

1763  
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# S E R M O N

Preached at

The Cathedral Church of *YORK*,

On *Thursday, May 5, 1763,*

Being the Day appointed for a General  
Thanksgiving to Almighty God, for put-  
ting an End to the late bloody and ex-  
pensive War, by the Conclusion of a  
Peace.

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*Canon Residentiary of the said Church.*

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*Y O R K:*

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S E R M O N, &c.

R O M. xiii. 4.

*He is the Minister of God to thee for Good.*

**I**N these words we have the Kingly Office, and, in consequence of that, all civil Authority and Power, conveyed to us under the idea of their being a common benefit to mankind. And unless we were to suppose, what indeed it would be absurd to imagine, that the People were made for Kings, and not that Kings were appointed for the Good of the People, it is

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obvious

obvious that this must be the natural and true state of the case, in all kinds of Government.

Wherefore that Subjection to the higher Powers, whereunto we are exhorted by the Apostle, should always be qualified by the consideration, that the Good of mankind is the End of their Institution, being ordained by God, from whom all Power is derived, to this very purpose.

And therefore if, in the accomplishment of this desirable purpose, they pursue the beneficent design of their appointment, the opposing or resisting them, in the progress of so good a Work, would be resisting the Ordinance of God; who, as his Benevo-  
lence

lence is equally extensive with his Omnipotence, requires that the Communications of his Power should be regulated by the principles of Justice and Goodness.

From whence we may observe, that the Value of every Mode of Government is to be estimated in proportion to the greater or lesser Degree of Good which it is calculated to produce.—And as the true end of all Government is the Freedom and Security, the Prosperity and Happiness, of those who live under it; that Government which is best calculated to procure and diffuse the highest Degree of those Blessings, must be esteemed the best.—But our happy Constitution is calculated to do this, above any Mode of Government in the world, and

justly claims the preference, as effectually securing to each Individual his Property, and the enjoyment of it with Freedom.

Whereas it is far otherwise in all absolute Government, where the Subject cannot truly say, that either his Property or his Person are strictly his own; under which circumstance he is not so properly a Subject as a Slave.—The apprehensions of which must damp all generous Principles, must greatly discourage all kinds of Application and Industry, and contract the Commercial Views and Operations of the Subject within much narrower Bounds; lest, by enlarging his Fortunes too much, he might be in danger of becoming the Object of rapacious Power, as the Possessors  
of

of such Power can easily find pretences for executing whatever their Ambition or their Avarice may suggest to them.

For so intoxicating is Power, that few men, very few indeed, are able to bear it.

The man who is invested with Power, is besieged by many enemies, not only from without, but from within himself, which are the more likely to betray him, as they always appear to him under the specious disguise of Friends.

His Sycophants and Flatterers are ever ready to administer to his projects of Ambition, however oppressive, with a view to themselves.

And

And those domestic Enemies within himself, his Resentments and Passions, are ever solliciting the exertion of that Power; however unjust, to gratify their several demands.

This shall be the manner of your King; says Samuel to the Jewish People, upon their impious rejection of the Lord, that the Lord should not reign over them.----  
 “ This shall be the manner of the King  
 “ that shall reign over you.”

He will deprive you of your Liberty.---  
 “ He will take your Sons, and appoint  
 “ them for himself—for his Chariots—and  
 “ to be his Horsemen—and some shall run  
 “ before his Chariots.”

He

He will deprive you of your Property---  
 for “ he will take your Fields, and your  
 “ Vineyards, and your Oliveyards, even  
 “ the best of them, and give them to his  
 “ Officers.”

In short, he will make you Dependiant,  
 and “ ye shall be his servants.”

This is the natural progress of Power  
 unrestrained, and may serve to point out  
 to us, that despotic Power was not made  
 for man, who is so unequal to the Burthen,  
 that it generally intoxicates and over-  
 whelms himself, and is always a sore Grie-  
 vance to those who live under it.

