NATIONAL BLESSINGS, A GROUND FOR THANKSGIVING.

A SERMON,

PREACHED ON THE DAY OF

GENERAL THANKSGIVING,

NOVEMBER, 29th, 1798,

IN THE PARISH-CHURCH OF

E D G W A R

By the Reverend JOHN DE, VEIL,

VICAR OF ALDENHAM, IN HERTFORDSHIRE,

CHAPLAIN TO THE MA? QUIS OF ABERCORN,

AND ONE OF HIS MAJESTY'S JUSTICES OF THE PEACE

FOR THE COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX.

London:

FRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR;

AND SOLD BY MESSES. RIVINGTONS, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD S

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1798.

General Committee of the Associated Volunteers of Edgware and Little Stanmore, November, 29, 1798.

"RESOLVED unanimosly, That the thanks of this Association be given to the Reverend John De, Veil, for his very excellent Sermon, preached this day in the Parish-church of Edgware, before us: and that he be requested to print and publish the same."

(Signed)

PHILIP O'KELLY,

Chairman.

Captain PHILIP O'KELLLY, of CANONS; Licutenant WILLIAM LAYTON, of Elstree; Enfign JAMES KELF, of LITTLE STANMORE;

AND TO

THE NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS AND SOLDIERS

OF THE

EDGWARE AND LITTLE STANMORE ASSOCIATION,

THIS SERMON,

PREACHED BEFORE THEM, ON THE 29TH NOVEMBER, 1798, REING THE DAY OF GENERAL THANKSGIVING FOR OUR LATE GLORIOUS VICTORIES AT SEA,

ĩS,

WITH GREAT RESPECT AND REGARD,
INSCRIBED,

BY THEIR FAITHFUL,

AND VERY HUMBLE SERVANT,

JOHN DE, VEIL.

EDOWARE, Dec. 24, 1798.

A SERMON, &c.

Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine, thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all.

Now therefore, Our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name.

I. Chron. chap. xxix. v. 11. 13.

IT is the literal meaning of these words, wholly unconnected with the preceding and subsequent context, to which our attention is emphatically called. In this abstract sense they strictly and happily apply to the nature of our present duty; and express, in elegant and precise terms, the grateful sentiments which we are all equally bound to indulge.

We have frequently met together in this place, to avert, by contrition, by fasting and humiliation, the judgments of God, who has justly published

nished our offences with the miseries and calamities of war.—We are this day affembled on a more joyful occasion:—to render our unseigned thanks to "the King of Kings," for his late gracious assistance, and for all the mercies we enjoy. And, as no duty can be more congenial to the sweetest feelings of our nature, or better accord with all our Experience, all our Knowledge, and all our Hope, let the spirit of this day's worship be,

GLORY AND THANKSGIVING TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST!

That we may perform this duty with more ardent zeal and a more full and perfect sense of its propriety, suffer me,

First,—To put you in remembrance of some of the principal blessings we enjoy; not only as Men, but as a Nation: and

Secondly,—To call your attention to the recent victories we are now affembled to acknowledge at the hand of God.

As Men, we owe to Almighty God, "our hum"ble and hearty thanks, for all his goodness and
loving kindness to us," at all times and at all
feasons; "for our Creation, Preservation, and
all the blessings of this life; but above all, for
his inestimable love in the Redemption of the
world, by our Lord Jesus Christ: for the

"means of Grace, and for the hope of Glory!"
—With these considerations upon our minds, our hearts must glow with exalted sentiments of reverence and gratitude: we must adore with undissembled affection, a Crucified Saviour, who died to restore and bless his fallen creatures—died to save them from endless misery; and, by his Resurrection from the grave, procured for them an inheritance, incorruptible, celestial, eternal!

As a People, we enjoy innumerable advantages, which are partially given to some nations, and totally denied to others. By the favourable difpensation of the Almighty, we live in a land which, for the comfort it yields, and the safety it affords, may well be stiled, "The Glory of all "Lands." It is a land of plenty; fertile in soil, temperate in climate, inhabited by an opulent, powerful, and enlightened people, long distinguished by arts and arms. We have the promise regularly fulfiled of seed-time and harvest; and so signal and uninterrupted is the gracious interest, which an indulgent Providence takes in our prosperity, that our years are crowned with increase, "filling our hearts with "joy and gladness."

