



Mr. *Allin's*

Thanksgiving-SERMON,

Novemb. 8th, 1722.



What shall I Render!

A Thanksgiving
SERMON

Preached at *Brooklin,*

Nov- 8th, 1722.

From P S A L M CXVI. 12.

By **James Allin, M. A.** &
And Pastor of the Church there.

*Gen. xxxii. 10. I am not worthy of the least of
all the Mercies, and all the Truth, which
thou hast shewed unto thy servant—*

B O S T O N, N. E.

Printed by *B. Green* for *Samuel Gerrish*
at his Shop, near the Brick Meeting-
House in Cornhill.

1722.



What shall I Render!

A

THANKSGIVING-SERMON.

PSALM, CXVI. 12.

*What shall I Render to the LORD for All
His Benefits towards me?*



THE Divine Goodness that Made the World, is the Foundation that Supports it. And as the Natural Light vanishes and leaves us in Obscurity, when the Sun the Fountain of it, withdraws from us: so if GOD did withhold or Deny His Influence; all things would presently Relapse into their first Nothing.

THAT GOD Rules and Governs; Maintains and Preserves all Creatures in their several Forms and Orders; is Confessed by All, who acknowledge a Deity and Providence. This is an Idea of the same Age and Date in the minds of Men, with the very Notion of a GOD. Hence the Heathen

Heathen in their Difficulties, and hazardous Enterprizes; are used to fly to their Altars and fill their Temples with Sacrifices, to engage the Divine Aid and Protection.

G O D is emphatically called *the Preserver of Men*; and we have as necessary, and continual Dependance upon Him, as the streams upon the Fountain. We are all His Offspring; form'd by His Heavenly Skill; and He Preserves by His Gracious Care, our frail Lives. He is the breath of our nostrils; a Sun and Shield to His People. His Goodness is the Inexhaustible Fountain, from whence all those Refreshing streams flow, which are the Joy and Comfort of our Lives. And then, He is under no Obligation to Confer on us His Blessings; but He does all *Gratis*; nor has He any expectation of an answerable Return from us. He loads us with His Benefits, that He may render Himself dear to us; attract our hearts to Him; and that we may pay Him no more but the small Acknowledgments of Love and Praise. Happy for us, if we fall in with this Design; for hereby we shall engage His Compassion and Care yet for us. But by our Ingratitude and Contempt of His Mercies, we may provoke Him to shut His hand against us, and lock up His Treasures. Thus He Threatned *Israel* because they did not acknowledge Him in their Prosperity and Increase, that He would take away their Corn, &c.

To Praise G O D then, is our Wisdom and Advantage; 'tis a profitable Exercise, and most Delightful, to reflect upon the numberless Instances of His Mercy, and remember His Gracious Works.

Works. This should be our constant and daily Business. We should Live a Life of Praise, that Work of Heaven. But this is what we are in a special manner call'd unto this Day by the Heads of our People, and what we now pretend to Appear before the LORD for. Let us be sincere in it, and unfeignedly express our Gratitude to Him for all His Benefits towards us ; and so to offer Praise, as to glorify G O D.

THE Nation of the *Jews* had, as their stated *Fasts* by Divine Appointment ; so their stated *Feasts* ; besides their occasional Days of Rejoycing. And Publick Thanksgiving Days have since, in every Age of the Church, been observed, if not by the immediate Appointment of G O D ; by the Order of the Civil or Ecclesiastical Powers. Agreeable to this Laudable Custom, and from a sense of the Divine Goodness to our Land in the Year past, our Honourable Rulers have been pleased to set apart this Day for our Publick and Solemn Thanksgiving to Almighty G O D for His Benefits.

A N D that we have now an Affecting sense, a warm and lively Resentment of His Favours ; and offer Him our hearty Praises for them ; is what He expects. And if perform'd, will be gratefull to Him, sweet Melody in His Ears. But without this our most splendid Services, our loudest Praises, will have but the unagreeable noise of sounding Brass or a tinkling Cymbal. 'Tis the *Soul* that G O D looks at. The *manner* of the Sacrifice more than the *matter* of it. And if it is not offered with the Fire of holy Love, and from the Altar of a Thankful Heart ; it will be
but

but an offence to G O D, an abomination in His sight, a loathsome stench in His Nostrils. It concerns us then, as we would Please G O D, and Advantage our selves by this Day's Service ; to examine the Temper of our Hearts, and engage them with our Tongues, the Organs of Praise, in this great Duty. We must with holy *David* call upon our Souls, and command the assistance of all our Powers in this Work.

