

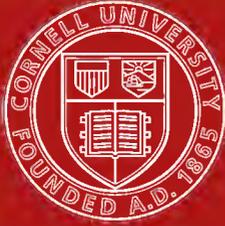
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THE
DEAN of *CANTERBURY'S*
Thanksgiving Sermon

Preach'd before the

QUEEN,

June 27. 1706.

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A
S E R M O N

Preach'd before the

QUEEN

A T T H E

Cathedral Church of *St. Paul, London,*

The xxviith Day of *June* MDCCVI.

Being the Day appointed for a

General Thanksgiving

To Almighty God for the Success of Her
MAJESTY'S Arms in *Flanders* and *Spain, &c.*

By GEORGE STANHOPE, D. D. Dean of *Canterbury*,
and Chaplain in Ordinary to Her MAJESTY.

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L O N D O N :

Printed by *W. B.* for R. SARE at *Gray's-Inn Gate*,
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fore make it reasonable to believe) were presented to his Prophetick Mind, in a long Train of memorable and marvellous Events. Some of them Signal Deliverances, owing to the *Shield of their Help*: Others, Amazing Victories, won by the *Sword of their Excellency*; All conspiring to represent God, as their Eternal Protector and Almighty Leader: The Former, to establish them in perfect Security; The Latter, to exalt them with uncommon Successes.

I shall not detain this Audience upon the Explanation of the Words, any longer than just while I observe the proper import of Two Expressions; Both which are evidently designed to signify the Disappointment and Defeat of all Them, who should attempt to oppose or disturb this People in their promised Inheritance.

1. The First is, *Thine Enemies shall be found Liars unto thee*. Hereby may be meant The frustrating of their Expectations, The Vanity of their Dependencies, And all the mighty Boasts, which *Israel* should quickly see vanish into Smoke. This Sense implies those Enemies being deceived themselves.

But it may also denote those Enemies labouring to deceive *Israel* by false and flattering Pretences. Thus did the *Gibeonites* Josh. ix. in particular. And hereby is implied the tamest and most servile Submission, that Fear and Consternation can suggest to poor dispirited Creatures: Those wretched officious Fawnings, by which such deprecate the Repentment of a Force at whose Mercy they lye, when throwing themselves at the Feet, and imploring the Clemency and Protection, of a Conquerour, whose Progress they are no longer in a condition to obstruct.

2. By the Other Expression, *Thou shalt tread upon their high Places*, may be understood reducing and dismantling (as in the case of *Jericho*) those *Cities great and fenced up to Heaven*, for which the *Canaanites* are Josh. vi. Deut. ix. 1. said to have been particularly formidable. LXX. Gr. Vulg. Lat. Chald. Syriac. Arab. Others, and indeed Versions of great Authority, apply it to the Head and upper Parts of the Body; and from thence, by an easy Metaphor, to Princes and great Commanders. The treading on whose Necks, when subdued in Battel, was a Ceremony denoting the completest Victory and most absolute Subjection. And this we find practised upon

Josh. x. 24. upon the five Kings combined against *Joshua*. Which some Interpreters have judged a remarkable and even literal Accomplishment of the Prophecy in my Text.

Grot. I add once more, that an Expositor of great Learning joins both these in one Sentence, to the following effect. *If thine Enemies shall be found Liars unto thee, thou shalt tread upon their high Places*: Which imports (what We, to be sure, have reason to esteem a very valuable Mercy) that, when *Israel's* Enemies had made Leagues of Peace and Friendship, if, upon any inviting Conjunction afterwards, they should sacrifice Honour and Conscience to Advantage, strike in with the favourable Opportunity, and enter upon new injurious Measures; it was neither their numerous Armies, nor their strong Towns, that should be able to protect the Fraud. For God would see Right done to his People, assist them in bringing their faithless Adversaries to Reason, and in chastising the Baseness of such undeserved Provocations.

