
A
Thanksgiving Sermon,

P R E A C H E D

On the 31st of December, 1706.

A
THANKSGIVING
SERMON,

PREACHED

On the 31st of *Decemb.* 1706.

AT

NEWNHAM

IN

HERTFORDSHIRE.

By *William Goldwin*, Batchelor of
Arts, and Fellow of *King's Colledge*
in *Cambridge*.

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Psalm CXLIV. 15th Verse. *03*

Happy are the people that are in such a case; yea, blessed are the people, who have the Lord for their GOD.

THE Royal Psalmist having receiv'd abundant tokens of the Divine Favour, in a grateful manner *blesse* the Lord his strength; and, to make Ver. 1. Heaven some return for its Kindness, he offers up this Hymn of Praise, compos'd in Honour of God, the Primary Author of all, who was *his hope and his fortress, his castle and* Ver. 2. *deliverer*; and herein he reflects on the Infinite Goodness and Love of God, in comparison of the unworthiness and lowness of the object, sinful man; for, Ver. 3. says he, *Lord, what is man, that thou hast such a respect unto him, or the son of man, that thou soregardest him?* Intimating, that tho we reap the highest fa-

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VOURS,

vours, as free-gifts from Heavens Bounty, we are unworthy of the least : Which Consideration justly strikes him with a deeper sense of Gratitude and Thanks, and excites his Soul to break out into a more zealous Rapture of Joy, and an uncommon desire to

Ver. 9. *sing a new song unto God, and to sing praises upon a ten-stringed lute :* In which triumphal Hymn, running in lively, brisk expressions, he gives us a detail of the most material blessings of a State, *viz.* Encrease of Power and Wealth, Plentifulness and Success, and then winds up the whole with the joyful Elogy in my Text, *Happy are the people that are in such a case :* And, because the above-mention'd National Blessings can originally be deriv'd from no other Spring but the Plenteousness, Goodness, and All-sufficiency of God, he subjoins, *yea, blessed are the People who have the Lord for their God.* Which Expression, in Scripture Language, implies having God on their side, or enjoying his favour and assistance on all occasions. Thus God declares to the *Jewish* Nation, who were under the more immediate Care and peculiar Protection of Heaven---*I will be their God ;* and in another place---*in the morning ye shall be filled with bread, and shall know that I am the Lord your God ;* and again in the 20th Chapter---*I am*
the

Exod. 16.
12.

the Lord thy God—that is, the God that protects and secures you, as the deliverance express'd in the next words fully explains: So that having the Lord for our God, means his being our *helper* and *defender*, the *rock* of our *might* and *salvation*, and such-like Titles, frequently occurring in Holy Writ. And indeed the Expression in itself needs little Interpretation, because to be a God to any one, according to the true notion of a Supreme Deity, as all-wise and powerful, naturally imports the greatest Protection and Defence.

Having thus shewn the design of the Psalm, and the Importance of the Text, I propose to consider,

First, Wherein the Happiness of a Nation consists—*Happy are the people, that are in such a case*

Secondly, Shew, that having the Lord for their God is the original cause of all National Blessings—*yea, blessed are the people who have the Lord for their God.*

Thirdly, What returns we are to make, and what means we must use to preserve Gods Blessing upon our National affairs.

The Happiness of a State consists principally in the due performance of Religion and the true Worship of God, wherein *with one*

mind and one mouth we glorifie God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ; and, in imitation of the Primitive Christians, are continually in the Temple, praising and blessing God. For God, who requires Reverence and Obedience at our hands, will in recompence bestow the signallest favours on that People where his Holy Religion is most and best perform'd, having declar'd in his Oracles, He that honoureth me, him will I honour. And therefore a right Exercise of Religion, practis'd and countenanc'd by those in high Authority, and solemnly perform'd by those in a lower Sphere, is the best Expedient to derive Heavens favour on a Civil Constitution ; and upon this Bottom, as on a Rock, a Nation's Prosperity is so fix'd, as not to be moved by the Storms and Assaults of any outward, or even inward Force beating against it.

