A SERMON

PREACHED at the Cathedral-Church of *SALISBURY*, October 6, 1745.

On Occasion of the REBELLION in *Scotland*,

By the Right Reverend THOMAS, *Lord Bishop of* SALISBURY.

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MDCCXLV.

JUDGES ii. 7.

And---*The People served the* LORD *all the days of* JOSHUA, *and all the days of the Elders that out-lived* JOSHUA, *who had seen all the great Works of the* LORD, *that he did for* ISRAEL.

THUS far all is well: God had been extremely gracious and merciful to *Israel*; and those who had seen his wonders, and had felt the miseries from which he had delivered them, retained a grateful remembrance of his goodness. But the case quickly altered: No sooner were the men, who had seen the works of the Lord, *gathered unto their fathers*, But *there arose another Generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel: and the Children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord.* The effects of their departing from GOD their deliverer, are described at the 14th Verse. *And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of the Spoilers that spoiled them, and he sold them into the hands of their Enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their Enemies.*

You have now the caſe of the *Iſraelites* fully before you. I wiſh it was a *Singular* caſe, and that the reſt of the people of GOD ſtood clear from the like imputation. If they do, happy are they; if they do not, they have great reaſon to fear, that the ſame cauſe will produce the ſame effect; and that they likewiſe ſhall be ſold into the hands of their enemies.

It is but a melancholy reflexion to think, that the misbehaviour here charged upou the people of *Iſrael*, is almoſt a natural effect of the preſent degenerate and corrupted ſtate of nature. we receive benefits with great warmth and zeal of gratitude, and we poſſeſs and enjoy them with great coldneſs and indifference; and too often with a total forgetfulneſs of the hand that beſtowed them. This temper diſcovers itſelf in the common affairs of life, and the mutual intercourſe that men have with men. Thoſe, who are able to help us, are courted and careſſed as long as we want their aſſiſtance; are honoured and reverenced whilſt they afford it; and as ſoon as they have made us happy, we begin to think they did us but juſtice, they gave us only what we had a right to, and the acknowledgments due to the benefactor, are paid to our own merit and deſert. By theſe ſteps our ſucceſs in the world, owing perhaps entirely to the partiality our friends had for us, and which ought to make us humble and thankful, leads us to two odious vices, very incident to human nature, tho' very unbecoming the condition of it, *Pride* and *Ingratitude*.

Publick bleſſings make ſtill leſs impreſſion on the minds of men, than private benefactions. Very few think of any obligation lying upon themſelves, for the good they enjoy in common with their neighbours. The peace and quiet and ſecurity procured by the care and protection of *Government*, is rarely reflected on as creating any debt of *Gratitude* to thoſe who watch for us. When *Tribute* is demanded by thoſe to whom *Tribute* is due, men are apt to conſider what they pay, as ſo much loſt out of their property: Whereas

Whereas in truth no part of our fortune makes a better return to us, than that which is beſtowed to ſecure the whole, and to maintain peace and tranquility in our days.

What miſchief this temper of ingratitude produces in private and in publick life is but too manifeſt. Every man almoſt has his complaint againſt ſomebody, who has repaid his good offices with neglect and contempt, perhaps too with injuries; and in publick life one would imagine that liberty was miſtaken for a right to abuſe the *Government*; and that the dignity of a free ſtate conſiſted in acting without regard or reverence to thoſe who are at the head of it.

But the effects of this perverſe diſpoſition acting in the affairs of this life, and among ourſelves, are matters of light complaint, compared with its influence in matters of religion. We have all one great *Friend*, if we wou'd acknowledge him, one great *Governour*, if we wou'd regard him. But we are too apt to deal with GOD, as we do with the reſt of our *Friends*; we intreat, we beg for his aſſiſtance, when we are in diſtreſs, and when we are relieved, we think but little of him.

