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v. 1

P R E F A C E. v

and Liberty, and introduced him to an extensive acquaintance with the Members of the two Houses of Parliament; but he accounted it his greatest honour to be the instrument of doing good to the souls of those who attended his ministry.

In these, as well as in his other printed Discourses, the reader will observe his almost inimitable skill of accommodating the word of God to the various occurrences of providence as they turned up in his life; so that the character of *Apollos* may with great propriety be ascribed to him, *Acts* xviii. 24. "He was an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures."

BUT after all that can be said of him, his large understanding in spiritual things, his sprightly genius, his unshaken zeal, his comprehensive thoughts, his flowing periods, his faith and charity, his godliness and honesty appear in his Sermons to have such a sufficiency in them, that they need no recommendation.

AUGUST 25,
1752.

RICHARD WINTER.



A

L I S T

O F T H E

S U B S C R I B E R S.

A.

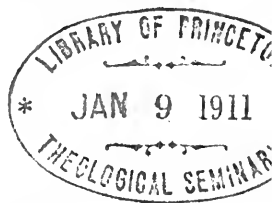
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C O N T E N T S,

S E R M O N I.

God's Presence the best Security: on Psal. xlvi. 5.

S E R M O N II.

The Nature of that Joy which God's Government of his Church obliges to: on Psal. cxlix. 2.

S E R M O N III.

The Value of a seasonable Deliverance, considered and applied: on Deut xxxii. 36.

S E R M O N IV.

The Reputation that a great Deliverance has in future Memory: on Numb. xxiii. 23.

S E R M O N V.

God's Empire over the Wind: on Prov. xxx. 4.

S E R M O N VI.

Public Revolutions the Work of God: on Dan. ii. 20, 21.

S E R M O N VII.

The divine Right of the Revolution: on 1 Chron. xii. 23.

S E R M O N VIII.

On the same Subject.

S E R M O N IX.

The Son of Tabeal; on the French Invasion in favour of the Pretender: on Isa. vii. 5, 6.

S E R M O N X.

On a Thanksgiving Day for Successes in Flanders and Spain: on Isa. xxiv. 16.

S E R -

iv C O N T E N T S.

S E R M O N XI.

Theocracy the Government of the Judges: on Judg. ii. 18.

S E R M O N XII.

Steadiness in Religion recommended from the Example of Daniel: on Dan. vi. 10.

S E R M O N XIII.

The Afs or the Serpent: on Gen. xlix. 14—18.

S E R M O N XIV.

The lawfulness of resisting Tyrants: on 1 Chron. xii. 16—18.

S E R M O N XV.

The true Happiness of a good Government: on Psal. lxiii. 11.

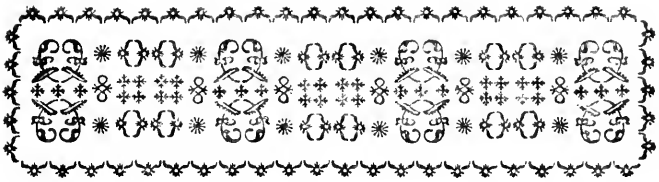
S E R M O N XVI.

Justice and Property the Glory of a Deliverance, in two Sermons: on Neh. v. 13.

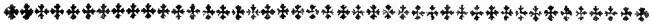
E R R A T A.

- Page 57, line 26, dele *of*
- 61, line 12, add *does*.
- 70, line 18, read *Armada*.
- 87, for *datb* read *batb*, in the text.
- 138, last line but one, read *about*.
- 155, line 24, for *Price* read *Prince*.
- 246, line 13, for *Darious* read *Darius*.
- 296, line 25, for *impofure* read *impofor*.
- 320, line 26, dele *it*.
- 351, line 22, for *and* read *an*.
- 364, line 12, for *Egypt* read *Egypt*.
- 413, last line but one, for *persecution* read *perfaufion*.

Note, The three Sermons Preached November 5, 1705, June 27, 1706, November 5, 1706, at the End of the SECOND VOLUME, the Reader is desired to read in their order after Sermon VI. in the FIRST VOLUME, they not being procured soon enough to be inserted in their proper Place.

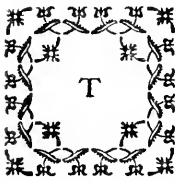


S E R M O N I.



T O T H E

R E A D E R.



THESE Sermons come abroad into the world with the same design that raised them to the pulpit; and that is to promote a religious memory of that *deliverance*, which put a new credit upon the fifth of *November*. The happy change which commenced in *England*, 1688, deserves to be saved from death, and calls for a zeal of all degrees, when so many hands are at work to give it the fatal blow. I have here endeavoured to propound those doctrines which are the christian's support in every terror of life; and more especially in those extensive dangers which include the whole Church at once: God's securing presence with his people (*a*); his indulgent sway over them (*b*); his readiness to appear for them in the darkest extremity (*c*); the vast compass that a national mercy takes (*d*); and the divine inscriptions that are upon it (*e*): these are matters of healing reflection in a day of calamity.