Wherefore



Wherefore it is highly expedient for the Good of the Community, in every Mode of Government; that the supreme Power, whether in One or in Many, should be so tempered and restrained by the Laws of the Community, as to answer the true end and purpose of all power; which is to protect and preserve, not to oppress and destroy:

He is the Minister of God to thee for Good!

For though in the other Branch of his Character as not bearing the sword in vain, but as being a Revenger to execute wrath upon those that do Evil, it is absolutely necessary to the Peace of Society, that he should be armed with this kind of Power,

as there would be no living in Society without it;—yet the most amiable and shining part of his Character consists in the protection and praise of those that do well, and promoting the common Utility.

And how exactly does our happy Constitution coincide with this true Idea of all right Government, wherein the Prerogative of the King and the Rights of his People are so well adjusted by the Laws of the Community, that the mutual exercise of their distinct and legal Rights, is productive of this common Utility; under which limitation the legal Power of the King can never be oppressive to his People, being regulated by such salutary Laws as were made and intended to work

for their Good.—And the King, on the other hand, is equally guarded by the same Laws from the LICENTIOUSNESS and the MADNESS of the People, the Laws being the Umpire unto which both must submit for their mutual security.

From whence it is observed by a Writer on this Subject, that “our Scheme of Government is the noblest, the most just, and the most exact that ever, perhaps, was contrived;—for it provides for the Security and Happiness of each Individual, though ever so inferior, and yet at the same time establishes the Glory of the Prince. It secures the Liberty of the People, and yet strengthens the Power of the King.”

And

And how pleasing the Reflection, that we have this just Observation so fully verified in the amiable Character of our most Gracious Sovereign, now upon the Throne of these Realms; who is so far from extending his Prerogative beyond its due bounds, that, like a tender Father of his Country, he is the most pleased, when exerting that Prerogative in promoting the Happiness of his People.—As one instance of which I shall now only mention that Happiness we are on this Day the more especially met to celebrate under his Auspicious Reign; who being truly sensible of the heavy Burthen and the dismal Ravages of a most expensive and destructive War, hath, in his Wisdom and Goodness, procured to

his People the Blessings of a Just and Honourable Peace.

But are we sufficiently sensible of his Goodness? Have we the like humane and tender Concern for the Good of our Country, that our most gracious Sovereign is pleased to exemplify upon every Occasion for its Welfare?

Are we sufficiently sensible of our own Happiness? Do we not pervert and abuse it, by turning our LIBERTY into LICENTIOUSNESS?

Let us lay our hands upon our hearts, and seriously consider if we act uprightly,  
and

and as becometh true Citizens of our Sion,  
upon this joyful occasion.

The most prejudiced will own, I presume, that Peace in Itself is a desirable Blessing. And if we further consider it, as having put a Period to that HAVOCK and DESOLATION spread abroad among the Nations, as well as among our own People, by the late extensive and bloody War, this makes the Blessing still more desirable, and should induce us, upon the common principles of Humanity, to commemorate the Day with thankful hearts, which put a period to the DESTRUCTION and CALAMITIES of our Fellow Creatures, by restoring Peace to this our Land.

Shall we then, as if totally insensible and regardless of the Feelings of Humanity—deaf to the Tears and Complaints of the Widow and the Orphan, wantonly pursue Conquests from which no public NATIONAL ADVANTAGES can accrue, and which, if acquired, might have been purchased too dear ?

Shall we then, flushed and elated with the Success with which Heaven has hitherto been pleased to bless our Arms, presumptuously build on the Continuance of this Success, forgetting that, amidst the precarious Contingencies and Vicissitudes of War, we are liable to a REVERSE OF FORTUNE, and that, by rashly pursuing unprofitable Conquests, we might be deprived of all  
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those REAL ADVANTAGES we have now obtained by the Peace? which shews the great Penetration and Abilities of the Minister, and the Goodness of his heart, in steadily pursuing such Measures in so CRITICAL a SITUATION, as were for the PUBLIC GOOD, however they might be depreciated by the turbulent Clamours of prejudiced people.—Under which prejudices they will not allow themselves to attend to the Truth of Facts, so much as to some circumstance or other which have no real connection with those Facts, and are therefore resolved to find fault with the Peace, however meritorious in itself.—But why? Only because they dislike the hand it came from.

