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*Reflections on the Conduct of Divine
Providence in the Series and Con-
clusion of the late War :*

A
S E R M O N

PREACHED at

N O R T H A M P T O N,

APRIL 25, 1749.

Being the Day appointed by his MAJESTY

FOR A

GENERAL THANKSGIVING

On Account of the PEACE concluded with
FRANCE and SPAIN.

By *P. D O D D R I D G E,* D. D.

L O N D O N :

Printed and Sold by J. WAUGH, at the
Turk's Head in *Lombard-Street.* 1749.

[Price Six-Pence.]



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PSALM cvii. ult.

Whofo is wife, and will observe thofe Things, even they fhall understand the Loving-Kindnefs of the LORD.



S almost all the Nations of the Earth have, from their first Plantation upon it, had fome Forms of Religion among them, (though alas thofe Forms have been too generally erroneous and fuperftitious,) it is observable, they have had Recourfe to their Sacred Solemnities, when they have been paffing from Peace to War, or from War to Peace. Among fome of the moft celebrated of the *Antients*, War was proclaimed by the Minifters of Religion, and Military Expeditions were opened by devout Proceffions and publick Sacrificcs; whereby they feemed to appeal to their Deities as Witneffes of the Juftice of their Caufe, and professedly to put them-

themselves under their Protection*. And when the Strife of War has ceased, pacifick Treaties have generally been confirmed by the Sanction of mutual Oaths; and the Festivities which have accompanied the Conclusion of them, have crouded the Temples with Worshippers, as well as the Streets and Houses with Tokens of Rejoicing. Well then may such Customs prevail in *Christian* States, where our Dependance on Divine Providence is known to such Advantage; and most suitable is it to a Sovereign, who esteems it his Honour to be called *the Defender of the Faith*, after having so often called us together to supplicate the Divine Blessing on his Arms, thus to assemble us this Day to return our Thanks to the great Disposer of all Events, for the Success with which he has crowned our Negotiations of Peace. And surely our cheerful Compliance is the more evidently reasonable, as all the Successes of the War abroad, glorious as some of them have indeed been, were so balanced by Events of a different Nature, that our Governours (who sing not

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* I am persuaded, that the 149th. *Psalms* is an Ode of this Kind, that was sung, when *David's* Army was marching out to War against the Remnant of the devoted Nations, and first went up in solemn Procession to the House of God, there as it were to consecrate the Arms he put into their Hands. *The Beds* referred to, ver. 5. on which they were to sing aloud, were probably the Couches on which they lay at the Banquet attending their Sacrifices; which gives a noble Sense to a Passage, on any other Interpretation hardly intelligible.

Te Deum in vain,) did not think it convenient to appoint one Day of general Thanksgiving on the Account of them.

As we well know Divine Providence to be concerned even in the minutest Affairs of the Animal or Vegetable Creation, we must certainly, on the most obvious Principles, acknowledge its Interposition where large Communities of Men are in Question : With relation to these it is peculiarly said, *I form the Light, and create Darknes; I make Peace, and create Evil; I the LORD do all these Things* (a). And as a careful Attention to Providence is always our Duty and Interest, it will especially appear so in Proportion to the Importance of the Events it produces and directs. To such Reflections therefore I would this Day invite you, and I know not how to do it better than in the Words of the *Text*; which are the more suitable, as the Vicissitudes to which they immediately relate are evidently of a publick Nature; Circumstances, whereby Men were on the one Hand blessed with *Prosperity and Plenty*, or on the other Hand *diminished and brought low, thro' Oppression, Affliction and Sorrow* (b), by such Revolutions as did not only affect Numbers of private Persons, but *poured Contempt upon Princes, and caused* those that had once been distinguished, perhaps in Cities, Provinces, or Armies, *to wander forlorn*
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(a) Ver. 7. (b) Ver. 39.

in the trackless Wilderness (c). All these Things are supposed under a Moral Government and Super-intendency, which should at length *cause the Righteous to rejoice*, and *Iniquity*, how loudly soever it had for a while triumphed and insulted, *to stop its Mouth*, confounded and ashamed. And then it is added, *Whoso is wise, he will observe these Things*; so observe them, as to see the secret Hand of GOD in them, even where the Train of Events is most natural: And *they* who attend to them in this Light, *shall understand the Loving-Kindness of the LORD* to them that fear him, which shall emerge gloriously out of every Cloud that might seem for a while to darken it. Thus the *Psalms* ends: And the Prophecy of *Hosea* concludes with a passage exactly parallel to this, in which my *Text* seems to be quoted and paraphrased: *Who is wise, and he shall understand these Things? prudent, and he shall know them? for the Ways of the LORD are right, and the Just shall walk in them; but the Transgressors shall fall therein* (e).

Permit me then solemnly to call you this Day, to make a serious Pause, and to employ that Recess from other Business which the Season and the Place gives, in looking back upon the Series of Events thro' which we have lately passed, as those that, believing the universal Government of GOD, *would re-*
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(c) Ver. 40.

(d) Ver. 42.

(e) Hof. xiv. 9.

gard the Works of the LORD, and consider the Operation of his Hands. (f) The Power of Reflection is the Glory of the rational Nature: May we now be directed to a proper Use of it! and it will afford us a calm Pleasure, which, though in these Circumstances not unchastised with Pain, is nevertheless much to be preferred to all the Joys of a licentious Mirth, to *the Laughter of Fools*, which Solomon esteemed *but as the crackling of Thorns under a Pot* (g).