Now, that we serve the Lord in this Beauty of Holiness, and Purity of Worship, the Testimony of Scripture, the Example of the Apostles, and Christ himself the *head of the Church, which is his Body*, sufficiently declare in our behalf : For without either the Excess or Defect in Religious Service, we let our Moderation be known to all Men, still preserving a due Decorum in singleness of Heart, and as the Apostle directs,

reets, *do all things decently and in order.* And ^{1 Cor. 14.}
 when such publick Mercies call for our pub-^{40.}
 lick Acknowledgments, we offer up in a Scrip-
 tural form a Sanctified Heart, and the calves
 of our Lips, and with such Sacrifices God is
 well pleas'd. By which pure Method of De-
 votion we are *with one accord in the temple,* and ^{Act. 2. 46.}
 there send up our joint-petitions to the Throne
 of Mercy for our publick and private Benefits,
 imploring Blessings upon the Ecclesiastical and
 Civil State, Welfare and Prosperity on the
 Gracious Moderator and Preserver of both,
 Preservation of Peace and an *Union* at home,
 and Success abroad; and (thanks be to God)
 our Prayers are heard, and the Lord has not
 denyed us the requests of our Lips, *because we*
ask not amiss; for thou, O Lord, art become fa- ^{Psaln 85.}
vourable unto thy Land; which now sees the ^{1.}
 Lawrel and the Olive, badges of two different
 States, friendly contributing to our Ornament
 and Joy, and both the Trophies of a Foreign
 War, and the Blessings of a Domestick Peace,
 mutually promoting the Good and Honour of
 a glorious Queen and happy People; in the
 midst of War, we are in the midst of Peace,
 and the *voice of joy and health is in the dwellings*
of the righteous: And lo! The Trumpets that
 sounded a Charge, are now founding a Tri-
 umph,

umph, and the hoarse din of War is turn'd into the *sweet voice of Melody*.

The next Happiness of a State is a Pious Governour, who, going wholly upon the Principle of Virtue, has a careful and tender regard for the Good and Liberties of Subjects; dealing with the People, as God, whom such represent, does with his Creatures, and by exhibiting acts of Mercy, Mildness and *Beneficence*, becomes a *Nursing Mother* to the whole Community; and thereby gets a sort of title to the kind Smiles and Indulgences of Heaven, such as we this day rejoyce in.

Matt. 5.
16.

For when Piety and Justice sit on the Throne, the height and blaze of the Example, like Lights from an Eminence, cast a Lustre and Influence upon the whole, and the Subjects by *seeing the good works glorifie their father which is in heaven*; which universal encrease of Godliness purchases Gods Blessing upon a Nations affairs; nay, the World is not without both Antient and Modern Instances, wherein the particular goodness of its Sovereign has engag'd Gods Providence and Favour; as on the other hand, a Monarchs Crimes draw down an heavy load of Gods displeasure on the whole body of a State, and the stroke of Justice, so long suspended for wise ends of

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Providence, compensates its delay by the weightiness of the Blow; for the Vengeance due to Treachery, Bloodshed, Rapine and Injustice, however slow in its Paces, and late in its Arrival, yet comes sure, attended with no less than astonishing Disasters, general Routs, dispirited Armies, degraded Princes, and *Nobles in Links of Iron*; God, by *whom Kings reign*, keeps a more strict Eye upon the behaviour of *Crowned Heads*; because by virtue of their divine Character, and as shining with Reflexions of his glorious Majesty, they bear a near relation to him; and the legal or illegal Use of their Power, brings down either the Vials of God's Wrath, or the Plenteousness of his Loving Kindness to the State; so that, as the Interest of a King and his People are inseparably interwoven, the good or ill condition of a Kingdom very often turns on the Merits or Demerits of its Prince. And therefore happy, thrice happy is that Land, where Righteousness and Truth flourish, and reign together with the Royal Preserver and Pattern of both, where a full Enjoyment of Liberty and Property, the effects of such a Government, compleat the Happiness of the whole; for whilst Virtue and Equity sway the Scepter, Slavery and Oppression keep at a distance, those being the mon-

strous,

stuous, but true Products of only Tyrannical Forms.

Let us add to this, that publick Measures and Counsels go steadier and smoother under the Guidance of Piety and Moderation; whilst the *Thoughts of the Wicked are as a troubled Sea*, tossing them to and fro with an unusual Perplexity and Distraction in their Affairs.

The next Happiness of a People consists in its success in War, and indeed this gives the finishing Stroke to the whole: For whereas a Nation, when compell'd, in defence of its Religion, Liberty and Trade, to have recourse to Arms, opens all its Veins of Blood and Treasure to pursue vigorous efforts against encroaching Power, the Prosperity of the State depends upon that of its Wars; and therefore when happy Events, glorious *Victories*, surprizing Deliverances, and a continual Blessing upon the Justness of the Cause crown the Heartiness of its Asserters endeavours, and the Bravery of their Arms, O! How *Gracious is their God*, and *how happy are the People, that are in such a Case*.