The common bleſſings of providence are received and enjoyed by multitudes, who ſeldom or never think of the hand that ſupplys their wants. The former and the latter rain, and plentiful ſeaſons are aſcribed to I know not what courſe of natural cauſes: But ſuch cauſes are meant, to which no thanks are due; and this notion, contrary to reaſon and true philoſopy, is the more readily embraced, becauſe it furniſhes men with the good things of the world, and lays them under no obligations to the author of them. St. *Paul* ſays, That GOD, at no time *left himſelf without witneſsn that he did good, and gave us rain from Heaven and fruitful Seaſons, filling our Hearts with Food and Gladneſs.* But how has this evidence been attended to! The conſtant and regular ſupply of our neceſſities makes us imagine that we have a right to them by preſcription, and

and that we have a property in them as *Children* of the *Earth*: Or, that if any thing is owing to wisdom, it is to *our own* wisdom, in managing the *Ground* and the *Seasons* to the best advantage. and thus forgetting the author of every good gift, and transfering the honour due to him, to ourselves, we do in the language of the prophet, *Sarcrifice unto our Net, and burn incense to our Drag, because by them our Portion is Fat, and our Meat plenteous*, Hab. i. 16.

But however these common blessings, which come to all without distinction, are neglected and over looked, one wou'd imagine that signal deliverances wrought in favour of any people, and in which the arm of the LORD is made bare, and visible to every eye, shou'd be had in perpetual remembrance, and be transmitted with sentiments of *Gratitude*, *Honour* and *Religion* to latest posterity.

But the case is far otherwise!

The history of the *Jews*, a people under the peculiar and visible government of providence, is a series of rebellions and revolts against GOD, who had frequently and miraculously deliver'd them from the hands of their enemies. In their story the counsels of GOD with respect to them, and their neighbours are laid open; and we see plainly the resentment of God's justice against a rebellious people, and in what manner he raised the nations round about them to punish and distress them. From their example we may learn to reckon with ourselves; and by considering our own case, know what to fear, and what to hope, from the justice and mercy of of GOD: for the ways of providence are unalterable, and the same wisdom and justice which governed the *Jews*, governs all the people of the world. The purposes of GOD are the same towards all nations, tho' not so discernable and manifest as in the history of the people of *Israel*. Prophane history presents us many instances of nations subdu'd under the hand of their enemies, and fallen from

from a ſtate of pride and ſovereignity to the miſerable condition of *Slavery* and *Captivity*. There the hiſtory leaves us.—It acquaints us with the facts, and the politicians of the world are buſied in aſſigning cauſes for the ſurprizing changes that have been in the nations. Some diſcern great wiſdom and conduct on the ſide of the conquerors, and great miſtakes and ill management on the ſide of the unfortunate; and all agree to aſcribe in moſt caſes, the events and ſucceſſes of war to the number and bravery of the Troops. But look into the *Sacred Hiſtory* where the counſels of GOD are diſplayed by his holy prophets, there will you ſee a plain reaſon, why the favourite nation, deliver'd moſt wonderfully and miraculously from the slavery of *Egypt*, was ſold again into slavery to the *Philiſtines*, and other heathen *Nations* around them. Had this ſtory been told in the common way of hiſtory, we ſhou'd have thought this people extremely weak or unfortunate, in that they had no ſooner eſcaped out of the hands of the great and powerful *Kings* of *Egypt*, but they became *Vaſſals* and *Bondſmen* to the little *Princes* bordering upon *Canaan*. But ſee the truth of the caſe: They became extremely unfortunate, becauſe they were extremely wicked; their proſperity was their ruin, as it made them forget the LORD that bought them. And the ſtrength, which they relyed on as their ſecurity, betrayed them to their deſtruction; for they had to deal with him, *who ſaveth not Kings by the multitude of an hoſt, nor giveth the battle always to the ſtrong.*

