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POPERY *and* SLAVERY.

As it was set forth in a

S E R M O N

in the Parish Church of

Sutton *in* Surrey,

Sept. 19. 1714.

Being the First *Sunday* after His  
M A J E S T Y's Landing.

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BY

W. STEPHENS, B. D. Rector there.

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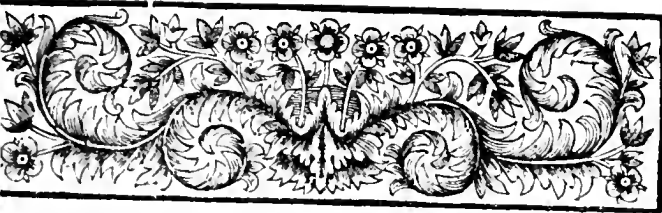
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I THESSALONIANS, 5. 18.

*In every thing give Thanks. For this is the Will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*



IS no small Symptom of that base Alloy which has corrupted our Natures, that we are so sensible of any Trouble which disquiets us, of any Calamity which afflicts us, and yet so little mindful of those many Supports and Reliefs which God does in Mercy afford us. But whoever considers, that the Design of all his Mercies is to refine us from this coarse Alloy, will carefully improve all Opportunities, both publick and private, which call us to Thanksgiving; because Gratitude is the highest Perfection of Nature, the most exalted Service

vice a Soul is capable of paying to God.

For what other Duty than this could have been the constant Employ of our first Parents, had they remained in Paradise without the Knowledge either of Sin or Sorrow? How could they have entertain'd themselves, but in the delightful Contemplation of the Divine Image impressed upon them, and in the joyful Returns of Thankfulness for that Share of Wisdom, Goodness and Dominion over the World which God had freely bestowed upon them? And when Godly Sorrow for Sin shall be turn'd into Joy, in what shall our eternal Happiness then consist, but in an everlasting Song of Praise and Thanks to him who is worthy of all Honour and Glory for ever and ever?

Nor are we in this Life bereft of all the Comforts of *Eden*, or destitute of all Anticipation of heavenly Joy; the flaming Sword of God's Anger, which drove Man out of Paradise, did not pursue him to mere Solitude and Desert;

fact : But on the contrary we have frequent Reason to say with *David*, *Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits : even the God of our salvation.* Psalm 68. 19.

And what a particular Reason have the People of *England* this Day to bless the heavenly Majesty, who has brought Light out of Darkness, Order out of Confusion, by putting a Stop to the wicked Designs of those Sons of *Belial*, who were nursing up a barbarous, bloody, civil, ceremonial War, on purpose to introduce a base ignoble Phantom of Majesty, to support the eldest Son of *Antichrist*, in his treble Capacity of Tyranny over Soul, Body and Property ? What Reason have we this Day to rejoice, that God has scattered Ps. 68. 30. *the people who delight in War* ? What great Reason have we at this Day to rejoice with his Sacred Majesty, the true Defender of our Holy Faith, in the Words of the Royal Psalmist, and in the same Spirit with which *David* indited that Psalm, *viz. The King shall joy in thy strength, O Lord : in thy salvation.* Ps. 21. 1, 2, 3.

*tion*

tion how greatly shall he rejoice ! Thou hast given him his hearts desire, and hast not withholden the request of his lips. For thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness : thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head. But that Particular in which the Glory of King David did chiefly consist, is mention'd in the 5th Verse, viz. because God in Mercy both to himself and his People, bestowed this Glory and Majesty upon him. His glory is great in thy salvation : honour and majesty hast thou laid upon him. And this is the Cause of our present joy, that when Snares were laid for us, and Terrors compassed us round about ; when the palpable Darknes of Popery, with its concomitant Slavery, hovered over our Heads ; then how joyful is it to say with David, Blessed be the Lord, who has not given us over as a prey to their teeth. Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowler, the snare is broken and we are escaped. Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

v. 5.

Pf. 124. 6,  
7, 8.

But

But the Text requires us in every thing to give Thanks; because the Calamities of this Life, and the Chastisements of the Lord, are not without their respective valuable Considerations, as the Cloud in the Wilderness had its bright side: So that we may have reason to count it all joy when we <sup>James 1. 2, 3.</sup> fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. If then Prosperity and Adversity conspire together for our Advantage; if (as St. Paul speaketh) we know <sup>Rom. 8. 28.</sup> that all things work together for good to them that love God; what Cause have we to attend all the Providences of God with thankful Hearts, and (as 'tis in the Text) *in every thing*, that is, in every State and Condition, to give thanks!

I shall from these Words take occasion, 1<sup>st</sup>, to set before you the particular Parts of which the Duty of Thanksgiving is made up; 2<sup>dly</sup>, apply our Thankfulness to a State of Adversity; and 3<sup>dly</sup>, to a State of Prosperity; with

a particular Relation to the Blessing we this Day recognize.

