



UNIVERSITÄTS-
BIBLIOTHEK
PADERBORN

Universitätsbibliothek Paderborn

The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.

In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

London, 1721

No 49. Friday, June 8.

[urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-53597](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-53597)

 N^o 49. *Friday, June 8.*

-----*jam nunc sollennes ducere pompas*
Ad delubra juvat-----

Virg.

Y Esterday was set apart as a day of publick Thanksgiving for the late extraordinary successes, which have secured to us every thing that can be esteemed, and delivered us from every thing that can be apprehended, by a Protestant and a free people. I cannot but observe, upon this occasion, the natural tendency in such a national devotion, to inspire men with sentiments of religious gratitude, and to swell their hearts with inward transports of joy and exultation.

When instances of divine favour are great in themselves, when they are fresh upon the memory, when they are peculiar to a certain country, and commemorated by them in large and solemn assemblies; a man must be of a very cold or degenerate temper, whose heart doth not burn within him in the midst of that praise and adoration, which arises at the same hour in all the different parts of the nation, and from the many thousands of the people.

It is impossible to read of extraordinary and national acts of worship, without being warmed with the description, and feeling some degree of that divine Enthusiasm, which spreads it self among a joyful and religious multitude. A part of that exuberant devotion, with which the whole assembly raised and animated one another, catches a reader at the greatest distance of time, and makes him a kind of sharer in it.

Among all the publick solemnities of this nature, there is none in history so glorious as that under the reign of King *Solomon*, at the dedication of the Temple. Besides the great Officers of State, and the Inhabitants of *Jerusalem*, all the Elders and heads of tribes, with the whole body of the people ranged under them, from one end of the kingdom to the other, were summoned to assist in it. We may guess at the prodigious number of this assembly from the sacrifice on which they feasted, consisting of a hundred and twenty thousand sheep, and two hundred and twenty heca-

hecatombs of oxen. When this vast congregation was formed into a regular procession to attend the Ark of the Covenant, the King marched at the head of his people, with Hymns and Dances, to the new Temple, which he had erected for its reception. *Josephus* tells us, that the *Levites* sprinkled the way as they passed with the blood of Sacrifices, and burned the holy Incense in such quantities as refreshed the whole multitude with its odours, and filled all the region about them with perfume. When the Ark was deposited under the wings of the Cherubims in the holy place, the great consort of praise began. It was enlivened with a hundred and twenty trumpets, assisted with a proportionable number of other kinds of musical instruments, and accompanied with innumerable voices of all the singers of *Israel*, who were instructed and set apart to religious performances of this kind. As this mighty Chorus was extolling their Maker, and exciting the whole nation thus assembled to the praise of his never-ceasing goodness and mercy, the *Shekinah* descended: or to tell it in the more emphatical words of Holy Writ, *It came to pass, as the trumpets and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord, and when they lift up their voice with the Trumpets and Cymbals, and Instruments of musick, and praised the Lord, saying, For he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever; that then the house was filled with a cloud.* The Priests themselves, not able to bear the awfulness of the appearance, retired into the court of the Temple, where the King being placed upon a brazen scaffold, so as to be seen by the whole multitude, blessed the congregation of *Israel*, and afterwards, spreading forth his hands to Heaven, offered up that divine prayer which is twice recorded at length in Scripture, and has always been looked upon as a composition fit to have proceeded from the wisest of men. He had no sooner finished his prayer, when a flash of fire fell from Heaven and burned up the Sacrifice which lay ready upon the Altar. The people, whose hearts were gradually moved by the solemnity of the whole proceeding, having been exalted by the religious strains of musick, and awed by the appearance of that glory which filled the Temple, seeing now the miraculous consumption of the Sacrifice, and observing the piety of their King, who lay prostrate before his Maker, *bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped and praised the Lord, saying, For he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever.*

What happiness might not such a kingdom promise to itself, where the same elevated spirit of religion ran through the Prince, the Priests, and the People! But I shall quit this head, to observe that such an uncommon

mon

mon fervour of devotion shewed itself among our own countrymen, and in the persons of three Princes, who were the greatest conquerors in our *English* history. These are *Edward* the Third, his son the *Black Prince*, and *Henry* the Fifth. As for the first, we are told that, before the famous battel of *Cressy*, he spent the greatest part of the night in prayer, and in the morning received the sacrament with his son, the chief of his Officers, and Nobility. The night of that glorious day was no less piously distinguished by the orders, which he gave out to his army, that they should forbear all insulting of their enemies, or boasting of their own valour, and employ their time in returning thanks to the Great Giver of the victory. The *Black Prince*, before the battel of *Poitiers*, declared, that his whole confidence was in the Divine assistance; and after that great victory, behaved himself in all particulars like a truly christian conqueror. Eight days successively were appointed by his father in *England*, for a solemn and publick thanksgiving; and when the young Prince returned in triumph with a King of *France* as his prisoner, the pomp of the day consisted chiefly in extraordinary processions, and acts of devotion. The behaviour of the *Black Prince*, after a battel in *Spain*, whereby he restored the King of *Castile* to his dominions, was no less remarkable. When that King, transported with his success, flung himself upon his knees to thank him, the generous Prince ran to him, and, taking him by the hand, told him it was not he who could lay any claim to his gratitude, but desired they might go to the Altar together, and jointly return their thanks to whom only it was due.

Henry the Fifth, (who at the beginning of his reign, made a publick prayer in the presence of his Lords and Commons, that he might be cut off by an immediate death, if Providence foresaw he would not prove a just and good Governor, and promote the welfare of his people) manifestly derived his courage from his piety, and was scrupulously careful not to ascribe the success of it to himself. When he came within sight of that prodigious army, which offered him battel at *Agincourt*, he ordered all his cavalry to dismount, and with the rest of his forces, to implore upon their knees a blessing on their undertaking. In a noble speech, which he made to his soldiers immediately before the first onset, he took notice of a very remarkable circumstance, namely, that this very day of battel was the day appointed in his own kingdom, to offer up publick devotions for the prosperity of his arms, and therefore bid them not doubt of victory, since at the same time that they were fighting in the field, all the people of *England* were lifting up their hands to heaven

for their success. Upon the close of that memorable day, in which the King had performed wonders with his own hand, he ordered the hundred and fifteenth Psalm to be repeated in the midst of his victorious army, and at the words, *Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name be the praise*, he himself, with his whole host, fell to the earth upon their faces, ascribing to Omnipotence the whole glory of so great an action.

I shall conclude this paper with a reflection, which naturally rises out of it. As there is nothing more beautiful in the sight of God and man, than a King and his people concurring in such extraordinary acts of devotion, one cannot suppose a greater contradiction and absurdity in a government, than where the King is of one religion and the people of another. What harmony or correspondence can be expected between a Sovereign and his subjects, when they cannot join together in the most joyful, the most solemn, and most laudable action of reasonable creatures; in a word, where the Prince considers his people as hereticks, and the people look upon their Prince as an idolater!

N^o 50. *Monday, June II.*

O quisquis volet impias

Cedes, et rabiem tollere civicam:

Si quæret pater urbium

Subscribi statuis; indomitam audeat

Refrœnare licentiam

Clarus postgenitis _____

Hor.

WHEN *Mahomet* had for many years endeavoured to propagate his imposture among his fellow-citizens, and, instead of gaining any number of profelytes, found his ambition frustrated, and his notions ridiculed; he forbid his followers the use of argument and disputation in the advancing of his doctrines, and to rely only upon the scimeter for their success. Christianity, he observed, had made its way by reason and miracles, but he professed it was his design to save men, by the