VOL. I.

B

I cannot

(*a*) Sermon I.

(*b*) Sermon II.

(*c*) Sermon III.

(*d*) Sermon IV. (*e*) Sermon VI.

I cannot think that discourses upon these subjects are born out of due time in this juncture, nor am I capable of so much complaisance to the opinion in vogue, as to suppose that now there can be *no rational ground to fear any mischief from Popery* *. The Scripture has made it no good symptom, when men cry out *peace and safety*: the issue is so far from being parallel to their vanity, that it is no other than *sudden destruction that comes upon them* (g). That city had the marks of ruin in her forehead, which promised herself an ample security; God took such language so ill, that he measures his anger to them by the excess of their foolish hopes. *How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow doth he give her: for she hath said in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow, therefore shall her plagues come in one day* (h). The Church made it one strain of her *lamentation*, that such as ought to have given her fair warning in blowing the trumpet, endeavoured rather to help on a dreaming presumption: it is mentioned as a brand upon their treachery, *Thy prophets have seen vain and foolish things for thee, and they have not discovered thine iniquity, to turn away thy captivity; but have seen for thee false burdens, and causes of banishment* (i); though their case was as probably safe, and had as few pre-*signs of ruin as any, for the kings of the earth, and all the inhabitants of the world, would not have believed, that the adversary and the enemy would have entered into the gates of Jerusalem* (k).

There is a great deal of pains taken to persuade us, that any farther methods to *prevent the growth of Popery* are needless, though the reasons look very transparent in some peoples eyes; they are such as a common

* See Doctor *Binckes's* Sermon before the House of Commons Nov. 5. And the ingenious answer to it in an *Expostulatory Letter*.

(g) 1 Theff. v. 3.

(h) Rev. xviii. 7, 8.

(i) Lam. ii. 14.

(k) Lam. iv. 12.

mon fight may discover a long train of dangers through. Is it not time to think that there is a plunder designed for the blessings, which made their entrance with the *Revolution*, when the *great Prince*, who was then our *guardian angel*, meets with so lavish a raillery? This is a proof equally convictive and wounding, that the impression of our happy escape is gone. It looks like wheeling about to bondage again, when people are making a new courtship to the plagues of *Egypt*, and extolling *Pbaraob*, the very worst of them all. To make their design more supple and taking, their first work is to sting the reputation of *his late Majesty*; that a malicious character of his person may sink a taint into the cause he came about.

No sooner had he taken his *serene farewell*, and shifted from one throne to another, but the brute was unchained: the malice that used to sleep in cowardise or mask in compliment, then began a sincere outrage. Though few had courage enough to affront his life, yet there was no danger in fighting his dust. His very name had often (like a powerful dart of lightning) melted an enemy in the scabbard; but when this light was extinguished, then they came out of their dens, like creatures whetted for prey; and never till then could they pretend to be his match. When he could no longer shew *his face*, they ventured to shew *theirs*. Thus it was with *Israel*, they begin to murmur just when *Moses* was taken up *into the mount*. The prejudice that went no farther than an inward fret, or some repining whispers, broke loose when the check of such a ruler's presence was gone: and their rage was so little frugal, that they include both GOD and his servant in one abuse; idolatry in worship and ingratitude in politics mingle in the same reflection: they strike both at their GOD and their captain, in this sentence, *Up, let us make us gods, which may go before us; for as for this Moses, the man*

that brought us up out of Egypt, we know not what is become of him (1). The same spirit in such a generation begun its clamour, as soon as our deliverer was gone to see God face to face.

So heady was this malice, that they charge him at random with a crime of the deepest malignity : they impute to him a design of disturbing the line of succession, breaking one great link in the chain, rasing out her *present Majesty's* title, and advancing the house of *Hanover* to a more immediate claim. They had given the story its complete shape, and it was spirited with such a confidence, that some people thought it both their duty and interest to believe it : and indeed a faith thus exposed to sale is no rarity. But the *House of Lords*, in a noble disdain of this rumour, gave it a fair scrutiny, and then left a brand upon it in this resolve :

“ The House being informed that there has been a
 “ report spread abroad, that amongst the late King’s
 “ papers, some papers had been found, tending to
 “ the prejudice of her present Majesty, or her suc-
 “ cession to the crown, and the Lord President, the
 “ Lord Steward, the Lord Chamberlain, the Earl
 “ of *Marlborough*, and the Earl of *Albemarle*, who
 “ were the persons appointed by her Majesty to in-
 “ spect the said papers, having, at the desire of the
 “ House, severally declared, That amongst the late
 “ King’s papers they did not see or find any paper
 “ in the least tending to the prejudice of her Majesty,
 “ or her succession to the crown, or to her prejudice
 “ in any respect whatsoever, or which might give any
 “ ground or colour for such report : it is thereupon
 “ resolved by the Lords spiritual and temporal in
 “ Parliament assembled, That the said report is
 “ groundless, false, villainous and scandalous, to
 “ the dishonour of the late King’s memory, and
 “ *highly tending to the disservice of her present Majesty.*

“ It

(1) Exodus xxxii 1.

