diligent Discharge of the Duties of our respective Stations, and so be prepared for a Dismission from our Employments here, whenever the Lord shall see fit to give it.

Too many act as if they thought they were only born for themselves, had a Right to employ their whole Time merely to serve their own Purposes, and were under no Obligations to expend any Part of it in serving God or their Generation. When this is the prevailing Spirit, it is a dark Symptom, on a Nation or Land, and is a sad Prefage of approaching Ruin. O let us rouse from our Supineness, in what relates to the important Interests of God and our Country! Let us be fired with a noble Ambition of doing something great and worthy in our Day! What celebrated Instances have we delivered down to us in History, of the Public-Spiritedness of the ancient *Greeks* and *Romans*? These renowned Worthies thought nothing they could possibly do, too much for the common Good; and even vied with one another, who should do most for their Country. Should it not shame us, who have much nobler and more exalted Principles, taught us in the Religion of Jesus, that we fall so far short of those great and generous Spirits among the Heathen, in all the patriot Virtues? What have we done, that is worthy to be mentioned, with the disinterested glorious Deeds of many, whose Names shine with illustrious Honour in the Records of Antiquity? What use have we made of the various Talents God hath intrusted us with? Hath Church or Common-wealth been much benefited by the manifold Gifts the Lord hath bestowed upon us? O let us labour to get rid of a mean, narrow, selfish Spirit; and strive to have

have our Views and Hearts enlarged in the Ways of doing Good in the World, according to our several Callings and Opportunities.

CONSIDER, *My Friends*, how loudly we are called upon to Activity and Diligence in this Day. It is a Time of great public Calamity and Distress; the Cloud gathers thick, and darkens over us. The News of our Misfortunes, like *Job's* Messengers, follow at the Heels of each other; and what is yet to come, I am sure we have Reason to be greatly afraid. Alas! how is our *Nation* and *Land*, filled with Sin! Our abounding Iniquities, and Heaven-daring Abominations, do, as it were challenge the Almighty to vindicate the Honour of his affronted Majesty. We are engaged in a War with a politic, bold and enterprizing Enemy, who have found Means to frustrate our high-raised Expectations, and to baffle us in our most important Undertakings. Our Counsels and Schemes Heaven seems to have turned into Foolishness; our vain Boastings have been repeatedly blasted; all our Designs against the Enemy strangely dashed; Shame and Confusion have been thrown upon us. We may well therefore tremble at what is like to be the final Issue, of so many disastrous Events, especially if Matters proceed with us as they have done ever since the Commencement of the present War.

ALLOW me therefore to say at such a *Season* as this, that it greatly concerns us all in *public Places of Power and Trust*, of the *civil and sacred Order*, to exert ourselves in bringing about a thorough Reformation of those Evils which are the procuring Cause of our present Miseries; and to animate all around us, to a vigorous Defence of our *bleeding Country*. The Displeasure of Heaven hath been in numerous Instances testified against us, and we have many Ways felt the Rebukes of an angry God. We may pretend to find the Cause of these Calamities in the *Weakness* of one, *Cowardice* of another, and *Treachery* of a third; but the Hand of God is over-looked.

He is openly and publickly affronted; his Name prophaned in the most atheistical Manner; his Laws violated; his Authority despised; the glorious Gospel of Christ slighted, and all the loud Calls of his Word and Providence disregarded. Such kind of Vices and Debaucheries become fashionable and common among us, as not only enkindle the Anger of Heaven, but sap the very Foundation of civil Society. . At such a Time, we should diligently exert ourselves for a general publick Reformation. If Men of Influence and Authority would appear in so good a Cause, what blessed Effects might it have! At the same Time we are endeavouring to remove the Cause of the divine Displeasure, we should do our utmost to stir up all around us, to a vigorous Defence of our sinking Land. All that is dear to us as *Englishmen* and Christians not only lies at Stake, but seems on the Brink of being irrecoverably lost. And for us at this Time, to do as we have done Things, by little and little, is a sure Way to perish by little and little. If the Provinces at last, would harmoniously unite, and make a thorough vigorous Attempt, for repairing our Losses, and bringing our Enemies to honourable Terms of Peace; and go forth, not in our Strength, but in the Name of the Lord of Hosts; there is yet Ground to hope we might again sit quietly under our Vine and Fig-Tree, and eat the Good of the Land. Which may God of his infinite Mercy grant, thro' Christ our Lord, AMEN.

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