It would very ill become me, to pretend to a Knowledge of the secret Springs of those Events which have lately passed before us, or to set up for any peculiar Penetration in judging of Things which are most apparent. But there are certain obvious Remarks which arise from Circumstances universally known, which though they be important in proportion to the Degree in which they are obvious, some for want of Attention may not fall upon, and others may not discern in that Connection which is like to render them most useful. I think it therefore congruous to the Relation in which I stand to you, and to the Occasion of this Day's Assembly, to endeavour to guide your Meditations to them, and to assist you in dwelling on the Review.

Let me then mention several Things which have lately passed before the Eyes of all *Europe*, as worthy of your farther Remembrance

(f) *Isai. v. 12.*(g) *Ecc. vii. 6.*

brance and Consideration. And I shall endeavour to do it without any unnecessarily severe Reflections upon those of our Neighbours, with whom we have lately been contending. When Hostilities were once commenced, many of the Events most grievous to us were justifiable by the Laws of Nations: And so far as Ambition, or any other evil Principle, might be the Occasions of opening them, may *the great Preserver of Men* forgive it, and make us and our new Friends for the future wiser and happier! In the mean Time, as the most solemn Acts of mutual Reconciliation have passed, it would be unworthy the Generosity of *Britons*, to rehearse the Wrongs, they could not but once apprehend and resent. But it is surely consistent with the sincerest Reconciliation, and with all the Rules of Propriety and Decency, on such an Occasion as this, to commemorate the Divine Goodness to us in Events, which during the Breach were afflictive to those who were then our Enemies: And it is with no unfriendly Disposition that we wish, they likewise may remember them for their future Instruction. I shall not therefore make any farther Apology, for what of this Nature may occur; but proceed to those Reflections, which may be naturally suggested from what we may easily recollect of the *Rise, Progress, and Conclusion* of the War; Reflections, which it may in many Instances
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be pleasant to pursue, and I hope in all profitable to retain.

- I. Let us recollect, how much we are obliged to the Divine Goodness, that the late War hath not proved our Destruction, or that of our *Protestant* Neighbours.

Nothing is more common, than for those who have long been pampered with the Blessings of Peace, in the Height of their Spirits, to plunge themselves into War with a Kind of wanton Confidence, like that with which *the Horse rushes into the Battle* (h): But the Issue has been so frequent, that it grew into a Proverb many Ages ago, *they who take the Sword perish with the Sword* (i). Let us adore the Divine Goodness, that *Great Britain* is not added to the Instances which illustrate it. It is the more reasonable particularly to acknowledge it, considering how ill we were provided with some Kind of Preparations, and how destitute of Alliances when the War with *Spain* broke out; and how deplorably, I will not pretend to say by what sad Fatality, we have since been disappointed in our Expectations from some, who were most evidently joined with us in a Community of publick Interest, had publick

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(h) Jer. viii. 6.

(i) Mat. xxvi. 52.

lick Interest been duely understood or regarded.

But it is sufficient to have hinted at this. Let me rather call back your Thoughts this Day to the Storm that hung over us, when *France* was preparing for so formidable an Invasion, and *GOD* *blew with his Wind, and scattered them* (k), and strewed their own Shores with the Wreck of those Ships and Men, which had been armed for our Destruction; an Event, the Importance of which there were few that then thoroughly understood, though what since happened opened the View more distinctly upon us. I here refer to that bold Attempt, then concerted, and quickly after made, by the Enemies of *Britain* at Home, in Concurrence with those abroad. And let me now more solemnly recall to your Remembrance that Day of Alarm and Consternation, when a little Spring from the *Northern Mountains*, which seemed in its Rise beneath our Notice, (and was unhappily too much despised,) swelled on a sudden into a Torrent, that deluged half our Land: When Battalions of desperate and infatuated Men, having consecrated their Swords to our Destruction in Blood ever to be lamented, bent on completing the Ruin of their Country, came pouring upon us with such savage Fury and unrestrained Impetuosity; till it pleased *GOD*, according to the Language in which
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(k) *Exod. xv. 10.*

he speaks of the proud *Assyrian*, to put a *Hook into their Nose, and a Bridle into their Jaws*, to turn them back by the *Way which they came* (1), even like him, to their own *Land*, that they might *perish there*. Dwell, Sirs, on an Idea, which I hope is already familiar to your Mind, and ought for ever to be retained. Do you not even now tremble to think, what the Consequence would probably have been, if those Westerly Winds which blew almost continually during the same Season of the last Year, had then been commissioned to detain our Forces on the Continent? What an *Æra* had that been in the *British History*! What a *Spectacle to Europe*! What a *Lamentation to Ages unborn*! But God wafted over to us speedy Deliverance, so that not a Company was kept back; nay, I think I may add, hardly a Man or a Horse miscarried. A Deliverance, greatly endeared to us by *the Hand that brought it*, and by the Remembrance of those importunate *Prayers* which we had so often presented in the Day of our Distress. Pursue the Reflection, and let your Hearts this Day feel anew the tender and lively Gratitude, which you owe to God, and to your Human Protectors.

It becomes us also this Day most thankfully to recollect, in what undisturbed *Tranquility* we have generally lived, during this

(1) *Isai.* xxxvii. 29.