Now a Man performs the Duty of Thankfulness to God by observing, acknowledging, retaining, esteeming and requiring the Blessing he receives from his Mercy.

*1st, By Observing.*

'Tis for want of a natural Faculty to perform this Office, that altho' God *Ps. 147. 9. giveth the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry,* yet these Creatures are not oblig'd to any Returns of Gratitude; because they have not Capacity to discern from whence their Help comes: Whereas Man being made capable to know that all the Benefits which he enjoys are the free Gifts of the greatest and best of Beings, is by this very Capacity which God has given him, as by all other Bounties he receives, oblig'd to Gratitude. And this Obligation arises from the Law of Nature, which is made known to us by Things, not Words. For *all things both within us and without us, as they signify our duty*

*duty to God and towards one another, are the law of nature. Where then God hath given Eyes to see, Ears to hear, and an Heart to understand, there 'tis an unnatural Ingratitude to supercede the Use of these Faculties ; which was a Fault our Saviour found in the Jews of his Time. Their eyes (said he) have* <sup>Mat. 13.</sup> *they closed, lest at any time they should see* <sup>15.</sup> *with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.*

But the Observation of Man is raised to the highest Objects by a greater Light than that of Nature. The Day-spring from on high hath visited us : So that by a divine Illumination we are led to contemplate spiritual Gifts far surpassing thole of Nature. And thus St. James teacheth, *Every good* <sup>James 1.</sup> *gift, and every perfect gift is from above,* <sup>17.</sup> *and comes down from the father of lights.* And St. John describes the Almighty by the Characters of *Light* and *Love*, that we may observe from whence proceed all the Treasures of Wisdom

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and Goodness, which enlighten our Minds, and enliven our Hearts.

Life is often compar'd to a Journey. Now the greatest Satisfaction a Traveller enjoys, is a delightful Observation of the various Works of Art and Nature which occur in his Way. 'Tis with pleasure he observes the Fertility of Soils, Temperateness of Climates, Sweetness of Air, various Prospects, stately and well-contriv'd Palaces; but how surprizing would be his Observation were he conscious that all which he beheld were his own Property? And this is the Pleasure which every good Man may take in the Travel of his Life, that all Things under the Sun are God's Gifts to him. 'Tis for him that the Sun ariseth, rejoicing as a Giant to run his Course: For him the former and the latter Rain descend: For his sake the Clouds drop Fatness: The Earth, Air and Water are all his Storehouses: For him are the New Heavens and New Earth prepared, and to him are appropriated all those spiritual



ritual Ordinances, precious Promises, and divine Graces which are necessary to prepare him for an eternal State of Glory. This Doctrine the *Corinthians* learn'd from St. Paul. *All things* (saith <sup>1 Cor. 3. 21, 22.</sup> he) *are yours : whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours, &c.* And from hence, by the Way, we learn that a due Observation of God's Bounty to us is by him design'd for our Delight as well as Duty ; and convinceth us of what *Solomon* said of Religion under the Character of Wisdom : *Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.* <sup>Prov. 3. 17.</sup>

But who can observe the Bounties of God, how rich in their Quality ! How vast in their Quantity ! How constant and continu'd in their Duration ! How absolutely necessary in their Use ! Who can make these Observations without reflecting upon the Unworthiness of the Receiver with *David* in the 8th Psalm : *When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon* <sup>v. 3, 4.</sup>

and the stars which thou hast ordained ; What is man that thou art mindful of him ? or the son of man that thou visitest him ? Nor do we rightly observe the good and gracious Hand of God reaching out these Benefits to us, unless we (1) receive all his Gifts respectfully ; (2) use them soberly ; (3) know that we are accountable to him for them ; and therefore (4) improve them to his Glory.

2. The Second Point of Gratitude is Acknowledgment : For out of the Abundance of the Heart the Mouth will speak. Indeed that Mouth which God fills with his Plenty ought not to be empty of his Praise. And thus the State of the Blessed is described by an everlasting Song of Praise ; a never-ceasing Recognition of all their continued Glories. And if we read over the many Psalms of Thanksgiving which were compos'd by *David*, we shall find in them such a lively Spirit of transporting Joy, from whence we may conclude, that whilst he was exercis'd  
with

with these Meditations, he enjoy'd a Heaven upon Earth. *Bless the Lord,* <sup>Pfal. 103. and 104.</sup>  
*O my soul, (said he) and all that is within me bless his holy name. And again, I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live. I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.* So the Songs of *Moses*, *Baruch* and *Deborah* were the grateful Acknowledgments of their respective Deliverances. And therefore the Saints in Heaven, whilst they acknowledge their everlasting Deliverance, are said by *St. John* to *sing the song of Moses.* <sup>Revel. 15 3.</sup>

