

# A PEACE-OFFERING TO GOD

FOR THE BLESSINGS WE ENJOY UNDER HIS MAJESTY'S  
REIGN;

WITH A THANKSGIVING FOR THE PRINCE'S SAFE RETURN, ON SUNDAY THE 5TH  
OF OCTOBER 1623.

IN A SERMON PREACHED AT MANITREE, IN ESSEX, ON THURSDAY  
THE 9TH OF OCTOBER, NEXT AFTER HIS HIGHNESS'S  
HAPPY ARRIVAL.

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TO THE

KING'S MOST SACRED MAJESTY.

THE altar of incense was compassed about with a crown of pure gold. Gratitude is a rich and royal virtue, best beseeeming the best princes, which have the best means to express, and the most cause to excite them thereunto. The meanest subject following the mill, may be as thankful as the greatest monarch sitting upon the throne. But between the effects of their thanks, there is as broad a difference, as between the acts of a giant and a cripple, whose fortitude may yet be equal. A private man praiseth God upon a ten-stringed, a king upon a ten thousand stringed, instrument, upon the loud-sounding organs, having so many millions of pipes, as there be men to whom his authority or example reacheth. The fruits of Constantine, Theodosius, and such good emperors' gratitudes, have been religion planted and promoted, churches erected, idolatry suppressed, wholesome laws enacted and executed, which makes divines doubt whether such kings were well advised,\* though much applauded in story, who upon victories obtained, not laid down only, but wholly laid off their crowns, and resigned their kingdoms to God, not considering they might better have

\* Elethan Rex Ethiopum (Niceph li. 17). Fernandus Rex Castillie (Rodericus de rebus Hispanicis, lib. 4. Fox, tom. i. Martyrolog).

paid their thanks to him in kind, as kings, than in private devotions, as monks. David was, therefore, a man after God's own heart, not because a king, but because a thankful king; the sweet singer of Israel, not for his poetry or music, but for his grateful hymns, composed and sung to God's praise upon every fresh occasion; and he calls upon princes and rulers three times in one verse, because they have three times the cause that subjects have, who have but a single share in those blessings, which jointly meet in the head of sovereignty. He often puts the thorn to his breast, as if he found some oblivion there, or unwillingness; \* yea, he often calls upon the angels, either implying the worth of the work, or else that the best alacrity may admit excitation. Alphonsus, that renowned king,† in a speech to the pope's ambassador, professeth he did not so much wonder at his courtiers' ingratitude to him, who had raised sundry of them from mean to great estates, as at his own to God. How acceptable an offering shall this be to God, if it may kindle the least spark, or rather blow those coals already flaming in your royal breast, or testify our gratefulness to him for his infinite old and new favours to your majesty's person, and thereby to your kingdoms! For all defects in it, the title pleads pardon and acceptance. Even God himself allowed a female in peace-offerings, not admitted in other kinds. Gratitude hath set a price upon mean presents. The form of a sermon will not disparage the subject-matter. The best monument of Constantine's government is a grateful sermon, recorded at large by Eusebius in his tenth, whose blessed and much honoured days, God make yours equal, and exceed in length and happiness! So humbly and heartily prays,

Your Majesty's most loyal and thankful Subject,

SAMUEL WARD.

\* Aug. in Ps. cxlv. Quasi tacentes invenerit angelos, hortatur qui tamen nunquam tacuerunt.

† Æneas Sylvius, lib. iv. de dictis Alphonsi:

# A PEACE-OFFERING TO GOD;

OR,

## A THANKSGIVING FOR THE PRINCE'S SAFE RETURN.

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*In all things give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus our Lord towards you.*—1 THESS. V. 18.

MAY an herald find out a rich coat of arms ungiven, then may a divine meet with a profitable subject unhandled. Gratitude, a virtue whose beauty so equally blazeth in the eyes of all,\* whose name sounds so pleasantly in the ears of all, whose contrary is so odiously censured of all, to whom hath it been beholden for so much as a small tract or sermon?† What divine hath bestowed so much cost upon it, as to acquaint us with the nature, kinds, canons, and motives of it? Men, I confess, had the use of logic before the art was penned; and so David the king, of all grateful persons, with other the servants of God in all ages, have in abundant measure expressed their thankfulness; yet no man will deny, but that rules and directions orderly collected and compiled, do much conduce to a more lively and certain practice, than wild and unguided affections: and such helps God's Spirit in ordinary despiseth not.

All that I shall upon this sudden and extraordinary cause of public thanks undertake, is to be as the wheel to the bird, which with its coarse noise sets better music on work; and out of this short text of gratitude, endeavour to bring some light to the duty enjoined, 'Give thanks.'

Secondly, To shew the extent of its matter, 'In all things.'

Thirdly, To enforce the practice from this motive of motives, 'For this is the will of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.'

Fourthly, To bring it home and apply it, 'Towards you.'