What, then, shall we render to the Almighty for all these his inestimable benefits? Is it not our B 2

^{*} Ezek. xx. v. 6.

bounden duty to receive them with gratitude; to use them with moderation; and to render them a sweet savour unto God, by imparting, of our abundance, to the wants of others, and promoting the happiness of all his creatures? Does it not become us to walk worthy of these his benefits, devoting ourselves to his service, purifying ourselves as he is pure, glorifying his name, duly frequenting his temple, and cheerfully submitting to his holy will in all things?

Ought not, "the isles and," we, "the inha"bitants thereof," to be thankful also for the
long continued enjoyment of our civil immunities,
which have ever been the wonder and envy of
the whole world? Who, amongst the nations,
can boast of such Rights and Privileges as ourfelves? Here, in this Happy Island, every man,
while he refrains from doing injury to others,
is justly accounted free; his family is his kingdom, his house is his castle, and his own will is
his law!

The whole detail of political privilege and duty is no where so accurately defined, or so clearly specified, as in our Happy Establisher. It checks alike all excess of liberty and power, and grafts the dignity of the magistrate on what governs both him and the subject:—it fixes and ratifies the stability of rank and property in all their forms

forms—it fecures to every man equally, what he may rightfully claim—it protects the weak and and innocent from oppression and guilt—it enacts no statutes, imposes no exactions, appropriates no revenue, without our own consent—it inspires considence, removes apprehension, renders the dispensation of justice independent of prerogative; and, in every case, enables the accused to face his accusers, to challenge an open trial, and to rest his property and life on the judgment of his peers.

If this be not true liberty, words have no meaning: and this liberty has, by the goodness of God, been preserved and handed down to us by our ancestors, as the birth-right and inheritance of every Briton, whatever may be his rank and condition.

I should disgrace my country to compare, even but in thought, the freedom we enjoy, with that Bloody Phantom, by which the remorfeless tyrants of a neighbouring nation have deluded and brought to desolation, as well their own, as many other kingdoms; breaking through every barrier that the commands of God, or the wisdom of man, have established for protection against oppression and violence.—No! from that Unnatural Freedom, which makes the cruelty of death

death its sport, that with a savage and relentless force, seizes on property, rends asunder every tender connection that binds man to man, or man to God, sparing neither Infirmity, Age, nor Sex, may the goodness of the Almighty evermore defend us !--May Britons never taste the fruits of Republican LICENTIOUSNESS, NOT WANTONLY DRINK THE CUP OF BLOOD!—May Britons ever shew a willing and perfect obedience to the laws of their happy constitution; and, while they reflect on the evils attending unrestrained liberty, let them resolve never to swerve from their duty to the BEST OF KINGS, and to that Government which secures to them their laws, their religion, the dearest pledges of their affection, and every possession that can render society or even life itself desirable.

While other nations are overwhelmed with the darkness of Pagan ignorance, or deluded with the superstitious tenets of Mahommed, the glorious Light of the Gospel abides with us, in all its primitive purity and lustre. How many, among all stations, even in this age of prevailing luxury and infidelity, find our Holy Religion to be what she professes to be, the wife guide of their lives, the happy means of salvation to their souls,—in worldly prosperity, their faithful monitor; in worldly adversity, their best friend;—addressing all,

all, conciliating all: with grace in her aspect, hope in her hand, music in her voice, and Heaven in her eye! Thanks be to the Almighty, this, our Religion, is yet left us for a blessing, and a pledge that God's all-gracious presence is not actually withdrawn, nor his Holy Spirit taken from us.