Lastly, To top these Blessings the Heavenly Gift of Plenty and Quiet at home is also a very requisite and essential part of a Kingdoms Welfare. For if whilst it is wasting its Sinews
in

in foreign Enterprizes, and spending its Blood in helping him to right that suffereth wrong, that Pfalm 10. 20. the man of the earth be no more exalted against him, it should feel the severe scourge of an home-bred disturbance or scarcity, gnawing, like two Vipers, on its Bowels within, the Body Politick would soon dwindle into weakness, and the Kingdom divided against itself would not Matt. 12. 25. stand; but (praised be God) the Sores that divided the Land are kindly heal'd, and, that our brethren may dwell together in a joyful unity, Pf. 133, 1. the Precious Balm is spread farther, and a more comprehensive and entire Union is near compleat throughout the *Brittish Isle*. Upon the whole, we are that, and that only happy Land, that receive and taste all the Sweets of a War, *viz.* Glory, Honour and Success, without the least relish of its Bitter Ingredients, Desolation, Blood and Ruin; whereas most other Countries, now the Seats of War, are forc'd to be the Theatres of their own Calamities and our Triumphs: Triumphs, that truly bespeak the Wonderful God that gave them, the Conduct and Valour of the Worthy Instruments that wrought them; Triumphs, that extend their influence far and near, and probably gave the Example and Success to that Rival Conquest at the Walls of *Turin*,

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won.

won by Heroes, equall'd by none but ours :
 Lastly, Such Triumphs as deservedly claim the
 grateful Tribute we are now paying to the
 Lord of Hosts, *who is the only giver of all Victory.*
 Which leads me,

Secondly, To shew that having the Lord
 for our God, is the original cause of all these
 National Blessings.

Men observing the close link of Cause and
 Effect, are apt to assign the winning of the
 Race to the Swift, and the Battel to the Strong,
 forgetting God, the Principal Agent in the
 case ; as tho the Ruler of the World loll'd
 on his Throne with the Nod of Drowsiness,
 rather than that of Authority, sitting as an idle
 unconcern'd Spectator of Humane affairs, with
 an indifferent regard which way the Scale turns.
 Thus, because Full Treasuries, well Disciplin'd
 Troops, Prudent Councillors, Strong Alli-
 ances, Unanimous Resolutions, are the most
 promising means for a Nations good, we are
 too ready to reckon the Foundation of our
 own laying, exclusive of the Right Hand of
 God, and impute the Lords doing to an Arm
 of Flesh : Whereas these outward means are
 but his Instruments of Action, and all Hu-
 mane Endeavours and Designs would prove
 weak and ineffectual, without the concurrence of
 the

the Divine Assistance. *The Horse is prepared a-* Prov. 12.
gainst the day of battel; but safety is in the Lord. 31.
 For as he sits at the Helm of the Universe, as
 an Omniscient and Omnipotent God, he can
 wind and manage our Hearts, as it seemeth
 best to his Godly Wisdom, he can turn the
 nicest Projects and most formidable Prepara-
 tions into Shame, Confusion, and Precipitate
 Retreats; or when he vouchsafes to dispence
 great Blessings to a *Nation that he loves*, he can
 bring their designs to a happy and surprizing
 event, *give victory unto Princes, and deliver his* Psal. 146.
Servant from the Peril of the Sword; or, when 10.
 matters are brought to such an extremity, that
 none but a God can *deliver our Darling from the* Psal. 22.
power of the Dog, and save us from the Lions Mouth, 21.
 by a seasonable interposition of his mighty and
outstretcht arm he can rescue the distress'd, save
 a just cause from sinking, and *bring us to the ha-* Psal. 107.
ven where we would be; as was evident in the 30.
 critical relief of that famous Prince and Siege,
 wherein appear'd so much of Gods Providen-
 tial Care alone, as hardly left any room for
 State-policy to claim a share in the Success;
 which instance, among many glorious ones
 since, is one of the greatest assurances of our
having the Lord for our God.