In handling whereof, if I shall procure any whit the more tribute of thanks and praise to God, I shall attain that which is the queen of all causes, the end of my labour, yea, that which is the queen of all ends, God's glory.

'Give thanks.' The nature and grace of thankfulness consists in a kindly reflection of honour upon the benefactor for the benefit received.

\* Virtutum lauditissima, &c.—Sen.

† Basil entitleth a homily, 'Of giving thanks,' but the subject-matter is of bearing afflictions cheerfully.

Look what perfection a solid body gives to the sunbeams, which having obscurely passed through the translucent air, are by it made to rebound with a spreading increase of their lustre and heat; look what such an echo as the sevenfold porch of Thebes is to the sound of a trumpet; such is thankfulness to the benefactor. And therefore, in reference to parents, is the sum of piety; to equals, of amity and humanity; to God, of religion; yea, the very prime and sum of all virtues and duties, because it most directly and fully promotes and achieves that which is the end and scope of all the Creator's works and gifts, 'his glory.' 'He that praiseth me honoureth me,' Ps. l.; and contrariwise, 'They glorified not God, neither were they thankful,' Rom. i.

To discuss here these school queries,\* whether it be a part of commutative or distributive justice, whether a general virtue or special, distinct or confounded with piety and justice, whether voluntary or bounden, whether of debt and by law or mere honesty, whether the innocent or the penitent be more obliged, whether it may adequate or surpass the benefit, were to trouble your heads with frigid subtleties, instead of warming your hearts with profitable matter. A thankful man had rather by ten times learn how to discharge this bond of needful duty, than to untie these knots of curious wit.

To such a one, I content myself to give the old tripartite rule, let him see that his soul, his tongue, and his life† bear their parts, discharge their several offices in glorifying God, that so his thanks being cordial, orear, and real,‡ they may be complete and accepted of God. And first let them make sure of the first, especially when he hath to do with God, the maker, searcher, and judge of spirits, who in these kinds of offerings loves the fat, and the inwards, Levit. iii.; the deeper and hollower the belly of the lute or viol is, the pleasanter is the sound; the fleeter, the more grating and harsh in our ears: the voice which is made in the mouth, is nothing so sweet as that which comes from the depth of the breast. By how much spring water is better than plash water, by so much handy, hearty, than wordy thanks. 'Sing with grace in your hearts,' is the best tune to all the Psalms, without which, if one could descant with the voice of an angel, he were but as the sound of a tinkling cymbal. The very Alpha and Omega, the principal and total of our thanks with God, is as Bernard ends his epistles, and counsels to one that inquired of him what God required of man, 'Give me thy heart,' or keep all to thyself. If Benjamin come not, all the rest may stay behind. Unless, therefore, you mean to offer the sacrifice of fools, and the lips of calves, begin and end as David his Psalms, 'My soul, praise thou the Lord.' Take also David's commentary, Ps. ciii. 'And all that is within me, praise his holy name.§' The first work is of the understanding, to judge of the worth of the benefit, to consider the unworthiness of the receiver, to study a *quid retribuam*. A fool cannot, and a proud man will not, be thankful; the first, because he cannot estimate and weigh in the balance of judgment the value of the favour conferred upon him, or, through melancholy conceitedness, will not see what God hath done for him. The second, because he conceives it no more, if not less, than his due and desert, which is the reason that an heretic, overweening the strength of his naturals, or the merit of his works, cannot be thankful; which taught Prosper wittily and wisely to entitle his poems, *Contra ingratos*,

\* Vide Thomam secunda secundæ questione centesima sexta.

† Corde, ore, opere. Bradward, lib. ii. c. 28.

‡ Conscientia lingua, vita. Aug. in Ps. cxlviii.

§ Tota estimatio ad animum rodit. Sen.

without further naming the adversaries of God's grace. A rash man cannot be thankful, who for a fit-only and brunt, sends up an extemporary 'God be thanked,' whereas he ought fixedly and seriously to study and devise how he might cast most honour upon his good God for his bounty to him.

The second care must be had of the memory, that a deep impression be made, frequent refreshing and refraction be used with David's watchword, 'My soul, forget not all his benefits,' which made him write down his passions, and give his Psalms the title of *Record*, or *Remembrance*. Oblivion is so far from excusing, that itself is the worst kind of ingratitude, excluding all hopes of future thanks, and arguing a slight esteem of favours past, which so soon have set them behind back, and out of sight in some blind corner of the mind. Our memory is a natural mother to injuries, a stepmother to benefits, for the help whereof our grateful forefathers were wont to erect pillars and monuments, stamp coins, give names to places, dedicate days, and keep anniversary feasts, that so they might preserve a vestal fire in their breasts, and not serve God with a flash of joy and blaze of thanks.

A third work is the warmth of the affections, which if dead and cold, how can any fumes of incense ascend? Excess of joy and gladness is instead of thanks, which the nearer it comes to a rapture and ecstasy (such an one as Peter was in, when he wot not what he said, or the Jews coming out of captivity, faring as one in a dream); the more pleasing it is unto God, though it express itself in abrupt and exorbitant passions and gestures, such as David's dancing, unseemly in foolish Michal's, but most comely and kingly in God's eyes.

