Session #2 Questions to Consider

1. ***What similarities and differences do you see in these sermons?***
2. ***To what extent do you see West's sermon as a philosophical argument as opposed to being a religious argument?***

John Witherspoon, *The Dominion of Providence Over the Passions of Men*, 17 May 1776 (excerpts)

. . . In the first place, I would take the opportunity on this occasion, and from this subject, to press every hearer to a sincere concern for his own soul's salvation. There are times when the mind may be expected to be more awake to divine truth, and the conscience more open to the arrows of conviction than at others. A season of public judgment is of this kind. Can you have a clearer view of the sinfulness of your nature, than when the rod of the oppressor is lifted up, and when you see men putting on the habit of the warrior, and collecting on every hand the weapons of hostility and instruments of death? I do not blame your ardour in preparing for the resolute defense of your temporal rights; but consider, I beseech you, the truly infinite importance of the salvation of your souls. Is it of much moment whether you and your children shall be rich or poor, at liberty or in bonds? Is it of much moment whether this beautiful country shall increase in fruitfulness from year to year, being cultivated by active industry, and possessed by independent freemen, or the scanty produce of the neglected fields shall be eaten up by hungry publicans, while the timid owner trembles at the tax-gatherer's approach? And is it of less moment, my brethren, whether you shall be the heirs of glory, or the heirs of hell? Is your state on earth for a few fleeting years, of so much moment? And is it of less moment what shall be your state through endless ages? Have you assembled together willingly to hear what shall be said on public affairs, and to join in imploring the blessing of God on the counsels and arms of the United Colonies, and can you be unconcerned what shall become of you for ever, when all the monuments of human greatness shall be laid in ashes, for "the earth itself, and all the works that are therein shall be burnt up."

Wherefore, my beloved hearers, as the ministry of reconciliation is committed to me, I beseech you in the most earnest manner, to attend to "the things that belong to your peace, before they are hid from your eyes". How soon, and in what manner a seal shall be set upon the character and state of every person here present, it is impossible to know. But you may rest assured, that there is no time more suitable, and there is none so safe as that which is present, since it is wholy uncertain whether any other shall be yours. Those who shall first fall in battle, have not many more warnings to receive. There are some few daring and hardened sinners, who despise eternity itself, and set their Maker at defiance; but the far greater number, by staving off their convictions to a more convenient season, have been taken unprepared, and thus eternally lost. I would therefore earnestly press the apostle's exhortation, 2 Cor 6: 1-2… "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

Suffer me to beseech you, or rather to give you warning, not to rest satisfied with a form of godliness, denying the power thereof. There can be no true religion, till there be a discovery of your lost state by nature and practice, and an unfeigned acceptance of Christ Jesus, as he is offered in the gospel. Unhappy are they who either despise his mercy, or are ashamed of his cross. Believe it, "There is no salvation in any other." "There is no other name under heaven given amongst men by which we must be saved." Unless you are united to him by a lively faith, not the resentment of a haughty monarch, the sword of divine justice hangs over you, and the fulness of divine vengeance

shall speedily overtake you. I do not speak this only to the heaven-daring profligate or grovelling sensualist, but to every insensible, secure sinner; to all those, however decent and orderly in their civil deportment, who live to themselves, and have their part and portion in this life; in fine, to all who are yet in a state of nature, for "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God". The fear of man may make you hide your profanity; prudence and experience may make you abhor intemperance and riot; as you advance in life one vice may supplant another and hold its place; but nothing less than the sovereign grace of God can produce a saving change of heart and temper, or fit you for his immediate presence…

While we give praise to God, the supreme Disposer of all events, for his interposition in our behalf, let us guard against the dangerous error of trusting in, or boasting of an arm of flesh. I could earnestly wish, that while our arms are crowned with success, we might content ourselves with a modest ascription of it to the power of the Highest. It has given me great uneasiness to read some ostentatious, vaunting expressions in our newspapers, though happily, I think, much restrained of late. Let us not return to them again. If I am not mistaken, not only the Holy Scriptures in general, and the truths of the glorious gospel in particular, but the whole course of providence, seem intended to abase the pride of man, and lay the vain-glorious in the dust…