These I presume to have been the Privileges, which when *the Man of God* foresaw, he contemplated with a Joy too strong to be

contained; and thereupon broke out into the rapturous Words now laid before you. *Happy art thou, O Israel! Who is like unto Thee, O People saved by the Lord, He is the Shield of thy Help, and the Sword of thy Excellency! And thine Enemies shall be found Liars unto thee, and thou shalt tread upon their high Places.*

I take for granted, You have gone before me, in applying to the Occasion of this August Assembly both my Text and the Illustration of it. And indeed, if *Moses* were exalted, as you have seen, with a Prophetick View only of Blessings then far distant; What should forbid Us, who have seen, and felt, and ought to be transported with the Goodness of the Lord, to take the like Gratulation into every one of Our Mouths? Especially at a time, when We can enlarge the matter of our Gladness, by very comfortable Presages of its Continuance, and yet daily Increase, upon Our *Israel*. Nay, when, all Circumstances laid together, we may reasonably take leave to hope, that, even while we are paying to God the humble Tribute of This, His Merciful Providence is laying the Foundation of Another, solemn Thanksgiving.

His Merciful Providence I say : For unless we place the last Resort of all there, the Distinctions of this joyful Day are no better than the Pomp of Hypocrisie. And therefore I shall endeavour to improve them, by shewing, with Respect, *First to Israel,* and *Secondly,* to our Selves, that which is manifestly the Substance of my Text : (1.) With how good Reason all Successes of this Nature are ascribed to Almighty God ; And then, (2.) How justly that People is pronounced *Happy*, whose Protection is undertaken, and whose Battels are fought by Him.

1. These Points, so far as *Israel* is concern'd, are properly matter of Contemplation only : Because so evident, that to attempt a Proof of them were to abuse your Patience. None, who are persuaded, that God disposes the Affairs of this lower World, can doubt either Their Security, of whose *Help He is the Shield*, or Their Success, of whose *Excellency He is the Sword*. And as little can Any, who believe *Moses and the Prophets*, question whether *Israel* were a *People thus saved by the Lord*. For, What
else

else in effect is the History of the Old Testament, but a *Series* of Action, whereby a handful of Men (comparatively speaking) became superior to Enemies, so vastly an Over-match both in Number and Strength, that we no where read of Events any thing near, any thing like, or even worthy to be named with These?

Here we are inform'd, how this Almighty Defender *made bare his Arm*, and got *himself an everlasting Name*; Sometimes, by going out of the Stated Course of Nature; Sometimes, by arming the Creatures on the Side of his Beloved; Often, by striking into whole Armies and Countries sudden and irresistible Terrours; Generally, by inspiring the Chosen Race with Courage and Power to do more than Men; Always, by ordering Matters so, that His Honour and Their Safety were in the Issue effectually consulted.

2. So plain and manifold are the Indications of God's engaging on behalf of *Israel*. But when it is that he does so on Ours, can only be inferr'd from such a Likeness of Cases, as the present Condition of Affairs will

admit. The same miraculous Appearances are not to be expected between contending Christians, as Omnipotence then exerted it self in. Those were necessary Distinctions of Favour to the One only People, acknowledging the true God; and awakening Evidences to a whole Pagan World besides, that their Idols could profit them nothing. But War, in the Nature of the thing, does however continue to be an Appeal to the Sovereign Judge of All; in Controversies, which independent Powers on Earth cannot, or will not, amicably compose. And, although the Measures of Providence may be altered, yet does it not stand by idle and unconcerned. God still asserts his antient Prerogative; and, as well by many express Declarations, as by significant Titles of himself, in Scripture, puts Men in mind very frequently, to whom the Issue of the Combat is due, even when they might lye under the strongest Temptations of taking it to themselves.

That all Victory comes from God, hath indeed been sometimes inculcated with very ill Design, and a great deal of wicked Sophistry employed, to possess ignorant and bi-

goted Zealots, that Success, even in the most villainous Enterprises, is a Mark of Divine Approbation and Favour. But, though the Counsels of Providence be a dark and great Deep, yet are the Fallacies, imposed on this Occasion, easie to be seen through, by Them who are careful impartially to examine, into The Merits of the Cause engaged in, The Ends proposed from that Engagement, And the visible Interpositions of God's own Hand, in the Events consequent thereupon. It is, I conceive, Our peculiar Felicity, that all these Considerations concur to justify our present Rejoycing. And therefore I will not suffer my self to doubt your Patience, while I briefly represent the Part we appear to have in them.