Are we not also bound to praise God for placing us, where the proud oppressor cannot destroy us? Where "the bounds of our habitation*" form an impregnable rampart against every bold and hostile invader! The very surrounding ocean, that separates us from all other nations, the Most High God has appointed, as our wall and bulwark! we are thus sheltered, and preserved, as it were, "in the hollow of his hand," while the tempest spends its sury, that our ears may not be stunned with the "consused noise of the warrior," nor our eyes afflicted with the sight of "garments rolled in blood!" —No hostile intrusion bere impedes our necessary business, nor violates our domestic peace.

If, then, these blessings which I have mentioned, and to which many more might be added, deserve our gratitude to God, and bind us to the love of our country, how thankful should we be that

^{*} Астя, xvii. v. 26. † Ізаіан, Іх. v. 12. † Ізаіан, іх. v. 5. § Ізаіан, іх. v. 5.

that, hitherto, through the divine mercy and goodness, they have been all preserved to us:—that the inveterate malice of our enemies has been disappointed; and that their "devices" in their attempts to invade these kingdoms have, not only been "confounded," but destructive even to themselves.

And if, according to the multiplicity of favours shewn to us, our gratitude ought to increase, (which surely will not be disputed,) how more especially are we bound to lift up our hearts to Heaven, and devote ourselves entirely to the greatest of all Beings, who takes delight from time to time, in his good pleasure, to shower down his mercies upon us with an unsparing hand. Perhaps no nation, if we except that which in holy writ is called "Gods own people," has ever been more distinguished by the protection of Heaven than our own!

While other kingdoms are at this moment groaning under various calamities, some falling a prey to pestilential diseases, others impoverished or completely desolated by war, the voice of joy and gladness resounds in our dwellings, and we may justly apply to ourselves the words of the Psalmist: "Be not asraid for any terror by "night, nor for the arrow that slieth by day; for the

"the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor for the sickness that destroyeth in the noon- day. A thousand shall fall beside thee, and ten thousand at thy right hand: but it shall not come nigh thee. There shall no evil happen unto thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwellings.* The Lord shall be the strength of thy health, and cover thy head in the day of battle."†

All this, and more, at the present time, is true of us: And that God hath usually dealt thus mercifully with us, is demonstrated in almost every page of our history. The numerous and wonderful deliverances of this highly-favoured land, from open violence and concealed treachery, while they excite our admiration, should inspire our hearts with the most ardent gratitude. And it deserves remark, that other countries have been so strongly impressed with the idea of God's peculiar care over us, that Great Britain has been gloriously distinguished as the Island of God!

And this reminds me of calling your attention to our late Glorious Victory over the enemy; and to other recent and fignal interpolitions of Divine Providence towards the effectual deliverance of

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^{*} Psalm, xci. v. 5, 6, 7, 10, † Psalm, cxl. v. 7.

these kingdoms from "Foreign Invasion and Intestine Commotion."

The indisputable superiority of our naval force, the skill and courage of our commanders, and the unparalleled intrepidity of our seamen, having been long felt and acknowledged in many important naval conquests, but particularly in Three illustrious Victories over the navies of France, Spain, and Holland, it were scarcely to be expected they would again attempt any enterprize of importance upon that element which HAILS BRITANNIA FOR HER MONARCH, and, under God, the unrivalled ruler of the waves!—Yet how did France meet these dissafters? why, by a formal denunciation of our monarchy, in all its parts; which she openly threatened utterly to abolish, by an insolent and vain boast to plant the Tree of Anarchy Carnage and Rapine (miscalled liberty) in the very heart of our Metropolis; and her tri-coloured flag to erect triumphantly over the British standard on the Tower of our London!!!

The possibility of this daring and insulting project of France arising from the impending treaty for peace with Germany, her prevailing influence in the counsels of most of the neighbouring maritime states, added to her own immense power, all directed to the subduing of One Little Island, seemed

seemed to afford some cause for alarm to our Government. It served at the same time to dupe and deceive all the blind adherents of their own faction, whether in or out of France. It was the formal declaration, and, apparently the determined purpose of a government, which had for a length of time demonstrated a wonderful capacity in realizing many of it's worst intentions, which, stung with jealousy at our prosperity, could not repress it's resentment; whose temerity was inflamed to rage by the rapid and constant success of it's numerous armies, which it was necessary to keep in motion, and which it dared not disband-and which stood pledged to the undertaking it had avowed so positively, and in such vaunting terms, in the face of all Europe, that the attempt could not be abandoned without the imputation of the highest disgrace and mortification.