Ten Years War; *sitting* as in the profoundest Peace *under our own Vines and Fig-trees* (m); as intire Strangers to those grievous Desolations and horrid Spectacles, which so many Thousands of our Neighbours have known, as if no Sword had ever been unsheathed. We *immediately* owe it to the Vigilance of our Governors, and the Advantages of our Situation, in Concurrence with the Strength of our Navy, and the Conduct, Courage and Fidelity of those to whom the Command of it was intrusted, (and which the contrary Character and Behaviour of some in their Station has, alas, too unhappily illustrated :) But let us remember, that the Governors, the Situation, the Navy, the Commanders, in which we rejoice, are the Gifts of a kind Providence, and are to be acknowledged as such. Let the Safety of *Britain* and its Provinces, in Consequence of all, be the Subject of our repeated and continued Thanksgivings. Nor let us be so unfeeling for the *Protestant* Interest in general, so forgetful of former Benefits, so insensible even of our own present and future Security, as not to rejoice, that our Allies, and especially *the United Provinces*, have shared with us in the Rescue God hath been pleased to give us. Let us adore the Almighty, that those *Prayers* for their Safety, which we had so much Reason to unite with those for our own, have appeared
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(m) Mic. iv. 4.

to come up in Remembrance before GOD; so that they are indeed as a Brand plucked out of the Burning (n). Praise waiteth for Thee, Oh GOD, in our Sion, on all these Accounts; and unto Thee may our Vows be performed (o)! the Vows, which we made when we were in Trouble and Perplexity, and lifted up our Eyes unto Thee, from whom our Help cometh, even to the GOD that made Heaven and Earth (p). But amidst all the Joy which these Reflections may afford,

II. Let us humble ourselves in the Review of those Rebukes of Providence, which we experienced during the Series of the late War.

I question, whether *Modern History* * can produce an Instance, in which a War has been entered into with more towering Hopes, with more anticipated Triumph, than that which we proclaimed against *Spain*; and probably, the wisest Men amongst us thought that Confidence no very good Omen of our Success. We seemed to think, we had nothing

(n) Amos iv. 11. (o) Psal. lxxv. 1. (p) Psal. cxxi. 1, 2.

* I say *Modern History*, as I must allow the triumphant Confidence with which the *Athenians* sent out their Navy and Troops to the unfortunate *Sicilian War* against *Syracuse*, where they were so deplorably destroyed, to be an ever memorable Exception, and so far as I can recollect, an Event unparallel'd in its Kind. See *Thucyd.* pag. 430.—432. *Diod. Sic. Lib. xiii. & Roll. Hist. Anc. L. viii. C. 8.*

thing to do but to *gird on our Terrors*, and make the Earth tremble. As if, according to the beautiful Manner in which *Isaiab* describes the Pride of the *Assyrian*, we might at pleasure go to the Nations that had offended us, as securely and irresistibly as to *the Nest* of some little insignificant Bird, and *gather their Riches, as one gathereth Eggs that are left, and there should be none to move the Wing, or to open the Mouth, or to peep* (q). But the Event proved very different: We found, there was such a thing as Military Prudence, and Strength, and Bravery among our Enemies, as well as among ourselves: And after all the vain Parade with which we set out, we returned, in repeated Instances, disappointed and ashamed; so as to have evident Reason, after such vast Preparations, and such presumptuous Confidence, to apply to several of our Projects and Attempts the Words of *Israel* by the same Prophet (r), *We have been with Child, we have been in Pain; we have as it were brought forth Wind; we have not wrought any Deliverance in the Earth, neither have the Inhabitants of the World fallen before us.* For succeeding Years during our War with *France*, though the *British* Soldiery to their immortal Honour behaved so bravely, we heard not of one Battle gained, of one Town taken by us or our Allies, on the Continent; while on the other

(q) *Ifai.* x. 14.(r) *Ifai.* xxvi. 18.

ther hand, we received repeated Information of Actions, in which we had greatly the Disadvantage, and in which Victory was snatched out of our Hands by Accidents so vexatious, that they are not, even at this Distance, to be named; and of fine Towns, more than Memory can number, lost to the Enemy almost as fast as their Forces could march from one of them to another, some without any Resistance, and most of the rest with only a Feint of Defence.

These, Sirs, are mortifying, but they are indisputable Truths; and they must stand upon Record, not indeed to the Shame of our Forces or our Generals, but for the Instruction of Generations to come, that *with good Advice* they may *make War*(s); and that, how well soever the Measures of it may seem to be concerted, they may not, *while girding on their Harness, boast as if they were putting it off* (t). I know, that by the War some particular Interests have been largely advanced, and many considerable Advantages for Commerce, while we remained so incontestably Masters of the Ocean, gained, which to those concerned in them have more than ballanced their Share in the Publick Expence: But I cannot imagine, that had the Nation distinctly foreseen all the Consequences, they would have engaged in it with the Eagerness they did, when I suppose the whole
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(s) Prov. xx. 18. (t) 1 Kings xx. 11.

Gain that can be set down at the Foot of the Account, to ballance the Loss of so many Thousand Lives, and so many Millions of Treasure, is this, That some of our Neighbours are perhaps more exhausted than we, and are less able, should they immediately attempt it, to make themselves terrible to the Liberties of *Europe*. On the whole, just as our Cause, and upright and strenuous as our Measures were, it appears to have been the Scheme of Providence, to save *Great-Britain* from sinking into Ruin, rather than to exalt it: And we have much greater Reason to wonder, when we consider our Circumstances in Comparison with our Characters, that Ruin was averted, than that so few memorable Advantages were gained, or some sensible Inconveniences incurred. In these Views,

III. Let us acknowledge the Divine Interposition, which facilitated so equitable a Peace as that which we this Day celebrate.

