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THE  
Bishop of GLOCESTER'S  
Thanksgiving Sermon  
BEFORE THE  
KING at *St. Pauls,*  
*Jan. 20. 1714.*

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Publiſh'd

*By his Maieſty's Special Command.*

*The Way to Stable and Quiet Times:*

A  
S E R M O N

Preach'd before the

K I N G

A T T H E

Cathedral Church of *St. Paul,*  
L O N D O N,

O N

The 20th of *January,* 1714.

B E I N G

The Day of Thanksgiving to Almighty God  
for Bringing His M A J E S T Y to a Peaceable  
and Quiet Possession of the T H R O N E, and  
thereby Disappointing the Designs of the  
Pretender, and all his Adherents.

By RICHARD Lord Bishop of *Glocester.*

L O N D O N,

Printed for MATTHEW WOTTON at the *Three*  
*Daggers* in *Fleetstreet.* M. DCC. XV.





## ISAIAH xxxiii. 6.

*Wisdom and Knowledg shall be the  
Stability of thy Times—.*



WE have now been offering up our Thanks and Praise to God for bringing his Majesty to a peaceable and quiet Possession of the Throne, and thereby disappointing the Designs of the Pretender and all his Adherents. And certainly, if any Nation ever had reason to be thankful to God, we have upon this Occasion.

We see our selves in Peace and Quiet; our Laws, our Liberty and Property preserv'd; our Excellent Church and Holy Religion secur'd: and which of these could we expect to have seen, had we been depriv'd of the Protestant Succession?

And what makes the Blessing the more valuable, is, that tho we thought it worth venturing all for, and had reason enough to apprehend it might have come to that; yet God was pleas'd to send it us without

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Blood and Slaughter, even without a Struggle, and in profound Peace. This, I say, makes the Blessing the more valuable, tho perhaps the less valued: for Mankind are too apt to value things, not according to the *Good* it does them, but according to the *Price* it costs them.

What still farther enhances the Blessing, is, that we have all the Human Views that it may be durable and lasting; that by a numerous Royal Progeny it may be transmitted safe to all Posterity. We have now not only a *Protestant King*, but *Children*, and *Childrens Children* that are *Protestants*; which we never had at *Home* before, and never but once *Abroad*, and that in this very *Family* by the Princess *Elizabeth*, Daughter to King *James* the First, and Grandmother to our present King: but with this difference, that it was a Family then in Distress and Persecution for the Protestant Cause, it is a Family now at the Head of the Protestant Interest in *Europe*. So that we have now a comfortable Prospect before us, of the Blessing mention'd in my Text, of *stable and settled Times*, if we are not wanting to our selves.

Perhaps

Perhaps there is no Nation in the World has more reason to be thankful to God, or has receiv'd more Advantages from Him than we have: our Religion establish'd by Law is happily reform'd from the Idolatry and Superstitions, and Tyranny of Popery; and we have some Advantages in our Constitution above all other Reformed Churches; our Civil Government is mild and gentle; the Crown has many Prerogatives to protect us and do us good, but none to invade our Liberty and Property: Our Country is rich and fruitful, and abounding with great Plenty; and whatever we want at Home, is by our Trade brought to us from Abroad: all sorts of Learning and Arts flourish among us; we are by our Situation, being an Island, freed from the IncurSIONS of Enemies, and cannot easily be invaded; which gives a great Security to all our other Blessings.

These things, one would think, were enough to make a happy People; but after all, the matter has hitherto been otherwise, at least for a great while. That I may not go too far back, we can many of us remember when we had a Popish Prince

upon the Throne, and how full of Frights and Fears we then justly were, and how all true Sons of the Church groaned for a Deliverance: God was pleas'd to send us one, to the almost universal Joy of the Nation; but that was scarce settled before we fell into Discontents, that lasted through the Reign of our Great Deliverer: which made him and us uneasy at Home, encourag'd the Common Enemy, and lost almost all the good Effects of vast Sums of Mony, and the Lives of many brave Men, spent in a War for the Defence of the Liberty of *Europe*.