“ It is ordered by the Lords spiritual and temporal
 “ in Parliament assembled, That the matter of fact
 “ aforesaid, and the resolution of this House there-
 “ upon, be laid before her Majesty by his Grace the
 “ Duke of *Bolton*, the Earl Marshal, the Earl of
 “ *Radnor*, the Earl of *Stamford*, the Earl of *Scarbo-*
 “ *rough*, and the Lord *Ferrers*; and that they do
 “ humbly desire her Majesty from this House, That
 “ her Majesty will give order to Mr Attorney General
 “ to prosecute, with the utmost severity of law, the
 “ authors or publishers of the abovementioned, or
 “ such like scandalous reflections.”

When this collection of lies was routed, then the noise run upon *exorbitant grants*: the Prince who saved the nation's treasure from enemies, was accused of draining it by *pensions*. But *the same honourable House* have again defended the IMMORTAL NAME from this aspersion, by telling her Majesty in their late address, [*Feb. 5.*] “ That it appears by the
 “ navy-books in the year 1697, (the last year of the
 “ last war) the pensions only amounted to Seven
 “ thousand seventy-seven pounds; since which time
 “ they are so far increased, that the estimate of the
 “ pensions for the year 1705 amount to Eighteen
 “ thousand one hundred and eleven Pounds.”

Now the most fashionable topic of accusation is, that he designed to dig up the foundations of the Church; but the argument they bring for it ruins the cause which it pretends to assist, and instead of wounding his character, leaves a glory upon it. The crime that is mentioned with so much noise, is his even tender carriage to all Protestants, by which he answered that great title of being *a common father to all his people*. This did not only secure us of an endearment abroad, but it abated that which has always been the most fatal distemper of this nation; I mean, a spirit of animosity which consumes us within, preys upon the vitals of the kingdom, and thus makes us

the easier conquest to a foreign enemy. What better zeal could he shew to the Church, than by advancing men of so much learning, holiness and moderation, as have endeavoured to cool the fury on both sides? By their example and conduct we are learning to fill up that distance with love, which has been made by varieties in opinion. Men of such qualifications will always be attractive of praise, from those that long to see the things of peace pursued: and their methods are more likely to prosper an argument, than any dismal schemes of cruelty. Persecution carries a conviction no farther than its penalty; it only deals with the part that is vulnerable: the mind all this while is untouched, and is so far from being a captive, that it rather sours into more suspicion of the cause that is thus promoted. Fire and faggot are no proper illuminations for the judgment. The most obtaining character that *Satan* goes under, is that of a *Destroyer*; and certainly when our *measures* are like to him, the *cause* can bear but little resemblance of Christ. Passion and ruin have no place in the artillery of the Temple, but must always go for unhallowed things, the rages of corruption and darkness.

The *House of Lords* (in the last year's conference) gave a noble testimony against any severities to Conscience, and have fixed King WILLIAM'S character in their argument. "When by such (*oppressing*) methods (say they) we were reduced to the last extremity, then was the late King *invited over* to come and deliver us; and after he had secured our Religion, our Laws, and our Liberties, he, by the *Act of Toleration* which he passed, quieted those heats that had almost consumed us: whatever some may think, he will still be reckoned amongst the greatest of our Kings; to him we owed a long continuance of a flourishing time, even during a great war, and it is to him that we owe the great happiness of her Majesty's being now on the throne.

"The

“ The Church has no reason to complain of the effects of the Toleration, for as the numbers of those who divide from us do visibly abate all over the nation, so the heat and fermentation which was raised by those divisions is almost intirely laid, and we cannot but look on that as an happy step towards the healing of our wounds.” The necessity and charm of an healing spirit is both recommended and exemplified in my Lord Bishop of *Sarum*’s Charge and Sermon at his late triennial visitation.

But it is this temper which makes them obnoxious to so much indecency. Some people have been waiting for a time, when the Dissenters should once again be their game, *pursued as roes upon the mountains*. The main bustle of their Religion (pardon the harshness of the name) is to *call down fire from heaven* upon those that differ from them; though they mistake their place, for none of the fire which they love is to be found *there*: but so eager are they in their chase, that they cannot endure any tenderness in *quality* should screen the prey. This makes them put all upon a level in character, both the men they would destroy, and those that resist their fury. *Dissenters* and *Low-Church*, *Separation* and *Moderation*, are things of equal repute; they are both damned with the same impatience.

