

**From:** Andersen, Margaret margaret.andersen@aimint.org  
**Subject:** Fwd: The Character of a Good Ruler (1694)  
**Date:** November 25, 2024 at 7:27 AM  
**To:** Dave Mills davemills1939@icloud.com



Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "Andersen, Margaret" <margaret.andersen@aimint.org>  
**Date:** November 25, 2024 at 9:52:08 AM GMT+3  
**To:** "Andersen, Margaret" <margaret.andersen@aimint.org>  
**Cc:** "Andersen, Andrew" <andrew.andersen@aimint.org>, Abigail Andersen <yesuhuokoa@icloud.com>, Benjamin Andersen <tinycavebear@gmail.com>, Caleb Andersen <kristoandersen@gmail.com>, Jessica Anne Andersen <Trsjessicap@gmail.com>  
**Subject:** The Character of a Good Ruler (1694)

Hi! Happy Thanksgiving Week! 🍁

Here is a sermon so impactful it is preserved until today... given and written by your 9th (Andy's 8th) Great Grandfather, a Puritan preacher, before local elections in Boston, MA, 1694.

You can also listen to it as a (somewhat monotone) podcast. Though I am thinking Samuel Willard delivered his sermon with a bit more gusto in his voice!

The screenshot shows a genealogy software interface with two profiles side-by-side. The left profile is for Rev. Samuel Willard (1640-1707) and the right is for Abigail Sherman (1647-1679). Below the profiles are detailed biographical tables for each. At the bottom, a 'Children' section shows Simon (1676-1713).

Profile	Rev. Samuel WILLARD	Abigail SHERMAN
Birth	31 Jan 1640, Concord, Middlesex, Massachusetts <sup>72,956,2823</sup>	3 Feb 1647, Watertown, Middlesex, Massachusetts <sup>72,2828</sup>
Bapt		
Removal		
Immi		
Will		
Death	12 Sep 1707, Boston, Suffolk, Massachusetts <sup>72,2818</sup> Age: 67	1679 <sup>17</sup> Age: 31
Burial		
Probate		
NickN		
Residence	Lived in Groton and Boston, Mass. <sup>72</sup>	
Educ		
Occ		
Ind Notes	• See Wikipedia Biography. <sup>8342</sup>	
Census		
Research		
Flags		
User ID		

Changed: 24 Nov 2024 | Person ID: 10394

Changed: 26 May 2001 | Person ID: 10395

**Children**

<b>Simon</b> 6 Dec 1676 – btwn 13 Nov 1709–11 Jan 1713, age: 34 Spouse: Elizabeth ALDEN 1 spouse 1 child
--

Family ID: 6885 683 marked

<https://samueladamsreturns.net/the-character-of-a-good-ruler-1694/>

# The Character of a Good Ruler (1694)

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## My Thoughts

Before I make reference to the text of 'The Character of a Good Ruler' and take you to the bio information about Samuel Willard, I wanted to highly recommend that you share this sermon with elected persons, judges and non-elected bureaucrats. This sermon is as pertinent in our present time as it was at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. As we see clearly in **ALL** administrations at all levels of governance particularly over the last one hundred years, these Characters of a Good Ruler have been and are wanting.

With that, for my part, the several takeaway's are:

- Government is from God for a civil society
- Since the fall of Mankind, the human race has 'filled his heart with perverse and rebellious principles, tending to the subversion of all order and the reducing of the world to a chaos.'
- 'Government is to prevent and cure the disorders that are apt to break forth among the societies of men, and to promote the civil peace and prosperity of such a people, as well as to suppress impiety, and nourish religion. '
- The civil magistrate 'is to maintain justice towards men, and piety towards God.'
- Those mentioned above must recognize that the God of the Bible is Sovereign over them therefore if they acknowledge this truth: 'they have a principle of moral honesty in them, and swaying of them – that they love righteousness, and hate iniquity – that they be men of truth.' Toward the end of the Sermon Willard restates:
- 'that by whatsoever titles of excellent, honorable, or worshipful, you are known, you not only rule under such as are your superiors on earth, unto whom you are accountable for what you do, but under GOD also, who is your Great SOVEREIGN.'
- Those mentioned above set the example such that if they give into vice, greed, ungodliness, unrighteousness that the laws they enact or enforce will be unjust, resulting in the misery of the people and society.
- 'A people are not made for rulers, but rulers for a people.'
- Those mentioned in the first paragraph and addressed in the sermon and challenged