These acts of the soul are often all that God requires, but always the best fountain and spring of thanks, which sets the price upon the offering, and makes the turtle of the poor as welcome as the ox of the rich, the cruse and mite of the widow more worth than the rivers of oil and treasures of the wicked.

All this is intrinsical and immanent thanks; but God's favours are too great for one man's heart to comprehend or requite; and therefore he will not have them die in the breast of one man, and lie buried in silent admiration, but requires a transitive expression and publication of them. How many aids and witnesses doth David summon to assist him in this work, the mountains to leap, the floods to make a noise, the hills to clap their hands, and which of his musical instruments doth he not call upon? Sundry helps and signs of thankfulness hath nature and art found out and used; ringing of bells, displaying of banners, pomp and feasting, lights and fires, which while some condemn, they come near his fault that asked, 'What meaneth this waste?' Yet are all these but a poor and senseless kind of sacrifice, performed by reasonless deputies, if the thanks determine and end in these without more significant expression. Cheer of the countenance, gestures of the body, leaping and dancing, are but dumb shows; the best interpreter of the mind is the tongue, the glory of man and glorifier of God. 'My tongue shall tell of thy wondrous acts, and my lips shall never cease to publish thy praise.' This was all the fee Christ expected for his cures, 'Go and tell what God hath done for thee.' Words seem to be a poor and slight recompence, but Christ (saith Nazianzen) called himself the Word, and good words coming from a good heart are of great account and force with God and man.

David envied the birds, that might in their kinds sing God's praise in his courts; and in imitation of them, who set themselves on the highest tops of

trees, whence their notes may be furthest heard, he laboured to spread God's praises in the greatest congregations, in Saul's court, in all companies he came in, in the temple itself. By speech one man's heart conveys into another the cheerly conceptions and passions of his soul, and so multiplies praise, and sets others on work to bless God with him; and the more the merrier; and the more mirth, the more thanks; the greater the flock, the cheerlier noise; the fuller the choir, the louder the music, and one cheerly bird often sets all the flock a chirping. One man shouts and the whole host follows. John heard a voice from the throne saying, 'Praise ye our God, all his servants, small and great; and immediately a noise as of many waters and mighty thunders saying, Hallelujah, for the Almighty reigneth.'

Yet, because speech is transient, and of life for the present only, the pens and writings of thankful men have been of singular use to transmit and convey unto posterity the noble acts of God; one generation teaching another to keep like praises in store, that God's thanks may be immortal in succession and propagation. Such fruit may our statute have in after ages, penned for the perpetuation of God's invaluable deliverance from the hellish powder-plot, were it as duly read as it was providently enacted.

When we have given God good words, it remains that we give him not words alone, but our real obedience, preferred by God to all our sacrifices; slay not our beasts, but our beastly lusts; give him not our goods, but ourselves; not any dead, but a living and seasonable sacrifice.\* He that in way of thankfulness vows and performs the mortification of one darling sin, the addition of one good duty, pleaseth God better than Solomon with his twenty thousand beeves and sheep. Would we know, then, how we should perfect our thanks, walk we with God, let us do righteousness, abound in alms and prayer, better our piety and charity, increase the works of our callings, bring forth more fruit in our kinds; for with such sacrifices God is most honoured and best pleased. The ancient and wonted thanks after victories and blessings were reformation of vices, removal of idols, sanctions and executions of good laws, release of debts, bounty to the poor.† The life of thankfulness consists in the lives of the thankful; otherwise it is but as one should sing a good song with his voice, and play a bad one on his instrument, which would make but a black *Sanctis*, and become such saints. He that saith, 'God be thanked' with his mouth, and his life remains reprobate to every good work, hath the show of thanks, but the power of ingratitude, and is near the curse of the fig tree, full of leaves and empty of fruit; for God is not mocked with words. Wherefore, O thou vain man, justify thy words by thy works, and thou shalt be blessed in thy deeds, and God by the poor blessed for them, who hath himself no need or profit of our works; but, as great men, turns over his fees and thanks to his poor followers and servants, and tells us in plain terms he reckons that done to himself which is done to the least of his; and smells as sweet a savour of Cornelius's alms as of his prayers, and counts himself as much honoured by a good housekeeper as by a church-frequent; but best by him that is both in truth and from faith. A new song; becomes

\* Per victimas caro aliena, per obedientiam, propria voluntas mactatur.

† Non sola vox sonet, sed et manus consonet; verbis facta concordant, quando cantas hallelujah, manum porrigas esurienti.—Aug. in Ps. cxlix.

‡ Canticum novum et vetus homo male concordant, canet canticum novum qui nova est creatura, qui novam præstat obedientiam.—Aug. in Ps. cxlix. Cui lingua tua laudes Dei cantillat, cujus vita sacreligium exhalat.—Idem. in Ps. xxiii.

not the old man's mouth ; and let him sing a new song that leads a new life, and that's the best harmony, and makes the best music in God's ear.