The next Reign began with a War for the same glorious purpose, and was carry'd on with such an amazing Torrent of Success, as scarce any Age can parallel. We thought that then was the time to put an end to all our Fears; that *Europe* was then to be deliver'd, and Our Selves to be establish'd in Security and Honour; when of a sudden, for our Sins, God was pleas'd to blast our great Expectations, and we fell into horrible Feuds and Factions: Some were afraid of a Foreign Power and a Popish Pretender, others were afraid of God knows what;

what; and like wild Horses, starting at a shadow on one side, were leaping down a Precipice on the other.

Thus were our *Times unstable* and unquiet, full of Fears and Perplexities, when it pleas'd God to make a Change so much of a sudden, so unexpectedly at that time, and in such a peculiar Conjunction of Affairs abroad, as not to give Time or Opportunity to the Enemies of our Constitution to make any Disturbance; the Laws took place, our King was quietly proclaim'd and settled, and we trust in God that our *Times* will now be *establish'd* in Peace and Security.

The Words of my Text are suppos'd by some to relate to the Times of the Messias; by others, more probably, to relate to *Hezekiah* King of *Judah*, at least immediately; tho with a further Reference to the Messias, as is the Case of many Passages in this sublime Prophet.

That they relate immediately to *Hezekiah*, is pretty plain from the words of the first Verse, which cannot well be understood of any but of *Senacherib* King of *Assyria*, who was an Enemy to *Hezekiah*, and  
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by his great Force and Fraud was the common Enemy of all the Countries about him at that time: *Wo to thee that spoilest, and thou wast not spoil'd, and dealest treacherously, and they dealt not treacherously with thee: when thou shalt cease to spoil, thou shalt be spoil'd; and when thou shalt make an end to deal treacherously, they shall deal treacherously with thee.*

It is not my meaning to make any Parallel betwixt those Times and our own; but I shall consider the Words in general, and from them speak to these two Things.

I. I shall shew you what is meant by *Stability of Times*, and how great a Blessing it is to any Nation.

II. What are the best Means, to procure it; *Wisdom and Knowledg shall be the Stability of thy Times.*

I. *Stability of Times* comprehends these two Particulars.

1. A Freedom from Danger of any foreign Invasion to overturn the Government: when a Nation is so strong and well prepar'd in it self, or so well fortify'd  
by

by Alliances with others, as not to be afraid of any of its Neighbours, it has then *Stability of Times* in this respect.

2. This also comprehends a Freedom from Factions and Divisions at Home, at least from such as may endanger the Peace and Quiet of the State. When both these concur, they make the Times *stable*; but if either of them are wanting, if a Nation has just reason to fear either a foreign Power, or Disturbances at Home, the Times are then *unstable*, and dangerous.

I shall have some regard to both these in my following Discourse, but shall chiefly confine my self to the latter, because the Care of the first, the Freedom from the Fear of foreign Invasions, is the Business of our Superiours, to whom it is not fit for me to give political Instructions. The other, that of Freedom from Divisions and Factions at home, does more depend upon our selves; and if we take care of that, our Governors will be able more easily to protect us from Dangers from Abroad.

There needs not many words to shew how great a Blessing it must be to any Country to have *stable Times*, and to be free

free from all Factions and Divisions that tend to make them otherwise, as all do more or less. Small ones may indeed sometimes be thought to do the same Service in the State, that the Winds do in the Air, by Motion to keep it from Stagnating and Putrefaction: But when once these Winds are rais'd, no body can tell when they will be laid, or how strong they will grow; and what was rais'd wantonly, or to serve a present Turn, may in time come to overturn Houses and Churches too. However, if they should not be carry'd to this extremity of overturning all, yet they have many dangerous, and very ill Consequences; they tend to corrupt the Manners of Men, to relax all Discipline, to make great Partialities in the distribution of Rewards and Punishments; to fill Men full of Pique and Malice, Anger and Resentment against one another; to raise Lyes, and Calumny, and Slander, and by degrees to take away all Sense of Charity and Justice too, so far as Parties are concern'd. And when things are come so far as this, they are in great danger of proceeding farther; Men are apt to lose all Sense of publick Good,  
and