This is a thing so notorious, that it is above the need of particular instances; I shall only mention one which is very remarkable in its kind, being first delivered in *Parliament* (where the nation is epitomized) and afterwards *printed* for a more general perusal, so that now it is addressed to the larger volume of the *Commons of England*. I have thrown the quotation into the margin, as a passage that ought to stand by itself*. There is another passage in that speech which

* I did wonder to hear so many Bishops against the Bill; but that wonder ceased, when I considered whom they owed their pre-

which throws a reflection upon his late Majesty, though the accusation is so happily founded, that most people in the nation are able to judge whether it is true or no. I will give you it in the margin, and leave it to such a reputation as every Reader's justice directs him to put upon it*. One would think these could never be the men, who used to preach up an unlimited subjection to *Bishops* and *Judges*: the mystery of that doctrine is now unravelled. They do not exceed their neighbours in any true value for the office, but they design to serve a narrow interest by the man that fills it: for when they are baffled in this, both the *chair* and the *bench* are the common-shore of reproaches: witness that saucy impudent reflection upon *one*, who has been the *glory of his great station*, a steady example of conscience, and sacred regard to the law. I must once more dismiss the reader to the margin, for I would do by such quotations as the *Israelites* did by their *uncleanness*, remove it to a *separate place*, that it might not annoy the *camp*: though when you have read the charge, you will find it so deeply laden that it must burst. The story is as much a lie, as the remark that hangs upon it is unmannerly †.

Some

ferment to. The Archbishop of *Canterbury*, I think, was promoted to that See by my Lord *S—d's* interest; and being asked what reasons he had against the Bill, replied, He had not well considered the Bill, but that my Lord *Somers* told him it ought not to pass. This was a very weighty reason for the head of our Church to give; and yet, I dare say, none of the rest of them could give a better. One would be provoked by the late behaviour of the Bishops, to move for leave to bring in a Bill for the toleration of Episcopacy; for since they are of the *same principles* with the Dissenters, it is but just, I think, that they should stand upon the *same foot*.

* They may remember, if they please to recollect, the language in the late reign, *Sir, You must turn this Gentleman out, or else I cannot serve you.* And if any Gentleman was in the interest of the Church of *England*, it was a sufficient exception against his being employed. No Gentleman of that principle was then fit to be a *Deputy-Lieutenant*, or a *Justice of Peace*.

† So tender are they of their Dissenting Brethren, that I am told it has lately been delivered as Law, by a *great man* in *Westminster-Hall*,

Some that pretend a mighty deference for this government have disputed the foundation of the last, and tell us our *great Deliverer* should not have been *King*, but *Regent*; that a door might be left open for the *man*, the *superstition* and *tyranny*, which were all sent together to the nation from whence we got them : but as that change was the result of close and free deliberation, so it has been honourably asserted in the abovementioned *conference*; for it is there affirmed, “ That the Lords do not well understand the inference, “ that as upon the revolution the last reign begun with “ an Act in favour of the Dissenters; so the Commons “ do desire in the beginning of her Majesty’s reign, “ an Act may pass in favour of the Church. The “ Lords conceive that *both reigns began upon the same “ bottom and foundation*; and that as in this reign her “ Majesty has been pleased to give gracious assurances “ as to liberty of conscience, so in the last, the Church “ ever met with protection and support.”

But I am really surpris’d at that length I have run; so many quotations flowing into this preface, have swelled it beyond my first design: though they are all of them passages which I read with so much gust, that I cannot think they will be unentertaining.

As to the following Sermons, they are not squeezed from me by an invincible importunity; I have not that hackney shelter to run to. If a voluntary design of recommending the Revolution to a *serious value* be not excuse enough, I confess, I am unprotected. This you will find to be their main drift, especially in the three last.

I am far from thinking that the end of this deliverance is attained by a zeal for the *glorious memory* of

Hall, that a notorious perjured vagabond, with two wives at once, being possess’d of a separate Congregation, though without any license or legal qualification to preach to them, shall for that reason only be exempt from the late Act for listing vagrants.

of King WILLIAM (though that is a debt from every *Englishman* and *Protestant*) but we are to consider an *infinite Agent* in the whole, and learn to be more active in his honour, more depending upon his goodness. Let us not sin away the liberty and peace which have sometimes been recovered with blood, but in our *Revolution* came so cheap and quick, as if GOD would have little else but himself seen in it. Heaven has now made us the Defence of *Europe*, the Guardians of a crumbling *Empire*: let us not disarm ourselves, and grieve away that divine presence and blessing, which is *the glory of any people*.