'In all things.' Now I have shewed how thou mayest and must be thankful. If thou ask me wherein, or for what, I will ask thee what thou hast of thine own, and what of right and desert ? If nothing, then 'in all things give thanks.' We have heard that a thankful man needs a good judgment ; but we shall see that he needs no invention ; if his heart be in tune, all things will bring matter to hand. Gratitude is as large as logic, that hath for its object things that are, and that are not. There be favours privative, and favours positive ; there be good things bestowed and evils kept from us ; yea, the very evils that do betide us are turned to our good, and therefore we are bound to give thanks in all, and for all. Not with a collective thanks by lump and wholesale, with a 'God be thanked for all his benefits,' but distributively keeping a bill of the particulars, and duly thanking as we daily receive them. This distribution is best made by a just gradation and scale of discretion, ascending in our thanks according to the degrees of his favours.

First, he will be praised in all his creatures, whereof we have the sight or the use, even as if we had a propriety in them ; for every one of us have no less benefit by the sun and air, than if we saw and breathed alone. The Hebrews have a canon, that God would be praised in the least emmet or gnat, but magnified in the elephant and leviathan ; admired in the sun, moon, stars, comets, earthquakes, thunders, and such extraordinary works. The praise of his wisdom and power lies asleep and dead in every creature, till man actuates and enlives it.\* The heavens and the earth, and all things therein, are said to praise God ; that is (saith Augustine) when thou considerest their order and beauty, and praisest the invisible Creator, they praise him with thy understanding and thy voice, which have none of their own, but are dumb and senseless.†

In all the works of his provident administration. And here let public blessings have the precedency in thy thanks. It is not only self-love, but want of judgment, that makes fools prize a domestical and private welfare before the commonwealth, and the good of the kingdom, which is in itself the greater, and would, in the long run, be greater to the particular man. Is any cost bestowed on the private cabin comparable to the saving of the whole ship ? The very heathens rejoiced more in their country's good than in their own ; let Christians much more praise God for their kings, princes, and rulers, by whose wise government they may live a quiet life under their vines and fig trees, and in all honesty and godliness worship God in their chapels and churches.

In all thy personal favours ; among which the privative challenge a place, that is, such evils as pass by and over thee. Famous is the story of the good bishop, that, seeing a toad by the way, lift up his heart unto God, that made him not such a creature. And Chrysostom wills us to walk into hospitals and lazar-houses,‡ that, by the sight of other's miseries, we may be occasioned to thanks for our own freedom. Every man that sees another stricken, and himself spared, is to keep a passover for himself.

In all the crosses that do befall us ; yea, happily more than in them we count and call blessings. To call for afflictions, we have no precedent or precept in Scripture ; but to praise God for them, store of both. To count

\* Raymundus in Theologia naturali.

† August. in Ps. xlviii., Tua voce clamat, &c.

‡ Chrysost. ad Sagarium.—Epist. 8.

it exceeding joy because of the exceeding gain ; to count it an honour that we are counted worthy to suffer, as the disciples that leaped and sung after their scourgings ; and in this theme Basil spends all his sermon, which he entitles giving of thanks in all things.

In all the gifts of God, whether for necessity or pleasure, of nature or of grace, temporal or eternal, more for necessities than for delicacies, more for thy bread and water than for thy wine and oil, for thy clothes than for thy lace and ornaments, for thy health more than thy wealth, for thy good name above thy jewels, the goods of thy soul above all goods. Plato observed this order in his thanks, that he was a man, a Grecian, an Athenian, and Socrates's scholar ; Alphonsus, that he was a king, a philosopher, and a Christian ; Theodosius, more that he was a member of Christ in his church, than head of the empire ; Paul best of all, ' Blessed be God, that hath blessed us with spiritual blessings in heavenly things.' One spiritual is better than all corporal, and one eternal than all temporal.

In all thy spiritual blessings, preparations, preventions, excitations, motions, acts, confirmations, consummations, give all to the praise of his grace, by which thou art that thou art ; chiefly in those thou hast most wanted and earnestly begged, in these let thy praises answer thy prayers. Samuel and Augustine, children of many prayers and fears, were also children of many praises and thanks.

In all and above all, for him that is *all in all*, thanks and praises. For he is worthy who hath redeemed us, and made us kings and priests unto himself ; and if thanks be the will of God in Jesus Christ towards us, then sure I am it is his will, that all thanks be given him for Jesus Christ, in whom all the promises are yea and amen.