Let no man be ſo weak as to imagine that this method of providence was peculiar and confined to the *Jews*, and that other nations were left to follow their own imaginations, and that GOD regarded them not; for the contrary appears in the ſame *Sacred Hiſtory*, in which we have the account of the *Jewiſh Nation*. The counſels of GOD were not indeed ſo manifeſtly declared to other *Nations* by *Prophets* and *Meſſengers* from GOD; but the methods of juſtice were the ſame to all, and the *Nations* were left to reaſon and conſcience, thoſe great lights given to all alike, to interpret the conduct

conduct of providence with respect to themselves. Were *Sodom* and *Gomorah* destroyed by chance? No: it was by a fire from Heaven, commissioned to extirpate a wicked and profane people. Were the *Canaanites* over powered by the arms of *Israel*? Certainly not: but God, who had waited in patience and forbearness till the measure of their iniquity was full, delivered them up to destruction. Enquire what became of the great monarchys of *Assyria*, *Babylon*, and *Egypt*: You may see their doom foretold by the prophets. they were to be destroyed for their great *Idolatry* and *Corruption*: and the prophecys have been so remarkably fulfilled, that they are a standing lesson of instruction to all *Nations*, who have eyes to see, and hearts to understand. Thus too it fared at last with the favourite people of the *Jews*? they were often punished in mercy, and suffered to be miserable that they might become better. they were from time to time admonished by the prophets; and at last GOD sent his *Son* to them; Him they slew and hanged on a tree; and having filled up the measure of their iniquity, vengeance pursued them; and such vengeance as astonished the world, and does yet astonish it; for *there is no misery, like their misery*.

Final punishments, whereby *Nations* are entirely rooted out, are of use to us as examples and warnings to flee from the wrath to to come; otherwise they can do us no service: for should we ever fall into so wretched a condition as to call down such judgments on our head, who can deliver us from the hand of the living GOD? But other judgments, how sharp and severe soever they may be, are the effects of mercy, and intended for our correction.——When ancient and late deliverances are forgotten, and have no effect upon the mind; when the voice of GOD speaking in his law, by his prophets, and by the ministers of his word, is no longer attended to; nothing remains but to apply sharper remedies, or to permit the people to fill up the full measure of their iniquities, and to perish in their sins.——'tis mercy to prevent *this fatal* evil, how corroding soever the means, made use of by mercy, may prove. The perverseness

perverſeneſs and corruption of mens hearts juſtify the goodneſs and equity of God in inflicting ſuch puniſhments, and they muſt blame themſelves for not attending to the gentler and the kinder calls of providence.

Perhaps there may be no great occaſion to juſtify before you the ways of God towards the children of *Iſrael*; we are all of one opinion to condemn their perverſeneſs and ingratitude: So much eaſier is it, to detect the faults of others, than to ſee and acknowledge our own!

But are we innocent from this great offence?

Let us conſider our own caſe: and ſurely we have great reaſon to conſider it, now the enemies of our *Religion* and *Liberty* appear with triumph in our land, and are in poſſeſſion of one ancient and powerful *Kingdom* united to the *Crown* of *England*.

Our unhappy diviſions in *Civil Matters*, I chuſe to paſs over in ſilence at this time and place; for I mean no reproach to any man; and without doubt our conduct towards GOD, and our regard to his *Holy Religion*, is the firſt and moſt intereſting conſideration now before us.

It is well known that the people of *Iſrael* were the choſen, the peculiar people of God; and diſtinguiſhed from the reſt of the *Nations*, by a ſpecial providence directing them and their affairs. If you conſider this as the effect of partiality, and a weak fondneſs for one ſet of men more than another, you injure the *Attributes* of *God*, who acts by *wiſdom* and *juſtice* in all his dealings, and is no reſpector of perſons. The houſe of *Abraham* was called for the ſake of true *Religion*; to preſerve the knowledge of the one *God* among themſelves, to propagate it among the *Nations*, and to prepare the way for introducing into the world, under proper circumſtances,

 that

that *Seed*, in which all the *Nations* of the earth were to be bleſſed. As they were choſen for theſe great Purpoſes, ſo whenever they acted contrary to them, they ceaſed to be the choſen people, and were treated as enemies and rebels.