W H A T shall I Render to the L O R D for all His Benefits ? The Inquiry speaks a Soul sensible of it's vast Obligations to G O D for received Kindnesses, and concern'd to make the Best Returns for them. Something, *David* knew, must be done for G O D, who had wrought Salvation and Deliverance for Him ; not as a recompence, which he well knew himself uncapable of making ; but to expresse his Thankfulness. And he was sincerely desirous to do that which would be most acceptable to Him. The Affections of a grateful mind were working in him, and he was solicitous to make some suitable Acknowledgment. He Inquires, and Resolves ; *What shall I Render— I will take the Cup of Salvation, and call upon the name of the L O R D, &c.* Thus we must offer the Sacrifice of Thanksgiving, together with other Returns which *David* determined to make, for the Divine Benefits towards us.

D O C T R I N E,

T H E Benefits of G O D to a People, lay them under Indispensible Obligations to be Concern'd to make him some proper and suitable Returns for them.

HERE

HERE I shall endeavour two things,

First, As the occasion of the Day leads me, To make some Reflections on the Gifts & Benefits of GOD unto us in the Year past. And then to show what the Returns are, GOD expects from us; and we are obliged to make Him, this Day for them.

I. I shall consider something of the Divine Benefits to our Land in the Year past, which are an Obligation upon us to make some proper Acknowledgments this Day.

THE Proclamation calls it *a Year Brightned with many Blessings*. And so we must this Day acknowledge, it has been, to the Glory of Divine Mercy; which is the Source or Fountain of all that Good, a People enjoy. Tho' indeed it has not been alike Plentiful with some other Years; And GOD has been, and now is, in some Respects, visiting us with His Righteous Judgments: Yet if we consider what and how many our Sins have been, How very mean and little our Returns for GOD's former Favours: We have cause to wonder that our Calamities have not been many more, & greater, and our Mercies much less. But our GOD is Good to the Evil, and Unthankful, Infinite in Mercy; otherwise we had been at this Day groaning out our sorrows; whereas we are now singing the Songs of Zion. Tho' our Iniquities testify against us, our Backslidings have been many, and the cry of our Sins is loud for the awful Awards of *Justice* upon us; yet *Mercy* spares us, and has dealt favourably with our Land.

I. ONE, and indeed the chief and greatest of the Benefits of GOD unto us in the last Year, has

B

been

been the continuance of His Gospel, and the Means of Grace.

T H E Gospel is our Glory. That GOD's Tabernacle is among us, is our highest Honour. This has been the Beauty and Crown of the Year. It was *Israel's* peculiar Glory that GOD had Recorded His Name, and dwelt among them. They greatly valu'd themselves upon it ; That He had chosen the Posterity of *Abrāham* out of all the Nations of the Earth, to be His People, and that he had his Temple, his Altars, his Word, and Ordinances amongst them. And it is our Glory, that the Throne of CHRIST is with us, even the Place of His Sanctuary ; and that He hath planted His Gospel in these Ends of the Earth. This makes our Land Pleasant, that it is *Immanuel's* Land where the LORD is Known, and His Name is Great.

SPIRITUAL Blessings are by far the most Valuable. The Gospel is our Richest Treasure. That we have CHRIST Revealed to us, Preach'd and Offered to us, with all the Rich & Unvaluable Purchases of His Death ; is more & better to us, than if we had all the Riches of the *Indies*, or Stores and Treasures of the whole Earth. The Sacred Scriptures our Bibles, are a Treasure of Immenſe worth. That GOD has made known to us His Statutes, Inform'd us of His Will, and the way to Salvation, That He has Reveal'd to us a Happiness to be Enjoyed hereafter, a Glory to come. And that He has made many Gracious Promises of this unto us ; is a Blessing vastly Superiour to that of all Temporal Riches and Honours.

T H E Gospel deserves our highest Esteem next
to

to our blessed LORD Himself its divine Author. Its called the Word of Life, in that it is the Glorious Instrument in the Hand of GOD of our Spiritual Life ; and then Life and Immortality are brought to Light by it. The Gospel discovers to us the way of our Reconciliation to GOD, and how we may come to enjoy Him, the Fountain of Happiness ; 'Tis the Glorious Light sent down from Heaven to us to direct us there. Most unhappy is their condition upon whom this Sun of Righteousness has not Risen & Shone ; our utmost Compassion is owing to such. And our highest Love & Praise is due to GOD, for his distinguishing Grace herein to us, and for the continuance of His Gospel ; notwithstanding all our contempt and abuse of it, GOD might very justly have deprived us of this Light, as He has done to many other Places, because we have Sinned under it. And then how deplorable had our case been ? Certainly the Consequence had been dreadful, the thick mists of Ignorance & Error would have Enveloped our Minds, and carried us blindfold to the Regions of Everlasting darkness. Oh that we could be sensible of the Rich Grace of GOD herein to us ! and so walk by this Light as that GOD may never be Provoked to take it away from us.