God is a general Lover of Mankind. The Benignity of his Nature, and the Temper of his Laws, do both conspire in promoting their common Happiness. Hence *Helping Them to Right that suffer Wrong, Preserving Christian People in their Laws and Liberties, Undoing* Isai. lviii. *heavy Burdens, Breaking the Yokes, Loosing the Bands of Wickedness, and letting the Oppressed go free, are Actions, which he loves, recommends, and is highly honoured by.*
And

And therefore, when just Arms are taken up for these generous Purposes, we may be bold to say, He thinks himself a Party, and that *the Battle is not Ours but God's.*

The Case, as I said, is not in All Points the same with that of *Israel's* Adversaries; But is not this of Ours in some respects the worse, for the Difference, which is between them? For, to make outward Shew of the Christian Religion, and yet break in upon those Rights of Society, which it intends to guard; To turn Articles, and Oaths, and Renunciations, and all the strongest Ties of mutual Faith, into instruments of Perfidiousness and Deceit, Avarice and Ambition; To make the most perfect System of Charity and Tenderness a Pretence for Cruelty and Persecution; are Provocations but the more heinous and flagrant, for professing a Gospel so palpably perverted and abused. And, in regard the World by this time may be fully satisfied, that a *Most Christian* Tyranny may put on Chains, as heavy as a Heathen one; They, who lye under or have Cause to fear them, are as proper an Object of the Divine Protection; And They, who threaten and prepare them are as obnoxious

to the Divine Vengeance; As if that Faith were expressly disown'd in Words, which in Works is most absurdly denied.

Well therefore may we look upon it, as an Act of God's particular Love and Favour, when he raises up Instruments to chastise and check such Oppression. And, sure I am, Their noble Undertakings will prove of more auspicious Influence to the present Generation, and deliver down a more glorious Name to Posterity; A Name, that shall be written in Characters more durable, and be read with greater Admiration and Delight, than Pompous Titles and Triumphal Arches, polluted with the Blasphemy of nauseous Flatterers, the Tears of enslaved Subjects, the Blood of Christians wantonly spilt, and the Sufferings of Protestants barbarously persecuted.

Upon this account particularly the Memory of our deceased Prince deserves to live in Honour, and must needs do so, as long as there are Liberties in *Europe*; And These, I hope, are now about to be made as lasting, as Time it self. But the Blessings heap'd upon his Royal Successour call upon, and fur-

furnish abundant matter for our present Meditation. And They are such, as fill us with humble Confidence, that God hath reserved to Her the Glory of finishing that Great Work speedily, which He, in despite of all Difficulties, had so magnanimously begun.

The Cause, in which we are embarked, is common. The Principle we act upon, Christian and commendable. Not an inordinate Thirst of false Honour, to be acquired by Slaughter and Devastation; Not a Greediness to enlarge our Territories, or to enrich our Treasures with Spoils, at the expence of innocent and peaceable Neighbours; But an honest Desire to bring back into its old Channel what Encroachment and Usurpation have drawn away: To adjust such a Balance of Power, as may prevent our Selves and our Allies becoming a Prey to an insatiable Devourer; To establish Security of Commerce, and a mutual good Understanding between adjacent Countries; And to assure the Quiet and Safety of the whole Western World. In short, We proceed upon a Principle, which aims at Peace; And had much rather have no Necessity of Fighting, than the greatest Glory of Conquering. But Ours
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is plain Necessity. The only Remedy left us, when Fact hath so clearly demonstrated, that with Some no Peace is lasting, no Treaties sacred, upon any other foot, than want of Ability to break them.

Let us now, in the Last place, give our selves the Satisfaction of observing, how Designs so just and wise and honourable have been prospered in the Execution. And here a spacious and delightful Scene opens upon me. In the Description whereof, if I shall, as I am sensible I must very far, fall short; you will please to remember, that the Greatness of our Felicity, and the Goodness of our God, have done Honour to this Day by a Complication of Subjects, which neither the Time, nor the Copiousness of the Matter, will allow me to make a just Enlargement upon.