In all things, in all times, and in all places ; so the very context implies. Pray always, in all things give thanks. Wish with Epictetus, thou wert of the nightingale's unwearied spirit, ever to be singing day and night ; at least, with Bernard, imitate the other birds, which morning and evening, at the rise and setting of the sun, omit not to praise their Creator. These must be constant, set, and inviolable times. Occasional times are when benefits are newly received, which otherwise soon wax stale, and putrefy as fish ; no part of the thanks-offering might be kept unspent till the third day. Hezekiah wrote his song the third day after his recovery : ' The living shall praise thee as I do this day.' And if he had been as speedy in his thanks after his deliverance from Ashur, it may be (saith Lavater) his plate had never been carried into Babylon. All days of prosperity and mirth are seasonable for thanks, as birds sing more in clear days than in gloomy. Let him that is sad, pray, and he that is merry, give thanks. The Jews' three solemn feasts were to be kept in three cheerful seasons : \* the passover, at the first riping of corn ; Whitsuntide, at the first reaping ; tabernacles, at the end of harvest. God loves a cheerful giver. Christ willed his passion should be remembered when our spirits are refreshed with bread and wine. ' I will take the cup of salvation,' &c. Our joy, which otherwise is a slippery passion, is then safe and sanctified, when it brings forth thanksgiving.

Were it not now superfluous to say to whom this thanks ought to be given ? To whom, but to him of whom we have all things ? Yet we had rather change the name, and shift the debt to any save the right creditor, ascribing events to nature, destiny, and fortune, rather than to the living God ; which is as if one should say, he owed no money to Seneca, but to

\* Isidor. in Levit. Theodoret.



Lucius Annæus, which are but blind names of the same man. What is more common than to rob God to pay the instrument? The fisher sacrificeth to his net, the husbandman will thank his dunghill for his crop, rather than him that gives the increase. God allows some praise to the instrument. The sword of God and the sword of Gideon; but when he hears us give more to the means than to the author, he is jealous, and offended more justly than Saul with the people, for singing of David's ten thousand, and Saul's thousand. Let Solomon have his thousand, and the keeper of the vine two hundred, Cant. iii. Adrian and Verus, emperors of old, Selimus and Ferdinand of late, are taxed in history for erecting monuments of victory to their horses, forgetting the Lord of hosts. Let us learn of Paul, in right down terms, in all things to bless the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Thus all things invite us to thanks; and yet Paul, foreseeing our backwardness and excuses, opposeth to them all the will of God in Jesus Christ, 'For this is the will of God.' The ungrateful, like unto the sluggard, is witty in finding out pretexts and pretences, making a clog to hinder of that which should be his goad to quicken him. God's name, he will tell you, excels all thanksgiving, his blessings are innumerable, and why should he attempt impossibilities? And yet the same man, in seeking of wealth and honour, will shoot at the fairest mark, though he take up his arrow short. Here, unless he may do all, he will do nothing at all; but God's will is, thou shouldst do thy good will, and he will accept thy will for the deed. And if thou shouldst say in thy heart, What addition shall my praise make to his honour, that is infinite and self-sufficient? \* was he not as happy before there was a man or angel to praise him, as since? I might answer with a schoolman,† he counts it an increase *ad extra*, in the notice and glory of his attributes, though *ad intra*, in the perfection and excellence of them, he cannot increase. But I had rather answer with our apostle, 'It is his will.' But we have need of his benefits; if he will allow us the profit, we may well allow him the praise; our emptiness calls for the one, and to his fulness belongs the other. Bradwardine, as thankful an English heart as ever wrote, knits and unties the knot thus: Why should I go about to pay that debt which is unpayable, and by paying whereof I run further in debt? for the grace and heart, the will and ability to be thankful, is his gift; and for that I must be further obliged, as David when he built the temple. But God forbid, saith he, that I should entangle mine heart in this chain of ingratitude, and break asunder this my bond of thanks, because I cannot unloose it. Let me rather know this to be my happiness, to whom I owe much, to owe more; to be as deep in his books as I can, who loves to water where he plants, to heap favour upon favour, till he overcome us with favour; to him let me be ever owing, and ever paying, never discharged, but ever becoming more and more thankful, till I be wholly transformed into thankfulness, and when all is done, account myself indebted and unprofitable.‡

'For this is God's will in Jesus Christ.' God's will hath binding authority enough; but he adds a winning word, his 'will in Christ,' commending the duty to us from God by that lovely name. The force of the persuasion is, as if God should say to us, Behold, I have so loved you, as

\* Nec deterior si vituperatur, nec melior si laudatur.—Bernard.

† Raymundus de Naturali Theolog.