2. THAT GOD has put an End to a Contagious & Wasting *Sickness*, which was the last Year raging among us ; and mercifully Healed our Land ; is another great Benefit which we are this Day to make Him some Returns for.

HEALTH is a very great & valuable Blessing. The very first & chief in the Inventory of Temporal Benefits. For what are all our other En-

joyments without it? This gives them a Relish, and makes them Pleasant. And the contrary, *scil. Sickness* is a sore and awful Judgment; what we are to Deprecate, be humble under, Pray for the removal of, and heartily bless GOD if He takes it away.

How very Awful & Distressing was the State of *Israel* when GOD sent the Pestilence among them; and slew of them *Seventy Thousand*. And how very lamentable has been the case of some parts of *Europe* in the Year past, that have been visited with the *Plague*, that Sword of *the LORD*; which has slain vast Numbers of their Inhabitants; and laid Populous Cities almost waste & desolate. GOD that is Mighty has done Terrible things; and scattered the Proud in the Imagination of their Hearts. Blessed be His Name that He has not so dealt with *Great Britain*; but has thus far preserved our Nation from the pestilence that walketh in Darknes, and the Destruction that wasteth at Noon-Day. Oh that He may still save them!—

AND how very Melancholy & Sorrowful was our condition in the last Year, when the Contagious & Mortal *Small-pox* was Raging among us, which has carried many Hundreds of our Friends and Neighbours from off the Stage of this World into ETERNITY. Death came up into our Windows, entred our Houses, and cut off the Children from without, and the Young Men from the Streets. GOD swept us away with the Besom of Destruction; we were consumed by his Anger, and by his Wrath we were troubled. But He has been pleased at length to take away this *Sickness*, and to heal us. The destroying Angel has put up his
Sword;

Sword, and stayed his Hand. GOD has mercifully delivered us from this Horrible Pit, & Miry Clay, and set our feet upon a Rock and established our goings, and hath put a new Song into our Mouths this Day; even Praises to His Name, and has comforted us again after the time He has afflicted us. *Psa. 40. 2, 3. Psal. 90. 15.* He hath sent forth his Word and Healed us, That I suppose no Inhabitant of our Land can now say I am Sick.

THIS is a Benefit we are to Acknowledge the Mercy of GOD in this Day, and to Praise Him for. *Psal. 103. Bless the Lord O my soul, who healeth all our Diseases.* —

GOD might have laid His Hand more sore and heavy upon us. Made the Mortality greater, and the *Sickness* of much longer continuance, have propagated it into other Towns, and made it a general Calamity. But He has not dealt with us after our Sins; but of His great Mercy has saved us. And where the Malignant Influence had dispensed it self, and threatned many Places, and some of 'em large & populous, its increase was happily prevented. GOD that sits King upon the water Floods, and bounds the Raging Waves; said to it, Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther. Surely then we are under indispenfible Obligations to make returns to Him this Day for so great a Benefit: And it concerns us to inquire, What shall we Render?

3. THE Fruits of the Earth which GOD has given us the last Summer demand our Returns this Day.

GOD is the Father of all: The great House-keeper of the Universe, out of whose Stores we are fed: He gives us our daily Bread; and there

is not the least *Crumb* we have but we must acknowledge GOD in it: 'Tis He that gives it us.

GODS claim was just to all *Israels* Glory, and so it would certainly be to all ours. The Prosperity & Welfare of a Person or of a People is from GOD. Riches & Honours come of thee, said *David*, and to Him he paid the just Tribute of Thanks. And because ungrateful *Israel* did not consider that their Corn, their Wine, and Oyl, their Gold and Silver were GOD's Bounty to them; He threatens them with taking these away.

GOD will be acknowledged, and it is most fit He should, in all the Blessings of a People. As no Man can add, as our Saviour tells us, One Cubit to his Stature; or as some Read it, *One * Moment to his Life*: So neither can he contribute a Mite to his Estate, without GOD's Blessing —

'Tis GOD that gives us *Rain* from Heaven, and fruitful Seasons, filling our hearts with Food and Gladness. 'Tis He that causes the Earth to yield to us her Increase, and the Trees their Fruit.

THE Summer past, it must be acknowledged, has not been equally fruitful with some others. Our Land being very unlike to *Ægypt*, and wanting the frequent return of Showers, which in the last Summer in a very unusual manner have been denied it; some of the fruits of the Earth are much shortned, but in some respects, and the more important & necessary, there has been a sufficient Harvest. Our *Corn* was not taken away as it might have been, and as we fear'd it would be; but GOD has so far open'd the good Treasures of Heaven, given *Rain* to us, and blessed the labours

* Dr. Edw. Ver. Red.

of our Hands, as that there is no lack of Bread. According to his Promise, He hath called for the *Corn*, and laid no Famine upon us, *Ezek.* 36. 29.