But in Confessions of this Nature, Care is to be taken that all Glory be given to God alone; not supposing that any natural Dispositions in our selves which might engage the divine Goodness to regard us above others. For in this manner *Jacob* made his Acknowledgment, saying, *O God of my* <sup>Gen. 32. 9, 10:</sup>  
*father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac; the Lord who saidst unto me, return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee. I am not worthy of the least of all the Mercies, and*  
of

of all the Truth which thou hast shewed to thy servant. And after this Manner Moses cautions *Israel*, when they were to go over *Jordan* and possess the Land of the *Cananites*. *Deut. 9. 4.* Speak not thou in thy heart after that the Lord thy God has cast them out from before thee, saying, For my righteousness the Lord hath brought me in to possess the land : but for the wickedness of these nations the Lord hath driven them out. Tho' the *Cananites* were a very wicked People, yet *Israel* was forbid to make any Comparison, lest his Praise of God should receive an ill Tincture of Boasting : Such as render'd the Pharisee's Confession unacceptable, when he thank'd God that he was not as other men were. *Luk. 18. 11.* But, on the contrary, our Acknowledgments to God ought to be prefac'd with a true Knowledge of our selves, as *St. Paul* spake, *Rom. 7. 18.* I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing. In summ, let him that glorieth glory only in the Lord, *1 Cor. 1. 31.*

It must indeed be confess'd, that God doth bestow his future Rewards according to the previous Disposition of Grace, whereby we are made meet to be Partakers of his Glory : But then it must also be own'd, that the Means of those Graces which distinguish the Servants of God, are intirely the Gifts of their great and bountiful Master. And it must likewise be acknowledg-ed, that notwithstanding the Improve-ments of our Talents, which either we or the Spirit of God in us hath made, yet the immarcessible Crown of Glory is at last the free Gift of God.

Wherefore *not unto us, O Lord, not un-<sup>Psal. 115.</sup>*  
*to us, but unto thy name give glory, for*  
*thy mercy and for thy truth's sake.*

*zaly, Retaining.*

For what pity is it that such de-  
lightful Observations, and joyful Ac-  
knowledgements, which are the Anti-  
cipations of Heaven upon Earth, should  
be fading and momentary ? Has not  
God found out a Way to keep the  
Flame of our Thank-Offering always  
alive ?

alive? Nay, has he not enabl'd, and in Kindness oblig'd us to perpetuate our Joy, by recalling frequently to our Minds the happy Scenes of our past Life? Thereby engaging us to fix our Hearts upon his Praise, as *David* spake,

Pfal. 107. *My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed;*  
 7. *I will sing and give praise.* How carefully in another Place does he charge his

Pfal. 103. *Memory with Mercies receiv'd? Bless*  
 2. *the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits*; that is, forget none of all his Benefits. And I humbly conceive, that 'tis this Recollection of the Deliverances which God hath given to his People here on Earth, which furnishes out some Part of the Saints Repast of Joy in Heaven. For, methinks, the first Degree of surprising Joy with which a devout Soul entering into Heaven will be affected, should somewhat resemble a Mariner's Review of those Winds and Seas, Storms and Tempests, Gulfs and Shipwrecks, which he has formerly escap'd: Only greater is the Danger which has arisen  
 from

from the boisterous Violence of our Passions, the strong Tide of our evil Inclinations, the Fury of our Lust and Rage, and the Subtilty and Power of various Temptations ; from all which Perils it has pleas'd God to deliver his weak Vessel, which he is now laying up into safe Harbour.

Two Repasts of this nature God has ordain'd for his People here on Earth, Two Feasts of Commemoration, at which they may *Taste and see that the Lord is good.* Ps. 34. 8. With the first of those Ordinances, the Passover, he favour'd his antient People the *Jews*, that they might annually call to mind the Deliverance which God wrought out for their Fathers in *Ægypt* ; that they might dwell upon the Partiality of that Angel which slew the first born of the *Ægyptians*, when he pass'd over their Habitation ; as also upon the wonderful and surprising Scenes by which God accomplish'd their Deliverance. The other Spiritual Feast is by the Grace of God prepar'd and set before

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fore unworthy, but not unprepar'd Communicants at the Lord's Table, where we joyfully celebrate a greater deliverance of our Souls from eternal Bondage. How sweet and condescending the Invitation! How comfortable the Entertainment! How readily and constantly to be accepted by all who are willing to renew the Memorials of their sublimest Joy!

But tho' the Fountain of Mercy be but one, the Merits of our Saviour Jesus Christ, yet who can number the Streams which arise from thence? And with these refreshing Streams we may with delight fill up the empty Spaces of our Thoughts, whether we are uprising or lying down, with the thankful remembrance of God's Mercies.