and not to care what becomes of that, so they can but promote the Party they are of, or be revenged of the other: This has often a dangerous Influence upon the Publick Counsels; at best, is apt to make them variable and uncertain, according as the several Parties prevail: this loses the Reputation of a People and all Publick Credit abroad; such a Nation can hardly have any fast Friends, or well-concerted Alliances, because it cannot be depended on.

These, and many more that might be named, are the dangerous Consequences of unstable Times. Let us add to these the Disquiet, the Anxiety and Fears that must in such a case perplex the Minds of Men, and take away almost all the Comfort of their Lives: What does a rich Country, or a great Estate in it, or Liberty and Property signify to the Happiness of Life, when we see them all in Danger? When we can't tell how soon either a Foreign or a Domestick Enemy may come and reap our Harvests, and plunder and burn our Towns; when our Life, and all the Comforts of it, *hang in doubt before us*; and when *our Hearts shall fail us, at looking upon what is coming upon us.*

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a Prince or his People. *Solomon*, who was himself a very wise King, tells us, that *lying Lips are but for a moment*: Fraud and Deceit are short-liv'd things, and when they are discover'd, leave those that us'd them without Friends, without Support, and without Credit; and those that are deceived by them, full of Discontent and Resentment.

But true Wisdom must be built upon the Foundation of Truth, and Honour, and Honesty; it must look directly at the Publick Good, and make all Private Interests subordinate to that: that will always have this Advantage, that tho it may disoblige some for the present, yet it will be better liked the more it's look'd into, and the more it's known. And nothing but this can give a stable and lasting Reputation to those that have the Management of Affairs, or stable Peace and Quiet to a Country. In a word, *Political Wisdom* should never be separated from *Religious Wisdom*: Great Men ought always to carry this Thought along with them, That God governs the World; and therefore should, above all things, endeavour to procure his Blessing upon their

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Undertakings, and have a great Care and Regard to Religion, as being the best way to make *stable Times*.

But perhaps it will be ask'd, What is it but Religion, or something under the pretence of it, that has made our Times unstable? and for several Ages given great Disturbance to the World?

This is a material Objection, and I wish I could answer it, by denying the Matter of Fact; but it must be confess'd, there has been more Cruelty, Wars, Massacres, Murders, Burnings, more Hatred, Animosity, Perverseness, Peevishness upon this Account, than upon any or almost all other Accounts whatsoever.

This has brought a great Scandal upon the Christian Religion, and probably is one great Cause of the Infidelity so much complain'd of, both here and in other Countries.

All Parties of Men have some share of this Guilt to answer for; but the great Guilt lies upon those of the Church of *Rome*, who have shed more of the Blood of God's Saints, than all the Heathen Persecutors put together.

This proceeds from a Spirit directly contrary to that of the Christian Religion, which is not so eminent for any thing, as for the Love, and Mildness, and Gentleness it requires from all its Disciples, even towards those who differ from them; and therefore the Scripture commands those that are the Ministers of God's Word, that they should be *patient towards all Men, apt to teach, and that they should do it with Meekness of Wisdom*: It tells us, that the *Servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle towards all Men, in Meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them Repentance to the Acknowledgment of the Truth.*

