

A
S E R M O N

Delivered at the
P R E S B Y T E R I A N C H U R C H
I N
N E W - Y O R K ,

JULY 31. 1746.

Being a DAY of solemn THANKSGIVING to
Almighty GOD, for the late Victory obtained
by His Majesty's Arms, under the Conduct of
His Royal Highness the DUKE OF CUMBERLAND,
over the Rebels in *North Britain*.

By E. PEMBERTON, A. M.



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PSAL. CXLIV. 10.

*It is HE that giveth Salvation unto
Kings : who delivereth David his
Servant from the hurtful Sword.*



OD, the supreme and universal Governor of the world, is pleased in his adorable providence, to visit mankind with a *variety* of dispensations; --- Sometimes he covers them with a *cloud* in his anger, and showers down upon them floods of distressing *Judgments*; -- at other times they enjoy the *sunshine* of his favour, and rejoice in *Peace* and *Prosperity*.

NOW every Providence is attended with a voice to the inhabitants of the earth; and it is an important point of christian wisdom, to hearken to the *instructions* of heaven, and yield a chearful obedience to the *discoveries* of the divine will. By this we acknowledge the infinite perfections of his nature, adore the wisdom of his government, and advance our temporal and eternal happiness. *Whoso is wise will consider these things, and they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord.*

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WHEN

WHEN visited with *distressing judgments*, we are to bow before the throne of a sovereign God, and acknowledge that we deserve the severest inflictions of his wrath. --- When favour'd with *distinguishing Mercies*, we are to rejoice in the Lord, and give him the glory of all the blessings we enjoy. --- In a day of *Adversity*, God calls us, to *cloath our selves with sackcloth*; to *hang our harps upon the willows*, and humbly deprecate his righteous displeasure. — In a day of *Prosperity*, he invites us to *lay aside our mourning weeds*, to *put on the garments of joy*, and celebrate the praises of our bountiful Benefactor.

THIS we are taught by the precept and practice of the *inspired Psalmist*, who had frequent occasion to sing both of *mercy and judgment*. In the Context we find God had wonderfully appeared for his deliverance, in a time of great extremity and danger. He had taught his hands to fight and his fingers to war, and had now subdued the people under him : Upon these accounts his heart was filled with gratitude, and his mouth overflowed with praises and thanksgiving. *I will sing*, says he, *a new song to thee, O God : upon a psaltery, and an instrument of ten strings, will I sing praises unto thee. It is he that giveth salvation unto kings ; who delivereth David his servant from the hurtful sword.*

YOU see, my Brethren, at first view, how suitable the words of my text are, to the solemnity of the

the present day ; upon which we are met together to acknowledge the *divine Goodness*, who hath *lately* given *salvation* to our KING, and *delivered* our Israel from the *hurtful sword* of our enemies. In the following discourse I shall therefore shew :

FIRST, That the *best* of Kings are often exposed to *eminent* dangers.

SECONDLY, The *salvation* they obtain is not to be ascribed to *man*, but is given them of *God*.

THIRDLY, When God bestows this *salvation* upon them, it is our *indispensable* duty to celebrate the praises of the *divine goodness*.

FIRST PART.

THAT the *best* of kings are often exposed to *eminent* dangers, and therefore stand in need of *salvation* and *deliverance*, is evident from the records of scripture, -- the *history* of all nations, -- and the *experience* of the present times.

THO' Kings are advanced to the most *elevated* degrees of dignity and power ; tho' raised by providence above the *level* of the rest of mankind, yet they enjoy no *prerogatives* that can preserve them from the *common casualties* incident to human nature. --- Tho' they are *dignified* with the character of *gods* upon earth, yet they must *die like men*, and return to their original dust : --- Their titles of honour, tho' adorned by the practice of a *distinguish'd* virtue ; -- their extensive power, tho' employed

employed to the *general advantage* of their fellow-creatures; — their crowns and scepters, tho' supported by *truth* and *righteousness*; yet afford *no security* from the innumerable *evils* that attend a state of mortality. Their *bodies* are exposed to wasting sickness, their *minds* may be filled with distressing terrors, and their *royal heads* will certainly in a little time be bro't down to the dust of death; which makes no distinction between the *mighty conquerors* of the earth, and the *meanest slaves*.