An Instance of this we have in holy *David*: *How precious are all thy thoughts to me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them they are more in number than the sand: when I am awake I am still with thee.*

Pfal. 139.  
17, 18.

Who



Who then can have reason to complain that time passeth slowly away, when every Minute may be fill'd up with the refreshing Commemoration of God's Goodness ; and when natural Memory fails, Art may be used to supply the Defect ? Nay, rather, since our Memories are treacherous in retaining the bountiful Provision which God hath made for us, 'twill be of good use to make a Register of those Deliverances and Advantages which he hath vouchsaf'd unto us in our own single Capacities ; as likewise of those Blessings which he has conferred upon us in common with others : To which common Places we may frequently resort for the refreshment of our Memories. Our Church furnisheth us with Topicks of this Nature in her daily Office of Prayer, where we are taught to bless God for our Creation, Preservation, Redemption ; for the means of Grace, and hopes of Glory. But,

4<sup>thly</sup>, Who can call to mind the least of God's Mercies, so as to put a

due Value upon it? We have no way of esteeming them but by acknowledging that they are inestimable. And therefore, when pious Souls have been recollecting God's Favours bestow'd upon them, Admiration and Astonishment have supply'd the place of Esteem and Value. Thus *David* begins the 8th Psalm, *O Lord our God, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!* Thus *St. Paul* joins Astonishment with his Praise for the wonderful Redemption of Man, *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!*

Rom. 11.  
33.

But tho' it be impossible to utter the mighty acts of the Lord, and shew forth all his praise; tho' it be impossible to express the full and commensurate Esteem which is due to his Loving-kindness, yet are we oblig'd to put a Value thereupon according to that Capacity which God has given us. For we may endeavour to put a real and true, tho' we can never put a full Price upon his Favours. And this Esteem of his Gifts will arise from a serious Me-

Me-

Meditation (1) of our constant Need of 'em. (2) Of the Plenty we receive of them. (3) Of the frequent Recovery of them when lost. And (4) of their long Continuance and Abode with us.

1. As to the first Case. He who shall consider his own Weakness, how obnoxious he is to unruly Passions, how easily he is prevail'd upon by ill Examples; his Danger from powerful Customs and strong Temptations, will soon be convinc'd how much he stands in need of God's Grace to prevent him from Evil, and assist him in the Pursuit of any good Design. Thus *David* was sensible of the preventing Providence of God, by which he was hindered from executing the Vengeance he design'd against *Nabal's* House. With what Concern does he express himself to *Nabal's* Wife, who was God's Instrument in turning away his Fury? *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel* 1 Sam. 25.  
(said he) *who sent thee this day to meet* 32, 33.  
*me; and blessed be thy advice, and blessed*  
*sed*

*sed be thou, who hast kept me this day from shedding blood.*

And 2dly, as to the Abundance we receive. 'Tis impossible for the nicest Observer to reckon up how often he has been preserv'd from doing and receiving Harm, or how frequent have been his Assistances or Deliverances: For *David*, tho' a curious Observer of God's gracious Providences, yet confesseth, that *Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works: and thy thoughts which are to us-ward cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee, if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbred.*

And 3dly, If the Want of any Benefit teacheth us to prize it, the Recovery of it will heighten our Enjoyment; as Hunger gives the best Relish to our Meat, and Thirst to our Drink. So the Husks of the Swine in a Foreign Country highly recommended the plentiful Entertainment which the Prodigal Son soon after receiv'd in his Father's House.

But

But 4<sup>thly</sup>. 'Twas a strange Ingratitude of *Israel*, which is left upon Record as a Mark of their unparallell'd Stupidity, that they slighted those Mercies which were of longest Continuance with them : *They loathed Manna, and despised the pleasant land.* And took an Occasion for this Contempt from that Cause which might justly have recommended both to their Esteem ; because one was their constant Support in their Journey, and the other their continual Abode. Surely that which renders the State of Bliss invaluable, is because the Light of the Living never grows dim. Their continuing City is built with such precious Stones, which are always bright in their Lustre, and durable in their Nature ; so that neither their Glory or Strength can ever decay.

5. Requiring the Blessings we receive is the last and highest Discharge of our Thanks to God. Now tho' it be impossible to make any Returns which can be equivalent to the least Benefit we

we receive, but when we have done all we can do, we shall be still unprofitable Servants ; yet there are some Returns which God hath enabl'd and required us to make, and such as his condescending Kindness has also promis'd to accept from us. And therefore it becomes every Man to ask *David's* Question, *What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me ?* And he answers the Question in the following Verse : *I will offer unto thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving.*

The *Jews* were taught to make this Return to God by way of Eucharistic Sacrifices, Thank-Offerings. As the Passover was their Retribution for their Deliverance out of *Ægypt* ; the Feast of Pentecost for the giving of the Law ; the Feast of Tabernacles for preserving their Fathers in Booths thro' the Wilderness. And at these Solemnities they paid their Tribute for the Blessings of God upon the Earth. Such was the Sheaf of the First Fruits of their Harvest ; the

First-

*Psal.* 116.  
12, 17.