THE Summer before last we suffer'd by too much *Rain*, as we have done this by *too little*. And our Crops then, especially the latter Harvest, was very much diminished; yet we were pretty comfortably carryed thro' the Year. And tho' the last Year has been attended with a very great *Drought*, whereby it has been in some measure, as the Prophet speaks, The Vine-tree was dried up, the Fig-tree languished, and the Trees of the field withered; the Beasts groan'd, and the Herds of Cattel were perplexed for want both of *Drink* and *Pasture*; yet GOD wonderfully preserved the Corn, and caused it to grow almost without moisture, that it has brought forth as is said of the Land of *Canaan*, Sixty and an Hundred fold. The Crops this Year much exceeded those the Year before; if not in the Number, yet in the goodness of the Grain, so that with GOD's blessing there will without doubt be a supply: Bread to the Eater, and food for Man, and also for the Beast.

4. OUR Salvations and Deliverances from, and Successes against our *Eastern Enemies*, call for our Acknowledgments & Returns this Day.

WAR is justly accounted one of the greatest Calamities of a People: Very sad & dismal have been the Effects of it; what overturnings and desolations hath it made in the Earth, turning great and populous Cities into waste & ruin'd heaps. Whole Countries have been made Desolate by it, their high ways untrodden, the Travellers have walked thro' by-ways, and the Inhabitants of the Villages have ceased. How

How dismal was *Jerusalem's* case, when Invaded by the *Roman Army*; what confusion were they thrown into, and at last, their whole City destroyed, as our Saviour had Predicted it should be. And how many and great Kingdoms were overthrown by *Alexander* and others? But it is endless to reckon up the Tragical Events of War. Well might the Prophet be put into a Consternation at the noise of it. Jer. 4, 19. *My Bowels, my Bowels, I am pained at my very heart, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the Trumpet, the Alarm of War.* Indeed it has never been with our Land, blessed be GOD for it, as it has been with many other Places. Yet we know enough of the unhappy effects of War, to make it a dread and terrour to us. And how much more we may know, before the War shall finish, we have lately engaged in, GOD only can say. But we hope for the best, and His appearance thus far for us; The Salvations He has afforded us; and our unexpected and unusual Successes against the Enemy, give us encouragement to hope; As they loudly demand our devout Acknowledgments, Adoration and Thanksgiving this Day. Blessed be GOD that hath not given us a prey to their Teeth; that we have occasion to raise that Note of Triumph, *Psal. 9. 2, 4, 5, 15. I will sing praise to thy Name O Most High, for thou hast maintained my right & my cause. Thou satest in the Throne judging right, Thou hast rebuked the Heathen, Thou hast destroyed the wicked, Thou hast put out their name for ever and ever, The Heathen are sunk down, &c.* Thus it has been with respect to some of 'em, which without doubt, has shockt their hopes, & very much damp't their further designs against us.

IN the first Opening the War, which used to give them the greatest advantage; and we have then sustain'd more loss in a few Weeks or Days, than in some Years afterwards. Their Success has been no ways answerable to what it has sometimes been, and we were ready to fear it would be. Surely this is a high Favour of GOD unto us, and what strongly obliges us to make Him some proper and suitable Acknowledgments this Day. And then that our Sea-coasts have been in so great a measure guarded from the bloody *Pirates*, is what we are this Day to observe to the Honour of the LORD on High, who is Mightier than the Noise of many Waters, and who is the Confidence of all the Ends of the Earth, and of them that are afar off upon the Sea.

THUS hath the LORD our GOD been with us, Blessed & Prosper'd us in the Year past, Kept us at Home and Abroad, in Perils by Sea, and Land: He hath blessed us in our Merchandize, Husbandry and Fishery: He hath blessed our *Zebulun* in his Out-goings, and *Issachar* in his Tents, Oh that He may yet be with us and bless us; That His Salvations may always be nigh unto us, and much of His Glory dwell in our Land!

5. THE continuance of Our Civil Privileges, and the good Government GOD in His Providence hath ordained for us, both respecting our KING at Home, and the Powers Immediately over us; is another Benefit we are this Day to acknowledge, and make proper Returns to Him for.

GOD is the Supreme LORD, and Governour of the World. The Reins of Universal Dominion are in His Hands; by Him Kings Rule: And His
C. Wisdom

Wisdom and Goodness must Particularly be acknowledged in the Authority that He hath placed over us, in the Imperial Crown of Government at Home with is our Honour and Joy.