BUT besides the *common* accidents of life, their exalted stations expose them to *peculiar* and *distinguishing* dangers. Neither the *greatness* of their power, nor the *justness* and *mildness* of their administrations, can preserve them from the *malignant* influences of malice and envy, of wrath and revenge. The most just and righteous princes frequently fall sacrifices to the *secret treachery* of pretended friends, or the *open assaults* of professed enemies. --- Flourishing kingdoms often become scenes of desolation and ruin, by the *boundless ambition* of their aspiring nobles, or the *unbridled insolence* of a seditious and ungoverned multitude.

UPON these occasions the most tender and affectionate princes are obliged to take up arms in their *necessary* defence, unsheath the sword of justice, and sometimes jeopard their lives in the high places of the field.

NEITHER

NEITHER the blessings that flow from *peace* and *good order*, nor the melancholly train of evils that attend a *domestic war*, can hinder men of *restless* and *ambitious* spirits, from enkindling the fire of contention in the bosom of their *native* country. They are even content to see the earth overflowed with a deluge of blood if they may but *retreive* their *broken fortunes*, and *establisb* their power upon the *ruins* of the public.

OF these things we have had too many *melancholly instances* in all ages. By such treasonable attempts *the Island of GREAT BRITAIN, the Land of our fore-fathers sepulchres*, has often been made a theatre of war and confusion; to the eternal infamy of her *unnatural* sons, and to the unspeakable damage of those who have preserved the character of *faithful* and *loyal* subjects.

BUT the LORD OF HOSTS has appeared in defence of our endangered liberties: The GOD OF BATTLES has gone forth with our armies; He has given *salvation to our King*, and delivered our nation from the *sword* of our enemies. --- Which brings me to *say*,

SECOND PART.

THAT this *Salvation* must not be attributed to *men*, but ascribed to the *most high God*. --- *It is he that giveth salvation unto kings, &c.*

THEIR salvation does not come from the strength of mountains, and the multitude of hills, but the God of Jeshurun rides upon the heavens for their help, and in his excellency on the sky for their deliverance. It is not from the wisdom of their generals, the number of their armies, the valour of their troops, but the power of the Almighty, that they obtain the victory. Therefore the Psalmist tells us, *There is no king saved by the multitude of his hosts; a mighty man is not delivered by much strength; a horse is a vain thing for safety; but it is the Lord of hosts that saveth his anointed.*

God indeed is generally pleased to make use of second causes in accomplishing these happy events; but they are only instruments in his hands, and derive all their success from his divine and effectual blessing. When the alarm of war is sounding in our ears, and the enemy every moment expected at our gates, we are not called to beat our swords into plowshares, and our spears into pruning-hooks; but to make ready the instruments of war, and valiantly defend the inheritance which the Lord our God hath given us.

BUT then we must always remember, it is not our own bows and spears, our own power and policy that can render our attempts victorious and successful; *the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, but God raiseth up one and pulleth down another, according to his sacred and unlimited pleasure.*

HENCE we sometimes find, that the *most unlikely* designs, triumph over all opposition, and are crowned with surprizing success; while the *best projected* schemes are unaccountably defeated, and end in confusion and ruin.

INFINITE wisdom orders affairs in this manner, *more strongly* to convince us, that He who made the world at first by his power, still continues to govern it, by his gracious providence, and gives victory and success to whom *He* pleaseth. Without *He* protects the person of our SOVEREIGN, and provides for the safety of the kingdom, the politicians counsel, the captains fight, and the guards watch in vain. --- It is *He* who takes him under his wings, *covers him with his feathers*, preserves him from *the pestilence that walketh in darkness*, and the destructive sword *that wasteth at noon-day*. --- It is *He* who preserves our *Generals*, *covers their heads in the day of battle*; and in time of danger appoints an invisible guard of angels to encamp around them, so that they stand, when a thousand fall on their right, and ten thousand on their left hand. --- It is *He* who defeats the designs of our enemies, turns their most *politick* devices into *foolishness*, and causes all their unrighteous attempts to prove abortive.