*Levit.* 23.  
10, 14.

Firstlings of their Cattle offer'd at the Feast of unleaven'd Bread; the Two Wave-Loaves, as the First Fruits of the Corn out of their Barn; and Wine and Oil at the Feast of Tabernacles. Levit. 13. 17.

But these ceremonial Services were design'd chiefly to set forth the Moral Part of Retribution, which consists in Two Things.

*First,* A diligent and constant Employ of all God's Gifts to the Glory of the great Benefactor in the Good of his Creatures.

*Secondly,* In a willing and humble Resignation of them when his Providence shall recal them. Without these Moral Performances the Ceremonial Addresses would not be accepted; as the Prophet *Micah* taught the Jews: *Wherewithall shall I come before the Lord? saith he, and bow my self before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil?* And he answers this Que-

stion in the following Words: *He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good: and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?* He who rightly applies the Abilities and Opportunities God hath put into his Hands, of *loosing the bonds of wickedness, undoing the heavy burdens, and letting the oppressed go free,* renders a proper Sacrifice of Thanks, because he *does justly*. So does he who sheweth his love of Mercy in feeding the Hungry, refreshing the Thirsty, cloathing the Naked, relieving the Stranger, visiting the Sick; for in all these Things the Gifts of God are restor'd to their Donor. So saith our Saviour, *In as much as ye have done it to one of the least of my brethren, ye have done it to me.* In like manner, he who walks humbly with his God in the free Resignation of his dearest Comforts at the Call of God's Providence, as *Dauid* his Child, *Job* his Family and Estate, *Paul* himself, *not only to be bound, but to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.*

Matt. 25.  
40.



*Jesus.* He who does this, makes Restitution to God ; the want whereof *Moses* charged upon *Israel* in these Words, *Do ye thus requite the Lord, O* <sup>Deut. 32.</sup> <sub>6.</sub> *foolish people and unwise?*

2. The second Thing proposed, was to apply this Doctrine to a State of Adversity.

Not that Afflictions in themselves can afford Matter of Thanksgiving ; yet, with respect to their Circumstances, they may : there being no Estate ever so melancholy on this side the Grave, but what, upon one Account or other, affords Matter of Thankfulness to God.

*First,* Because he lays no Affliction upon us, but what is less than we have deserv'd. We sin with a high Hand and a hard Heart ; God layeth on his Rod with a gentle Hand and a tender Heart. We provoke him frequently, he afflicts us sparingly. We cast away his Commandments from us as Rebels, he chastiseth us as Sons.

*Why then doth a living man complain,* <sup>Lam. 3.</sup> <sub>39.</sub> *a*   
 *man*

man for the punishment of his sins? When every Man may say with *Ezra*,  
 Ezra 9. 13. *After all this is come upon us for our evil  
 deeds, and for our great trespasses, thou  
 our God hast punished us less than our ini-  
 quities deserve. And so may a sinful  
 Nation, lying under God's afflicting  
 Hand, find Reason for Joy in the  
 midst of Sorrow, and join with Israel  
 in Jeremy's Lamentation, saying, It  
 Lam. 3. 22. is the Lord's mercies that we are not  
 consumed, because his compassions fail not.  
 But,*

*Secondly*, The many Advantages  
 which may be gather'd from Afflictions,  
 administer Matter of Thankfulness to God;  
 as is acknowledg'd by  
 Psal. 114. 67, 71, 75. *David, saying, It is good for me that I  
 have been afflicted. Because before he  
 was afflicted he went astray. But his  
 Troubles dispos'd him to learn God's  
 word, and keep his statutes. From  
 whence he concludes, that God in faith-  
 fulness had afflicted him.*

Now the Benefits which arise from  
 Afflictions are considerable, both with  
 respect

respect to them who suffer, and them who do not.

(1) As to those who suffer, they are taught these important Points of Wisdom; *viz.* the Knowledge of themselves; the Weakness and Impotency of humane Nature; that our Subsistence is only a momentary Dependence upon the divine Power and Goodness: without whose Support *all our days are done; we soon pass away as a tale that is told; we are as water spilt upon the ground; as a shadow that vanisheth away.*

And (2) as Afflictions teach us the Knowledge of our Nature, so they discover the Graces which God has given us. Thus by a fiery Tryal God discover'd to *Job* that Patience, Meekness and Submission with which he had endu'd him; together with that supernatural Trust which he expresseth in these Words, *Tho' he slay me yet will I trust in him.* Job 13. 15. And from hence

(3) They carry us to the Knowledge of God's All-sufficiency, teaching us to say with *David*, *The Lord is my* Pf. 18. 2  
*rock,*

rock, and my fortress, my deliverer, my God, my strength, in whom I put my trust: my buckler, the horn of my salvation, and my high tower. Thus when God withdrew from Israel his Corn, Wine and Oil which they prepared for Baal, then they learned to know that Jehovah was their God. When he slew them then they sought him: and they return'd and inquired early after God. And they remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their redeemer.