From what has been said you may learn what encouragement you have to put your trust in God, and hope for his assistance in the present important conflict. He is the Lord of hosts, great in might, and strong in battle. Whoever hath his countenance and approbation, shall have the best at last. I do not mean to speak prophetically, but agreeably to the analogy of faith, and the principles of God's moral government. I leave this as a matter rather of conjecture than certainty, but observe, that if your conduct is prudent, you need not fear the multitude of opposing hosts.

If your cause is just, you may look with confidence to the Lord, and intreat him to plead it as his own. You are all my witnesses, that this is the first time of my introducing any political subject into the pulpit. At this season, however, it is not only lawful but necessary, and I willingly embrace the opportunity of declaring my opinion without any hesitation, that the cause in which America is now in arms, is the cause of justice, of liberty, and of human nature. So far as we have hitherto proceeded, I am satisfied that the confederacy of the colonies has not been the effect of pride, resentment, or sedition, but of a deep and general conviction that our civil and religious liberties, and consequently in a great measure the temporal and eternal happiness of us and our posterity, depended on the issue. The knowledge of God and his truths have from the beginning of the world been chiefly, if not entirely confined to those parts of the earth where some degree of liberty and political justice were to be seen, and great were the difficulties with which they had to struggle, from the imperfection of human society, and the unjust decisions of unsurped authority. There is not a single instance in history, in which civil liberty was lost, and religious liberty preserved entire. If therefore we yield up our temporal property, we at the same time deliver the conscience into bondage . . .

Samuel West, *On the Right to Rebel Against Governors*, May 29, 1776 (excerpts)

Titus 3:1 Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work.

The great Creator, having designed the human race for society, has made us dependent on one another for happiness. He has so constituted us that it becomes both our duty and interest to seek the public good; and that we may be the more firmly engaged to promote each others welfare, the Deity has endowed us with tender and social affection, with generous and benevolent principles; hence the pain that we feel in seeing an object of distress. . . .

The Deity has also invested us with moral powers and faculties, by which we are enabled to discern the difference between right and wrong, truth and falsehood, good and evil. . . .

This proves that, in what is commonly called a state of nature, we are the subjects of the divine law and government, that the Deity is our supreme magistrate, who has written his law in our hearts, and will reward or punish us according as we obey or disobey his commands. Had the human race uniformly persevered in a state of moral rectitude, there would have been little or no need of any other law besides that which is written in the heart,-for every one in such a state would be a law unto himself. . . .

The necessity of forming ourselves into politic bodies, and granting to our rulers a power to enact laws for the public safety, and to enforce them by proper penalties, arises from our being in a fallen and degenerate state. . . .

It is certainly a matter of the utmost importance to us all to be thoroughly acquainted with the nature and extent of our duty, that we may yield the obedience required; for it is impossible that we should properly discharge a duty when we are strangers to the nature and extent of it.

In order, therefore, that we may form a right judgment of the duty enjoined to our text, I shall consider the nature and design of civil government, and shall show that the same principles which oblige us to submit to government do equally oblige us to resist tyranny; or that tyranny and magistracy are so opposed to each other that where the one begins, the other ends. . . .

The law of nature gives men no right to do anything that is immoral, or contrary to the will of God, and injurious to their fellow-creatures; for a state of nature is properly a state of law and government, even a government founded upon the unchangeable nature of the Deity, and a law resulting form the eternal fitness of things. . . .

It is our duty to endeavor always to promote the general good; to do to all as we would be willing to be done by were we in their circumstances; to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly before God. These are some of the laws of nature which every man in the world is bound to observe, and which whoever violates exposes himself to the resentment of mankind, the lashes of his own conscience, and the judgment of Heaven. This plainly shows that the highest state of liberty subjects us to the law of nature and the government of God. The most perfect freedom consists of obeying the dictates of right reason, and submitting to natural law. . . .