GOD has done wonderful things for us the last year. He shews a willingness to be our guardian; but let us not lay an abusive stress upon his forbearance. All these liberalities of Providence are not to heighten our rebellion against him, or give us any license for sensuality and hatred. If we still abound in luxury and envy, destroying ourselves and one another, that is acting the *brute* and the *Devil* in the face of an eternal friend.

This being the day of *his late Majesty's* quiet departure to an immortal crown, we may give ourselves the liberty of a serious pause, and say, *Hitherto has the Lord helped us*. Let us bless the divine goodness which continued his life without any scandal, and quenched it without any horror; prepared him both to rule and to die; made him glorious in possessing, and easy in leaving a toilsome government, and so largely fitted *our present gracious Queen* to succeed him. Our value for his memory is so far from being a weakening of duty and veneration for *her*, that we think the one is essential to the other. A *malignant* in the late reign must either be a *Nonjuror* or *Malecontent* in this.

I will conclude with an hearty wish, that the victories of the last year may be drowned in the greater successes of this; that *Blenheim* and *Hockstet*, which make so brave a sound in history now, may be remembered

membréd as introductions to some more extended conquest. May this be the character of *our wonderful General*, that as the common enemy has *begun to fall before him*, so he may go on sinking, until he comes to a misery as deep as his wickedness.

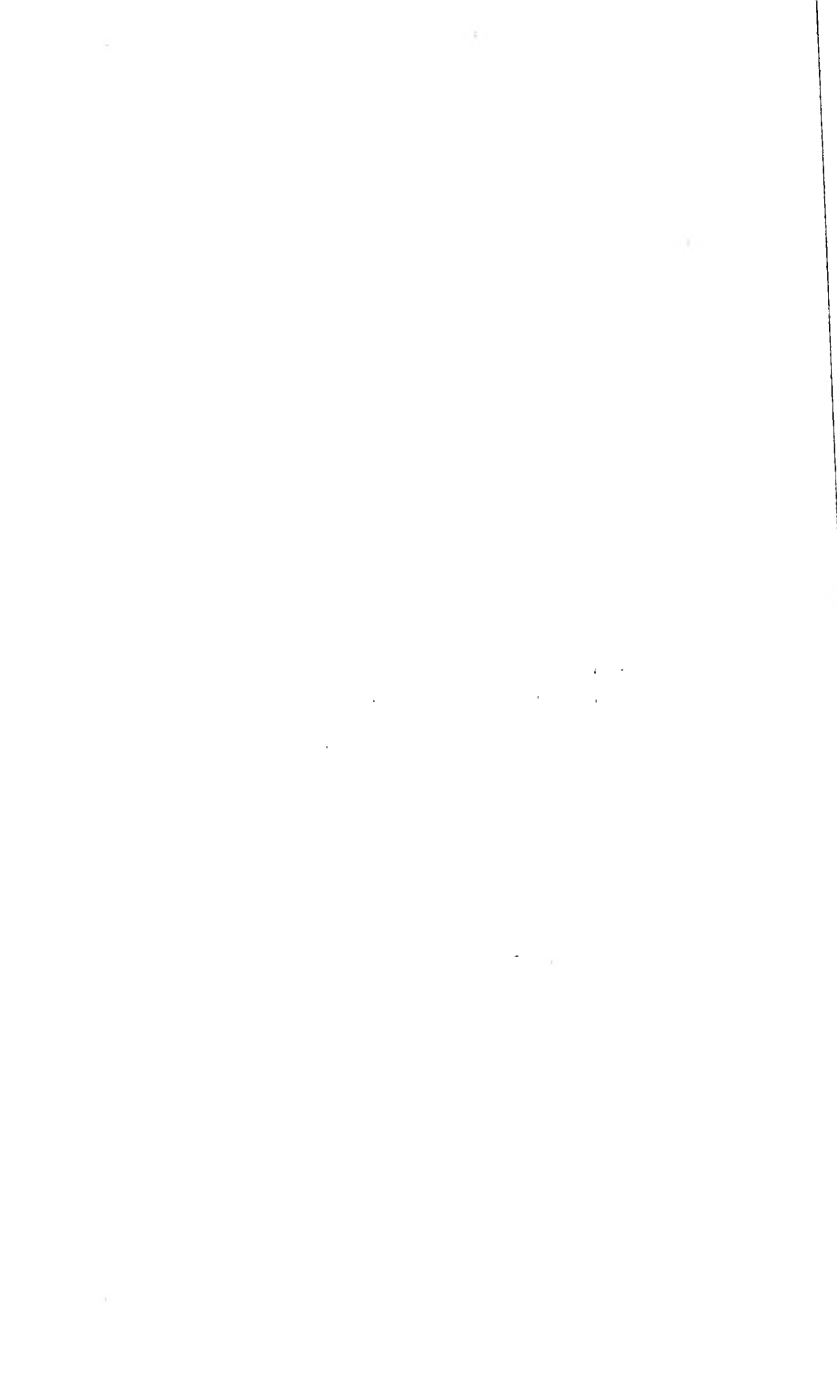
May her excellent Majesty, the great moving *soul of the alliance*, find the benefit of that pious resolution of calling in help from above. As she has graciously appointed *April 4*, for a *public fast*, to invite GOD into the confederacy; so may she find that his power will neither be an enemy nor a neuter, but be employed in causing *the people to fall under her*.