Ps. 78. 34,  
35.

(4) Add to this, that Afflictions teach us to discern the true Proportions of those Blessings of which we have been deprived; and also quickens the Relish of those we enjoy. Hunger sets a true Relish upon a Morsel of Bread, and discovers the Strength and Support which is in the Staff of Life.

(5) As the Fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom, so are Afflictions the beginning of that Fear; being frequently necessary to preserve that Awe and Reverence of God in which is laid the Foundation of Religion. *Because they*

*they have no changes, saith David, therefore they fear not God. And thus it is said of King Manasseh, When he was in affliction he besought the Lord his God: and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers. The hardest and coarsest Mettals at last yield to the Fire, and thereby become separate from their Dross.*

But yet it must be acknowledged, that such a Separation of a Soul from its Sin, cannot at present give so great a Comfort to a Penitent, as if his Repentance had arose from the Call of God's Word, or from the Sense of his Loving-kindness, and gracious Promises. And I have known it lie as a heavy Burden upon some Penitents, who, tho' loathing themselves in their own sight for all the evils they have committed, were yet unsatisfy'd of the Truth of their Repentance, because it was occasion'd by Fear, Want, or Shame.

But since Fear, and Grief, and Shame work more effectually upon us than Love, Hope and Joy; what reason  
have

have we to bless God for that gracious Parable of the prodigal Son's successful Return to his indulgent Father. Drudgery and Famine drove him home, where Ease and Plenty had been neglected and despised. But yet he was received with all the Demonstration of a tender and fatherly Affection: And the ignoble Motives of his Return were no more remembered to him, than was his undutiful and most ungrateful relinquishing of his Father's House. The Joy of the Father shews, that he had quite forgot the untoward Behaviour of the Son. Said the Father to the

Luke 15. *Servants, Bring forth the best robe and*  
 22, 23. *put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and be merry.* If then it be so appointed by the most gracious Providence of

Heb. 12. *God, that even Chastening, which for the*  
 11. *present is grievous, yieldeth afterwards the peaceable fruits of righteousness unto them who are exercised thereby; he who drinketh of the Cup of Affliction has*  
 more

more Reason to rejoice at the Benefit, than to lament the Bitterness of his Potion.

Nay, a good Man may have Reason to rejoice for the Sake of others, who sometimes reap in Joy what he had sow'd in Tears. Thus *Daniel's* Imprisonment administer'd Occasion Dan. 6. to *Darius* to know the true God, and to proclaim him over all his Empire. *St. Paul's bonds in Christ were manifest* Phil. 1: 12, 13. *in the Roman Emperor's palace, to the furtherance of the gospel.* And the great inexhaustible Spring of all Comforts, the ever-flowing Fountain of all those Blessings, which we either enjoy or expect, the Rivers of Pleasure which run at God's Right Hand for evermore, have all arisen from a man of sorrows, who was himself made perfect through sufferings.

3. The third and last thing I design'd, was to apply the Duty of Thanksgiving to a State of Prosperity, with particular relation to his Gra-

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cious Majesty's happy Accession to the Throne of these Kingdoms.

How thankfully ought we to observe and acknowledge the surprizing Seasonableness of our present Deliverance from the fatal Conduct of our great Managers, and the sottish Compliance of the People, whereby we were given up as a Prey to our Enemies, if not to our selves : *For while*

Gal. 5. 15. *we were biting and devouring one another, we were in the ready way of being consumed of one another.* How dreadful was it when the Spirit of Slavery was so far advanc'd among us, that our former Deliverance wrought out by our late glorious King, was remembred only to be ridicul'd, and cast back into the Face of God on a solemn Feast-Day, by one who pretends to be a Minister of God's Holy Word : When base Ingratitude for our late wonderful Deliverance, in Conjunction with a slavish Disposition of Mind, were made the Characteristic of a true Church-Man, on purpose to encourage an

Dr. Sacheverel.



an inglorious Mushroom to usurp over us, while the Gates of Hell and Coffers of Antichrist were open to receive the Spoils of his Profusion. In short, When Rapine, Falshood, and Religious Fury did meet and culminate in the Zenith of our Meridian, then it was that Man's Extremity became God's Opportunity to make Way for our most gracious Second Deliverer, our Rightful and Lawful King *GEORGE*, the Preserver and Defender of our Faith; and by his happy Accession to the Throne of these Kingdoms, to restore Liberty, Truth and Peace to this our *Israel*.