I shall not enter into any large Discourse on the Blessings of Peace in general; since, how proper soever it may be to recollect them at present, the Subject is trite, and many of the most material Thoughts which might illustrate it, sufficiently obvious. But I would hint at some Things, which are pecu-

peculiar to the present Occasion. I am persuaded, distant Posterity will wonder, that so equitable a Treaty should take Place, when they consider a Variety of attending Circumstances, and compare them with the great Rapidity and Extent of the *French* Conquests, and the evident Superiority with which they threatned *the Low Countries*, and by a necessary Consequence *Britain* itself, and all its Allies. To suppose this to have been owing to some sudden Change in the Spirits of Men, moderating their Ambitious Views, and asswaging their Thirst of Plunder and of Empire, would increase rather than abate the Wonder; and there are Incidents by which, on very different Principles, the Change of Measures may be accounted for; but they are such as still leave Room to say, especially when compared with each other, that *it is the LORD's doing, and marvelous in our Eyes* (u).

In this View we shall naturally think of our late *Successes at Sea*, in the first place; whereby the Designs of hostile Powers were rendered abortive, and those Naval Preparations which were intended to ruin our Colonies, were led home in Triumph to our own Shores, and made at length to pour that Vengeance on themselves, which they had meditated against us; whilst the Opportunity which our Maritime Force gave us of

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(u) Psal. cxviii. 23.

cutting off their Trade, and at the same Time of extending our own, added Strength to the Sinews of War amongst us, which it weakened amongst them. Nor are we to consider that ever memorable Series of Providence which gave *Cape Breton* into our Hands, as insignificant to this End. For though important Reasons obliged the Government to restore it, it is certain, the Possession which we actually had of so valuable a Jewel of the *French Crown* must add great Weight to our Negotiations, and equitably intitle us to many Advantages which we might not otherwise have been able to obtain: Not to say what Influence our having so long held it, and intimately known its State, Connexions, and Dependances, may have on settling and conducting that Colony to our adjacent Province of *Nova Scotia*, which under the Divine Blessing (to which I hope we shall fervently recommend it,) may be productive of signal Advantages, and prove an happy Equivalent for what it has been necessary to resign.

In these Things *the Arm of the LORD* hath been *made bare*; and lest the Part which we ourselves have had in them, should make us less sensible of it, *GOD* hath been pleased to interpose in other Instances, where we could pretend to no Share of Glory. In this View, besides what I said of the renewed Wonders of Providence in so favourable a Disposition
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of the *Winds* *, we have great Reason to reflect on the *Scarcity of Provisions* in *France*, while we were enriched with Plenty, for many successive Years. And though in the mean time Distempers reigned among our *horned Cattle*, yet, blessed be GOD, never to such a Degree as in some neighbouring Countries, where various Provisions were raised to almost three Times their former Value. And the Fertility of our *Sheep*, as well as of our Lands, while our *Kine* have been visited and afflicted, is never to be reflected upon without grateful Acknowledgement; as it hath not only moderated the Price of our Food, but furnished us abundantly for those Manufactures, the Trade of which has been carried on extensively abroad, so much to our national Advantage; in Consequence of which we have been much better able to support the necessary Expence of the War. And this has taught our Enemies to look upon us, not as an exhausted ruined People, but as those who had still Resources sufficient to render them formidable, and whom it was not their Interest to provoke to the last Extremities.

I am indeed sensible, there are some, who being themselves surrounded with all the Blessings of Plenty, and attentive only to ac-

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* See some Illustration of the Expression here used, in my *Sermon*, preached on the *Fast Day*, 1738-9, and a much fuller in that excellent Pamphlet, called *Britain's Remembrancer*.

cidental Personal Advantages, or to the happy Consequences which might have attended some successful Action on the Seas, or in the Field, at a Crisis like that which has lately occurred, regret the Pacification in which we are this Day called to rejoice. But such should temper these sanguine Views, by remembering, how possible it was that another Action might have been unsuccessful to Us and Our Allies, and how dreadful the Consequences of this must have been to the publick Cause, and even to *Britain* itself; whose Army might then probably have been utterly cut off, and whose Naval Strength might not have been able to have defended it, if the Wealth and Shipping of *Holland* had fallen into the Hand that was stretched out over them. The View indeed is so affecting, that it is painful to dwell upon it; and one trembles to think of casting the Die for so deep a Stake, had the Chance been more equal than it seems to have been. But one of the first unhappy Events which might have attended the Risque, leads us to reflect on that signal Interposition of Heaven, which, in the Hour of Extremity, and with a Hand conspicuous to the whole World, raised the House of *Orange* to such distinguished Dignity and Power, whereby the Strength of the *Low Countries* is drawn into a Point, and a Steadiness and Weight is given to their Councils; which will render them respectable in the
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Eyes of all *Europe*, and must surely put it out of the Power of any neighbouring States, to traverse our Interest in them, and to deprive us of their important Assistance, if future Emergencies should arise. From this surprizing Event, with many others which have occurred of late Years,