with: 'Be you entreated, to measure all your administration by this rule: Do all justly and in the fear of God.'

This Sermon clearly addresses the Character of a good leader and bad. The challenge for the Citizenry is to: 'Choose such men, and then you may expect to be so governed: If you desire that holiness and righteousness may be promoted and encouraged, this is the best stroke that you can give to it; if you have a mind that prophaneness and debauchery should take place, and bear all down, here is the readiest way for it.'

The last two paragraphs of the sermon summarize well that:

'Evil doers, and the mal-administrations of good ones, are punishments which GOD does inflict on a people that have provoked Him to anger against them. God gave Saul to Israel in His wrath, and he left David to number the people because His anger was kindled against Israel.'



**Evil doers, and the mal-administrations of good ones, are punishments which GOD does inflict on a people that have provoked Him to anger against them.**

Samuel Willard - 1694

52:17

But if we be a people fearing GOD and keeping of His Commandments, He will delight in us to bless us, and to do us good—and to give us rulers after His own prescription, Just Men, and Ruling in the Fear of God.'

## **The Sermon Intro and Link**

### **THE CHARACTER OF A GOOD RULER.**

[By Samuel Willard] [1694]

## II. Samuel 23:3. "He that Ruleth over men, must be just, Ruling in the Fear of God."

Whether the ordination of civil government be an article of the law of nature, and it should accordingly have been established upon the multiplication of mankind, although they had retained their primitive [first] integrity—or whether it have only a positive right, and was introduced upon man's apostasy, is a question about which all are not agreed. The equity of it, to be sure, is founded in the law natural, and is to be discovered by the light of nature, being accordingly acknowledged by such as are strangers to Scripture revelation; and by Christians it is reducible to the first commandment in the Second Table of the Decalogue; which is supposed to be a transcript of the law given to Adam at the first, and written upon the tables of his heart. For though, had man kept his first state, the moral image concreated [created] in him consisting in, *knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness*, would have maintained him in a perfect understanding of, and spontaneous obedience to, the whole duty incumbent on him, without the need of civil laws to direct him, or a civil sword to lay compulsion on him; and it would have been the true Golden Age, which the heathen mythologists are so fabulous about. Yet even then did the all-wise God ordain orders of superiority and inferiority among men, and required an honor to be paid accordingly. But since the unhappy fall has robbed man of that perfection, and filled his heart with perverse and rebellious principles, tending to the subversion of all order and the reducing of the world to a *chaos*, necessity requires, and the political happiness of a people is concerned in, the establishment of civil government. The want of it has ever been pernicious, and attended on with miserable circumstances. When there was no governor in Israel, but every man did what he would, what horrible outrages were then perpetrated, though holy and zealous Phinehas was at that time the high priest? and we ourselves have had a specimen of this in the short anarchy accompanying our late revolution. God's wisdom therefore, and His goodness is to be adored in that He has laid in such a relief for the children of men, against the mischief which would otherwise devour them, and engraven an inclination on their hearts, generally to comply with it. But this notwithstanding, men's sins may put a curse into their blessings, and render their remedy to be not better, possibly worse, than the malady. Government is to prevent and cure the disorders that are apt to break forth among the societies of men, and to promote the civil peace and prosperity of such a people, as well as to suppress impiety, and nourish religion. For this end there are to be both rulers, and such as are to be ruled by them: and the weal or woe of a people mainly depends on the qualifications of those rulers, by whom we are to be governed. Hence that observation, Eccles. 10:16, 17. *Wo to thee, O Land, when thy King is a Child, and thy Princes eat in the morning. Blessed art thou, O Land! when thy King is the Son of Nobles, and thy Princes eat in due season for strength, and not for drunkenness.* There is then much of God's kindness or displeasure to be read in His providential disposing of this affair. God says of them, Hos. 13:11. *I gave them a King in mine Anger.*