‡ Bradward. de causa dei, lib. 8, cap. 28. Gratiasimis gratitudinis vinculis alligor ut gratior, et gratior flamm tandemque in gratias gratissimè transformer.

to give you my Son, and with him all things; and what return do I expect? what is my will, but that in all things you give me thanks in his name? Thanks is my will, and pleaseth my will, as sweet odours do man's nostrils. Gratitude needs not, as other virtues, letters testimonial, or commendatory. David often tells us it is comely and lovely enough of itself. Prayer is profitable, but praise is honourable. To ask is a troublesome thing,\* and a mendicant word implying want, and therefore comes hardly and harshly from us; but praise becomes the angels, yea, the Son of God, and therefore should be welcome to us. It is a grace and praise to him that gives, as well as to him to whom it is given. How renowned in all story hath been the practice of this virtue in David to Jonathan's, Abimelech's, and Bazzilai's posterity; in Joseph to his parents; in Hannah (more honoured for being the author of a song than the mother of a son); in Cromwell's to Frescobald; Agrippa to Thaumastus's servant, for a cup of cold water in his troubles; Egelred to the swineherd;† yea, in bruta beasts, in lions,‡ dragons,§ eagles, and falcons; in elephants, fishes, dogs. The contrary most hateful: in Judas, Ahithophel, Pharaoh's butler, &c., not actionable, or finable by any legal or set mulct, as sufficiently censurable, but deserving, and left to excess of hatred by God's judgment, and so generally reputed of all, the sum of all disgrace, the worst, yea, all that can be said of a man; say this, and say all; the main sin of the apostate angels and damned spirits. Thanks the chief, if not the whole, work of the glorified seraphims, who vent and spend all their burning fire in the flames of God's praise. How cheerfully should we redeem time to this blessed work!|| which, because it is too large to be done in this span-long life, it shall ever be doing in that eternity. What like evidence hath a saint, of God's free and princely spirit residing in his heart and tongue, to this frankincense, and free work, wherein our ingenuity is best tried, not extorted from us by our own necessities, as prayer; not exacted by law, or drawn by shame or penalty from us, but voluntary, and therefore best testifying us to be of God's willing people: which grace, where he gives, surely he will confer more of all kinds. For where do men delight to sow, but in fertile soils, where they reap most? Where do musicians delight to sound their instruments, but where the echo multiplies them most in their return? But our profit is too sordid a motive for this liberal virtue. Thanks is not thanks, if bribing and eyeing future favour, if anything more than the praise of past bounty, though there should never be need or receipt of any more afterwards. But our dulness hath need of all spurs. David, the nightingale of Israel, sets many a thorn to his breast; that vigilant cock clappeth oft his own wings. An ingenuous child desires no more but to know what his father loves. Isaac, if his diet be known, shall be sure of venison enough; and if Saul take delight in David's harp, he shall not want music. A grateful courtier desires but to know what the will and pleasure of his sovereign is: and this is enough, and above all other bonds, to a man sensible of the benefits of creation and redemption. What else is the difference and pre-eminence of the gospel above the law, but thanks the one and debt the other? Which made Ursinus judiciously give his book of obedience and good works the title of *Gratitude*: which whose slights or neglects undo

\* Molestissimum istud verbum rogo.—Sen.

† Fox, tom. i.

‡ Agell. lib. x. cap. 5.

§ Pierius, lib. xix. Strabo, lib. v. Philarchus apud Athenæum. Geenerus, &c.

|| Sit illa meditatio frequens in hoc sæculo quod opus erit in futuro.—Aug. Ps. cxlviii.

and dissolves the whole bond of perfection, not of humanity alone, but of all Christianity. God abhorring all that we can do with other respect or end, bidding the proud man and his merits perish, done in way of desert or pay; only accepting that which is done in the name of Christ, in way of thankfulness for him and his merit, who is the altar which sanctifies and graceth the gold and the gift, to the horns whereof it is best binding with the cords of thanks all our offerings: who is the great master of requests, having a golden vial ready to offer up, and commend to his Father all the incense of his saints, and to give a sweet odour and perfume unto them, making the least cup of water tendered in his name of precious account, without which all is abominable. And therefore he that would set a special gloss upon his sacrifice of thanks, let him, with the acknowledgment of his vileness (as David, 'Who am I and my people?'), crave acceptance in his name, in whom God is well pleased; for 'this is his will in Christ Jesus our Lord,' &c.

That thanks *in thesi* and general, is God's will, it is now out of question; but there is yet another clause in my text, 'towards you,' which bids us search what is God's will *in hypothesi*, in particular. 'Towards us: ' even to uswards of this nation, this assembly, towards thee and me, all and every one of us jointly and severally. First, It is requisite that we take good notice of our receipts, and then balance them well with our returns; and so shall we see our arrearages best, and what remains for us to do. Mark we advisedly what our own writers, historians, poets, usually applaud in our nation. How they extol our climate, our soil, our native commodities, our policies, laws, orders, peace, plenty, prosperity, terming us *Albion*, *quasi Olbion*; *Angli*, *quasi Angeli*. Can too much in truth be spoken to the praise of God's bounty, and blot of our ingratitude? How hath he lifted us up to heaven, severed this island with the seas of his mercies from all the world besides, and bordering kingdoms round about, setting it as a queen in the midst of them, to hear news of wars, pestilence, bloodshed, and desolations, not to feel the least disturbance from within and without, scarce to hear a dog bark against its long-lontinued peace, unmatchable in present or past examples. Above all, what a golden candlestick hath he placed in it, furnished with oil and lamps, I would I could say in every shaft and pipe of it; but so as I may well resemble it to a bright sky in a clear evening sparkling with stars, though not in every part, yet in every zone and quarter of it! What times can tell of the like light, learning, preaching, knowledge? O that I could say practice and thankfulness answerable! What a hedge or wall of fire and protection hath God made about us! What glorious salvations from foreign invasions,\* from domestic treasons,† such as will scarce be credible to after ages.‡ Was Israel itself ever honoured with more? To all these, when for a while of late we were in a damp of grief and fear in the absence of our prince for a season, how suddenly hath he blown over that cloud! How speedily and happily hath he returned him, that we fare as people as in a dream, can scarce tell how to believe ourselves, or how to express our joys enough! How hath he filled our hearts with gladness! O that I may be able truly to say, our tongues with praise, and our lives with duties. In this fresh and last favour of his, he deals, methinks, with us as creditors with slow debtors:

\* 1588. (The year of the Spanish Armada.—Ed.)

† 1606. (The year of the Gunpowder Plot.—Ed.)

‡ Factum est hoc & Domino, mirifico in consiliis, magnifico in operibus, et est mirabile in oculis nostris.

where they have adventured much, they will sometime shoot another arrow, in hope to find and make good their former losses ; as Seneca counsels his Ebutius to imitate the husbandman, who never leaves husbanding and manuring the barren ground, till he make it fertile, to heap benefit on benefit, till he awaken his unthankful friend, overcome him with kindness, and in the end, by some welcome good turn, excite his dulness, and extort thanks by that for all the former from him. I would I were as sure God should speed of his end, as I am sure this is his end, to put us to the blush for our former ingratitude, to win us at length to pay our debts and vows unto him. Some, and sundry of all sorts, great and mean, he hath, I doubt not, among us, grateful observers and receivers of his blessings, like a few berries after the shaking of a tree, which makes him forbear to lay the axe to the root for a while : but the common thanks which he reaps at the hand of the multitude, is lukewarmness and neutrality at the best ; in many, lingerings after superstition and idolatry ; in the worse sort, desperate swearing, dissolute Sabbath keeping, brutish drunkenness and uncleanness, falsehood in dealings till all burst again, vanity in fashion-following, without shame or modesty. These are the dregs of our times, and blots of our feasts, which, if not amended, may not a withdraught of all God's favours, a removal of his candlestick, the worst of all plagues, be as certainly foreseen and foretold, as if visions and letters were sent us from heaven, as to the seven churches of Asia ? But I hope better things of our better sort, and love as little as may be to have mine eye and finger upon such sores, wishing we might see such a book-fire as we read of Acts xvii., made of all our clandestine libels, seditious and malcontented pamphlets. I speak not against the precious balm of reproof, no, not oil of scorpions. Let the righteous smite us with plain and faithful rebukes, and such smitings shall not wound the body, or break the head, but shew us our defects without rancour and malice, pouring in no poison and venom, but oil and wine to heal our wounds, to excite us to thankfulness worthy the blessings heaped and renewed daily upon us ; and what is the best thanks, but national and personal amendment of life ? And what thanks is enough, what hecatombs of sacrifices are sufficient for a God that hath done so much for us, and yet ceaseth not to do us good ? I would know of the most ungrateful man, what he can require of us more than he hath richly and abundantly deserved, were it to half, yea, to all the wealth of the kingdom ? I take not upon me to prescribe particulars. But suppose he should exact of us this particular, which, I dare say, would highly please him, and would, I am sure, be a most worthy and needful fruit of our gratitude to him. I will not mention a ceremonial, circumstantial, superfluous matter of form and order, but a necessary substantial amends of what all confess to be amiss ; a provision, I mean, of a sufficient maintenance and minister in every parish of the kingdom, a righting of what popery hath wronged, a restitution of what religion first consecrated, superstition misplaced, covetousness wholly alienated and impropriated. This could not in likelihood but prove a cure to all the maladies, spiritual and temporal, a dispelling of our Egyptian fogs, a dispersing of the frogs that yet remain as thorns in our sides, a quickening to all good works of piety and charity, a goad and spur to all kinds and fruits of thankfulness that God can require of us. Have I spoken of more than he requires, or we need, or of that which is impossible ? The last will be the only plea, but withal the plea only of our ingratitude and infidelity, not disability. Is it harder now to restore, than at first to give ? When God stirred up his

people's affections, their princes and priests were fain to set mortmaines and bounds to their bounty, and stay their hands from giving more. What were a subsidy or two for God and his church? If God give us hearts, wood and the sacrifice will soon be found, and brought to hand; and till this be done, a just brand of ingratitude lies upon us. It is impossible for any explication to extend to every particular. If every soul would study thankfulness, God would direct to the best duties. If every Englishman would kindle a bonfire in his own heart, how would the flame break out, and shine abroad, and the smoke ascend up to the heavens! If every thankful man would take up his harp, and sing and play with his tongue and hand a new song of thanks, how loud and full melody would it make! what joy would be on the earth, yea, in the heavens, to see our thankfulness and amendment. It is but every man's labour to sweep before his own door, and every man's fagot to this fire, and the work were done, and God pleased. 'Give unto the Lord,' you potentates, 'glory and strength;' give unto the Lord, ye sons of the mighty, worship and praise due to his name. You house of Aaron, and you that serve him in his courts, praise ye the Lord, and stir up others to praise him. Let Israel, and all that fear him, say, 'His mercy endureth for ever.' Whatever others shall do, 'My soul, praise thou the Lord.'