This special Providence, this surprising Deliverance has wrought so effectually, that it has turn'd both the Heads and Hearts of the *British* People, who have now learn'd to distinguish an Usurper from a rightful Prince, from the same Characters by which our Saviour distinguish'd between the Thief and Shepherd. For thus said he, *Verily he that enters not* <sup>John 10,</sup> <sub>1, 2,</sub> *by*

by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he who enters in by the door, the same is the shepherd of the sheep.

The Door through which rightful Princes (which are the Shepherds of their People) enter, is the free Consent of those Nations which they govern, whilst Fraud, Falshood and Force join together to introduce an Usurper. In like manner the People are taught of God to distinguish between a Tyrant and a King, as between a Wolf and a Shepherd, since the one preserves, the other preys upon the Flock.

But how shall we be able to acknowledge (for 'tis impossible to put a Value upon) the Liberties, not only of *Britain*, but of *Europe* restor'd, and the Jaws of Hell shut up by the Preservation of God's true Religion among us? Or who can reckon up all the Benefits which a just Liberty, set forth and maintain'd by known Laws, secures

secures to a Nation? It enlargeth the Capacity, refineth the Understanding, quickens the Industry, and increaseth the Power, Wealth, and Plenty of a Nation. What Diligence and Application to Business will be thought too much, when the Products thereof are not only secur'd to our selves, but Posterity? To this Security are owing all Improvements of Art and Industry; when, on the contrary, an enslav'd People are depriv'd of their very Reason, and render'd as incapable of discerning God's Providences as are the very Beasts. Witness the People of *Israel* at their Return out of *Ægypt*, whose unparallell'd Stupidity in their Behaviour as they pass'd thro' the Wilderness, could be the Effect of no less Cause than of their long Slavery.

If then the Preservation and Improvement of our Reason, the Prosperity of our Country, and Happiness of our Posterity be unvaluable Blessings, what Price can be put upon a  
just

just and legal Liberty, the Parent of so great Advantages?

And who then can be blam'd that useth a *Berean* Freedom, in examining those Doctrines which tend to impair or lay waste this Liberty? 'Tis a Matter of serious Lamentation to consider, that any Principles or Conclusions of this ill Tendency should ever have been avow'd from the Holy Scriptures; since Experience will inform us, that instead of supporting such selfish and slavish Doctrines by a Pretence of divine Revelation, the just Authority of sacred Writ is rather weaken'd thereby; forasmuch as every unjust, tyrannical, self-interested, and slavish Doctrine abetted from thence, is a Millstone hung upon the Book of God.

And now what Reason have we to attone for our late mock Thanksgiving for such a scandalous Peace, which his Majesty discourag'd in the highest Degree by his Publick Minister, who was for that Reason dismissed

fed the Court with many scandalous Reflections, which he and his illustrious Master unjustly suffer'd for their sincere Regard to this Country, and to the Protestant Religion.

What Returns shall we make to God for our present Deliverance? And herein let us take Direction from God himself; who when he shews Mercy to us, commands us in Requital to *go and do likewise*. From hence sprang the Sabbatical Year, and that of Jubile (which Word signifies *Release*) which were instituted only for this End, that by a Liberty granted to poor Debtors and Servants, *Israel* might make their Returns to God for their Deliverance out of *Ægypt*. Thus the Reason of the Seventh Year's Freedom is given in these Words. *Thou* Deut. 15. *shalt remember that thou wast a bondman*<sup>15.</sup> *in the land of Ægypt, and the Lord thy God redeemed thee. Therefore I command thee this thing to day.* And how much God Almighty discourages a slavish Spirit, will appear from the following

lowing Verse. The Words are these.  
 v. 16, 17. *And it shall be if he shall say unto thee, I will not go away from thee, (because he loveth thee and thy house, because he is well with thee) then thou shalt take an awl, and thrust it thro' his ear unto the door, and he shall be thy servant for ever.*

For the same Reason was the Jubile ordain'd, wherein an universal Liberty was proclaim'd throughout the Land of Israel. As it is written,  
 Levit. 25. *Thou shalt cause the trumpet of the Jubile to sound in the day of attonement. And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land. And the Reason of this is alledg'd in the 42d Verse, viz. their Deliverance out of Ægypt. 'Tis observable, that three times in that Chapter Moses cautions the People against Oppression, as inconsistent with the Fear of God. Ye shall not oppress one another. Again, Thou shalt not rule over him with rigour, but shalt fear thy God. And again, Ye shall*  
 v. 14.  
 v. 17.  
 v. 43.  
*not*