### **About Samuel Willard**

I suggest two primary references:

1. [Samuel Willard \(1640-1707\) – A pilgrim in the New World, president of Harvard, and an able Minister of the Reformed Gospel.](#)

2. [Samuel Willard's Sermons – Essay by 2015 Arcadia Fellow Alicia DeMaio](#)

Short descriptions from the first reference –

'Willard attended Harvard and graduated in 1659, studying divinity after his conversion to the Gospel. After graduating from Harvard, he was ordained a minister in Groton, Massachusetts in 1664, where he served as pastor until 1676 (until the town was attacked by Indians in 1676, during King Philip's War). He was then called to the Old South Church in Boston, and became the second most important preacher of the New England Calvinistic Church of the day, after Increase Mather (1639-1723). John Dunton (1659-1733), an English bookseller, said, "He's a man of profound notions, can say what he will, and prove what he says," commenting on Willard's scholarly abilities with Scripture. He had a keen ability for preaching with excellent delivery. For example, his son-in-law, Rev. Samuel Neal, preached for him in the Old South church one Lord's Day, and the sermon being considered very poor, the congregation requested that he should not be invited to fill the pulpit again. Mr. Willard borrowed the identical sermon and read it to the same congregation, which immediately requested a copy for publication.

Willard strenuously opposed the Salem witchcraft trials, and tried to influence public opinion against them.

When Increase Mather retired from the presidency of Harvard, Mr. Willard, being vice-president, succeeded to the government of that college, serving in 1701 until 1707.

In keeping with a Reformed emphasis on the Gospel, Willard's preaching centered on the doctrine of the covenant (of which the work "The Doctrine of the Covenant of Redemption," masterfully demonstrates). He opposed Arminianism by preaching the Reformed doctrines of predestination, total depravity, limited atonement, irresistible grace, and perseverance of the saints as standards of Gospel truth, consistently magnifying the sovereignty of God's divine grace through Jesus Christ's redemptive work.

Willard opposed Antinomianism by writing and preaching vigorously on the historic Reformed emphases of revelation, justification, and sanctification. Throughout his ministry he propagated and defended New England's biblical and orthodox stance on infant baptism, an educated – pastorate, and the alliance of church and state in religion (opposing both Baptist and Quaker theology).

Interesting tidbit from Wikipedia:

'Willard preached at Boston's Third Church during the illness of Rev. Thomas Thacher and gave an election-day sermon on June 5. The Third Church called Willard to be its Teacher. an associate pastor. on April 10. 1678. When Thacher died on October 15.

Willard became their only pastor. Members of the congregation included a variety of influential members of the colony: John Hull (18 December 1624 – 1 October 1683), Samuel Sewall, Edward Rawson, Thomas Brattle, Joshua Scottow, Hezekiah Usher, and Capt. John Alden (the son of John and Priscilla Alden of Plymouth). His wife Abigail died sometime in the first half of 1679; in July of that year he married Eunice Tyng, a possible sister-in-law of Joseph Dudley.

While in Boston, he wed Josiah Franklin and Abiah Folger, the parents of American polymath and Founding Father, Benjamin Franklin.

Wikipedia contributors, "Samuel Willard," *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Samuel\\_Willard&oldid=986181180](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Samuel_Willard&oldid=986181180) (accessed January 20, 2021).

Sent from my iPhone