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#### A POSTSCRIPT TO THE READER.

A THANKFUL man is worth his weight in the gold of Ophir. Could I be as thankful as I ought to be, which sure I am I never shall be, yet can the thanks of a mean man procure but mean honour to God. Could I be as thankful as is possible for any one man to be, yet single thanks is like a single voice, which makes but simple music. But could I stir up thankful intentions and affections in every reader,—for example, in thy heart whose eye is now upon this advice,—then wouldst thou also endeavour to work the like in others; and so a small number, by multiplication, might prove a large sum, as a great debt is often paid by a collection from many hands which one poor man's ability could never have reached unto. That we may be aright thankful, it is requisite that with one eye we observe our sins and evils, both public and personal, and with the other our favours and blessings, that the one may acquaint us with our unworthiness, the other may prevent malcontented ungratefulness. Many a man would be much more thankful than he is, if he had but a hint of excitation and help of direction; as many a scholar, if he had but a few heads of commonplaces, would be rich in observations, which, for want of such a slight help, vanish in the reading and perish in the meditating. Behold, therefore, I give thee here a register or inventory, which I wish thee to keep and use as a table of thanks due to God in kind, and negligently by thee paid; which, when thou perusest, thou must, under every head in the space left of purpose, record, not all and every favour, which is impossible, but the most memorable and thankworthy, putting a special *Selah* of thanks upon them, as David upon his deliverance from the bear, lion, and Goliath. It cannot but revive thy memory and quicken thy affections so often as thou shalt seriously review it.

## A THANKFUL MAN'S CALENDAR.

*Public.*—Consider in what times and places the lot of my life hath fallen ; in what king's reign, in what nation, in what town, under what magistracy and ministry.

*Domestical.*—What parents, schoolmasters, and tutors, what wife, children, and servants, hath God blessed me withal ?

*Personal and Privative.*—What sickness have I been delivered from ? What dangers, casualties by sea or land ? What suits and vexations by law or otherwise ?

*Positive, Corporal.*—What measure of health and strength of body ?

*External.*—What talents of wealth, birth, office, authority, repute ?

*Mental.*—What faculties of understanding, memory ? What helps of arts, sciences, education ? &c.

When and how my conversion to God was wrought ? What assurance of God's love in Christ, what peace and joy in the Holy Ghost ? &c.

What progress, growth, and increase have I made in grace, and in good duties of my place and calling ?

What victory over tentations and special sins, old and inveterate customs of evil ?

When thou hast written down some particulars, then minister these interrogatives between God and thyself to thy conscience :—

What times formerly, or now usually, do I take to ponder and take notice of God's blessings ? What daily observation make I of them ? How many hours spend I weekly or monthly in revolving the memory of them ? What occasion take I to speak of them in company, to God's glory rather than mine own ostentation ?

What gain have my talents brought into my Master's banks ?

What benefit have my brethren by them ? Of what use is my life, parts of mind and body, &c., to my country, church, or commonwealth ?

What alms and good deeds have I done or intend to do ?

What shall I render to God for all his benefits ? How shall I add to my former thankfulness ? What good service may I do him more than I have, that men may glorify my heavenly Father ?

BRADWARDINI GRATA AD DEUM PRECATIUNCULA,  
LIB. 8, DE CAUSA DEI.

Da mihi mendicanti et misero, qui tuus sum magis quam meus, imo non meus sed tuus, ut tibi Patri luminum, cujus dona gratuita sunt omnes boni motus, actus, habitus, carentiæ malorum actuum, bona positiva, privativa, gratias, quæ mihi posibles sunt agam maximas gratissimas. Da ut facilis corde et opere faciam quam ore proferam. Da, iterum atque iterum precor, nihil ut mihi dulcius sit et delectabilius quam hæc effectuosissimè affectuosissime adimplere, incessanter semper sed ubique ab æterno in æternum. Amen.

Quoties tentatio superatur, periculum declinatur, vitium subjugatur, annosa et inveterata animi passio sanatur, laqueus deprehenditur, aut multum cupita virtus obtinetur, toties personare debet vox laudis ad singula beneficia.—Bernardus in Cant. Serm. I.

## AUGUST. IN PSAL.

Quid est, *tota die impleatur os meum laudibus?* Sine intermissione te laudem, in prosperis quia consolaris, in adversis quia corrigis, antequam essem quia fecisti, quum essem quia salutem dedisti, quum peccassem quia ignovisti, &c.