AN *unbinking* world are apt to ascribe these things to *second causes*, and forget the SUPREME ARBITER of all events; and so place the creature
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in the room of the *Creator* : But this is the height of rebellion and ingratitude ! I therefore proceed to shew

THIRD PART.

THAT when God bestows these *salvations* upon us, it is our *indispensable* duty, to celebrate the praises of his *goodness*.

THIS is the voice of *nature* and *scripture* : What more *equitable*, than that he who is the father of *mercies*, should receive a tribute of *thanks* ! --- that he who is the author of our *victories*, should be the object of our *praises* ! These *devout acknowledgments* are more acceptable to God, than the most pompous ceremonies of *external* worship, and the sacrifice of a *grateful heart*, than the most *expensive victims* offered up upon his altar.

BUT if we *neglect* this so just and reasonable a duty, if (to use the language of the prophet) we *sacrifice to our own net, and burn incense to our own draggs* ; if we give the glory of our success to *our own* policy and power, to *our own* conduct and valour ; we despise the condescending *kindness* of Heaven, violate the sacred laws of *gratitude*, and expose ourselves to God's righteous *judgments*.

AND as this is a *just* and *reasonable*, so it is a most *pleasant* and *agreeable* duty to a mind enlightned and renewed. We know indeed, that *none of his commandments*

mandments are grievous, that all the ways of wisdom are ways of pleasantness, and that all her paths are peace: But some duties are attended with greater difficulties and trials, and practised with superior degrees of mortification; they directly cross the grain of corrupted nature, and oblige us to renounce many of our favourite passions: But praise, when performed in a right manner, has an immediate tendency to enlarge our views of the divine perfections, to inspire us with a joyful sense of his excellent goodness, and make every part of duty pleasing and delightful. --- When we confess our sins, we look inward upon our corrupt hearts, and make sorrowful reflections upon our guilt and folly, in violating the laws of our Maker and Sovereign: But when we engage in the work of Praise, we look up to the unspotted majesty of Heaven, and fix our thoughts upon that astonishing goodness, which is the fountain of our beings, the foundation of all our mercies, and the vital spring from whence we derive all the blessings of time and eternity.

PRAYER is suited to a state of *indigence and want*, and peculiarly incumbent on us in a day of affliction and distress: But *Praise* is the employment of those who are raised *above the frailties and necessities* of this inferior state, who are entered into the world of *uninterrupted joy and eternal triumph*. Therefore the Psalmist calls upon all creatures, to engage in this desirable duty, *Praise ye the Lord; for it is good*

to sing praises to our God ; for it is pleasant, and praise is comely for the upright. --- When God had signally preserved him, in a time of eminent danger, and delivered him from the hands of his treacherous and malignant enemies, he reviews the divine goodness with a thankful heart, and breaks forth into the most triumphant expressions of gratitude and joy. Thou hast turned my mourning into dancing, thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness, to the end that my glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent ; O Lord my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever.

A conscientious practice of this duty, has also a happy tendency to inspire us with an high indignation, against every thing that is displeasing to God. --- A warm sense of the divine goodness, places the folly and ingratitude of sin in the clearest view, and discovers its highest aggravations. --- Has God by an indulgent providence defended us from the malice of our enemies. --- Has he with a bountiful hand showered down upon us numerous and unmerited blessings. --- Has he encompass'd us with his favour as with a shield, and made abundant provision, not only for our temporal but eternal welfare, and shall we be so ungrateful as despise the authority of our generous benefactor ? shall we dare to violate the commandments of our sovereign Lord ? How can we do this great wickedness, and sin against so good a God, so condescending a Master, so compassionate a Father !