Since then God, and God alone, directs and steers the course of worldly affairs, we must look up to Heaven, whence *cometh every good and perfect gift*, for the true and original Author of all our Blessings. *God is our King; the help that is done on earth, he doth it himself.* For could such well-concerted Schemes be either framed or put in execution, unless God, who governeth the Hearts of Princes, gave her Majesty Prudence, and her Senators Wisdom? Could such a Constant Stream of Success have come flowing in upon us, except the Finger of God had both guided and protected the Worthy Hands that struck the fatal, fatal Blows? Or, to look nearer home, could the Blessing of Plenty be among us, unless the Lord, that reigneth above the Clouds, and *sitteth above the water-flood*, open'd the Windows of Heaven, and from thence, as the Fountain-head of all Temporal Mercies, shower'd down the *former and the later rain*; that our garners are full, and plenteous with all manner of store. In a word, whatever National Advantages we enjoy and rejoyce in, we stand indebted to Heaven for them all.

And therefore it is highly Impious and Ungrateful, to impute such Successful Services to
 Chance

Chance or Fortune, or what the Envious World calls a *Lucky hit* : So likewise it is as wrong a way of judging, to resolve the *Marvellous acts of the Lord* into the immediate effects of Humane Abilities, however Noble and Illustrious in themselves. We gladly own, that Royal Prudence, Even Management, a Faithful Ministry in Church and State, due Administration of Justice, Personal Courage and Vigilance, are deservedly the Darling Objects of a Nations Love and Esteem ; and as Instruments, which God pleas'd to raise up to check and confound the furious Attempts of Tyrants, Rebels, and Usurpers ; they bear indeed a great share in producing great and glorious Exploits ; yet still the *right hand of the Lord hath the preheminnence,* Psal. 135
the right hand of the Lord bringeth mighty things to pass. 16.

We must go then far above Humane Capacities, even to the *heaven of heavens*; the chief residence of Infinite Power and Knowledge ; and there deposit at the great Authors Throne all our Qualifications and Endowments, and Great Actions, the result of them ; which is in effect but giving God his own again : For our Sufficiency is of God. • And of him, and to him, and through him are all things, to whom be Rom. 11
glory 16.

glory for ever. Here therefore the wisest Coun-
cellours must lay their best Accomplishments
of Policy and Thought, *For the Lord giveth Un-
derstanding.* Here the bravest Heroes must re-
sign their Trophies at the Feet of the Lord of
Hosts. *For the battel is the Lords.* At this Hea-
venly Altar the most Industrious and Plenteous
Land must dedicate their Fruits and Labours.
For God giveth the encrease. Thus we see that
all National Blessings proceed originally from
the Divine Favour, and that the people are
blessed who have the Lord for their God.
Therefore *not unto us, O Lord, but unto thy name,
be the praise for thy loving mercy and thy truths
sake.*

Psal. 115.
1.

Thirdly, Let us consider what returns we
are to make, and what means we must use to
preserve Gods favour on our National Af-
fairs.

Since God has been shedding from day to
day the kindest Indulgence upon us, and as
publick Authority and each Man's private Ob-
ligation demand a Religious Offering of Praise
and Thanksgiving, let us in some measure de-
serve the favours receiv'd, by a cheerful Glo-
rification of God's name, which is a lively
Exertion of all the Powers and Faculties of our
Souls,

Souls, to the advancement of his Glory and Renown, and a directing and referring the whole scope of all our Actions to that principal end; not that our Mite adds any weight to the boundless Riches of his Glory, who being an ample fulness of essential Lustre and Happiness, can receive no additional Glory to the perfection of his Nature, yet the giving *unto God the things which are Gods, viz. Worship and Obedience* is a requisite Tribute, to which God in right of his past favours, and from our entire relyance on him, for the continuance of the light of his Countenance on our future Designs, has a just Claim and Demand; and therefore the omission of this our bounden Service, would be an ungrateful neglect of Duty on Man's part; and from such Ingratitude alone, we might easily dread our Enemies Portion of *turning back in the day of Battel*, and feel the reverse of our present Success, and we too *be brought down and fall*. For will God give Honour for Dishonour, or throw such Pearls as Victories, to such Swine as Ingrates, who can swallow the delicious Morsel of Success, the Manna from Heaven, and immediately forget the Powerful Hand that gave it? O! *that men would therefore praise the Lord for his Goodness,*

Matt. 22.
21.

 Psal. 78.
10.

 Psal. 117.
8.
 and

and declare the wonders that he doth for the children of men.