Men of unbridled lusts, were they not restrained by the power of the civil magistrate, would spread horror and desolation all around them. This makes it absolutely necessary that societies should form themselves into politic bodies, that they may enact laws for the public safety, and appoint particular penalties for the violation of their laws, and invest a suitable number of persons with authority to put in execution and enforce the laws of the state, in order that wicked men may be restrained from doing mischief to their fellow-creatures, that the injured may have their rights restored to them, and that the virtuous may be encouraged in doing good, and that every member of society may be protected and secured in the peaceable , quiet possession and enjoyment of all those liberties and privileges which the Deity has bestowed upon him. This shows that the end and design of civil government cannot be to deprive men of their liberty or take away their freedom; but on the contrary, the true design of civil government. . . .

As magistrates have no authority but what they derive from the people, whenever they act contrary to the public good, and pursue measures destructive of the peace and safety of the community, they forfeit their right to govern the people. . . .

Though magistrates are to consider themselves as the servants of the people, seeing from them it is that they derive their authority, yet they may also be considered as the ministers of God ordained by Him for the good of mankind. . . .

When a people have by their free consent conferred upon a number of men a power to rule and govern them, they are bound to obey them. Hence, disobedience becomes a breach of faith; it is

violating a constitution of their own appointing, and breaking a compact for which they ought to have the most sacred regard. Such conduct discovers so base and disingenuous a temper of mind, that it must expose them to contempt in the judgment of all the sober, thinking part of mankind. . . .

It is also necessary that the minor part should submit to the major; e.g. when legislators have enacted a set of laws which are highly approved by a large number of the community as tending to promote the public good, in this case if a small number of persons are so unhappy as to view the matter in a very different point of light from the public, though they have an undoubted right to show the reasons of their dissent from the judgment of the public, and may lawfully use all proper arguments to convince the public of what they judge to be an error, yet, if they fail in their attempt, and the majority still continue to approve of the laws that are enacted, it is the duty of those few that dissent peaceably and for consciences' sake to submit to the public judgment, unless something is required of them which they would judge to be sinful to comply with; for in that case they ought to obey the dictates of their own consciences rather than any human authority whatever. . . .

The only difficulty remaining is to determine when a people may claim a right of forming themselves into a body politic, and assume the powers of a legislation. . . . hence comes the necessity of appointing delegates to represent the people in a general assembly. And this ought to be looked upon as a sacred and inalienable right, of which a people cannot justly divest themselves, and which no human authority can in equity ever take from, viz., that no one be obliged to submit to any law except such as are made either by himself or by his representative.

A wise and good man would be very much loth to undermine a constitution that was once fixed and established, although he might discover many imperfections in it; and nothing short of the most urgent necessity would ever induce him to consent to it. . . .

[T]he same principles that oblige us to submit to civil government do also equally oblige us to, where we have power and ability, to resist and oppose tyranny; and that where tyranny begins government ends. For, if magistrates have no authority but what they derive from the people; if they are properly of human creation; if the whole end and design of their institution is to promote the general good, and to secure to men their just rights, it will follow, that when they act contrary to the end and design of their creation they cease being magistrates, and the people which gave them their authority have the right to take it from them again. . . .

As our duty of obedience to the magistrate is founded upon our obligation to promote the general good, our readiness to obey lawful authority will always arise in proportion to the love and regard that we have for the welfare of the public; and the same love and regard for the public will inspire us with as strong a zeal to oppose tyranny as we have to obey the magistracy. Our obligation to promote the public good extends as much to the opposing every exertion of arbitrary power that is injurious to the state as it does to the submitting to good and wholesome laws. No man, therefore, can be a good member of the community that is not as zealous to oppose tyranny as he is ready to obey the magistracy.