But fee "bow the mighty are fallen!" mark how "God hath brought down their strength in their jour-"ney," and baffled completely all their mightiest threats and exertions! "At this moment the wretched remains of her naval force, are either shattered to pieces, or blocked up in portx:"

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^{*} See Mr. Pitt's reply to Sz. John Sinclair's objection to the augmentation of our scamen.

After all these gigantic threats of invasion, appropriating for it's pretended accomplishment, the flower of her troops, and the first and most fortunate of her generals, stiling them the Army of England, and him the Conqueror of Italy, the unnatural heaving of this huge mountain only brought forth one solitary armament in one of her Mediterranean ports!

The profound mystery in which this mighty equipment was enveloped—the rumours raised and industriously propagated;—and the wonders it was to perform—filled all the gazettes of Europe for some months with nothing but siction and romance.

At length, it was generally apprehended, that the real object of this formidable expedition, was intended for the conquest of our territories in India, by a route over land, which no army had ever trode or explored. Every pretext calculated to mislead was readily seen through by the penetrating eye of our Government; and a squadron immediately dispatched in pursuit of the adventurers. It pleased the Almighty to suffer them to disembark their army, and the Land of Egypt, under the sovereign authority of a Power with whom they were at that time in the profession of the strictest peace and amity, was suddenly overfored.

spread and infested with *plagues*, ten thousand times more noxious and deadly than all those, which rendered her sufferings so conspicuous in Sacred History.

But although the French army made good their landing, and escaped the vengeance due to their crimes, (if indeed they have escaped) yet dread-FUL was the CATASTROPHE which awaited their fleet. Afraid of encountering our ships in the open sca, they steered for Alexandria, by a circuitous course, not frequently used by ships of large burthen. Here, in the very mouth of the Nile, they were arrested by the immediate hand of God, " who feems to "have chosen the arm of the British Seaman to " punish, in a foreign land, the horrible crimes " committed in their own and other countries; " and by this fignal interpolition to have taught "the wavering powers of Europe,—to have "taught France herself, in the midst of her " corruption, that—wickedness is not always suc-« cc/sful."

Here, then, our undaunted countrymen, eager for the fight, and animated by the Heroism of their brave commanders, bore down upon them with such irresistible spirit and consummate skill as completely overwhelmed them.

In the course of Thirty-six Hours this mighty enterprize was shaken to the foundation, and the Whole Fleet, with one or two exceptions, was either Taken, Blown up, Sunk, or Destroyed!!!

All the energies of language are inadequate to describe the glory of this memorable day. No battle was ever better fought, nor victory more decifive.

It is easier to observe the certainty and the importance of the consequences which will follow this glorious defeat, than to estimate their extent.

It has certainly lessened the glory of France in proportion as it has magnified our own. It has infulated, and, probably, for ever cut off the retreat of her prime battalions, from the resources of the mother-country, and lest them in an unhealthy and inhospitable land, struggling with wretched hope, and the sport of every desperate expedient suggested by extraordinary emergency. It has nearly annihilated all her marine, and exposed her coasts both at home and abroad to the attacks of her insulted enemies. It has opened the eyes of all the political states in the world to the sovereignty of the British Navy, and it may have already created such a consederacy among

the nations of Europe as may check her rage for conquest, dominion, and plunder, and ultimately confine her within her ancient limits.

And these conjectures are in some degree confirmed by "that general joy which has burst forth "without care or caution; and which proves the " general sentiment of all governments and na-"tions towards this inhuman Republic, that " crushes and insults them, that has filled the "measure of her iniquities, and sown every " where around her detestation and horror!" Surely then, "the hand of the Lord is in all "this," and we may exclaim with Holy David, "Blessed are the people whose God is the Lord "Jehovah, who, in the hour of calamity, can " claim the Almighty for their friend," and who "can say of their enemy, in the words of Hezekiah, "with him is an arm of flesh, but with us " is the living God, to help us, and to fight our " battles."