W I S E & Pious Rulers are to be estimated as great Blessings to a People : They are under GOD, their Defence & Glory. And it is because GOD loves a People that He constitutes such to Rule over them. Such a Prince we must acknowledge this Day to the Honour of GOD is Exalted to the *British* Throne ; A Prince of very Uncommon Prudence, Lenity and Goodness ; One that very much answers the character of a Nursing Father to GOD's *Israel* ; which as it adds very much to the comfort of our Lives ; so it should to the joy of our Solemnities this Day. We are to Praise GOD for him, and that his Throne has been thus far Establish'd, notwithstanding the repeated Attempts of his Enemies to overthrow it : They have Imagin'd a vain thing : All their Secret Plots and Conspiracies against the LORD's Anointed, to shake off his easy Yoke, and to pluck the Crown from his Head, and set it upon another's, to introduce the *Bramble* to bear Rule instead of the *Olive-tree* ; have been happily discovered and defeated. He that sits King in *Zion*, hath Laughed at them, the LORD hath had them in Derision. May G O D yet encompass Him with His Tender Mercys, and make the Crown long to Flourish upon his Head. And may his Faithful Services for G O D and his People, be at last Re-compens'd with Distinguishing Honours in the Heavenly World.

AND is it not a smile of Heaven upon us, a
high

high Favour to our Land, and what we have cause to Rejoice in this Day, that the Powers immediately over us, are Ministers of GOD for good unto us: That our * Officers are Peace, and our Exactors Righteousness; That there is a || Spirit of Wisdom & Understanding in them, a Spirit of Counsel & of Might, a Spirit of Knowledge and of the Fear of the LORD; and that they sincerely desire & endeavour the good of this People.

I N our present Constitution, and our present Government, we are happy, if we can but think so; much more so than we have reason to think an Alteration will make us; And if there be any among us that are given to Change, we have no cause to meddle with 'em.

BUT are there not those, to their shame be it spoken, that Fault the present Ministry and Managements; that Revile, Arraign & Condemn the Rulers of GOD's People: Restless Spirits, and that endeavour to make all about 'em so, by sowing the evil seeds of Discord, Faction & Sedition, which above all things are detrimental to the State, Wounding and Destructive to the Body Politick. But let such Sons of Wickedness remember that to Speak evil of Dignities is a fault of a black Character in the Word of GOD. And to contemn and slight Rulers, is to despise GOD Himself; and therefore they may not think to escape Punishment.

BLESS'D be GOD for it, we have a Governour that has the Tender Regards of a Father for us, that has ever express'd and manifested Love to us, and a Readiness to serve us in our best Interests.---

• Mai 60. 27. || 11. 3

WE have a Magistracy who have always endeavoured to answer the high Character they bear of Gods, to this People. That maintain the cause of the Poor and Fatherless, and do Justice to the Afflicted & Needy, and are a terror only to Evil-Doers.

AND then is it not a valuable Priviledge, that our Rulers, the most of them, are of our own Electing. That we may chuse Men, from out of all the Tribes of our People to take us by the Hand and lead us; Men that Fear GOD, and are Loyal to the KING; and that have understanding of the Times, to know what *Israel* ought to do, *1 Chron. 12. 32.*

THESE things we are to acknowledge this Day to the Glory of GOD the Father, & of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, who hath enriched us with these Blessings. And let us Pray GOD long to continue them unto us. Oh that our Goodness in these Respects may not be as the Morning Cloud, and the early dew that soon pass away.

6. AND Finally, Our Personal Blessings which GOD of His Rich Goodness hath bestowed upon us in the last Year, should make us concern'd and Inquire, What shall I Render to Him? Our Particular & Personal Blessings, how many are they, a vast sum have the Mercies of GOD been unto us. Who of us can reckon up the Instances of the Divine Care and Bounty to him in the last Year; yea in any One Week or Day of it. How many and how Great Evils hath GOD by the Guardianship & Ministration of His Angels saved us from? How many times hath His Merciful Hand Pluck't us as Brands out of the Burning?

And

And how Numerous & Valuable have been His Benefits unto us? His Mercies have been Renewed upon us every Morning, and every Moment.

AND then the Blessings He hath bestowed upon our Relations & Friends which we are to account as partly given to our selves, we are to acknowledge the Kindness & Love of GOD in this Day.

THESE, together with our own, we Reflect on with Comfort, and should do with Love and Gratitude to the GOD & Giver of 'em. Thus I have considered the first General Head; Namely, something of the Gifts & Benefits of GOD unto us in the Year past, which are an Obligation upon us to make Him some proper Acknowledgments this Day. I proceed to the Second.

II. WHAT are the Returns which we are obliged this Day to make to G O D our Great Benefactor and Saviour, for His Blessings?