Secondly, As next under God, we owe our present Felicity to a pious and gracious Sovereign, wholly devoted to the Service of God and her People, let us render *tribute to whom tribute, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour is due*, and in point of Gratitude as Men, in point of Duty as Subjects made happy, let a faithful Submission and Allegiance be paid to the *powers ordained of God*; inasmuch as the Goodness of the Possessor of the Throne, has deriv'd a double Blessing upon us all by healing our Wounds at home, and giving them abroad; and sure such a Collection of Princely Virtues shining so bright in the best of Christians and Queens, must needs ravish the Hearts of us all, and at least unite all Parties in an unanimous Affection and Loyalty for so common a Benefactress to the State, so sincere a Patroness of the Church, so generous a Defender and Preserver of *Europe's* Liberty and Cause. And to step a little lower to that Illustrious Person that gave the chief occasion to this our Joy, his eminent Accomplishments and Merits blazing so conspicuous in the greatest of Subjects and Generals,

Rom. 13.
7.

Rom. 13.
v.

rals, may claim some share, if not our present Praises, (which are directed chiefly to God) yet of our Prayers for a continuance of his Life and Prosperity, so often engag'd, and so much concern'd in our Cause; which by his Valour is now become as much superior to our Enemies in its Success, as it always was in Justice. For this, this Person has levell'd the Ax at the Root of the *Corrupt Tree*, and by a Victory unparallell'd by any but one of his own, in a few days time gave a thorough Shock to a vast Monarchy, of above threescore years raising; and though he has not yet *bound their Kings in Chains*, yet he has fetter'd their Power; and if we are not wanting to our selves, and not beguil'd by Sham-Pretences to Peace, the same powerful Hands are both ready and able to prosecute the mighty Blows; for from the forward Advances our Expeditionous *Hero* has made in the Road to his own Honour, and his Enemies Territories, the World is not without hopes of seeing once again a *Cæsar*, or, may I not say, a greater than *Cæsar* in *Gaul*.

Thirdly and Lastly, Since the true Worship of God, and the exact Performance of Religion appear to be the main Expedients to pre-

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serve the Divine Favour to a Nation, and consequently its Happiness, an holy Profession and Observance of his Worship prescribed, a Devout Declaration of his Praise in all Publick and Private Exercises of Religion, the Promoting of Christ's Kingdom in the World, the Maintenance of his Church on the present establish'd foot, are all indispensable Duties on our part, and the surest and best methods to win and secure Gods Favour on our Affairs: Our Contempt or Observance of Gods Laws, will bring either Blessing or a Curse upon the State. Thus Heaven dealt with its darling People the *Jews*, and thus too will he with us, his now beloved Nation, highly favour'd of God, honour'd by our Allies, dreaded by all *that hate us*. Let us therefore wisely lay the foundation of our Happiness in true Piety and Holiness, and lead such Lives as may give a Force and Efficacy to our Prayers, to extort a Blessing upon the Publick Undertakings: In a word, let us *fear God, honour the Queen, love the brotherhood, and as much as in us lies live peaceably with all men*, then we may expect a continued Series of Blessings, and see foreign Kingdoms restored, and our own *united, Triumphant Fleets, and still Victorious Armies, and Crowns of glory* both here and hereafter.

Upon

Upon this bottom we may fairly ground our earnest Hopes and Wishes, for her Majesty's Long Life and Happy Reign over her United People, that the *Lord her strength*, will Preserve her with the Blessings of Goodness, and continue to her and her *true* establish'd Successors a *Crown of pure gold*; that he will graciously guide and influence her Counsels, and crown both hers and the Nations Consultations, with an unanimous peaceable Result: For Religion and Honesty are the firmest Ground-works for successful Policy, and every best Christian is the best Subject, and the devoutest Members of the Church, prove the loyallest Members of the State.

Upon the whole, as we can on this day sit and look a great way back on a long and noble Train of Successes, and see the Hand of Providence plainly appearing in each, so likewise upon a right use of Gods Mercies, we may take a fair and charming prospect of more, and if it is possible, greater Blessings at the end of the Landskip, to be built on the foundation of the present, and still hope to *have the Lord for our God*. And as we thus conclude this memorable and glorious year with a solemn and grateful remembrance of Gods Loving Kindness

ness and Mercy, so we may hope God will in due time finish the Work he has begun, and so graciously carryed on, and at last crown his present Blessing of a Prosperous War, with that more desfireable Blessing, even the *blessing of peace* ; which God of his infinite Mercy grant through Jesus Christ our Lord, *Amen.*

F I N I S
