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S E R M O N

Preached *November 29, 1759.*

Being the Day of public THANKSGIVING.

A T  
F O R N H A M A L L - S A I N T S .

And on the  
*Wednesday* following, at the LECTURE

A T  
*St. James's* in *St. Edmond's Bury.*

By PETER STEPHEN GODDARD, M. A. *K*

Rector of *Fornham All-Saints*, with *Westley*,  
in the County of *Suffolk*: Chaplain to the  
Lord Bishop of *Norwich*; and late Fellow  
of *Clare-Hall*, in *Cambridge*.

BURY ST. EDMUNDS:

Printed and Sold by *W. Green*, Bookseller and Stationer,  
in *Cook-Row*: Sold also by Messrs *Crowder* and *Co.*  
on *London-Bridge*: Mr. *Chase*, in *Norwich*: Mr.  
*Shave*, in *Ipswich*: Mr. *Merril*, in *Cambridge*: Mr.  
*Skeymer*, in *Colchester*: And Mr. *Holingworth*, in  
*Lynn*. 1760.



DEUT. XXXiii. 29.

*Happy art Thou, O Israel! Who is like unto Thee, O People saved by the Lord, the Shield of thy Help, and who is the Sword of thy Excellency! And thine Enemies shall be found Liars unto Thee, and Thou shalt tread upon their high Places.*

\* \* \* THESE Words are the Conclusion  
\* \* \* T \* \* \* of the Blessing wherewith Moses the  
\* \* \* \* \* Man of God blessed the Children of  
Israel before his Death: And I have chose  
them for the Subject of this Discourse, be-  
cause I thought them very applicable to  
Ourselves, and the present Situation of our  
public Affairs, as well as suitable to that  
happy Solemnity we have been so lately  
celebrating.

The Words of the Text naturally suggest the following Reflections.

*First*, In general that no Nation or People can be prosperous or happy without the Favour of God, and the Protection of his good Providence, unless they be *succ'd by the Lord, unless He is the Shield of their Help, and the Sword of their Excellency*; and that any Nation must be in the most flourishing Condition that enjoys this blessed Advantage.

*Secondly*, That this general Observation has been particularly verified, both in the Case of the People of *Israel*, and in that of the People of these Nations.

For suppose any Nation to possess all the choicest Advantages both of Art and Nature. Let its Situation be the most eligible both for its Commerce and its Security. Let it enjoy the best-temper'd Constitution. Let it be supported by the strongest Alliance. In a Word, let it be as wise, as valiant, as powerful, and as flourishing, as you please, yet still the Continuance of its  
Happiness

Happiness must depend upon a great Variety of Accidents which no human Policy can prevent, or withstand. Thus, let a People be ever so formidable, yet they cannot command the Elements. The Winds will not blow when, and where they please to have them. They have no Power over the Clouds of Heaven, neither can they oblige *the former*, and *the latter Rain to come down in their Season*. Whether the Earth be barren, or fruitful, or the Air they breathe wholesome, or infected, are Points which are not subject to their Jurisdiction, nor controllable by their Authority. And as to those who are the proper Objects of their Power, though they may in some Degree restrain the external and visible Actions of Men, yet they can take but little Hold of their secret Thoughts, and Dispositions. They cannot prevent the sudden Effects of a wild and popular Fury, neither can they be always on their Guard against the Treachery and enraged Malice of Particulars; against the dark and covered Workings of the Traytor, or the instantaneous Stab of the Assassin. But supposing a Government has no Enemies

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mies but such as are declared and open ones, and that it meets its Adversary in a fair Field, yet neither the Number, nor the well-tryed Courage of its Troops can always assure it Success. A Panic may seize the Soldiers. Orders may be mistaken, and a multitude of unexpected Incidents may arise during the Confusion of a Battle, which may defeat the best-concerted Plan of the most experienced General. History, both ancient and modern, will furnish us with Instances enough of this Kind. In short, as long as any Nation is liable to the Ravages of Storms and Tempests, and the Desolations of Famines, Pestilences and Earthquakes, as long as it is exposed to the Giddiness of an unthinking Multitude, to the perverse Humours of fickle Men, and to the hellish Malice of artful and inveterate Enemies ; or, as long as there are any such Things as unforeseen Accidents, so long must the Happiness of any People be in a most precarious Condition ; and it is impossible for it to hold out long against one or other of the Evils I have mentioned, if it has nothing but its own Arm, its own Power and Skill