WHEN GOD Blesseth a People, He expects that they make Him some suitable Acknowledgments; and it becomes a People to be concern'd and inquire with holy *David*, after GOD in answer to his Prayer, had granted him some eminent Deliverances, What shall I Render? —

WHEN the *Israelitish* State, from that of a contemptible and forlorn Infant, was by the divine Care and Bounty, become Beautiful & Renowned; GOD expected that they should have acknowledged Him in it, made Him the Returns of Love, Gratitude & Service, and employ'd all his Gifts to the Honour of His Name: And when they made a contrary improvement of them, He was exceedingly

ly

ly Provoked ; upbraided their vile Ingratitude, and awfully punish'd it. The like Treatment we may look for, if we prove alike Ungrateful and Rebellious. It highly concerns us then as we would avoid the imputation of being an Ungrateful People, and its heavy & dismal Consequents, to reflect on the many divine Benefits to us, and offer up our Publick and hearty Thanks for them ; To bless the Name of the LORD for His goodness, to exalt Him in the Congregation of the People, and Praise Him in our Assemblies. It was *David's* resolution to praise Him for His Benefits, together with a Profession of His Love to him, and Promise of Obedience.——

I. WE are Obliged to make the Returns of *Praise & Thanksgiving* to GOD for All His Benefits. To Praise GOD for His Peerless Excellencies & Benefits ; is the indispensable Duty of Rational Creatures. To this End were they formed, and are they preserved. To deny GOD this small Tribute then, is to pervert the intention of our Creation, and of all His Blessings. Natural, as well as Divine Light, the written Word, dictates to us our Necessity & Obligation to a Thankful Acknowledgment of the Mercies freely given us of GOD. So that to neglect this Duty, is not only to bid defiance to Religion, to cast contempt upon the many plain & positive Commands of GOD ; but also to violate the laws of Reason and Conscience. 'Tis the Universal acknowledgment of Mankind, that all are bound to Praise their Benefactors. The Heathen were so sensible of their obligation herein, that they erected Monuments of *Gratitude* to them from whom

whom they had receiv'd any special *Kindness*. Such was the Altar at *Athens* dedicated to the *Unknown God*, i. e. to some *Uncertain Benefactor*. And an Ungrateful Person was liable to Punishment, both by the *Athenian* and *Persian Law*.

SINCE all our Blessings are the Free Gifts of Heaven, and we can lay no just claim to any One of them; we can do no less than Acknowledge them, to the Praise and Honour of GOD. And not to Ascribe the Praise of all our Mercies to Him, is in effect, to disown our dependence upon Him, and to deny Him to be the giver of them; and so to frustrate the great design of His goodness, which is to lead us to Repentance, to excite us to vertue, and engage our Hearts to Him.

THERE is a very great & pleasant Variety in the Gifts of GOD unto us; and they all call upon us to Praise Him; this is the demand of every Mercy; and the neglect of it, will be very Provoking to Him. *Spiritual* Blessings especially require this Return from us; these are of a Superiour Nature, and in them the Glory of Livine Goodness is especially Illustrious. Infinite Praise is due to GOD for providing us a Saviour, to deliver us from Hell, the desert of Sin; and for all the rich Benefits that flow down to us from the Death of CHRIST. Hereby the Fountain of divine Mercy is opened, from whence we derive all the Blessings and Comforts of our Lives.

2. LOVE to GOD for His Benefits, is another Return, which we are oblig'd to make to GOD. When GOD causes the Sun of Prosperity to shine upon a People, and waters them with showers of Blessings; it is certainly an Obligation upon them
to

to *Love* Him ; and by the neglect of this, they justly forfeit His Favours. As it would be Unnatural & Sordid in a Child, nourish'd & brought up at the Breasts of its Mother ; and therefore to whom the Highest Affection is due ; to have but an indifference for her, or rather an Aversion : so for a People to whom GOD hath shown very special Favours, that have been nourish'd at the Breast of His Providence, and loaded with His Benefits to grow forgetful of Him, or to make Him the Returns of Evil, or Hatred, instead of Love ; is the most disingenious and base that can be, and enough one would think, to Provoke a Merciful GOD to Retract His Favours, and shut His Hand.

As we Love our Natural Parents, who are but the second Causes of our Being. And as we Love our Benefactors, who are but the Instruments in GOD's hand of our Well-being ; so, and much more are we obliged to Love GOD, from whose Rich Stores all our Blessings come ; who bestows upon us all we have, and is under no Obligation to do any thing for us, and has no design in it, but our Good. He Confers His Blessings that He may render Himself Dear to us, they come on this Errand. The voice of all is that we Love the LORD ; but our Ears are deaf, our Hearts are frozen. His Gifts prove His Rivals in our Hearts, and we place that Love upon them, which is His Due ; but how unworthy is this, and how unreasonable, and unjust, and wherein will it Terminate ?

