

## **Knopwood Sermon K1/1**

### **Key:**

**Xt = Christ**

**Xtian = Christian**

### *on the King's accession*

#### **St Timothy 2 Chapt 1 & 2 verses**

I exhort that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men.

For kings and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. An exhortation from an Apostle always merits attention; but more especially, when he himself assures us, that the subject of it is not of an inferior or secondary nature. I exhort that, first of all "the person exhorting is St Paul, the duty of which he exhorts is a capital and leading article. It is the duty of intercession to be made by all men for all men, to manifest the love we bear for one another, as Members of Him, who at the right hand of God, ever liveth to make intercession for the whole race of Mankind. Our Prayers are united with his and by Him offered to the Father; his merits, like the cloud of sweet incense from the alter [sic] ascending with them, to render them effectual. Effectual, they must be, when rightly made; otherwise, we would not have been exhorted to make them. But to say that no benefit accrues to the Person or Persons for whom intercession is made, what is it but to contradict the whole tenor of Scripture, which shews us in so many instances the regard vouchsafed by Heaven in the Prayers of men, and the favours granted in consequence of them. He will certainly perform that which he has promised; how he will perform it is a consideration which belongs to him. Proceed we therefore to the subject of the day, namely, the duty of making intercession for Kings, and for all that are in authority. The reasons on which this duty is founded that he considered, as they respect God; as they respect those who govern; and as they respect those who are governed. In as they respect God it would indeed be sufficient that he has enjoined the duty even though he could assign no other reason. There is no danger lest He should be too absolute. Whenever he commands, we have nothing to do, but to obey; and we shall always find our account in it. "This" says the Apostle following the words of the text "this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour". But what are we, sinful men, thy unworthy Servants, O Lord, that we should be sufficient to do anything that is good and acceptable in thy sight? What are we, if, thou art graciously pleased to say so, we should either refuse or neglect to do it.

But there is a very obvious reason why this is deemed good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour. It is an acknowledgement of his providence, his power, and his goodness: of his providence, as superintending and directing the affairs of men; of his Power, as being able to protect, preserve and prosper those for whom our prayers are preferred: and of his goodness, as being willing so to protect to preserve, and to prosper them. What the act of intercession thus implies, is expressed, with wonderful excellence, in the daily Collect for the King, when we [Illegible] God, "Our Lord and heavenly Father, high and mighty, King of kings, Lord of Lords, the only ruler of Princes, who does from thy throne behold all the dwellers upon earth," and therefore "beseech him with his favour to behold our most Gracious Sovereign Lord," who reigns over us. This is a noble confession of the

unlimited extent, the undoubted superiority of divine Providence a powerful argument for confidence that we shall obtain the petitions we ask and as powerful an argument against impeding the success of our prayers, by sinning at any time in his presence. "Who from his throne does thus behold all the dwellers upon Earth." If God be on our right hand we should suffer ourselves to be neither seduced nor terrified. There is yet another consideration to be urged in the case before us. When we intreat the almighty, that he would protect and preserve government amongst us, we intreat him to protect and preserve that, which is his own appointment, and by all good and conscientious men is to be obeyed as such. All power is originally and essentially [sic] in God. Accordingly by our Apostle we are told. There is no power but of God; the powers that be "the powers subsisting", are ordained of God" so far as relates to the different modes by which in different constitutions, Rulers become invested with their power. So far government is, what St Peter styles it, "an ordinance of Man," regulated by human laws. But when, by Rulers becoming so invested, government is in force, it must be submitted to "for the Lord's sake": not only through fear of punishment, but because God, who is the great King over all the Earth has commanded us, for the peace of the world, and the comfort of Society, to consider our Governors as armed with his authority, and to be subject to them as to himself. Resistance in them will be accounted as resistance to him.

Secondly. Other reasons will offer themselves respecting Rulers and the situation in which they are placed. Who upon Earth is exposed to so many and powerful temptations as a King? Has he a propensity to the Measures of Sense? They are all at his Command: they stand around him, only waiting for his call to return answer "Here we are". In short does ambition fire him to aggrandise himself at the expence of his neighbours; to seize that to which he has no right: to desolate whole Countries, and deluge them with the blood of the Inhabitants; the instruments of destruction are prepared: Fleets and Armies move when the word is given. The means are at hand, and there are always those who will flatter and encourage him in following his inclinations.

But suppose him manfully to resist these temptations; and let us view that Sea of troubles, which threatens to overwhelm him in the discharge of his office. He must feel day and night the weight of that office, the various duties to be performed, and the difficulty, nay almost impossibility of performing them all. Exposed continually to the shock of parties contending ostensibly, for the public good, but, in reality, for places of honour and emolument, he knows not, whom to trust anemploy. In the meantime a set of libertine unprincipled writers are ready to exhibit him to his people as a Minister, to misrepresent and traduce his best actions, and treat him in a manner in which he himself would disdain to treat the beggar at his gate. Is a Person thus circumstanced an object of Envy? No: if there be any love and mercy, pity and pray for him that God would grant him Patience in suffering Evil, and perseverance in doing good, to the end of his days.

Thirdly. But it is not only a regard to our Rulers which suggests reasons why we should pray for them. A regard to ourselves should operate no less. Our own interest is deeply concerned; "I exhort that Supplications, prayers, intercessions, and given of thanks, be made for Kings, and for all that are in authority." Why? That we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all Godliness and honesty, both as Citizens and as Xtians.

More than a centry [sic] has passed, since England experienced the miseries of anarchy and confusion: when unhappy dissensions afforded opportunity for a Crafty and ambitious upstart to Murder the King, annihilate one house of Parliament, and having turned the members out of the other, walkd [sic] unmolested to Whitehall, with the key of it in his pocket. Thus was Liberty supplanted by able and useful hands, duly watered and full blown, God forbid that anything like it should happen again. Let not, then, the principles which produced it be adopted and disseminated

Transcribed by Eliza Fox on 16/10/19.

amongst us: Let not the Governed be taught to esteem themselves superior to Governors; but let all be taught as they "fear God "to" honour the King". Our felicity depends on the safety of the Prince and the stability of Government, which may fail; among other reasons, through our neglect to pray for them. Our ingratitude and ungodliness, as well as our other vices, may bring a blast on the designs of our Rulers: and while we blame the King, and his Ministers, the fault may be entirely our own. "Let supplications, Prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made therefore for Kings and all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, as citizens: and that we may lead it in all Godliness and honestly" as Xtians. As Xtians, let us therefore gratefully acknowledge the Protection we receive. We are pilgrims, travelling through this world to another. The powers of the world must use us as they shall think proper, and it please God to permit them. And if Israelites, when captives in Babylon, were enjoined by a prophet to pray for a heathen King, who had carried them into captivity, "that in his place they might have peace": how much more ought we to pray in our ~~own~~ land, for our own Prince, who adorns by his life the faith which by his office he stands engaged to defend: that so Xtianity which is the religion of Peace may flourish in the soil natured to it. Continue to us, then O Lord, we beseech thee, Him, whom thou hast hitherto preserved. "Grant the King a long life," bless him in his person, in his actions, ~~in his family~~ and in his people: make his days happy and prosperous, and the close of them, when it must come, honourable and comfortable, that, through thy grace and Goodness, it may open for him an entrance into that Kingdom, where only temptation shall cease, and trouble shall be known no more.