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to trust to. The Intervention of a much higher Cause is necessary to this End. One, who can supply all the Defects of human Policy, who can controul the Powers of Nature, and the inmost Determinations of free Agents, *who doth according to his Will in the Army of Heaven, and among the Inhabitants of the Earth. Who stilleth the raging of the Sea, and the Noise of his Waves, and the Madness of the People.* Who saith unto every Evil in Life, *hitherto shalt thou come, and no farther.* So evident is it that no Nation whatever can be prosperous or happy without the especial Favour and Protection of God's good Providence.

And that any People must be so in the highest degree that enjoy this blessed Privilege is most undeniably certain. For they have nothing to fear, and every thing to hope for. They have always a Friend at hand, who will not only preserve them from all evil, but will also give them every thing that is good for them, who is both able and *willing to do exceeding abundantly for them above all they can ask or think.* No Wickedness, though ever so secretly carried on can escape his notice, whose *Eyes are*

*are ten thousand times brighter than the Sun,* which can pierce through the thickest covering, and expose the lurking Traytor to the open Daylight. No Difficulty or Distress can be an Over-match for his infinite Power and Wisdom, nor any good thing too much for his Mercy to grant them. He will not always indeed be working Miracles in their behalf. He may sometimes suffer things to go on in the stated course. He may permit many evils of different sorts to afflict them for a Time; but they may always assure themselves that he only intendeth their real benefit, and that he will make all things work together for their good. But what need I insist any longer on so plain a Point? What need I tell you how secure and flourishing that Nation must be who have *the Rock of Ages* for their Support? that it mattereth not, who, or how many, *they are that rise up against us, whilst the Lord of Hosts is with us, and the God of Jacob is our refuge.*

But Secondly, the general Observation I have been here insisting on has been particularly verified both in the Case of the  
 People

People of *Israel*, and in that of the People of these Nations.

And, with regard to the former, this appears from the slightest Review of their History. From their first departure from *Egypt* to their compleat Establishment in the Land of *Canaan*, they were supported by a continued Series of Miracles. For forty Years together (for so long were they on their Journey through the Defart) they were conducted, cloathed, and fed by the immediate, and visible Hand of the Almighty. The Winds and the Waters, Heaven and Earth conspired to preserve and comfort them. *The sea divided itself to make them a Passage. In the day-time they were led on their way by a cloudy pillar, and all the night through with a Light of Fire.* Without any labour of their own *Bread and Flesh* were prepared for them, able to content every Man's Delight, and agreeing to every Taste. No sooner did they want to quench their Thirst, but *the hard Rock became a standing Water, and the Flint-stone a springing Well.* No opposition, though ever so formidable, could stand before them. *One Man of them was able to chase a thousand, and two to put*



*ten thousand to flight.* Neither was this all : God himself vouchsafed to be their King and Law-giver, delivering to them under his own hand writing such a Body of Laws as were the best calculated to secure their Virtue and Happiness, and to promote the great Ends for which they were made the chosen and peculiar People of God, namely, to preserve in the World the Knowledge and Worship of the one God, and to keep up in all Ages the Belief and Expectation of the Messiah \*. They were moreover honoured with the more immediate Presence of their Maker, constantly residing amongst them, and displayed by a glorious and sensible Appearance. In all their Doubts and Difficulties they could have Recourse to the most high God, and receive his Directions. Happy wert thou, O *Israel*: Who is like unto thee? .  
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\* A Divine of the last Age (whose Wit was too apt to get the Start of his Judgment) has assigned a very ludicrous Reason for God's chusing the Jews for his People, viz, that he did so for the same Reason that *Socrates* chose his Wife, to exercise his Patience ; not considering that the Almighty must always act upon no other Principles but those of the most consummate Wisdom. Vid. Dr. *South's* Sermons.

What Nation or People ever had like thee, Omnipotence for its Protector, infinite Wisdom for its Counsellor, and infinite Goodness for its Father and Friend.