IV. Let us take Occasion to reflect on the
Vanity of Human Ambition.

Some of its fatal Effects we immediately saw ; and I persuade myself, the Hostilities which were exchanged between us and our Neighbours, could not so far steel our Hearts against all Sentiments of Humanity, as that we should not tenderly regret on their Side, as well as on our own, the many Sacrifices which were made to that merciless *Dæmon*. And who must not now be struck, to observe how it has repaid its Votaries ! We may hope, it will be a Lesson of Wisdom, Moderation, and Justice, to distant Nations, and to future Ages, when they hear and read, how after so vast an Expence of Blood and Treasure, after so many fine Provinces harrassed, so many rich Cities plundered, so many Thousands and Myriads slain in their Prime, the Consequence of all should be, to quit what had been thus violently usurped, with this only Consolation, or little but this, that the Places through which the sanguinary Proce-
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tion had passed, were left less populous, less beautiful, less opulent, than they had been found, and that perhaps a Day had ruined what Nature and Art had been Years in forming. Can we imagine, that if *France* could have foreseen, how *France* would have been lacerated, chastised, and exhausted, not to say in many Instances disgraced, it would have purchased the Disquiet of *Flanders*, of *Germany*, of *Italy*, of *Britain*, at so dear a Rate? Surely it would be unjust to suspect that, or any Nation under Heaven, of so much *disinterested Malevolence*. But, as in the Instance of *Edom*, it may justly be said, *The Pride of their Heart hath deceived them; and the Men of their Confederacy, the Auxiliary Forces on which they so much relied, have only brought them back to their own impoverished Border* (x). The River rose with Impetuosity, and deluged the Lands on either Side; it bore down their Ornaments, and their Wealth, into a Sea of Destruction; and now its Force and Fury are spent, it runs, not un sullied, within its former Channel.

While we reflect upon this, and perhaps suppress in our Minds some of those Reflections which will naturally arise upon it, let us pray, that wiser and more equitable, as well as more benevolent, Measures and Principles may prevail among the Rulers of the
Earth,

(x) *Obad. ver. 3, 7.*

Earth. And let us rejoice, that the Counsels of *Britain*, and the Conduct of that generous Prince who presides over them, may teach the Nations Honour and good Faith. The Glory of our Sovereign in this Respect must be the Joy and Boast of his People, far beyond what the Trophies of Conquest could yield: And it must give a Satisfaction, not to be parallel'd by any little momentary Advantages which a contrary Conduct might promise, that Posterity will testify for his *Britannick Majesty*, how religiously his Treaties have been observed, and his Engagements fulfill'd; in Consequence of which his Throne has stood firm against all Efforts to shake it, supported by the grateful Affection of a Free People, supported above all by the Omnipotent Guardian of Justice and Truth.

V. Let the Scenes through which we have passed, teach us to value and cultivate Peace at Home.

The publick Virtues of a Prince take off very much from the Merit of Loyalty; and in an Assembly like this I need not urge, how much those of Ours would increase the Infamy of Disaffection. May they who need such Kind of Lessons more, reflect how sadly our Dissentions at Home have weakened our Strength and our Importance Abroad. Taught by what the Common Interest has suffered by
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them, let us exert the utmost Influence of our Examples, our Persuasions, and our Prayers, to unite all around us in Attachment to our illustrious King and his Family, and in unfeigned Love to each other. And Oh that He, whose powerful Influence alone can effect it, would so subdue every unkind Suspicion and unfriendly Prejudice, as to promote our *Civil* and *Ecclesiastical Union* in Degrees which have been hitherto unknown ! A Civil and Political Union seems so easy under a Government like ours, that one would wonder any should oppose it, who have not some unnatural Antipathy to Liberty and Prosperity, or whose desperate Circumstances and Characters do not apparently give them an Interest in the Confusion of the Publick. In Religious Affairs, mistaken Principles conscientiously admitted and retained may create mutual Difficulties, which may embarrass the most faithful and affectionate *Counsellors of Peace* ; not to say, how far Secular Interest may, in some Cases, increase the Embarrassment. But let us humbly look up to that universally acknowledged, but alas almost as universally neglected, *Head of the Church*, to whose all-healing Energy no Evils are incurable ; that he may diffuse those gentle but powerful Influences of *the Spirit of Love*, which may effectually prevent our reviling or suspecting, our judging and despising each other. As for *Us*, while under an unwilling Necessity of
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continuing separate from our Brethren, may we use thankful, peaceful, and unenvied, the Liberty which the Laws of GOD and Man allow! and may growing Experience more fully teach *Protestants* of every Denomination, *how good and pleasant it is for Brethren, tho' perhaps in different Habits and Assemblies, to dwell together in Unity (y)*; how much Beauty, and Pleasure, and Strength, are added to the Community, when it is cemented by such Bonds! Which leads me to a yet more extensive Reflection,

VI. Let what has passed, teach us to conduct ourselves, and all under our Influence, by such Rules of Prudence and Virtue, as may have a natural Tendency to increase our national Strength.

I would not cloud the Festivity of a Day like this, by any thing which might appear an inauspicious Insinuation as to the Peace so lately established: May it be as lasting, as it is welcome to any who are concerned in it; and may Providence give *our Children's Children* to rejoice in its happy Consequences! But we know, that all Human Affairs are uncertain; and it cannot easily be forgotten, that the Peace with *France* towards the End of King *William's* Reign, and that with *Spain* towards the End of *Queen Anne's*, did neither

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(y) Psa. cxxxiii. 1:

of them continue Seven Years. It is however evident, that nothing will tend more to perpetuate this Pacification, than our being so provided against a contrary Event, that none of our Neighbours may find it their Interest, if by a fatal Relapse it should be their Inclination, to disturb us.