THE warm Beams continually darted down upon us from this Sun, shou'd thaw our congealed Affection^s

Affections in love to Him. As the Load-stone turns the needle by it's attractive Influence and keeps it fixt to it self : so the Divine Love should have a Transforming Efficacy upon our hearts, and draw them off from all other Objects ; and fix them upon G O D entirely and for ever.

3. THE Benefits of G O D unto us, are an Obligation upon us *to Devote our selves to Him* in a settled Regular course of *Subjection and Obedience.*

THIS Holy *David* was apprehensive of, and therefore Professes, *v. 16 O Lord, truly I am thy servant, I am thy servant, — thou hast loosed my Bonds.* And Resolves *v. 13. I will walk before thee in the Land of the Living.* The Relation of Creatures we stand in to G O D, gives Him a Right to Command us to what Services He will, and it is our Duty to engage in the Task He sets us, how seemingly Difficult soever, with a resigned and chearfull Spirit, and without Delay. As we are to choose GOD for our chief Good for our Everlasting Portion ; and to fix all our Hopes, Desires and Love upon Him ; so we must submit to Him as our highest LORD, and manage at all times under the awful Sense of His Authority over us, and of His all-seeing Eye upon us. And as the Law of G O D must always be the Rule we act by, our Compass to direct our Course thro' the dangerous Voyage of this World ; so His Glory must be our ultimate and governing Designe in all we do. We were not made for our selves, nor should we Live to our selves, but to Him that made us, and Glorify Him with our *Bodies* and *Spirits*, seeing they are both His.

WE must make a Practical Acknowledgment of GOD's Benefits to us. In this way we must express our Gratitude for them, and in this it is most evident. It is certainly a vain Pretence that we are suitably affected with the Mercies of GOD, and thankful for them; if we are not Influenced by them to Discard even our most beloved and favourite Lusts; and to Live a Religious and Holy Life. A Subject certainly manifests His Loyalty to his Prince more by a strict Observance of His Laws, than by all his fair Words and Speeches. When our Lips and Lives Harmonize in the Praises of GOD; it is a certain Indication of our Sincerity, and that we have a proper Resentment of His Blessings.

THE Creatures below us, in their several Degrees of subordination, serve to the Honour of their Creator, and on whom they Depend; And thus should *Men* especially be employed, to whom the Divine Benefits have been many more and greater; and who understands his Obligations for them. And then it is both the Honour and Happiness of a Person or People, to serve GOD. The Advantage of Religion is vast & surprizing; the Gains of Godliness are Infinite. If we are sincerely Devoted to serve GOD here on Earth, He will Crown our Services, (tho' in themselves imperfect and worthless) not with *Earthly* Blessings only, but with the Happiness and Glory of *Heaven*.

THIS is the way to be Blessed in this World, and in the World to come. And when Death calls us off from our Services here; it will transmit our Souls to Heaven, and we shall for ever
share

share in all the Dignities and Pleasures of that Court.

THUS we are to Acknowledge the Benefits of **G O D** unto us, by a *Dutiful Thanksgiving* ; by our *Supreme Love*, and *faithful Services* ; and I might add by our *Charity and Mercy to others*. Thus the Devout *Jews* on their Publick Thanksgivings, were careful to send Portions to them for whom nothing was Prepared, *Neb. 8. 10. Esth. 9. 22.* Whose *Example* should Influence us to do the like. But especially we are obliged as far as our Abilities will allow, to *Imitate G O D* in a Diffusive Goodness. The Divine Charity has a very extensive Reach, and includes all Persons within the Line of it's Care ; a Pattern for us to Commiserate the Calamitys of others, and contribute to their Relief, as far as we are able. This, if regularly perform'd, will be an acceptable Return to our Great Benefactor. **G O D** will be well Pleased with it, and highly Recompence it.

THESE are the Returns we are to make to **G O D** for His Blessings, and however mean and little in themselves ; and can't at all advantage the Almighty ; yet **G O D** knows, they are the very Best we have, and indeed all that He requires of us ; and if we are sincere and hearty in 'em, He will accept our Offering, and account Himself Honoured: For He has said, He that offers Praise, Glorifieth Him, and the Living Sacrifice of a thankful Heart, and obedient Life, is acceptable to Him, beyond the Dead one of fatted Beasts.