*not therefore oppress one another, but thou shalt fear thy God.*

And what is yet more remarkable is, that for the Neglect of Obedience to this Law of Liberty, *Juda* was by God's just Judgment deliver'd up to *Babylonish* Captivity; as *Jeremiab* hath recorded. Thus saith the Lord God of Jere 34.  
13, &c. Israel, *I made a covenant with your fathers in the day that I brought them forth from the land of Egypt, saying, At the end of seven years let ye go every man his brother an Hebrew, which hath been sold unto thee. And when he hath served thee six years, thou shalt let him go free from thee. But your fathers hearkened not to me, neither inclined their ears. And ye were now turned, and had done right in my sight, in proclaiming liberty every man to his neighbour. But ye turned and polluted my name, and caused every man his servant, and every man his handmaid whom he had set at liberty, to return: and brought them into subjection, to be unto you for servants and for handmaids.* Therefore thus saith

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*the Lord, Ye have not hearkened unto me, in proclaiming liberty every one to his brother, and every man to his neighbour. Behold, I proclaim a liberty for you, saith the Lord, to the sword, to the pestilence, to the famine : and I will make you to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth.* Thus it pleas'd God to shew them the Face of their Sin, in the Glass of their Punishment, and to give them up, who were devouring one another, to be a Prey to Strangers.

Now if we the Inhabitants of this Land, have been brought within view of the like melancholly Prospect to that which *Jeremy* laid before *Juda*, which has thrice happen'd to us within the Space of an Hundred Years last past ; and if we can look upon our selves but just now deliver'd from the Grand *Nimrod*, the Mighty Hunter after the Liberties of *Europe*, may not these dangerous Circumstances be attributed to something which may be resembled to the uncertain Breakings out of Mount *Ætna* ; I mean, the  
 rampant



rampant Rage of a violent Faction, known Enemy to the Liberties of Mankind ?

Nothing is more evident from Holy Scripture, than that the Spirit of Christian Religion is made up of Moderation, which includes Condescension, Toleration, Candour, Ingenuity, and Fair Dealing, *forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, as God for Christ's sake forgives us.* Nay, it enjoins us to have Patience in case of Provocation, and not to give way to Jealousy, Suspicion, or evil Surmise, in case we should be doubtful or uncertain of another Man's Meaning in some particular Words or Actions. It requires us to be of a pacifying, peace-making Spirit ; to be moderate in Power, humble in Prosperity, modest with great Parts and Gifts, and to leave every Man to the Reason of his Mind in Case of Religion. For they who are come to any Growth in Religion are free-spirited in it, and act with inward Satisfaction :

tisfaction: They understand that 'tis for their Good, and therefore act with Delight. Indeed, till then, Man will not be friendly to it; till then, 'tis not settled with them, nor can they call it their own; but till then they will look upon it as a Taskmaster, or carry it as a Burden. What then can be more contrary to the Nature of Religion, than Imposition? For where Force takes Place of Reason, all Religion must necessarily be alike, and as Colours in the Dark, undistinguishable. And how can we deny that Liberty to others, which we claim, by a natural Right, as due to our selves. It is certain, that had we always forborn to have bitten and devour'd one another, we should not thrice have been brought into Danger of being consum'd one of another, or of being made a Prey to Antichristian Tyranny.

But blessed be our gracious God,  
who hath open'd to us a Door of  
Hopes,

Hopes, and made us glad with the Light of his Countenance ; who hath given us this Day of rejoicing at present, together with Hopes that our Publick Joy may be of long Continuance. For if we consider the Royal Qualifications and happy Circumstances of our Gracious Sovereign, the known Wisdom and Moderation of his Family, in a particular Manner recommend him to a Nation subject to be overturn'd too frequently by the Violence of a Faction. His Frugality and good Oeconomy, so strange to the *British* Throne, will assure us, that at last a real Stop will be put to the Plundering of the Publick Treasure. And since his Majesty return'd, to the Hands of his People, a Tax rais'd in his *German* Dominions, because the Reason of it was ceased, we cannot distrust his Faithful Administration of the Publick Treasure. Besides, his native Country does in a particular Manner furnish him for the

Defence

Defence of *Britain*, which, together with the Empire, have the same common Enemies; against whose Encroachments he has always been watchful. And being himself the Head of the Protestant Part of the Empire, he has the most natural Right, especially by the present Accession, to be intrusted by all the Protestant Powers of *Europe*. These Circumstances, together with his bright and hopeful Offspring, furnish him out in the most ample Manner to support the Crown of these Realms, according to its antient Lustre and Glory.

May Honour and Honesty, Justice and Charity, Wisdom and Moderation, make their Entry with his Sacred Majesty, take Possession of these Realms, and be inseparable from his Reign. And may the God of all Mercies so powerfully incline the Hearts of all *Britains* to the Fear of his Holy Name, the Honour of our  
Sovereign

Sovereign Lord, and Love to one another, that we may be a People belov'd of the Lord *Jesus*. To whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all Honour and Glory now and for evermore. *Amen.*

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*F I N I S.*

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