Not that it is fit for Men to come to an Indifference in Matters of Opinion, either with respect to themselves or others. The Divine Life is indeed the great Point to be minded, but that must be founded upon the Principles of the Christian Faith; and therefore St. Paul puts *Faith* and a *good Conscience* together, as both necessary, and the one to be built upon the other: and sometimes what is not directly necessary to the Divine Life, may be necessary to  
make

make a consistent Scheme of the Christian Religion. Some Errors that have not a direct Influence upon Practice, may yet be very dishonourable to God ; besides, that many things, not quite necessary, may be very useful : We should therefore study to find out the Truth, and have a Zeal for it, and endeavour by all ways, consistent with Humanity and Charity, to promote it : But the contrary Methods, of fiery Zeal, and a persecuting Spirit, generally suppose want of Truth at bottom, are directly contrary to the true Spirit of Christianity, and highly tend to the Disturbance of the World. *St. James* says, That if ye have bitter *Envyings*, or, as it ought rather to be translated, *bitter Zeal and Strife in your Hearts*, glory not, and lye not against the Truth ; this *Wisdom* comes not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish ; for where *Zeal and Strife* is, there is *Confusion*, and every evil *Work*.

Give me leave to make some few Remarks upon these words :

1. How apt People have been in all Ages of the Church to deceive both themselves and others with this false Zeal, to  
glory

glory in it themselves, and to be admir'd for it by others.

2. That whatever fair Appearance this bitter Zeal may carry with it of a Concern for God's Truth and Religion, it is indeed nothing but a Pretence to cover other Designs; it is *lying against the Truth*, pretending a Zeal for that, when other Considerations have the secret and great Influence.

3. That however this may be thought a *wise Method* to promote any Party, it is such *Wisdom as comes not from Above*, does not proceed from the Holy Spirit of God. The Apostle, in the next Verses, tells us, That *the Wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of Mercy and good Fruits, without Partiality, and without Hypocrisy*: Those are the Characteristick Marks of that *Wisdom* that is inspir'd into Men by God's Holy Spirit; and nothing that is peevish and passionate, fierce and furious, cruel and revengeful, can come from him. These Things are every where in Scripture describ'd as the *Works of the Flesh*, whatever  
the



the Pretence may be wherewith they are coloured over.

4. And therefore the Apostle tells us, in the fourth place, that this Wisdom is *earthly, sensual, devilish*; that is, that it generally proceeds either from some worldly Design of Interest, or Advancement, or Reputation, from a Desire to please some who set them on, or to make a Figure in a Party, or something or other of that kind. Or else, that it proceeds from their natural Temper; for so the word *sensual* may be interpreted; which if it be passionate, fierce, and cruel; will incline them to this sort of bitter Zeal. Or, lastly, that it proceeds from the Instigation of the Devil. From one of these, or from all together, this Wisdom proceeds; which Men are so apt to glory in, and to be admir'd for.

5. The last Argument he makes use of, is, from the mischievous Effects of this bitter Zeal; that the Produce of it is *Confusion, and every evil Work*.

The truth is, that where this Spirit much reigns, tho it may bring in a great deal of Talk about Religion, yet it com-

monly blasts all the true and genuine Fruits of it. It is a great Enemy to Devotion and the heavenly Life, because that requires Recollection and Retirement within our selves, and a sedate, easy, quiet Spirit: besides, that when Peoples Heat vents so outward, very little is apt to remain within, to warm the Heart with true Devotion. But it is still a much greater Enemy to all the sociable Virtues, that tend to preserve the Peace, and Quiet, and Happiness of the World: instead of Love and Charity, and Good-Will, and a Desire to do good-Offices to one another, which are the great Christian Virtues, it commonly produces Hatred and Variance, Jealousies and evil Surmises, rude Words and rude Behaviour, Lyes and Slanders: and these provoke the Heat farther, till it may be, whole Countries are rang'd into Parties mortally hating one another; and not only all sense of Charity, but even of common Justice is lost among them. And then *Confusion and every evil Work is quickly like to follow.*

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These things<sup>1</sup> are not mere Speculations, but such as have commonly happen'd in the World; and the Histories of most Countries give us many dismal Examples of them.