If magistrates are ministers of God only because the law of God and reason points out the necessity of such an institution for the good of mankind, it follows, that whenever they pursue measures directly destructive to the public good they cease being God's ministers, for forfeit their right to obedience from the subject, they become the pests of society, and the community is under the strongest obligation of duty, both to God and to its own members, to resist and oppose them which will be so far resisting the ordinance of God that it will be strictly obeying his commands. To suppose otherwise will imply that the Deity requires of us and obedience that is self-contradictory and absurd; e.g., while He commands us to pursue virtue and the general good, He does, at the same time require us to persecute virtue, and betray the general good, by enjoining us obedience to the wicked commands of tyrannical oppressors. Can any one not lost to the principles of humanity undertake to defend such absurd sentiments as these? . . .

If men have at any time wickedly and foolishly given up their just rights into the hands of the magistrate, such acts are null and void, of course. . . .

And as nothing tends like religion and the fear of God to make men good members of the commonwealth, it is the duty of magistrates to become the patrons and promoters of religion and piety, and to make suitable laws for the maintaining public worship, and decently supporting the teachers of religion. . . .

But for the civil authority to pretend to establish particular modes of faith and forms of worship, and to punish all that deviate from the standard which our superiors have set up, is attended with the most pernicious consequences to society. It cramps all free and rational inquiry, fills the world with hypocrites and superstitious bigots - nay, with infidels and skeptics; it exposes men of religion and conscience to the rage and malice of fiery, blind zealots, and dissolves every tender tie of human nature; in short, it introduces confusion and every evil work.

From this account of civil government we learn that the business of magistrates is weighty and important. It requires both wisdom and integrity. When either are wanting, government will be poorly administered; more especially if our governors are men of loose morals and abandoned principles; for is a man is not faithful to God and his own soul, how can we expect that he will be faithful to the public? . . .

But though I would recommend to all Christians, as a part of the duty that we owe the magistrates, to treat them with proper honor and respect, none can reasonably suppose that I mean that they ought to be flattered in their vices, or honored and caressed while they are seeking to undermine and ruin the state; for this would be wickedly betraying our just rights, and we should be guilty of our own destruction. We ought ever to persevere with firmness and fortitude in maintaining and contending for all that liberty that the Deity has granted us. . . .

To save our country from the hands of our oppressors ought to be dearer to us even than our own lives, and, next the eternal salvation of our own souls, is the thing of the greatest importance, - a duty so sacred that it cannot justly be dispensed with for the sake of our secular concerns. . . .

My reverend fathers and brethren in the ministry will remember that, according to our text, it is part of the work and business of a gospel minister to teach his hearers the duty they owe to magistrates. Let us, then, endeavor to explain the nature of their duty faithfully, and show them the difference between liberty and licentiousness; and, while we are animating them to oppose tyranny and arbitrary power, let us inculcate upon them the duty of yielding due obedience to lawful authority. In order to the right and faithful discharge of this part of our ministry, it is necessary that we should thoroughly study the law of nature, the rights of mankind, and the reciprocal duties of governors and governed. By this means we shall be able to guard them against the extremes of slavish submission to tyrants on one hand, and of sedition and licentiousness on the other. We may, I apprehend, attain a thorough acquaintance with the law of nature and the rights of mankind, while we remain ignorant of many technical terms of law, and are utterly unacquainted with the obscure and barbarous Latin that was so much used in the ages of popish darkness and Superstition.

To conclude: While we are fighting for liberty, and striving against tyranny, let us remember to fight the good fight of faith, and earnestly seek to be delivered from that bondage of corruption which we are brought into by sin, and that we may be made partakers of the glorious liberty of the sons and children of God: which may the Father of Mercies grant us all, through Jesus Christ. AMEN.

John Adams to Hezekiah Niles, Quincy, 13 February 1818 (excerpts)

Mr Niles,

The American Revolution was not a common Event. It's Effects and Consequences have already been Awful over a great Part of the Globe. And when and Where are they to cease?