There are natural and political Precautions to be taken for this Purpose, which will undoubtedly be the Care of our Governors, and concerning the Particulars of which none but they who have the Management of publick Affairs can competently judge: But there are others, and those on the whole not less important, which are of such a Nature, as well becomes the Teachers of Religion to recommend and enforce; I mean, the cultivating those Moral Dispositions, without which we may venture to say, that none other can have a sufficient Efficacy for the general Safety.

And here no Thought more readily occurs, than the Necessity of endeavouring to curb that Taste for *Luxury* and pleasurable Expence, which has done so much to enervate, disgrace, and impoverish us. One would imagine, that the Degree to which our Finances must necessarily have been exhausted during so long and expensive a War, should enforce a prudent Frugality on all who have any Regard for the publick Good. But instead of this, were we to judge from
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the glaring Objects which every where strike us, a considerate Man would be tempted to suspect, that the whole Nation, if it acted on any Scheme at all, was fallen into the unhappy Artifice whereby so many particular Persons have been undone; I mean, that of fancying a Credit may be established among their Neighbours, by making a gay Figure, when there is least to support it. True Prudence would certainly teach us, to endeavour to retrieve our Affairs, while there is a Possibility of doing it, by imposing on ourselves those *Sumptuary Laws*, (if I may be allowed the Expression,) which the Indulgence of our Superiors spares us; that a vain Parade, and an excessive Delicacy in the Articles of Food and Dress, of Furniture and Equipage, may not melt down our Spirits, and increase our Necessities; and so make us the more accessible to Corruption, the more averse to those Labours and Dangers, which if we know not how resolutely to face, we shall in Consequence of that be forced to meet, and perhaps the sooner when we turn our Backs upon an Enemy to avoid them.

Permit me farther to observe, of how great Importance it is, that a wise and steady Care be taken in the *Education of Youth*, that they may be *trained up in the Way in which they should go* (z); a Care to form them betimes, to strenuous Resolution and Industry, to Acti-

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(z) Prov. xxii. 6;

vity and Self-denial, to Reverence for Laws and Obedience to just and equitable Government, and in a Word, to every generous Sentiment with regard to the Publick Good and the Liberty of their Country ; that they may take an honest Pleasure and Pride (if I may be permitted to say it,) in sacrificing to *that* every personal Interest which may seem to oppose it. The more elevated and distinguished the Station of any one in Question may be, the more important will these Precautions be found, and the more solicitously should such Principles be inculcated : But even in lower Life this Care is necessary ; that if those whose Prerogative it is to set the Fashion should fail, as amidst their strong Temptations they so generally do, *all* may not be carried away by the Torrent.

The like Considerations call us, to exert ourselves for the Execution of those wholesome *Laws*, which are enacted for the *Suppression of Prophaneness and Vice*, but which are so frequently violated, and audaciously insulted. Associations of worthy and publick-spirited Men are in this View very desirable ; especially for restraining that *Licentiousness*, which if not carried into an Army, is so frequently brought out of it, even where it has in the main been well disciplined ; and which in Civil Life, to which disbanded Soldiers must return, is pregnant with many grievous and fatal Consequences,

I might enlarge here ; but these are Hints of Advice, easily suggested by one destitute of all Religion, and which no prudent Atheist would oppose or neglect. It becomes the Servants of the Living God, the Ministers of the everlasting Gospel, to lead your Thoughts much farther on such an Occasion: I must therefore add,

VII. Let us all be engaged by the Survey we have been taking, to repose ourselves on God, and to seek His Protection and Favour in the Way He has graciously appointed.

We well know Him to be the great Disposer of all Events, who *speaks* at Pleasure, with an efficacious Voice, *concerning a Nation*, as well as a Family, *to plant or pluck up, to build or destroy it* (a). Our highest Wisdom must therefore consist in securing his Favour, by a most grateful Reception of his Gospel, and a faithful and constant Compliance with its great and blessed Design. And indeed it is, as the Apostle insinuates, absolutely necessary, that *Virtue* should be grafted on *Faith* (b) in order to its flourishing. Permit me therefore this Day, solemnly to renew the Exhortation I have so often given you, that you submit to the Authority of the Word, and of the Son of God, and that you endeavour
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(a) Jer. xviii. 7, 9. (b) 2 Pet. i. 5;

religiously to conform yourselves to the *Christian* Institution; acting as in the Presence of that holy Majesty of Heaven, who registers all our Actions, and penetrates our Hearts; feeling at all Times the deepest and most affectionate Sense of your infinite Obligations to Redeeming Grace; and considering yourselves as continually on the Borders of an Eternal State, where Happiness or Misery awaits you, compleat and perpetual. These are Motives and Considerations, suited to produce that Consistency, that Uniformity, that Elevation of Goodness, which must never be expected on any other Foundation.