We are apt enough to boaſt of the purity of our *Religion*, and our *Reformation* from the errors and corruptions of the *Church of Rome*; and to flatter ourſelves that we alſo are a peculiar people of God, and ſet up by providence to be the *Bulwark* of the *Proteſtant Religion*. And indeed, if we judge from the many deliverances we have had, when our *Religion* and our *Liberties* were in the utmoſt danger, we have great reaſon to acknowledge the care and protection of heaven over us. But remember ſtill that we too are choſen to profeſs and maintain the truth of God's holy *Goſpel*, and to bear our teſtimony againſt the corruptions, which have prevailed over a great part of the *Chriſtian* world. If inſtead of acting up to this part aſſigned us by providence, we grow careleſs and indifferent to our holy *Profeſſion*, and ſuffer a ſpirit of irreligion to prevail over the nation, We forfeit our title to God's protection, we are no longer the choſen people, and muſt expect to be treated as enemies and deſerters.

Our *preſent* ſituation is attended with fears and uneaſy apprehenſions; and if we look back and conſider from whence we are fallen, we may ſee but too much reaſon to ſuſpect that our fears are well grounded. How has this nation been bleſſed with the light of the Goſpel? how wonderfully and how often has it been reſcued from danger, when to human appearance there was no help at hand? Scarcely had the *Reformation* taken root among us, but a *Popiſh Queen*, made cruel by *Bigotry* and *Superſtition*, aſcended the *Throne*; and applied the *only ſtrong Argument* of *Popery*, fire and faggot, to extinguiſh the light that was breaking in upon us. Not only the *Civil Powers* of this country were in the hands that meant to deſtroy the *Reformation*, but they were ſupported and united to the powers of *Spain*, whoſe *Prince* was become a partner of the

Throne

Throne of *England*; who lived to deſtroy (not in this country, bleſſed be God,) but in his own dominions *Thouſands* and *Tens* of *Thouſands* on the account of *Religion*.——Such were the powers under which the *Reformation* here, ſtill in its *Infancy*, was to ſtruggle. It is painful to think of the miſeries of that time; but think of them we ought, and bleſs God for the noble *Examples* of conſtancy and *Chriſtian* courage, left by thoſe whom he raiſed up to bear teſtimony, at the expence of their lives, to the truth of his *Religion*. Had this reign been long and proſperous, it is highly probable that *Philip* of *Spain* had left this country in the ſame condition he left his own; where the *Iquiſition* rules with lordly and uncontroulable power, over the conſciences and over the fortunes of the people. But God, in whoſe hands are the iſſues of life and death, made way for a *Proteſtant Princeſs* to aſcend the *Throne*; in whoſe long and glorious reign, the *Reformation* took deep root, and the *Eſtabliſhment* of this *national Church* was perfected. A work of great *wiſdom* and *piety*, and ſo eſteemed by the *Proteſtant Churches* abroad, however unhappily ſome among ourſelves have forſaken her *Communion*.

The *Reign* of this glorious *Princeſs* was almoſt a continual *Scene* of deliverances from foreign *Invaſions*, and *Diſturbances* at home. And notwithſtanding ſhe was diſtreſſed on every ſide; by *Bulls* and *Curſes* from *Rome*, by *Armados* from *Spain*, by *Rebellions* in *England* and *Ireland*, ſhe left this *Church* and *Nation* in *Peace* and *Security*: So wonderfully did the hand of God appear in our preſervation.

Peace and *Security* under a weak *Government* which ſucceeded, produced by degrees a corruption in *Principles* and *Manners*; which ended at laſt in the ruin of this *Church* and *Nation*, and the deſtructon of a virtuous *Prince*, worthy of a far better fate. With him fell all our hopes of *Order* and *Government* in *Church* and *State*; Anarchy and confuſion uſurped the *Throne*; and religion was ſo divided into an almoſt infinite number of diſagreeing SECTS, that the true one could hardly be found in the crowd.

But

But whilst we were under this thick *Cloud*, HE, who can bring light out of darkness, did, against all the hopes of human probability, restore to us our happy constitution in *Church* and *State*; not by force of *Arms*, or the power of *Princes*, but by over-ruling the passions of men: so that even *they* became instruments in restoring these *Blessings*, who had been greatly concerned in destroying them.