But what do We mean by the American Revolution? Do We mean the American War? The Revolution was effected before the War commenced. The Revolution was in the Minds and Hearts of the People. A Change in their Religious Sentiments of their Duties and Obligations. While the King, and all in Authority under him, were believed to govern, in Justice and Mercy according to the Laws and Constitutions derived to them from the God of Nature, and transmitted to them by their Ancestors—they thought themselves bound to pray for the King and Queen and all the Royal Family, and all the Authority under them, as Ministers ordained of God for their good. But when they Saw those Powers renouncing all the Principles of Authority, and bent up on the destruction of all the Securities of their Lives, Liberties and Properties, they thought it their Duty to pray for the Continental Congress and all the thirteen State Congresses, &c. . . .

This radical Change in the Principles, Opinions Sentiments and Affection of the People, was the real American Revolution. . . .

By what means, this great and important Alteration in the religious, Moral, political and Social Character of the People of thirteen Colonies, all distinct, unconnected and independent of each other, was begun, pursued and accomplished, it is surely interesting to Humanity to investigate, and perpetuate to Posterity. . . .

The Colonies had grown up under Constitutions of Government, So different, there was so great a Variety of Religions, they were composed of So many different Nations, their Customs, Manners and Habits had So little resemblance, and their Intercourse had been so rare and their Knowledge of each other So imperfect, that to unite them in the Same Principles in Theory and the Same System of Action was certainly a very difficult Enterprize. The compleat Accomplishment of it, in So Short a time and by Such Simple means, was perhaps a Singular Example in the History of Mankind. Thirteen Clocks were made to Strike together; a perfection of Mechanism which no Artist had ever before effected. . . .

It was not till After the Annihilation of the French Dominion in America, that any British Ministry had dared to gratify their own Wishes, and the desire of the Nation, by projecting a formal Plan for raising a national Revenue from America by Parliamentary Taxation. The first great manifestation of this design, was by the Order to carry into Strict Executions those Acts of Parliament which were well known by the Appelation of the *Acts of Trade*, which had lain a dead Letter, unexecuted for half a Century, and Some of them I believe for nearly a whole one.

This produced, in 1760 and 1761, An Awakening and a Revival of American Principles and Feelings, with an Enthusiasm which went on increasing till in 1775 it burst out in open Violence, Hostility and Fury.

The Characters, the most conspicuous, the most ardent and influential, in this Revival, from 1760 to 1766, were;—First and Foremost, before all, and above all, James Otis; Nex to him was Oxenbridge Thatcher; next to him Samuel Adams; next to him John Hancock; then Dr Mayhew, then Dr Cooper and his Brother. Of Mr Hancock's Life, Character, generous Nature, great and disinterested Sacrifices, and important Services if I had forces, I Should be glad to write a Volume. But this I hope will be done by Some younger and abler hand. Mr Thatcher, because his Name and Merits are less known, must not be wholly omitted. This Gentleman was an eminent Barrister at Law, in as large practice as anyone in Boston. There was not a Citizen of that Town more universally beloved for his Learning, Ingenuity, every domestic & Social Virtue, and Conscientious Conduct in every Relation of Life. His Patriotism was as ardent as his Progenitors had

been, ancient and illustrious in this Country. Hutchinson often Said "Thatcher was not born a Plebeian, but he was determined to die one." In May 1763, I believe, he was chosen by the Town of Boston One of their Representatives in the Legislature, a Colleague with Mr Otis, who had been a Member from May 1761, and he continued to be reelected annually till his Death in 1765, when Mr Samuel Adams was elected to fill his place, on the Absence of Mr Otis, then attending the Congress at New York. Thatcher had long been jealous of the unbounded Ambition of Mr Hutchinson, but when he found him not content with the Office of Lieutenant Governor, the Command of the Castle and its Emoluments, of Judge of Probate for the County of Suffolk, a Seat in his Majesty's Council in the Legislature, his Brother-in-Law Secretary of State by the Kings Commission, a Brother of that Secretary of State a Judge of the Superiour Court and a Member of Council, now in 1760 and 1761, Soliciting and accepting the Office of Chief Justice of the Superior Court of Judicature, he concluded as Mr. Otis did, and as every other enlightened Friend of his Country did, that he Sought that Office with the determined Purpose of determining all Causes in favour of the Ministry at Saint James's and their Servile Parliament.