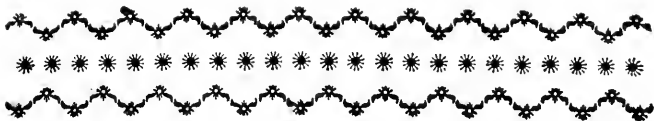
And may we in *the next Parliament* have men whose hearts are gathered up into the common welfare, who make *the liberties of the people* their darling and charge. Then may we hope that *Judgment will run down our streets as a river, and Righteousness as a mighty stream*: the crown will fit more easy upon the royal head; ruling will not be so thorny and oppressive a work as it has been. Such an union would terrify the enemy, and crush *his only hopes* of succeeding. That GOD may pour down *such a spirit*, as an evidence that we are a nation *whom he cares for*; and that *England* shall be yet the stage of Gospel-purity, a shelter of innocent refugees, and the greatest instance of concord between prerogative and liberty, should be the general cry to heaven: and of this number of petitioners is (though most unworthy)

Your affectionate humble servant,

LONDON,
March 8, 170 $\frac{4}{5}$.

✓
Thomas Bradbury.





SERMON THE FIRST.

God's Presence with a People the best Security.

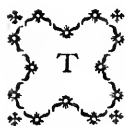


Preached at NEWCASTLE, 1700.



PSALM XLVI. 5.

God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved.



HIS is a Psalm of triumph, where we find the Church using a majestic language to those enemies, whom Providence had befooled and undermined. The first verse lets us see what her courage took its principal footing upon; *God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble (a)*. This is a satisfactory answer both to foreign threats, and the inward objections of unbelief. In a confidence of this she discharges fear, and resolves to keep a steddyness under the greatest disturbance of nature: *Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be removed, though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof, Selah (b)*. When the world is under the wildest convulsion, the believer is upon another bottom, and therefore keeps his settlement. He is built upon the rock, against which the gates of hell cannot prevail.

Now

(a) Pfal. xlv. 1.



(b) Pfal. xlv. 2, 3.

Now lest this challenge should pass for a groundless boast, the Psalmist runs the old encouragement over again. *There is a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of our God, the holy place of the most High (c).* Notwithstanding the laborious devices of malice against this sacred interest, yet the Church has the best assurances of relief and solace. Here is a *river* of flowing comfort, that shall never be interrupted by an external malice, nor run itself dry with any inward expence or corruption. It is to be a lasting cordial. Now that which he here represents in a similitude, he speaks out in the plainest terms in the text I have chosen, *God is in the midst of her*; this is his covenant with his people, the river that supplied so many healing streams.

He is in the midst of *her*, that is, *the city of God*, as appears from the former verses; or *Mount Sion* the place of religious worship in *David's* time, and thereby endeared both to the company of saints, and the smiles of heaven. Sometimes it is called *the joy of all the land, the tribes of God go thither (d)*. And it is represented as the seat of a peculiar presence; *Out of Sion the perfection of beauty God has shined (e)*. And again, *The Lord loves the gates of Sion more than all the dwellings of Jacob (f)*. *He has chosen Sion, and desired it for his habitation; This is my rest for ever, here I will dwell, for I have desired it (g)*. And as we often read in the New Testament, that the Church of God keeps this character, so when we meet with it in the Old, we are taught to put such a sense upon the word, as agrees to the state of Religion now, so that here by *the city of God*, which *the most High* has placed himself *in the midst* of, I understand the whole body of those that have really espoused his interest, in distinction from the rest of the world. And the text sounds forth the happiness of such a people in the fullest language, that

God

(c) Psal. xlvi. 4.

(d) Psal. cxxii.

(e) Psal. l. 2.

(f) Psal. lxxxvii. 2.

(g) Psal. cxxxii. 13, 14.

God is in the midst of them. He is in every particular believer: this is a glory that we are bid to put to the test; for *if Christ be not in us, we are reprobates (b)*. In another place, such are called *the temple of God (i)*. But these words have reference to the privileges that are bestowed upon *God's* people in general. They make up one body: they live in common upon the grace that is lodged in the great head of the Church, and from whom it is conveyed with freedom and wonder. What I understand by the text you may take in this proposition.