Nor, in the blaze of this brilliant and splendid victory, let us lose sight of the important services rendered to our country by the Vigilance, Spirit, and Indefatigable Astivity of that Commander and his brave companions, who have followed up a long series of gallant exploits during the war, by the deseat and dispersion of the armament, desti-

ned for the conquest of our Sister Kingdom. If the destruction of a fleet, which already had transported the troops, intended for the subjection of India, and had thereby fulfilled the main purpose of it's equipment, is so highly meritorious, it cannot be denied, that the complete over... throw of one of the most formidable rebellions ever remembered, and which has been fully effected by the capture of one ship of the line, a numerous fleet of frigates, (dispersed as they were at great distances from one another,) together with the troops, arms, stores, ammunition, and cloathing, all expressy provided and equipped for the purpose of supporting that rebellion, and which might eventually have endangered the safety of these kingdoms, deserves in it's degree, every Honour, Distinction, and Reward, which a generous Monarch can bestow, or a grateful nation can give.

In this instance, also, we recognize the watchful care of Providence, whose all-protecting wings have hovered over our sleets, and given courage to our seamen in the awful day of battle. And while the names of Nelson and Warren shall be immortalized in the page of history, the heroic deeds of our mariners will excite the admiration of ages to come, and prove to the world,

world, that the inhabitants of Great Britain continue to be, what they have ever been, a highly favoured people!

But while these incontestable evidences, that the God of our fathers is still with us, and that he goeth forth with our armies, inspire us with sure trust and confidence in his government, it is nevertheless incumbent on us, to use those means of defence with which we are furnished by his good providence. And nothing can tend more effectually to frustrate the designs of our relentless foes, than that martial spirit, which has for some time past pervaded, and at this moment animates, all orders of the community. Our youth every where fly to arms with ardor, submit to discipline with patience, and imbibe the military spirit so universally, that the whole kingdom has assumed a warlike appearance; and every citizen that venerates his king and loves his country, is eager to become a soldier.

These reflections will naturally reflect on the minds of this audience the zeal and alacrity with which You, Gentlemen, have generously taken up arms for the defence of your country, and for the security and protection of every tender regard that can sweeten the enjoyment, or increase the comforts, of life.

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I hope,

I hope, therefore, I shall not be thought to deviate very far from the spirit of this day's solemnity if I embrace this opportunity for addressing a few words to You, the Officers, Non-commissioned Officers, and Privates of the Edgware and Little Stanmore Associated Volunteers.

Your attendance in the house of God this day, may be considered, as no doubt it was intended to be, a pious and solemn dedication of every faculty of your mind and body, and even of life itself, should it be required, for the defence and protection of the Church of England, the State and Constitution of Great Britain, in King, Lords, and Commons; and for the security of our domestick peace.

And of all the volunteer corps that have been formed during the present war, no one, as far as my knowledge reaches, has taken up arms with more disinterested zeal, and true patriotism, than You, Gentlemen, who have the honour to be enrolled in this Association. You have one merit, at least, to boast of, which I believe no other society of this nature can claim: I mean, that the measure was the pure result of your own patriotic spirit. When you first communicated to me your offers of service, you had neither the rich nor the powerful to assist your endeavours, or encourage

have fince received has been small, very small indeed, compared with your own private disbursements, or with the importance and sefulness of your undertaking: and the individual subscription that was resolved upon at your last meeting shews, that the same liberal spirit, by which you were at first actuated, is in no degree abated or depressed.

These particulars, together with the distinguished alacrity which marked your affociating in the first instance, (for if I am correct more than one hundred persons enrolled themselves within the space of one hour,) your cheerful compliance with the toil and fatigue necessary in the discipline of a soldier; and your regular attendance on your military duty, at times often inconvenient to your private occupations, are highly honourable to the corps, auspicious to its prosperity and continuance, and greatly deserving the praise of your friends, and the public at large. Your patriotic conduct is an unequivocal pledge of the spirit and views that will regulate and determine your actions in the arduous day of trial. Far, indeed, be such a day from you, or any of your brave affociates in arms! But should Providence permit such an event to take place,

we have full confidence you will acquit your-felves like Englishmen, and do ample credit to your own characters and our partiality, in every part of the conflict you may be called to fustain.