His Indignation against him henceforward, to 1765, when he died, knew no bounds but Truth. I Speak from personal Knowledge and will [. . .] For, from 1758 to 1765, I attended every Superiour and [. . .] Court in Boston, and recollect not one in which he did not invite me home to Spend Evenings with him, when he made me converse with him as well as I could on all Subjects of Religion, Morals, Law, Politicks, History, Phylosophy, Belle letters Theology, Mythology, Cosmogeny, Metaphysicks, Lock, Clark, Leibnits, Bolinbroke, Berckley, the Preestablished Harmony of the Universe, the Nature of Matter and Spirit, and the eternal Establishment of Coincidences between their Operations; Fate, foreknowledge, absolute—and we reasoned on Such unfathomable Subjects as high as Milton's Gentry in Pandemonium; and We undestood them as well as they did, and no better. To such mighty Mysteries he added the News of the day, as the Little Tattle of the Town. But his favourite Subject was Politicks, and the impending threatening System of Parliamentary Taxation and Universal Government over the Colonies. On the Subject he was So anxious and agitated that I have not doubt it occasioned his premature death. From the time when he argued the question of Writts of Assistance to his death, he considered the King, Ministry, Parliament and Nation of Great Britain as determined to now model the Colonies from the Foundation; to annul all their Charters, to constitute them all Royal Governments; to raise a Revenue in America by Parliamentary Taxation; to apply that Revenue to pay the Salaries of Governors, Judges and all other Crown Officers; and after all this, to raise as large a Revenue as they pleased to be applied to National Purposes at the Exchequer in England; and farther to establish Bishops and the whole System of the Church of England, Tythes and all, throughout all British America. This System, he Said, if it was Suffered to prevail would extinguish the Flame of Liberty all over the World; that America would be employed as an Engine to batter down all the miserable remains of Liberty in Great Britain and Ireland, when only any Semblance of it was left in the World. To this System he considered Hutchinson, the Olivers and all their Connections dependants, adherents, Shoelickers and entirely devoted. He asserted that they were all engaged, with all the Crown Officers in America and the Understrapors of the Ministry in England, in a deep and treasonable Conspiracy to betray the Liberties of their Country, for their own private personal and family Aggrandisement. His Philippecks against the unprinipled Ambition and Avarice of all of them, but especially of Hutchinson, were unbridled; not only in private, confidential Conversations, but in all Companies and on all Occasions. He gave Hutchinson the Sobriquet of "Summa Polestatis," and rarely mentioned him but by the Name of "Summa." His Liberties of Speech were no Secrets to his Enemies. I have Sometimes wondered that they did not throw him over the Barr, as they did Soon afterwards Major Hawley. For they hated him worse than they did James Otis or Samuel Adams, and they feared him more,—because they had no Revenge for a Father's

disappointment of a Seat on the Superiour Bench to impute to him as they did to Otis; and Thatcher's Character through Life had been So modest, decent, unassuming—his Morals So pure, and his Religion so venerated, that they dared not [. . .] attack him. In his Office were educated to the Barr two eminent Characters, the late Judge Lowell and Josiah Quincy, aptly called the Boston Cicero. Mr Thatcher's frame was Slender, his Constitution delicate. Whether his Physicians overstrained his Vessels with Mercury, when he had the Small Pox by Inoculation at the castle, or whether he was Overplyed by publick Anxieties & Exertions, the Small Pox left him in a Decline from which he never recovered. Not long before his death he Sent for me to commit to my care Some of his Business at the Barr. I asked him Whether he had Seen the Virginia Resolves. "Oh yes.—They are Men! They are noble Spirits! It kills me to think of the Leathargy and Stupidity that prevails here. I long to be out. I will go out. I will go out. I will go into Court, and make a Speech which Shall be read after my death as my dying Testimony against this infernal Tyrany they are bringing upon us." Seeing the violent Agitation into with it threw him, I changed the subject as Soon as possible, and retired. He had been confined for Some time. Had he been abroad among the People he would have complained So pathetically of the "Lethary and Stupidity that prevailed," for Town and Country were all Alive; and in August became active enough and Some of the People proceeded to unwarantable Excesses, which were [. . .]nted by the Patriots than by their Enemies. Mr Thatcher Soon died, deeply lamented by all the Friends of their Country.