Strange Perverseness indeed!

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As if a Blessing was to be depreciated or rejected, because it is not conferred on us in the manner we chuse!

This way of thinking and judging is extremely disingenuous, as every disinterested and true Lover of his Country will ever prefer the GOOD of the WHOLE to the Prejudices and disappointed Ambition of Individuals, and will with Unanimity concur in the generous Principles of true Patriotism, and that public Oeconomy recommended to us from the Throne, so absolutely necessary after such an ENORMOUS EXPENCE of MEN and TREASURES.—For these alone can properly distinguish this memorable Æra; and, if heartily concurred  
in,

in, would render this Nation the ADMIRATION and PRAISE of the whole earth.

Thus much, and much more might be said, O happy Britain! for thy internal Security, being supported by such Laws, as would make fast the Bars of thy Gates, and bless thy children within thee.

And as to our external Security, we are equally happy in That—having the Arms of the Ocean for our Bulwark; the guarding of which, by the Superiority of our NAVAL FORCE, is what our natural Situation points out to us, and evidently denotes that the supporting this Superiority, wherein our GREAT STRENGTH lies, is the most natural and effectual method we can  
 C take

take of repelling the Attacks, or chastising the Insolence, of a foreign Enemy.

To which we may add this farther circumstance of our Situation.——That the means of our Defence are also the means of our EXALTATION and NATIONAL GRANDEUR, in procuring to us a most abundant increase of Riches and Affluence in all manner of Stores, by our Trade and our Commerce with the remotest Regions of the Globe.

So that our MARITIME STRENGTH does not only establish Peace within our Walls, but also brings Plenteousness within our Palaces; and what is said of Jerufalem is strictly applicable to Great-Britain on this  
occasion

occasion—“ They shall prosper that love  
“ thee !”

They shall prosper, as having all the means of Plenty and Prosperity in their Power, by their commercial Situation, and as having the Fruits of their application and diligence secured to them by this animating consideration, that whatever they legally acquire by their Commerce and Industry, is properly and strictly their Own.

They shall prosper that love thee, not only in the free enjoyment of their civil Rights and Liberties, but of their religious Ones also, being delivered from that spiritual Tyranny which our Fathers were not able to bear, and released from that unmanly  
Yoke

Yoke of Bondage into “the Liberty where-  
 “with Christ hath made us free.”

Happy the Prince and his People who are in such a case!—Whose civil and religious Rights are a mutual Support to each other, and productive of that manly spirit, always the Result of true Freedom, which enables us to stand fast against every encroachment, whether religious or civil, in that Liberty wherewith our Laws and our Religion have made us free.——And therefore what is said of Jerufalem, may likewise in this further sense be applied to our happy Constitution, “which is built  
 “as a City that is at Unity in itself.”

What pity would it then be, to see this WELL-COMPACTED and BEAUTIFUL SYSTEM of GOVERNMENT either weakened or defaced by our INTESTINE FACTIONS, or the BLIND RAGE of PARTY-DIVISIONS? The fomenting of which at this critical juncture, would show that we are either not truly sensible of our Happiness, or that we are unworthy of it, by using that most inestimable Jewel, our LIBERTY, “as a  
 “cloak of Maliciousness, and not as the  
 “Servants of God.”

Let us show then, by a conscientious Discharge of our DUTY to GOD—of LOVE to our COUNTRY—of a LOYAL ALLEGIANCE to the BEST of KINGS—that we are not unworthy those distinguished Blessings,  
 where-

wherewith we are so Peculiarly encompassed by a KIND PROVIDENCE.

For as this well-timed Peace hath opened to us the pleasing prospect of future Quiet and Security from a foreign enemy, we may hope, by improving the Advantages it affords us, not only to enjoy the happy Fruits of it ourselves, but to transmit them, in full maturity, to a GRATEFUL POSTERITY.

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