But though we the People of this Land cannot boast of the same miraculous Interposition, and of the same extraordinary Providence which they were blessed with, yet certainly, next unto them, never was there any Nation that has been more signally *saved by the Lord*, than we have been. Look but into any of our Histories and you will be convinced of this Truth. For there you will see the most formidable Preparations against us utterly defeated and destroyed; not by any measures which we took to oppose them, but it was God himself who made our Enemies become *as the Dust before the Wind*; it was the *Angel of the Lord that scattered them*. They will shew you how the darkest and most direful Conspiracies have been discovered when they were on the very point of Execution, and this in so extraordinary a Manner, that all who saw or heard of it could not help saying, *This hath God done*. One while you will see him restoring to us our ancient Constitution, af-

ter a long and hopeless State of Anarchy and Confusion, by the most gentle and expeditious Methods; at another time preserving our Religion and our Laws when they seemed to be on the brink of Destruction. You can hardly forget the last Attempt of the Enemies of our happy Constitution, which, though it happened at a Time when we were the worst provided against it, and did at first wear a very threatening Aspect, yet in the end it has served only to strengthen that Government which it was intended to destroy. For it has shewn very plainly that all the Wealth and Power of the Nation is on the Side of the Establishment, and that, however we may divide on smaller Matters, we shall readily unite whenever the main Foundations of our Peace and Happiness are attacked.

But I shall insist no longer on former Mercies which God has vouchsafed to us and our Forefathers, because I hasten to those which have so lately been the Subject of our public Thanksgiving.

And never surely did a more glorious Year pass over the Head of any *English* Monarch.

Monarch. A Year that will be for ever memorable in our Annals for the uninterrupted Train of Victories with which Heaven has blessed us both by Sea and Land, in every Quarter of the World. Victories which may most properly be called *British*, as they were obtained almost by *Britons* only, and as they so immediately tend to the Security, Glory and Prosperity of these Kingdoms. Even within these few Days, whilst the *Praises of God were in our Mouth*, he has been pleased to bless us with a decisive Victory over the Fleet of our Enemies, the almost only one remaining that deserves that Name; by the Defeat and Dispersion of which we have given (forgive me if for once I borrow an Expression from our Enemies, an Affectation which prevails too much in the present Age, and which is generally owing either to a scandalous Ignorance, or an insolent Contempt of the Strength and Copiousness of our own Language) the *Coup de Grace* to all their Pride and Insolence, and by which all their long-boasted Projects of invading us have vanished into Smoke. How justly then may we apply the Words of the Text to our

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own native Country, *Happy art thou, O Britain! O People saved by the Lord, the Shield of thy Help, and the Sword of thy Excellency, whose Enemies have been found Liars unto thee, and thou hast trod upon their high Places.* For let us not be so ungrateful as to disown our Benefactor. Let us confess that it was the Lord who was *the Shield of our Help.* That it was he who inspired our King and his Ministers with Wisdom, our Fleets and Armies with Courage and Conduct. That it was he that has blest all our Designs with Success, so that not one of them hath failed, has made the Times and the Seasons to favour us, and has caused even the Winds to fight for us. That it was he who has *crowned the Year with his Goodness, and made the Clouds drop Fatness upon us.* Thou O Lord art *the Sword of our Excellency.* All our Successes, all the glorious Victories we have obtained were the *Work of thy Arm, and of thy right Hand, O God, because thou hadst a Favour unto us: And therefore not unto us, but unto thy Name be the Glory and Praise for thy loving Mercy, and for thy Truth's Sake.* To thee, O gracious God, it is owing that *our Enemies have*  
*been*

*been found Liars unto us, and that we have trod upon their high Places.* For they have threatened to deprive us of all our foreign Acquisitions; nay, even to invade our native Country with such a mighty Power as we should not be able to resist: And yet behold these invincible Heroes have more than once been defeated in a fair Field by an inferior Number of Englishmen. Their Ships lay sculking in their own Ports, tamely suffering themselves Month after Month to be blocked up by our Fleets, and not daring to come out 'till the Winds had drove us from them. And happy it had been for them if the Winds had still permitted us to keep our Station. For then this mighty Armada had continued safe and sound where it was, and so have avoided that Ignominy and Destruction which has now overtaken it. Instead of making Conquests upon us we have taken from them their most valuable Possessions, the Source and Support of their Trade and Wealth. So that what the Prophet *Jeremiah* (li. 30, 31.) foretells should befall *Babylon* and its King is, with some Addition, strictly applicable to our