It will be wronging the nation to say that this deliverance at the *Restoration* was not received with great joy and pleasure. The joy indeed was excessive; and, as the case too often happens, left little room for sober and serious reflexions. The hearts of men being set open to the impressions and transports of joy, soon grew sensual; and the prosperity of the nation broke out into *Luxury*, and into all the Vices which naturally attend it. The sense of *Religion* decayed; and the very appearances of it were suspected, as a remnant of the hypocrisy with which the late times had been charged. And if we may judge by the performances of the *Stage*, which are formed to the taste of the people, there never was a time when lewdness, irreligion, and profaneness were heard with more patience.

But let us consider, what fruit the nation had of these things. I shall pass over all the calamities of that time, which were many, and mention only that, which is the cause and foundation of all we fear at present. In the next reign then, see *Popery* once more exalted to the *Throne* of *England*, and working to destroy the *Religion* and *Liberties* of the people; not by art and cunning and leisurely steps, but by open and avowed attempts upon our constitution. The laws for defence of our *Religion* were silenced by a dispensing power; *Papists* were placed on the *Bench*, on the *Seat* of *Judgment*, and at the head of *Colleges* in our *Universities*. Mens hearts sunk for fear, and the torrent seem'd to carry all before it. One happy effect indeed it had; it awakened men to a sober sense of themselves and their condition. when they were *put in Fear*, they soon found *themselves to be but Men*; and they did the only reasonable thing they cou'd do, apply to God for protection. The *Zeal* of the nation at that time for

for the pure uncorrupted *Doctrines* of the *Gospel*, in opposition to the *Errors* of *Popery*, was perhaps greater than ever it had been from the days of the *Reformation*. The *Pastors* and their *Flocks* were equally animated with a constancy and a courage above temptation. And the *Clergy* of the *Established Church*, under all the fears and apprehensions that daily threatned them, maintained the *Doctrines* of the *Reformation*, with such learning, ability, and integrity, as did them honour both at home and abroad.

Thus were the hearts of the people turned as the heart of one man: Nor was it in vain they sought the *Lord*; for by a wonderful series of providence, he delivered them from their distress, and we have seen for many years the *Crown* upon the head of *Protestant Princes*, the natural *Guardians* of the *Religion* and *Liberties* of this *Country*.

If we have made a right use even of this last deliverance, let us fear no *Change*; for GOD will not forsake us, till we forsake him. But the prospect before us, the danger that draws near to us, call upon us to act uprightly with ourselves; and not to deceive our hearts with hopes that GOD will remember us, if we have forgotten him, and the great things he has done for us.

Our histories will always remind us of the great deliverences this nation has had, and we cannot forget them; nor did the *Jews* forget the wonders wrought in the land of *Egypt*, and the redemption of their *Ancestors* from *Captivity*. The historical remembrance of the facts *they had*; and *we have it*. The charge against the *Jews* expressed frequently by their forgetting God, is the same which St. *Paul* brings against the heathen world: *When they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations; and their foolish heart was darkned.*

Do we stand clear of this charge? I wish to God we did.

Let

Let not *me* be the accuſer of my nation, but let every man recollect what he has heard, and read, and ſeen, within the compaſs of a few years. Surely the Goſpel of *Chriſt Jeſus* was never treated with greater malice and contempt, by *Jews* or *Heathens*, than it has been in this *Chriſtian* Country. Think not that I am condemning a ſober enquiry into the truth of *Religion*: God forbid. But what ſhall we ſay, for the undiſguiſed profaneneſs, and even blaſphemy that has ſwarmed from the preſs: Many inſtances might be given; but *One* can never be forgotton; where the nobleſt and moſt exalted (a) *Hymn* of *Chriſtian* devotion known to this *Church*, or any *Church* in the world, in which *Angels* and the bleſſed *Spirits* above join with us, has been perverted to the higheſt impiety and blaſphemy, that ever the wickedneſs or malice of man's heart cou'd conceive. This and other crimes of the ſame nature, are indeed chargeable on the authors: but how deplorable muſt the ſtate of a nation be, when men find encouragement to provide ſuch entertainment for the publick?