And what glorious Hopes might we not form for our dear Country, if Sentiments like these were generally to prevail! “ Oh
 “ *Britain*, thou Nation *saved* and favoured
 “ *of the Lord*! If God hath so powerfully
 “ rescued thee again and again, plung’d as
 “ thou art into so many Excesses and Enor-
 “ mities; if *His Arm* has been thus *made*
 “ *bare* in thy Defence, whilst many who
 “ boast the most ancient hereditary Honours,
 “ or whose Atchievements for their Coun-
 “ try’s Good have ennobled their Line,
 “ deem it no Stain to their Greatness, to
 “ shew their Contempt of Religion, and to
 “ teach every Rank below them, to profane
 “ his Sabbaths, to neglect his Ordinances, or
 “ to affront them yet more by their irreverent
 “ Attendance, and by every other Method to
 “ dis-

“ dishonour and outrage that tremendous
 “ Name, which is the Awe of Heaven, and
 “ the Terror of Hell;—if He not only spare,
 “ but by signal Interpositions deliver and
 “ bless thee, while Prophaneness and Riot
 “ walk through thy Villages and Cities un-
 “ controlled, and almost unreproved too;
 “ and so many of thy *Watchmen* themselves
 “ *sleep over their Charge*, where they do not
 “ by false Principles or scandalous Exam-
 “ ples *cause their People to err*; — what
 “ mightest thou not expect were a general
 “ Reformation to prevail! What Prosperity,
 “ what Felicity would not attend thee, if
 “ thy Princes and thy Nobles appeared in-
 “ deed to reverence the GOD of Heaven, if
 “ his Sabbaths were religiously observed, his
 “ Name honoured, his Worship devoutly
 “ celebrated, in the Family as well as in
 “ the Sanctuary; if Pastors, to the Strength
 “ of Argument and the Fervour of Exhorta-
 “ tion, *publickly and from House to House*, (c)
 “ added the Sanction of a blameless, an holy,
 “ an edifying Example; and in Consequence
 “ of this there were a general Solitude in
 “ those under their Ministry, however they
 “ varied in Opinions and in Forms, to unite
 “ in *adorning the Doctrine of GOD their Sa-
 “ viour in all things* (d)! ”

Surely the Consequence must be, that a Na-
 tion thus truly *Christian*, tho' far less distin-
 guished

(c) Acts xx. 20. (d) Tit. ii. 10.

guished by natural Advantages than ours, would appear at once amiable and awful; or, in *Solomon's* sublime Language, *fair as the Moon, clear as the Sun, and terrible as an Army with Banners* (e). Our Neighbours would revere us; our GOD would protect us, and shower down his Blessings upon us; the Blessings of Peace and Plenty, which being traced up to their true Source, being also moderately used, and equitably and generously distributed to those that were real and proper Objects of Compassion, would be far sweeter than ever. When our Counsellors were faithful, and knew no Interest of their own to be compared with that of the Publick; when our Leaders, like that excellent Man who so lately fell in our Defence (*), *fear'd to sin, but not to die*; and there was in the Breast of every Soldier a calm Resignation to the Will of GOD, a noble Ambition of securing his Approbation, a well grounded Confidence in his Favour, whether for Time or Eternity; what could we reasonably dread? Surely, bad as the World is, the Enemies of such a People would be few; and GOD, their Guardian, would make such Enemies to know, that *he who touched them, touched the Apple of his Eye* (f).

Whose Heart does not kindle at such a Representation? Who that loves his Country, would

(e) Cant. vi. 10. (*) See Col. Gardiner's Life, §. 11.

(f) Zech. ii. 8.

would not form the most ardent Wishes, that this may be its Character, and its Felicity? May the Repose GOD hath been pleased to give us, be subservient to this blessed End! and now that our publick Counsellors are eased of many Burthens which the Exigencies and Operations of the War must occasion, may their Thoughts be directed to the happiest Measures, whereby *Immoralities* may be farther curbed, and pure, genuine, catholick *Christianity* most effectually promoted and establish'd among us! And may they who stand in the first Rank of the *Ministers of Christ*, be animated to lead the Way, with a Courage, Magnanimity, and Zeal, which may transmit their Names with Glory to the remotest Ages, and through the Grace of the Gospel intitle them to more distinguished Honours in the Church above, than any Constitution or Prince upon Earth can confer!

To conclude all, with the mention of what in this Connection may easily present it self to our Mind,

VIII. Let the Occasion of this Day's Assembly lead our Thoughts to that universal Peace of the Church, which we expect in the latter Day, and to the compleat Peace of the Heavenly World.

How delightful is it to think, that whatever Blemishes we for the present lament in
 E Churches,

Churches, whatever Desolations in States and Kingdoms, there is a Time approaching when all shall be remedied; a glorious long expected Time, for the Manifestation of which *the whole Creation seems to travail and be in Pain* (g); when *the Earth shall be filled with the Knowledge of the Lord, as the Waters cover the Channel of the Sea* (h), and the World shall learn by happy Experience, what *Christianity* is, and what the invaluable Blessings with which it is pregnant. Let us cheer our Hearts with the lovely and glorious Prospect of that Day of grand and final Pacification, when, once for all, those who have been armed for the Destruction of each other, *shall beat their Swords into Plow-Shares, and their Spears into Pruning-Hooks, when Nation shall not lift up Sword against Nation, neither shall they learn War any more* (i), having so cordially learnt the Gospel of Peace. Glorious Period, when the Religion of *Jesus* shall universally prevail over the whole Human Race, and disarm their fierce Passions, and regulate their exorbitant Desires, and inspire the most benevolent and generous Sentiments! When Men shall regard their Fellow-Men of all Nations as their Brethren, and desire to see all around them as happy as themselves; forgetting, with a Nobleness of Heart which nothing but the Gospel

(g) Rom. viii. 22:

(h) Habak. ii. 14.