I need not say, that God does now work generally by humane and ordinary Means: But I must beg leave to remind you, that even Those Means do notwithstanding fail or take place, according to His Permission and Direction. In War, for instance (where Strength and Numbers,
C Courage

Courage and Discipline, Stratagem and Conduct, are the Springs, upon which the Fortunes of the Field are thought to turn) the Providence of God is frequently signalled, by making seasonable Discoveries, suggesting wise Counsels, furnishing favourable Opportunities, dispiriting the Strong, defeating the Many, inspiring with uncommon Bravery the Few, to whom He visibly makes the Conquest His Gift; and, Lastly, by qualifying first and singling out for the bringing to pass his merciful Purposes, Men of eminent Abilities and Importance; and then more peculiarly protecting Their Persons, upon whom the Issue may seem chiefly to depend. In several of these Instances our most gracious Lord hath of late so distinguished Us and Our Affairs, that I cannot think the Duty of this Day discharged, without some thankful Recollection of them.

To begin then with the happy Progress of Her Majesty's Arms in *Spain*. It were Blindness not to discern the particular Hand of God, in directing, at so very Critical an Instant, the surprising Attack made by our gallant Countrymen, upon that Har-

bour and Fortrefs, which gave us the firft footing, and laid the Foundation of our fubfequent Advantages, in that Kingdom. In the mighty Concernment whereof we were foon instructed, by the feafonable Refreshments our Fleets found there, after a Bat-tel fought, on Our Side, with great Inequality of Force; but with what Refolution and Succels, we need no other Evidence, than the Difability of making any formidable Figure at Sea, which the *French* have manifeltly lain under ever fince.

To the fame kind Providence we owe it, that the Enemy, rightly computing the Strength and Confequence of that valuable Poft, efteemed it worth reducing at any rate. But, when their Efforts were fo vigorous, and their Army fo well appointed, as threatned once more to take from it the boafled Title of *Impregnable*; Thefe were fufained by a Prince of Immortal Merit and Renown. By whose admirable Sagacity, and Vigilance, and Courage, the Befieger's Force was not only difappointed, but fo wafed and broken, as greatly to facilitate thofe Improvements of this Provi-

dential Beginning, which God reserved for the ensuing Year.

Then did His auspicious Influence shine out more bright upon the Confederate Arms, under the Command of a *Genius*, peculiarly adapted to such an Undertaking. His Activity, and Vigour, and Noble Fire press'd on apace; and quickly rendred him a Sanctuary to the Friends, and a Terrour to the Enemies of his Cause. To These we in great measure owe the swift Reduction first, and afterwards the seasonable Relief, of a City, to whose Fate that of the *Spanish* Monarchy was thought so closely allied, that Two contending Princes were concerned to claim it personally. And the Decision of this Prize so honourably disputed, (together with the Impressions made in other Provinces of that Kingdom, by a Commander of unquestionable Gallantry and Zeal,) is now, we hope, a firm Establishment of Glory and Dominion to Him whose Royal Presence was both its Honour and its Preservation. And Both together are certainly an illustrious Accession to the Triumphs and Devotions of this happy Day.

The former is so to the Devotions of it more especially. For *this hath God done* in such a manner, *that all Men* may plainly perceive it was His Work. The unanimous Constancy of the Citizens, The active Zeal of the Countrey, The obstinate Valour of the Garrison, The Diligence and Bravery of our Soldiers and Commanders both by Sea and Land, had probably all fail'd of their intended Effect; if He, who alone can command the Winds and the Seas, had not brought Them in to fight for us also. For thus they evidently did, first by repulsing our Adversaries former Attempt with Loss; then by detaining a part of our Fleet till the Squadrons expected to reinforce them could unite; and at last by conducting them to the Succour of the Besieged, in the very Article of extreme Danger and Distress. All which produced a Flight so precipitate and dishonourable, that He seem'd now to have confounded our Enemies with his Terrors, who had a little before disappointed and persecuted them with his Storms.