**Enemies**

Enemies and their King. *Their mighty Men  
 have forborn to fight. They have remained in  
 their Holds. Their Might hath failed. They  
 became as Women. One Post shall run to  
 meet another, and one Messenger to meet an-  
 other, to shew THE GRANDE  
 MONARQUE that his City, the  
 BABYLON of, his American Empire  
 is taken, that his Armies are defeated, his  
 Fleets destroyed, or dispersed, that the  
 choicest of his Colonies are in the Hands  
 of his Enemies, his Commerce ruined, his  
 People beggared, and Himself a Bankrupt.  
 But we have not only trod upon the high  
 Places of our Enemies, we have also trod  
 upon their excessive Pride and Vanity. We  
 have humbled one of the most vain and  
 haughty Nations in the Universe by the  
 contemptible Figure we have, through  
 God's Assistance, reduced them to.*

But let us not so dwell upon these il-  
 lustrious Mercies, as to forget the other  
 Subject of our Thanksgiving to Almighty  
 God, his great Goodness to us in giving  
 us so uncommonly plentiful a Harvest. A  
 Mercy which must be very sensibly felt  
 by the poorer, that is the far greater Part  
 of

of the Nation; and the more so, after two such pinching Years of Dearth and Scarcity.

Let us likewise bless and praise his Holy Name, for that invaluable Blessing we still enjoy (pray God we may long enjoy it) of living in a Country which is entirely free from all the direful Calamities of War. Can any of you read or hear of the Plunderings and Devastations, the Burnings and Massacres which at this Time are the unhappy Lot of a great Part of Europe, and not rejoyce in your own good Fortune, and heartily thank that kind Providence which has placed you in a Land, where you can only read and hear of these Things? Where every Man can quietly enjoy all the Comforts of this Life, without being liable to be stripped of his All at once, and to see his nearest and dearest Friends murdered before his Eyes. Is not such a Country as this, with the happy Constitution under which we live, worth our preserving? Is it not worth our contributing some Portion of our Substance to preserve it? Who can scruple, when properly called forth, even to bleed for it? Certainly those Num-



bers of brave Men, who have both now and formerly ventured their Lives in its Defence, thought in this Manner. Most certainly He did, I mean that excellent, that truly brave Man, who so lately died for it. I shall only say of the Man who thinks otherwise, that he is not worthy of such a Country, but deserves to have lived and died a Slave and a Frenchman.

Let us, in the last Place, return our grateful Acknowledgments to our great Benefactor for having *bowed the Hearts* of the People of these Nations *as the Heart of one Man*. So animated, so universal is the Zeal which now prevails for advancing the public Service in Opposition to the common Enemy. Nothing now can be heard (except what may be muttered in a few dark Holes and Corners) but the most affectionate Wishes for the Health and Prosperity of our most gracious Sovereign, nothing but the loudest Applauses of his Measures, of the Wisdom, Vigilance and Integrity of his Ministers, of the military Skill and undaunted Courage of his Generals and Admirals, of his Soldiers and Seamen. It is to this glorious  
Unanimity

Unanimity (as his Majesty has been pleased publicly to declare) that, under God, we in a great Measure owe our late Successes.

And now *what shall we return unto the Lord for all his Benefits?* What should we return unto Him, but the Sacrifice of our Hearts, and the Obedience of our Lives? What can we do less than *love the Lord our God, our merciful and gracious God, with all our Hearts, with all our Souls, and with all our Strength.* O that we would at last become a wise and a grateful People, duly sensible of the Mercies we have received, and firmly resolved to sin no more, lest a worse Thing than ever yet befell us, come unto us. So may we humbly hope that *the Lord will still be our God, will still continue to go forth with our Armies, and to fight our Battles for us;* and, which is above all Things to be wished and prayed for, that He will speedily, very speedily give us the Blessing of a safe and an honorable Peace. And may there be no other Strife amongst us, but who shall approve themselves the most loyal Subjects to our King, the truest Friends to our Country,

the

the best Men and the best Christians. And may this blessed State of Things continue from one Generation to another. To which let all the People say with one Heart, and one Mouth, *Amen. Amen.*

The E N D.