I am well aware it is not becoming in me, efpecially from this place, to arrogate the province of dictating to you, how best to sulfil your military obligations. I would rather wish to recommend to your perusal a patriotic fermon "On the defence of our country," lately preached in the neighbouring Parish-church of Hendon,* addressed to an association nearly similar to your own, and organized upon the same principles and regulations, which, allow me to say, I had the honour to suggest to you at your first meeting.

But, that I may leave nothing undone within the compass of my weak abilities, suffer me to solicit your attention to a few leading points.

And first, our steady and affectionate loyalty is justly due to our Sovereign Lord the King, in return for his long-tried and patriotic love to us his subjects. The King is the true servant of God, and the exemplary Father of his Country. He has also a claim to our love and veneration for his

The discourse here recommended breathes the true spirit of piety, wisdom and loyalty, and does honour to the heart and understanding of the author, Dr. Martin Trinder, of Mill-Hill, Hendon.

his constant endeavours to establish our welfare, both in church and state, as well as our most cordial thanks for the appointment of such his prefent Ministers, by whose unshaken integrity, and loyal attachment the King's dignity and dearest interests have been supported and preserved in the most arduous trials, and by whose transcendent abilities our country has been defended, and exalted in character and merit above all the nations of the world. It is your duty to prove yourselves worthy of these blessings, by a due attention to the rights of others as well as your own, --- by condescension to the lower orders, courtesy and civility to the higher ranks; --- by a respectful and obedient attachment to your officers, and a mutual affection and forbearance one towards another, as comrades and townsmen, imbodied in one social cause; and, on all occasions, by making it your glory to honour and obey the King, and all that are put in authority under him. These observations are most honourable to yourselves, and very essential to the character of a good English. man and a foldier.

We are confident, that herein you will never disappoint our expectations. I have the pleasure to say, that these favourable ideas are entertained of the whole corps, by your neighbours and sellow-subjects: and it not only does me honour,

but

but affords me also real satisfaction, thus publicly and explicitly to declare them in the hearing of both you and them.

I have now only to recommend you to the gracious protection of Almighty God! May his strength be glorified in you;—may our Church and state find in you able and faithful defenders;—may God's divine spirit be your guide and comfort, and bless all your endeavours for preserving the public tranquility, and for saving us, and all that is dear to us, from the woes and miferies of foreign invasion and domestic tumult!

To conclude:—Christianity is always practicable in some or other of its several duties; and every act that originates in a truly religious spirit is true and proper praise to God. Let us, then, render him our highest praise and thanksgiving for all, and particularly for his late mercies vouchsafed unto us:--let us make his will the rule and motive of our thoughts, words, and acctions:--let us run the way of his commandments, that our hearts may be improved, and our lives amended:--let us examine every resolution, and every design, by the unerring rule of. his Gospel; looking up to him as the "Father of all Mercies," who will not suffer us to fail, if we be diligent, faithful, and obedient:--let us ever conduct ourselves, as those who are con**fcious**

fcious, that "The Lord is nigh unto all them "that call upon him, yea all fuch as call upon him faithfully:"—let us express our gratitude, "not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up ourselves to his service, and by walking before him," henceforth "in righte-" ousness and true holiness."

Having now offered up our fervent prayers to the Almighty for fuccess in all our lawful undertakings, both by sea and land, and our unseigned thanks for the gracious aid we have lately experienced, let us not, as men and Christians, forget to entreat him to soften the hearts of our enemies, to abate their pride, assuge their malice, and incline them to offer such terms of equitable and permanent reconciliation, as may accord with the honour and dignity of our Sovereign and his king-"doms: so that "Peace and Happiness, Truth" and Justice, Religion and Piety, may be esta-"blished amongst us for all generations!"

Now to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, be ascribed all Glory and dominion, both now and for ever. Amen.

THE END.