God is and will be *in the midst* of his Church: or he will be always near his people in public occurrences. This is what the words principally mean, and, you know, it is what divine Providence directs us to mind this day. The method will be to shew,

- I. Under what characters *God* is present with his people.
- II. What his being *in the midst* of the Church imports.
- III. The reasons or grounds of this wonderful kindness.
- IV. The application.

I. Under what characters is *God* present with his people, or *in the midst of Zion*? This is set down as a favour, which the rest of the world are not sharers in, and therefore it must be inclusive of something better and more gracious than his omnipresence; for *he fills both heaven and earth with his glory*: it is the misery of the wicked, that in this world he is near them to observe their villainies; and in hell he will be a *God* at hand, to keep the flames alive with his own displeasure. But when he is said to be *in the midst* of his people, He is so,

1. As a Governor. He holds the reins of providence which determine the actions of every creature.

He

(b) 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

I

(i) 2 Cor. vi. 16.

He does according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth (k). But he is in a more peculiar manner the *King of Saints*, and therefore the Church pleads this title as an argument for God's mercy, and a distinction from their enemies. *We are thine, thou never barest rule over them; they are not called by thy name (l).* Holy souls are all subjected to his disposal. He has his own way of managing them. He prescribes laws for the rule of life, and he makes them successful upon his servants. He is the master of their hearts: he keeps up a garison there to sway the soul, and fulfil his pleasure. *The Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our King (m).* He rules with arbitrary grace, makes them *willing in the day of his power*, uses such a sweetness of authority as at once both pleases and overcomes the subject. *His they are, and him they serve (n).* Whatever remains of stubbornness they may feel, yet there is not one soul of those that are devoted to him, but who have an heart at his service. In this sense God is in his Church. He *walks among the golden candlesticks* to fill them with his own light. He prescribes the laws of obedience. It is his prerogative to rule consciences; this is an authority that he has never given out of his own hand.

2. As a Guardian. *In Judah God is known; his name is great in Israel; there he broke the arrows of the bow, the shield, the sword, the battle (o).* He is present with his people, for their protection as well as management. He is the *hope of Israel, the saviour thereof in a time of trouble*; and therefore will not be as a *stranger in the land, or a way-faring man, that turns aside, to tarry for a night (p).* This the prophet pleads, why he should not be as a *mighty man that cannot save*, because he was *in the midst of them.* His
Saints

(k) Dan. iv. 35.
(l) Ifai. lxiii. 19.
(m) Ifai. xxxiii. 22.

(n) Acts xxvii. 23.
(o) Psal. lxxvi. 1, 3.
(p) Jer. xiv. 8, 9.

Saints are chosen out of the world; their interest, methods, progress and characters are peculiar. The avowance of piety makes them a fair mark to a general censure. If they stand up for GOD'S honour, they run a great venture of their own. There is an intail of reproaches upon those that dare to be serious. A devotedness to the will of heaven is the most affronting spectacle to corrupt nature. As men have renounced the beauties of holiness themselves, so they love not to read their own condemnation in the zeal of others.

And since vexation, disgrace, turmoil and malice are the ordinary train that follow seriousness, it is but just to conclude, that such as GOD pitches upon for his service, should have a stock to bear them out in all this expence and hazard. Thus he comforts his people, *Thou art my servant, I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away; fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God, I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee, and uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. They that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded; they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish* (q). Is he the master of our souls? Do we lie at the conduct of his grace? And will he let us be losers by our allegiance? Shall we ever have occasion to recant a life of duty, or grieve over all our labours for him? No surely; the character that he is known by promises other things. It sounds harsh in the name of our GOD, to say he is one who plunges his people into ruffle and disquiet, and then withdraws when they are in the hottest battle. This is cross both to the glories of his love, and the usual roads of his providence. *When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee* (r).

As GOD knew what a venom and opposition piety would expose us to, so he resolved to stand by his people in the worst extremity. *The Heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved, he uttered his voice, the earth melted. The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge (s).* As no distress of persecution shall cool the believer's zeal for him, so neither shall it stop the course of his favours. Our *Beloved is ours (t)* as intirely as we are *his*. Religion looks well in the christian's eyes, when it meets with all the contradiction of sinners. Such an one takes pleasure in *Sion's dust*, and *favours* the disjointed *stones*; and as the cause we espouse is never the worse for the clouds that darken it, so the hazard we run in those evil days fixes no vileness upon us. The soul shall be amiable to GOD, when others are doing their utmost to plunder his reputation and interest. Is he our Governor, and will he not be our Guardian? Will he let his people be run down, when they fight his battles? No, the honour of his goodness cannot endure it.