AND

AND as it has a happy tendency to restrain us from *sin*, so it powerfully engages us to the *duties of religion*. The curses of the law are adapted to awaken mankind out of their security, the terrors of divine wrath may *restrain* from the commission of sin; but love alone will excite us to *devote* ourselves to the service of God, and preserve us *stedfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord*: And if our hearts are enlarged with a sense of his love, we shall run with swift obedience in the ways of his commandments: The language of our hearts will be, --- “ I am *unworthy* to breathe in God’s
 “ air, to tread upon his earth, and to receive the
 “ common mercies of life; I have *ungratefully*
 “ despised his excellent goodness, I have abused
 “ his astonishing patience, I have affronted his
 “ unspotted holiness, I have provoked his displea-
 “ sure by *numerous and repeated* iniquities. --- Yet
 “ *he hath loaded me with his benefits, and crowned me*
 “ *with loving kindness and tender mercies. The lines*
 “ *are fallen to me in pleasant places, and I have a*
 “ *goodly heritage.* --- *What shall I render to the Lord*
 “ *for all his benefits? I will take the cup of salvation,*
 “ *and call upon the name of the Lord.*

I SHALL only add, --- By *praising* God upon earth, we prepare ourselves for the *exalted services of Heaven*. Praise was the employment of our *innocent nature*, while surrounded with the delights of paradise, --- *should accompany us thro’ every period*

period of our *pilgrimage* upon earth, and if practised in a suitable manner, *will be* our perpetual entertainment in *Heaven*. The *language* of heaven is praise. --- There the innumerable nations of redeemed sinners, and the universal hierarchy of unspotted angels, celebrate the praises of God, without *jarr* or *discord*, with uninterrupted *harmony* and *love*. --- And the more we are engaged in this work upon *earth*, the more intimate communion we have with *angels and archangels, with cherubims and seraphims, and the spirits of just men made perfect*, and the better shall we be disposed to join in the sacred exercises of the NEW JERUSALEM, thro' the boundless ages *Eternity*.

THUS I have attempted to convince you, of the great *reasonableness* and *advantage* of praising God for his mercies. --- I now proceed to the APPLI-CATION of my Discourse, which is to stir you up to the *performance* of this excellent duty.

NEITHER gratitude to God, nor good-will towards men; neither love to our nation, nor the regard we bear to our own peace and prosperity, will permit us to be silent upon *this joyful* occasion.

GOD has surrounded us with many blessings, which deserve our grateful acknowledgements; and we in this CITY are under *singular* obligations to celebrate the praises of his goodness: Tho' we have met with many losses in *trade*, by the captures of
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our vessels, tho' we have suffer'd considerable damage on our *frontiers*, by the incursions of a barbarous enemy; yet our *Sea-coasts* have been wonderfully preserved from foreign invasions, our *Land* has bro't forth the fruits of the earth in plenty, and this *City*, which has frequently at this season, been visited with a *mortal sickness*, has hitherto been favoured with a comfortable state of *health*: Above all, we enjoy the light of the *glorious Gospel*, and have an happy opportunity of hearing *the things that belong to our eternal peace*. --- These are Blessings which deserve to be remembered with the highest *gratitude*, and to be celebrated with the loudest *praises*.

BUT we are *this day* particularly invited to return thanks to our heavenly Father, for his goodness in defending our KING and *Nation*, from the attempts of a *Popish Pretender*, when we were threatned with the *loss* of every thing, that is dear to us, either as *Men* or *Christians*, as *Englishmen* or *Protestants*.

WHEN we look back, and consider the events of the last year, we cannot but see that all our valuable enjoyments were in *uncommon* danger of being made a sacrifice to the aspiring ambition of FRANCE, and the antichristian bigotry of ROME. The enemies of our happy constitution, from a *contemptible handful*, soon increased into a *formidable host*, from a company of abandoned fugitives, form'd themselves into a numerous army: For a time they were attended