U S E

L E T us then attend the Business of This Day, and ascribe Praises to our G O D, the Praise of all our Salvations and Deliverances, and of all our Mercies. Tho' the Praises of Angels, those flames of Love wait on Him, & they stand ready about His Throne, with their Obedient & Holy Services; yet He will not disdain *ours*, if they be sincere, and flow from Hearts duly sensible and affected with His Blessings. Let us then Resolve with *David*, to take the Cup of Salvation, and call on the Name of the L O R D; to offer to Him the Sacrifice of Thanksgiving. And that we will walk before Him in Holiness and Righteousness. *Thy* Days of our Lives. Let His many Benefits to us, attract our ... to *Him*: Let us make Him the Return of our most ardent *Affection*, render up our *Hearts* entire to Him, who doth justly Demand, and highly deserve them. And let us this Day renew the Dedication of our selves to Him, our solemn Covenant with Him; and resolve upon a steady course of Obedience to Him, and that from henceforth we will make Religion our Business; and His Glory our Ruling Design. We can do no less, than with our utmost endeavours to serve *His* Interests; since He hath so much served *Ours*. Let us then avouch the L O R D this Day to be our G O D, and that we will walk after His Laws, and employ all our Powers in all Dutiful Regards to Him. Let us serve Him in the very best manner we can, with a Voluntary, Constant and the most exact

exact Obedience. In this Method, and no other, shall we engage His Presence yet with us, His Care & Bounty to us, He will then bestow upon us, not only *Temporal*, but *Eternal* Blessings.

PRAISE is the work of Heaven, the employment of *Angels*; they sing a *New Song* before the Throne. The Saints are joyful in Glory, the High Praises of **GOD** are in their Hearts and Mouths; and they should be in our Hearts. Let us then joyn that noble Choir in the Ascriptions of Blessing, Glory & Thanksgiving to **GOD**, and to the Lamb. Let us be Thankful to the **LOARD**, and Bless His Name for all His Gifts to our Land, and to our Selves.

THERE are none of us, (how sad & sorrowful soever, our Condition has been in the Year past) but we have many Blessings to give a Merciful **GOD** Thanks for, and He expects that we acknowledge it this Day, to the Praise of His Rich Grace. Let us then consider, as we can, His Benefits unto us, wherein He hath Blessed & Prospered us; The Death's and Dangers He hath saved us from, and the whole Store and Treasure of corporeal Blessings He hath heaped upon us, and give Him the deserved Praise of them.

BUT especially let us call to mind the *Spiritual* Blessings He hath vouchsafed us, what He hath done for our Souls. And if **GOD**, who is ready to forgive, has Pardoned our many Sins, whereby we are not only exempted from all Obligation to suffer the Curses of the Law, and the Pains of Hell; but are become Interested in His Favour, and Receiv'd into the near Relation of Children to Him, and so have a Right to the most valuable
In-

Inheritance, this is a High favour, a great and Inestimable Blessing, which we have Infinite cause to Acknowledge to Him in Love & Thankfulness this Day, and every Day of our Lives. If there has been a saving change wrought in us by the Holy Spirit in the Ministry of the word; or by His Providences in the Year past; If we have experienc'd what it is to be Born again, have tasted of the heavenly Gift, and are called into the Love and Fellowship of CHRIST; We are this Day to bow our knees before GOD in Thankful Acknowledgments of His undeserved and distinguishing Mercy herein to us. But if we have remained another Year in an Unconverted Estate, and have the guilt of all our Sins lying heavy upon us; Oh how sad & deplorable is our case! Let us Tremble at the thought. And without a Moments delay, fall down before GOD in humble Confessions, and earnest Supplications for His Mercy thro' the Merits of a Compassionate Redeemer. Let us not dare to bring our *Old Sins* into the *New Year*; this will be most unhappy for us. But let us be advised to a speedy Repentance for them, and Amendment of our Lives——
To Day while it is called to Day; for we know not what may be the Event of another Year or Day.

AND let us Thank GOD, as for our Personal Benefits, so for all His Mercies to our *Land*; and also to our KING & *Nation*. Let us be humbled before GOD for all the *Sins* of our Land. Sigh and Cry for the Abominations that are committed among us. And let us Pray that the Wickedness
of

of the Wicked may come to an End, that all Iniquity may stop her Mouth. Let us Resolve *for* GOD, and *against* Sin, Purify our Hearts, Pray away the Evil of our doings from before His Eyes, and learn to do well. Seek Judgment, Relieve the Oppressed, Judge the Fatherless, and Plead for the Widow.— If we are willing and obedient, we shall eat the good of the Land, and GOD will Bless the ensuing Year, and crown it with His Goodness, and make all His Paths drop fatness; Yea, He will be with us and keep us in all the way that we go, during our Pilgrimage in this World, and give us Bread to Eat, and Raiment to put on; and will at last bring us all to His House in Peace.

A N D now Blessed be the LORD GOD of Israel from Everlasting to Everlasting; And let all the People say, Amen. Hallelujah, Psal. 106. ult.

F I N I S.