Let us, in the next place, magnifie the Mercy of God, for the Empire rescued from imminent Danger, by an Action in *Germany*, never to be forgotten, of which a higher Character cannot be given than that in Gallantry and Renown it equalled that of the Two consummate and Heroick Generals who conducted it. But now more especially let us praise him for the *Austrian* Rights vindicated, and in good Degree restored, by means of a late Victory, surpassing even the most Sanguine of our Expectations. And here we cannot be just to the Giver of all good Gifts, without esteeming it an Instance of His special Favour, that he raised up for so nice a Juncture a Commander, so formed by Nature, so finished by Experience, for bold and noble Enterprizes. Whose Sedateness and Judgment in Counsel, Courage and Presence of Mind in Action, Whose deserved Authority with all our Allies, and whose peculiar Felicity in gaining and improving Advantages, are the Blessing of his Own, the Envy and Wonder of every Age and Nation. To His marvellous Application and Victorious Name we owe an honourable Revulsion in the *Spanish Netherlands*, almost as speedy, as that infa-

mous one made some Years ago by Treachery and Surprise; A Country, wont to be gotten by Inches, but Now retrieved, (rescued rather) in the beginning of one glorious Campaign.

Now, Does the Scripture descend so low, EXO. xxxi. 3- as to ascribe to the Spirit of God, the Skill and curious Contrivance of Artificers; And can we imagine, that God will not insist upon having the Honour of such a Man as This? That we acknowledge all his Great Accomplishments to Him, who *makes one differ from another*, and *distributes to every Man severally as He will*? But particularly are we bound, for his Safety and Success, to adore the *Hand from above that held him fast*, and the *Arm that strength'ned him*. The Sons of Violence were well aware, that Victory it self would be bought too dear, at the Expence of that important Life; And they bent their Efforts accordingly. But His and Our Almighty Protectour signalized himself by covering him from a Death, the very near Approach whereof ought to stir and keep up in us a thankful Sense of so great and seasonable a Deliverance. And, I presume, we make the right Use

Use of God's so remarkable Interposition in our Favour, when we hope, and even trust, that the Measure of His Conquests and Our Benefits from them is not yet full, while the Bravest of Generals continues to be thus preserved for the Honour and Service of the Best of Queens.

It makes another Article in our Praises due upon this Occasion, that the Prince, whose Cause we assert, appears to be distinguished by all the Qualities and Ornaments of a Great and truly Royal Mind. His undaunted Resolution in Danger, His unwearied Application, the Condescension of his Carriage, and the Encouragement of his Example, have already gained the Hearts of his Subjects, and the very tender Regards of his Allies. And What indeed can Subjects wish for more, than a Monarch entitled to Dominion by Merit as well as Descent? And What can be a greater Endearment to Allies, than the Opportunity of placing a Crown on such a Head; where the Honour of Giving can only be exceeded, by That of Receiving it at such Hands?

But

But above all, What Expressions of Thankfulness, in this time of our Solemnities, shall We of These Nations find, commensurate to that most valuable one, which God hath appointed, next under Himself, the Cause and Instrument of All our publick Blessings? Her, whose auspicious Reign (which God of his Mercy long, very long continue) in the short Space of Four Years, hath brought down from Heaven such signal and accumulated Successes, as seem to declare her, of all the Princes of the Earth, the Person, whom God delights to honour. Let Others seek out mercenary Historians, dexterous in eloquent Flattery to write their Annals. Hers ask no Art or Ornament. A faithful nay a modest Relation would scarce find Credit hereafter; but that the Benefits of her Government will be transmitted with her Story; And Posterity shall be convinced by a Feeling of that Happiness, which they might otherwise lye under some Temptation of making a Difficulty to believe.

The Peace and Tranquillity of Her Own,
The Fame and Power of her Arms in O-
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ther Countries, The Distinctions and Glory of the *English* Valour, (a natural Consequence of *English* Liberty) The effectual Support of Her Allies, The generous Vindication of injured Princes, The seasonable Restraint of potent Oppression, The vanquishing Foreigners into their own Freedom, and exchanging their Slavery for legal Properties and Rights: These are shining Beauties in Her Administration: In which she hath been resembled but by Few, In Any of them scarce ever excelled, In All of them never equalled.