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with

with *unexpected* success; they march'd thro' the North, without any considerable opposition, took possession of EDINBURGH, the *Capital* of that part of his Majesty's dominions, and with raised hopes of victory *penetrated* even into the bowels of SOUTH-BRITAIN. --- But He who sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and governs the affairs of this lower world according to his sacred pleasure, put a stop to their mad career, and said to the *sedition multitude*, as to the sea itself, -- *Hitherto shalt thou come, but not further, -- and here shall thy proud waves be stayed.* --- When our enemies were ready to think the day was their own, and that they had hardly any thing to do but to arise and divide the spoil; -- then did God appear, and own our righteous cause; then was the LORD OF HOSTS our *strength* and our *shield*. He so intimidated the hearts of the *Rebels*, that in the midst of their boasted success, they precipitately fled before the conquering Arms of his *Royal Highness* the DUKE, and when they could flee no further, fell a sacrifice in the field of battle, to their own *traiterous* and bloody designs.

How justly might God, as a punishment for our sins, have permitted these sons of *rapine* and *violence* to have succeeded in their wicked attempts! Our iniquities greatly exposed us to the wrath of offended heaven; for verily we are a *sinful People*, a *Nation laden with iniquity*, a *Seed of evil-doers*! Our long continued *peace* had rendred us secure,

tho' defil'd with the *grossest* abominations; our *plenty* has been abused to the most *shameful* excesses. --- Never was there so much *profaneness* in our streets, -- so much *luke-warmness* in our churches, -- so universal a *corruption of manners* among all orders and degrees of men. Verily we, and our nation, have spurned at the bowels of divine mercy, which have yearned over us for good; we have *lifted up the heel* against him, who has *stretched out his arm* for our salvation; --- with *Jeshurun*, we *have waxed fat and kicked* against our generous benefactor: How justly might God, to punish our stupidity and ingratitude, have delivered us into the hands of them that hate us with an *implacable* hatred.

It is true, we have this advantage of our adversaries, we maintain the *purity* of the faith, and they have corrupted it with many *defiling* mixtures. -- We worship God according to the *pattern in the Mount*, the methods prescribed in his word; they blend it with a thousand *superstitions* of their own invention, and imitate many of the *grossest* idolatries of the gentile world. --- But tho' we have a *better Faith*, yet it is to be feared we are not more *holy* in our *practice*; tho' we have a *purser worship*, it is to be feared we are not more *spiritual* and *zealous* in our *devotions*; tho' we make an high *profession*, yet is it not too evident, that we *walk contrary* to our *sacred engagements*.

DID Atheism and Infidelity, a contempt of God and the institutions of his house, ever more *visibly* prevail, ever more *openly* triumph, than in the kingdoms of *Great Britain and Ireland*, and these distant *Provinces* dependant upon them? -- What an open *violation* of the *Sabbath* is visible in our towns! -- What *horrid impieties* are continually heard in our streets! -- What *brutish debaucheries* are daily practised even by those, that *profess* to be the disciples of the Holy Jesus, and *expect* to be saved by his invaluable merits! --- What then had we to look for but that God would have employ'd the sword of our enemies to avenge the quarrel of his violated Covenant? How clearly would his righteousness have shone forth, if he had deprived us of those privileges which we have so wantonly abused!

How deplorable would have been the condition of us, *our nation*, and, in all probability, of all the reformed *nations of EUROPE*, had God permitted our antichristian enemies to succeed in their designs! --- We must have changed a lawful Prince for an usurping Tyrant, the liberties of *England* for the oppressions of *France*, the protestant faith for popish idolatry; -- for popery and slavery are *inseparably* connected together. Whatever some inconsiderate persons may imagine, we can have *no security* for the worship of God, according to the principles of the *reformation*, under the government of a monarch who is a devoted son of that *Mother of HARLOTS*,
 who

who thro' a succession of ages has been made *drunk with the blood of the saints*; -- whose conscience is subjected to the tyranny of the BISHOP of ROME; -- who has suck'd in with his mother's milk that *detestable principle*, that *no faith is to be kept with hereticks*. ---- What Protestant subjects have to expect from a *Roman Catholic* prince, -- let the ruins of the demolish'd temples of our brethren in *France*, -- let the fires of *Smithfield*, which burnt with such *unrelenting* fury in the days of *Queen Mary*, -- let the blood of thousands of martyr'd saints, who have fallen victims to *papal superstition*, in ancient and modern times, -- declare to the world. -- Let the remembrance of these *inhuman* barbarities, be propagated from age to age, that the children yet unborn may learn to renounce the communion of that *pretended Church*, which turns the faith of the gospel into an *implicit* subjection to the dictates of lordly and ambitious *Priests*; -- which enkindles in the most *gentle* bosoms, the principles of *cruelty* and persecution, and under a pretence of honouring God, destroys mankind by all the methods of *torture* and *violence*.