This Spirit indeed, if follow'd to the utmost, may make Peace, as it is where the Inquisition reigns; but then it is Peace without Light, it is Quiet like the Horror of Night; and the best that can be said of it is, that it is Peace made by the Breach of the most Fundamental Rules of Humanity, and by dethroning Jesus Christ from governing the Consciences of Men, and making their Faith depend upon the Dictates of their Fellow-Creatures. But where a Church is already divided, even this can't be procur'd without the greatest Convulsions.

To conclude this Head: The Scripture makes *Charity* to be the greatest Duty of Religion, and even prefers it before *Faith* it self; and indeed if Religion be divested of Charity, it is so far from making Men more like God, the great Fountain of Goodness, that it makes them more like the Devil than otherwise they would have been, more savage and cruel than human Nature is

well capable of without it, because it does, in a manner, license and sanctify the worst Passions that belong to us. Armies have sometimes done barbarous things, in sacking of Towns; but it has generally been when they have been provok'd by Hardships and Dangers suffer'd beforehand: but very few Armies can be prevail'd upon to massacre their Fellow-Subjects, in cold Blood, and without provocation, and to do it with all the Circumstances of Rage, and an insulting Joy: and yet this has often been done by this false Zeal for Religion.

Perhaps no Prince had ever so much natural Barbarity, as to force two hundred thousand of his Subjects, who had deserv'd well of him, and were guilty of no Crime, to desert their Country; and yet this we have seen done for Religion in our Time.

To name no more; What Prince was ever so cruel to his Subjects, as to establish common Courts of Justice with such barbarous Rules as those of the Inquisition? And yet this false Zeal has made that be reputed *A holy Office*, and necessary for the Preservation of the Faith.

I have insisted upon this so long, to give us a just Abhorrence of Popery, and to make us sensible of the great Blessings of our present happy Settlement, that has prevented our falling under the Rage and Cruelty of that Religion.

The Inference we should make from the whole, is, that a Protestant Country can never have *stable Times* under a *Popish* Prince, any more than a Flock of Sheep can have quiet when a Wolf is their Shepherd. The business of a Wolf is not to feed and protect, but to tear and to devour: And is not this the business of Popery, whenever it has Power over Protestants? The Princes of that Religion, no doubt, have as much natural Humanity as other People; but that is never to be trusted to, when it shall be told 'em, that it is not only their Duty, but highly meritorious to be inhuman. What sad Expectations must a People have from a Prince, who looks upon their Religion to be a Crime worse than *High-Treason* or *Witchcraft*? and which by the Laws of his Church, ought to have at least as severe a Punishment, that of being burn'd alive. It may be indeed, that a Prince

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Prince may not begin with that, if the Numbers are very great; either some Remains of Humanity, or Fear of a general Revolt, or Policy, not of a sudden to dispeople a Country, may, for some time, suspend the utmost Extremity; but there are other ways of Oppression that will be sensibly felt: Way will be made, either to terrify, or to corrupt the Great Men with Places and Pensions; the Church-men that stand most in their way, will be turn'd out, and others more complying put in their Places. A Standing-Army will awe the rest, which such a Prince, for the future, will take care not to make of *Protestants*. Our Liberties will be invaded, our Laws dispens'd with, our Schools and Universities corrupted; and if any endeavour to stand up for their Religion or Liberties, it will be called Sedition or Rebellion, especially since *what has hapned*. And in the mean time, *Mens Hearts will fail 'em for fear, and for looking at what is coming upon us*. We shall be forecasting to what Country we shall fly to save us from the impending Storm; the Rich, that can transmit their Mony abroad, will fly

fly first. This will put almost a total stop to Trade and Commerce; by degrees, many will be gain'd over; especially, since there will be no hope of Succour or Resource; because, whatever becomes of the immediate Pretender, there are a long Train of Popish Successors, and some of 'em the greatest Princes in *Europe*. When these steps have made way, then, if not before, more open Violence would be us'd, Imprisonments, Dragooning, Burning, and God knows what. This is the Prospect which a Protestant Country must have from a Popish Prince; and no Promises, no Oaths before-hand, can be any Security. According to the Principles of Popery, such Oaths must be unlawful in themselves, and therefore cannot bind; or however, will be easily dispens'd with, as we our selves, by sad Experience, have found under two Popish Reigns: the first of which, that of *Queen Mary*, after corrupting a Parliament with *Spanish* Money, quickly went on to burning; the other was making large Steps: and had not God sent us a Deliverance, we had been, at this time,

time, the most miserable Country in the World.