Look into common life, (not to pry into the ſecret faults of men,) but to ſee what is become of that ſenſe of religion, which once animated the people. When *Popery* was breaking in upon us, our *Churches* were crowded; and unhappy was the man, who by ſickneſs, or any real neceſſity was prevented in his attendance in the houſe of the LORD. Is it ſo now? Is not *Sunday* become a day of diverſion to the *Great ones*, and a day of idleneſs and lazineſs to the *Little ones?* and has not this been manifeſtly followed by a great increaſe of great wickedneſs and violence among the lower people? *Theft* and *Robbery* which uſed to be ſecret crimes, now appear armed in our *Streets*; and are ſupported by numbers ſtrong enough to defy the power of the magiſtrate. The unruly paſſions of men muſt be governed either by force, or by religion. Force cannot watch at all doors to prevent further miſchief; but *religion* is a *Centinel* placed in every heart, to guard it againſt wickedneſs. and it is but a natural conſequence for men to grow violent and

(a) *The Te Deum.*

and injurious to others, in proportion as their ſenſe of *Religion* decays.

But amidſt this ruin of *vertue* and *religion*, one thing there is, that ſtill may be thought matter of comfort; that the *Nation* is generally averſe to *Popery*: But it is ſome abatement *even* to this comfort, to conſider that the fear of *Popery* is not always a concern for the purity of the *Goſpel*, but a fear merely of the powers of a *popiſh Church*. Thoſe who have the leaſt *religion*, and are grown wild with notions of *Liberty*, have reaſon to be apprehenſive of eccleſiaſtical *Courts* and *Inquiſitions* under the direction of *Popery*. But in this there is no virtue or merit; tho' it may be perhaps an happy circumſtance at *preſent*, that there is *ſomething* in *popery*, for thoſe to to be afraid of, who have no regard for *religion*.

But in the mean time has not *popery* been daily getting ground on us, by the artful and unregarded inſinuations of the *Adverſary*; and by applications of another kind, which do indeed but little honour to the *Converts*, or the *Converters?* The price at which a man may ſell the *proteſtant religion*, is become almoſt a ſtated and well known *Sum*; and there are known *Markets* in which a man may ſell the *Faith* in which he was born and bred. Such new purchaſed *proſelytes* make no great *Figure*; for this method indeed has no effect, but upon the loweſt people. And conſidering how improper an application this is to the *Conſcience*, there is ground to ſuſpect, that it is made uſe of rather to raiſe recruits againſt a proper time, than in hopes to make real *Converts*. I wiſh we may not ſoon feel the effects of this management ſo long connived at.

But to return to ourſelves: To prevent this, and whatever elſe we may apprehend from the danger and diſpleaſure of God, let us ſeek the Lord in our diſtreſs; and by acknowledging our own unworthineſs, and the abuſe of former mercies, render ourſelves objects of his goodneſs and forgiveneſs. we have but too exactly copied the behaviour

of

of the *Jews* in their days of prosperity; let us learn of them likewise in their adversity, and cry unto GOD for help against our enemies. Let us set a due value upon the blessings bestowed on us, and walk worthy of the light of the Gospel which has shone among us; that our conduct and behaviour may bear testimony to the truth which we profess.

And as in all the dispensations of providence towards us, it is expected from us that we should make use of the means which GOD hath put in our power, for our own defence and safety; let us on this occasion with chearfulness, and the hearts of men who trust in GOD, be ready to employ our *persons* and our *fortunes* in the defence of our KING and COUNTRY, and the *Happy Constitution* in *Church* and *State*, under which we live. Let every man do his part: He who can do least, can pray for the peace of *Jerusalem*. every man may reform one, that is himself, and fill up perhaps that number of the righteous, for the sake of which the *City* may be saved.

In a word, the time calls upon us to be serious; to think of GOD, and of OURSELVES; and according to the advice of the *psalmist*, with which I shall dismiss you, *to stand in awe and Sin not, to commune with our own heart, and in our Chamber and be still. To offer the Sacrifice of righteousness, and to put our* Trust *in the* LORD.

FINIS.