(i) Isai. ii. 4.

Gospel of *Christ* can inspire, every Personal yea I will add, every National Interest, which appears inconsistent with the Happiness of the whole Human Species!

But *who shall live, when God doth this (k) ?* when this great Miracle shall close the Scene of Wonders, which the Christian Revelation has opened? Probably a distant Generation, by whom our Names shall be forgotten, tho' the Event itself be as certain as the Divine Oracles can render it. We will at least, with the First-Fruits of a Temper which shall then so universally prevail, rejoice in the unexpected Happiness of those, who shall not so much as know that we ever existed.

And if some Regard to personal Engagements will, as it is so natural and so just, mingle themselves with Sentiments like these, let me on this good Occasion call your Thoughts to the much nearer and more important Prospects of the Eternal World; Prospects, which I hope are familiar to the Minds of many among us, and to which so many sad Spectacles as daily present themselves here, concur to lead us. 'Tis painful to a truly benevolent Spirit, especially to one who considers the remoter Consequences of Things, to look round on what is generally the State of the present World, and to look back on the History of Mankind in preceding Times, antient or modern. There is no Branch of Science, with

(k) Numb. xxiv. 23.

respect to which it may be so truly said, *He who increaseth Knowledge, increaseth Sorrow* (1) in Proportion to it. In this Respect, they seem to have the greatest Advantage, who know only the Story of their own personal and domestick Afflictions, and those of a little Circle of near Neighbours. Yet so is our Nature constituted, that we delight and wish to know, how it fares, and has fared with others, though at the Expence of a sad Sympathy: But it is most comfortable to reflect, that where God has given such a Sensibility of Heart founded on true Principles of Piety and Charity, he hath appointed, that the Soul in which it dwells should not long inherit the Infirmities and Sorrows of human Flesh, nor multiply Years in the Provinces of Calamity and Misery. He did not send those Heaven-born Graces down to Earth, merely to teach Men to weep the Tears of Humanity, tho' they have their intermingled Sweetness too. Unfeigned universal Love shall infallibly be the Source of Joy. *Yet a little while*, and God will draw a Veil over all these mournful Spectacles; or rather, he will raise us beyond the View of them, to a high and serene Situation, from whence the penetrating Eye shall command an ample Prospect, beyond the present Stretch even of Thought, and nothing shall strike it but Sights of Bliss.

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(1) Eccl. i. 18.

In the mean Time, let our Eyes be lifted up towards Heaven, in humble Hope, and in fervent Prayer, for the publick Prosperity, for the Prevalency of true *Christianity* in the whole World, especially in our own Country; and above all, (as it is that in which we are first and most intimately concerned,) for its Prevalency in our own Hearts; that we may steadily retain it, that we may faithfully practise it, that we may daily advance in our Conformity to it. So shall we *understand the Loving-Kindness of the Lord*, in the general Conduct of present Affairs; and though there may be Mysteries of Providence which we cannot particularly explain, shall assuredly believe, that *all the Paths of it are Mercy and Truth*, and find the truest and the securest Peace in our Passage to everlasting Joy. AMEN.



A HYMN *sung after the* SERMON,
to the TUNE of the Old Fiftieth
Psalm.

I.

NOW let our Songs address the God of Peace,
Who bids the Tumult of the Battle cease.
The pointed Spears to Pruning-Hooks he bends,
"And the broad Faulchion in the Plow-Share
(ends."

His pow'rful Word unites contending Nations
In kind Embraces and friendly Salutations.

II.

BRITAIN, adore the Guardian of thy State ;
Who high on his Celestial Throne elate,
Still watchful o'er thy Safety and Repose,
Frown'd on the Counsels of thy haughtiest Foes :
Thy Coasts secur'd from ev'ry dire Invasion
Of Fire and Sword, and spreading Desolation.

III.

When Rebel-Bands with desp'rate Madness join'd,
He wafted o'er Deliv'rance with his Wind ;
Drove back the Tide that delug'd half our Land,
And curb'd their Fury with his mightier Hand :
'Till dreadful Slaughter and the last Confusion
Taught those audacious Sinners their Delusion.

IV.

IV.

He gave our Fleets to triumph o'er the Main,
 And scatter Terrors cross wide Ocean's Plain ;
 Opposing Leaders trembled at the Sight,
 Nor found their Safety in th' attempted Flight :
 Taught by their Bonds, how vainly they pre-
 (tended
 Those to distress whom *Jfr'el's* God defended.

V.

Fierce Storms were summon'd up in *Britain's* Aid,
 And meagre Famine hostile Lands o'erspread :
 By Suff'rings bow'd, their Conquests they release,
 Nor scorn the Overtures of equal Peace.
 Contending Pow'rs congratulate the Blessing,
 Joint Hymns of Gratitude to Heav'n addressing.

VI.

While we beneath our Vines and Fig-trees sit,
 Or thus within thy sacred Temples meet ;
 Accept, great God, the Tribute of our Song,
 And all the Mercies of this Day prolong !
 Then spread thy peaceful Word thro' ev'ry
 (Nation,
 That all the Earth may hail thy great Salvation.

F I N I S.

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