Another Gentleman who had great influence in the Commencement of the Revolution, was Doctor Jonathan Mayhew, a descendant of the ancient Governor of Martha's Vineyard. This Divine had raised a great Reputation, both in Europe and America by the publication of a Volume of Seven Sermons in the Reign of King George the Second, 1748, and by many other Writings, particularly a Sermon in 1750, on the thirtieth of January, On the Subject of Passive Obedience and Non Resistance, in which the Saintship and Martyrdom of King Charles the first are considered, Seasoned with Witt and Satyre, Superior to any in Swift or Franklin. It was read by every Body, celebrated by Friends, and abused by Enemies. During the Reigns of King George the first and King George the Second, the Reigns of the Stewarts, the Two Jameses, and the two Charleses were in general disgrace in England. In America they had always been held in Abhorrence. The Persecutions and Cruelties Suffered by their Ancestors under those Reigns, had been transmitted by History and Tradition, and Mayhew Seemed to be raised up to revive all their Animosity against Tyranny, in Church and State, and at the Same time to destroy their Bigotry, Fanaticism and Inconsistency or David Hume's plausible, elegant, facinating and fallacious Apology in which he varnished over the Crimes of the Stewarts had not then appeared. To draw the Character of Mayhew would be to transcribe a dozen Volumes. This transcendant [by choices] threw all the Weight of his great Fame into the Scale of his Country in 1761, and maintained it there with Zeal and Ardour till his death in 1766. In 1763 Appeared the Controversy between him and Mr Apthorp, Mr Caner, Dr. Johnson and Archbishop Secker on the Charter and Conduct of the Society for propagating the Gospels in foreign Parts. To form a Judgment of the debate I beg leave to refer to a Review of the whole, printed at the time, and written by Samuel Adams, though by Some, very absurdly and erroneously ascribed to Mr Apthorp. If I am not mistaken, it will be found a Model of Candour, Sagacity, Impartiality and close correct Reasoning.

If any Gentleman Supposes this Controversy to be nothing to the present purpose, he is grossly mistaken. It Spread an Universal Alarm against the Authority of Parliament. It excited a general and just Apprehension that Bishops and Diocesses and Churches, and Priests and Tythes, were to be imposed upon Us by Parliament. It was known that neither King nor Ministry nor Archbishops could appoint Bishops in America without an Act of Parliament; and if Parliament could Tax Us they could establish the Church of England with all its Creeds, Articles, Tests, Ceremonies and Tythes, and prohibit all other Churches as Conventicles and Sepism Shops.

Nor must Mr Cushing be forgotten. His good sence and Sound Judgment, the Urbanity of his Manners, his universal good Character, his numerous Friends and Connections and his continual intercourse with all Sorts of People, added to his Constant Attachment to the Liberties of his Country, gave him a great and Salutary influence from the beginning in 1760.

Let me recommend these hints to the Consideration of Mr Wirt, whose Life of Mr Henry I have read with great delight. I think, that after mature investigation, he will be convinced that Mr Henry did not "give the first impulse to the Ball of Independence," And that Otis, Thatcher, Samuel Adams Mayhew, Hancock, Cushing and thousands of others were labouring for Several Years at the Wheel before the Name of Mr Henry was heard beyond the limits of Virginia.

If you print this, I will endeavour to Send You Something concerning Samuel Adams, who was destined to a longer Career, and to Add a more conspicuous and, perhaps, a more important Part than any other Man. But his Life would require a Volume. . . .

John Adams