In These however the Wisdom of Her Counsellors, The Wealth and Affection of Her People, The prudent Disposition of Her Treasure, The Courage of Her Souldiery, The Conduct of Her Commanders, and the Assistance of Her Confederates may claim some Share. But there is something behind, in the Honour of which she hath on Earth no Partner. Her Royal and truly Christian Virtues. These are properly Her Own; And These too have no small Concern in the Mercies we are now commemorating. The Account of *Moses* praying upon the Hill,

Hill, while *Israel* and *Amaleck* engaged be, low, was no doubt intended to teach us that *Joshua* without *Moses* is not a sufficient Strength. Fleets and Armies are proper Instruments of Defence; but fervent Applications to the Lord of Hosts and God of Battles give a Turn to the whole Affair. Thus Religious and good Governours work unseen and at a distance; while their Piety and their Prayers qualifie their Forces for Victory, and the Chapel and the Closet crown the Sea and the Field with Efficacy and Success.

Thus have I in some measure represented, upon how many Accounts the Sacrifice we now are offering is due. On which my Enlargements have been, not so much for the Sake of that Praise, which these next Instruments of our Happiness deserve, as for exciting Your Praise and Gratitude to that Author and Fountain of all Good, who hath chosen and made use of them. For our true Happiness and Ground of Rejoycing lies not in Victory and Success abstractedly considered; (These, like all other sorts of worldly Prosperity, are sometimes given to Men to their Hurt) but they lye in the

Resemblance of Our Case to *Israel's*, and the Reasons we have to believe our selves therefore victorious, because God is *the Shield of our Help, and the Sword of our Excellency*. But our Advantages, and the Greatness of them, are never remembred to purpose, unless they awaken in us a due Sense of the Greatness of our Obligations, which may put us upon Returns suitable and worthy of them. Obligations by no means satisfied with the solemn Professions of a Festival Day; but which require a Temper and Tenure of Life and Conversation, such as may promote the Ends of God's unspeakable Goodness, advance our Interest at the same time it expresses our Gratitude, and recommend us yet more effectually to the enlargement of His Favour toward us.

Let our Thankfulness then, Let it, I beseech and conjure you, appear in all the fitting Demonstrations of it. As we are Members of a Body Politick, let it be seen in Unity of Counsels and Affections, in impartial Justice, in Brotherly Kindness, in Candour, and Condescension, and Temper, and Charity, and every Instance of
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the true (For this is the true) Gospel-Moderation. Let us study to advance the Glory of God, and the Good of our Countrey, By a Faithful Adherence to, and an unfeigned Zeal for, our excellent Constitution both in Church and State: By a punctual Discharge of our respective Functions: By all honourable and tender Regards to Them who have been, and are exposed to Danger for our Ease and Safety; And especially, by a cheerful and most affectionate Obedience to that Centre of our common Happiness and Honour; whose Arms the more signally God vouchsafes to prosper, the more disingenuous, unnatural, and even impious must it needs be, to create Her unnecessary Difficulties, and add Weight to those numerous Cares, that hang about her Crown. Next, as to our Private Capacities, Let us use our utmost Endeavours to remove far from us every accursed thing, to be by this Goodness effectually led to Repentance, to live as a *People saved by the Lord*: With our Enemies, treading under our Corruptions, the worst and most dangerous of all Enemies: And never let it be our Reproach, when our Destruction had been laboured in vain
from

from every other Quarter, that we then by our obstinate Sins and Follies at last destroyed our selves. In short, Let us settle in our Hearts this most certain Truth, that He is the best Subject, the best *Englishman*, and the best Christian, not whose Expressions of Joy are most profuse for Victories abroad; but whose good Principles and good Example, whose Peaceableness and Piety, contribute most to a yet more glorious, more advantageous Conquest; Such as may render Her Majesty triumphant, where she desires most to be so, over Irreligion and Profaneness, Libertinism and Faction at home.

I leave this whole Discourse upon you with two or three Passages of Scripture; And Blessed be His unspeakable Mercy, which hath made them so applicable to the present Occasion. *The Lord hath driven before you Nations great and strong, and the Lord your God hath laid the fear of you, and the dread of you upon all the Land whereon ye tread, and they that hear report of you are in anguish and tremble because of you: for the Lord your God he it*

Deut. ii. 25.

xi. 25.

Josh. xxiii.

9, 10.

is that fighteth for you. Take good heed therefore unto your selves, that ye love the Lord ^{1 Sam. xii.} your God, and serve him with all your hearts, ²⁴ for consider, how great things he hath done for you.

To This God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost be Glory and Dominion, Adoration and Thanksgiving, now and for evermore. *Amen.*

F I N I S.