BLESSED be God, he has delivered our nation from the hands of these bloody and treacherous men, and by his gracious providence, left us in the full possession of our *civil* and *religious* liberties. -- Blessed be God, we are not under the government of one of those *insulting* tyrants, who know no law but their

own *arbitrary* wills, who sacrifice their most valuable subjects to gratify their ambition and revenge. -- Blessed be God, we are favoured with a KING, who may truly be stiled the indulgent FATHER of his people, under whose administration we may worship God according to the *dictates* of our conscience, and have none to terrify and disturb us, --- may dwell *under our own vines and figtrees, and have none to make us afraid.*

I AM sensible the sacred desk is no place for flattering encomiums; but it is the command of our divine Master, to give *honour to whom honour, and tribute to whom tribute is due*; and we are enjoined by the authority of an inspired Apostle, not only *to fear God*, but to *honour the King*. I presume therefore, I may be allowed to say, on *this* occasion, --- That the inhabitants of *Great Britain* live under one of the wisest and *best-modelled* forms of government of any of the nations of the earth, in which both the *liberties* of the subject, and the just *prerogatives* of the prince, are happily preserved: -- In which, the *different* interests of all ranks and orders of men, are so closely *interwoven* with that of the state, that they must *flourish* or *decline* together: -- In which, *dominion* and *subjection* are so wisely tempered, and bounded by such equal laws, that unless the whole frame of our happy constitution is dissolved, the Prince can never degenerate into a *Tyrant*, nor the People sink into the character of *Slaves*.

IF

IF we look round upon many of our *neighbouring* nations, we shall find them in subjection to lawless *tyrants*, who have establish'd their power, by invading the *natural rights* of a free people, -- who make their *arbitrary pleasure* the sole *standard* of justice, and *support* their thrones only by the *terror* of their guards: While we have the happiness to behold a prince, swaying the sceptre of the *British Empire*, who ascended the throne of his ancestors, not only with the *free consent*, but with the *universal joy* and *acclamations* of his subjects: Who teaches his people their duty, not as *Gideon taught the men of Succoth, with the briars and thorns of the wilderness*, but charms them into obedience by the blessings of his *mild and merciful* government: In a word, who employs his extensive authority, to protect the liberties of *England*, to maintain the balance of power in *Europe*, and advance the *general interest* of mankind.

LET us therefore, with united hearts and chearful voices, praise God, who hath given salvation to our KING, and hath deliver'd our dread sovereign *his servant from the hurtful sword*. Let this mercy be transmitted to the latest posterity, in the brightest characters of *gratitude* and *thankfulness*, that future ages may celebrate the praises of the MOST HIGH. Let us beware, lest by our obstinate continuance in sin, we provoke the great God, to come out in anger against us, and give our watchful and malicious
adversaries

adversaries a commission to destroy us. Let no *intemperate* excesses stain the beauty of *this joyful* day: But let us render to him, the sacrifice of a grateful heart, the fruit of our lips, and the obedience of our lives.

TO CONCLUDE, with our *praises* let us join our unfeigned *prayers* to Almighty God, for our rightful Sovereign King GEORGE THE SECOND, --- That God would continue to protect his Royal Person, preside in his Counsels, give *increasing* success to his victorious Arms; --- make him an happy instrument of restoring a safe and *honourable* peace to *Europe*, --- and continue the protestant succession in his *illustrious* House, till the Kingdoms of this World shall become the Kingdoms of our LORD, AND OF HIS CHRIST:

To whom, &c.

AMEN.