Let us therefore all join heartily in blessing and praising God, that none of these things are come upon us, and that we have great reason to hope they never will; that we have the Protestant Succession quietly settled at Home, and own'd by all the Princes Abroad.

It has been a great Matter of Contest among us, whether it were in danger or not; I wish that the undutiful Carriage of many, even at present, had not put it out of Contest: but however that be, if it were in danger, we have great reason to thank God for our Deliverance; if it was not in danger, we have the more reason to thank God that it had so many Friends.

I might add, as a farther Motive to Thanksgiving, the personal Qualifications of our Excellent King, and Prince and Princess, and the very promising Hopes of the Royal Issue. But I know in what Presence I am, and our Business here is not to praise *Men*, but to praise *God*: I shall therefore beg leave to pass that Matter wholly over, trusting that it will be sufficiently



sufficiently discover'd in a long Course of good Government, and that they will All be belov'd and admir'd here, as it is certain they were in the Country they have left to come and make us happy.

What then remains, but that we all of us, in our several Stations, endeavour to make this Blessing perpetual? In the first place, by a hearty Zeal for, and dutiful Submission to the Government which God has in great Mercy secur'd to us; let us have a care not to make Factions or Divisions, or entertain false and groundless Fears, which are rais'd by wicked Men to carry on Designs which they dare not openly avow: we may depend upon it, that it is an *Enemy* that sows these *Tares* in the Field.

But above all, let us endeavour to make God our Friend; let us humble our selves before him for the great and crying Sins of the Nation; and let us all do what we can to put a stop to that Spirit of Profaneness and Irreligion, that Contempt of God, and his Word, and that great Corruption of Manners which still too much

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remains,

remains, notwithstanding all God's Mercies to us.

This is the true way to make *stable Times*, and without this we can never be secure. A wicked People have always reason to be afraid of the Judgments of God, and if they remain impenitent, the greater reason to fear, by how much greater the Favours are which they have receiv'd from him. If we remain barren and unfruitful, notwithstanding all the care that God has taken of us, what have we to expect but the sad Sentence, of *Cut it down, why cumberst it the Ground?* If we abuse, or make no good use of our *Bibles*, which are the Religion of Protestants, why should we not expect that God will in time take them from us, notwithstanding all the promising Hopes we have? But besides this, Wickedness in its own nature tends to make *unstable Times*. The Scripture says, *That the Wicked are like the troubled Sea, subject to perpetual Agitations whenever the Winds shall rise; and the greater Liberty any Nation has, the more it is subject to these Agitations.* When such a People shall,

shall, in any great measure, have lost the Fear of God, and the Love of their Country; when they shall be negligent and idle, proud and luxurious, and by that poor and discontented; there is a great deal of danger of their breaking to pieces, or their becoming a Prey to any that shall be able to *buy* them, or *invade* them.

To conclude all; notwithstanding the great Corruptions among us, yet, blessed be God, we have many, very many, good People, for whose sake we have reason to think God has hitherto spar'd us, and to whose Prayers we owe the Blessings we have now been praising God for: God grant we may all become such. And let us all join heartily in our Prayers, that the same good Providence that has brought about this great Work, would continue to protect and bless it; that as God has been pleas'd to make our King the Instrument of preserving our Religion, so he would, in his due time, make him the happy Instrument of *reforming* our Manners; that we may become a People to whom

whom the Lord will *delight to do Good*, and that, under his Protection, we may enjoy the *Protestant Succession*, with *stable Times*, from Generation to Generation; and let all the People say, *Amen, Amen.*

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***F I N I S.***