It is love to him that has made them so negligent of their worldly credit and advantage: and we may suppose them to argue in *David's* words. *For thy sake we have borne reproach, shame has covered our faces. The zeal of thine house has eaten us up (u).* “ Could we
 “ have stood unconcerned, when Religion begun to
 “ lose its freshness, and decline into a shadow: Could
 “ our zeal have allowed the abuses that were thrown
 “ upon thy name, we might have lived in quiet, and
 “ never made ourselves the jest of profaneness. But
 “ we found a secret impatience that would not let us
 “ alone; something that disturbed the sloth of nature:
 “ we were *jealous for the Lord of hosts*: we must be
 “ meddling with the corruptions of men, and trying
 “ a battle with those impieties, that were dearer than
 “ life itself. And what pity is it, that the principles,
 “ which

(s) Psal. xlvi. 6, 7.

(t) Cant. ii. 14.

(u) Psal. lxxix. 7, 9.

“ which made us loyal, should leave us miserable?
 “ That in our choice of thee, we have nothing to re-
 “ pay the expences of an obedient zeal.”

It is below the reputation of our LORD, to put by the soul that runs for shelter under his wings. *O thou afflicted, tossed with tempests, and not comforted; I will lay thy stones with fair colours,—and great shall be the peace of thy children (x).* He is the protector of *Israel*. He allows them guards, as well as laws; that as the one may train them in a course of duty, so the other may secure them from all incroachment. As he keeps the government in his own hands, and will allow no rival in the honour of that post; so he is the only trustee and defence of his people. It is as much his work to save, as to guide them. He will not venture them intirely upon a created care, but placeth himself *in the midst of Sion*. *God is known in her palaces for a refuge (y).* These two general heads might be ranged into many particulars: but the time bids me proceed to shew,

II. What is implied in God's being *in the midst* of a people.

1. *Great Love.* They are the *Temple of God*, as he hath said, *I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people (z).* Had their company been a disgust to him, he would have removed his habitation. When the Jews had grieved him with their murmurs and unbelief, the amends that his anger would have of them was the withdrawment of a gracious presence. In that one threatenng he sums up all possible desolation. *I will not go up in the midst of thee, for thou art a stiff-necked people (a).* They became nauseous in his eyes: he did not delight in their numbers, but was for calling off that providence, which was both the guard and

C 2

glory

(x) *Isai. liv. 11, 13.*

(y) *Psal. xlviii. 3.*

(z) *2 Cor. vi. 16.*

(a) *Exod. xxxiii. 3.*

glory of their camp. There is nothing that could threaten a fuller vengeance, than his refusal to go along with them. The suspense of those favourable smiles had vexation and calamity enough in it. *He abhorred them, because of the provoking of his sons and his daughters; and he said, I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end will be* (b). And as these words are the language of a sore resentment, so his presence is the most amiable conviction of love.

When he says, that he will be *in the midst* of a people; such a promise sounds the great delight that he has in them. A studied society speaks an endearment between the persons that design and contrive it: and GOD'S attendance of his chosen, is a proof of those labouring bowels which he has for them. *The Lord's portion is his people: Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. He found him in a desert land, and the waste howling wilderness: he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. As an eagle stirs up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreads abroad her wings, takes them, bears them on her wings; so the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange God with him* (c).

He enjoys himself in the crouds of his servants. The duty of their homage and subjection, the freedom of his own condescension and mercy, are what he is pleased with. His love throws the most cheerful darts upon them, and all these rebound up to his bosom again in mighty shouts of praise. He delights to be encircled with an admiring throng, who are the favourites of his breath, and the trumpets of his glory. *He inhabits the praises of Israel* (d). Thus when we read of the exalted state which Christ fills in heaven, we find his honour is assisted by the surrounding crouds. This he claimed as the wages of his service. *Father, I will, that they whom thou hast given me, be with me where*

(b) Deut. xxxii. 19, 20.

(c) Deut. xxxii. 9—12.

(d) Psal. xxii. 3.

where I am, that they may behold my glory (e). And this is paid with the greatest fairness and justice. He is called a *Lamb in the midst of the throne* (f). He lives in the heart of triumph, and is the very centre of numerous praises. From him, in this station, they derive a blessedness, and to him they direct all their *hallelujahs. Worthy is the Lamb, that was slain, to receive honour, &c* (g). So when he is said to be *in the midst of Sion*, it imports his great solace in communion with his people. *If thy presence, saith Moses, go not with us, carry us not up hence; for wherein shall it be known that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? Is it not in that thou goest with us* (h)?

2. Diligent Attendance over them. He has chosen a post, that is most serviceable to observation and remark. He places himself there, that he may with the greater ease deal about the pensions of his love. Here it is, that he follows malicious enemies in all their tracks and windings. He sees how their plots are woven, and carried on towards something of a ripeness. The hidden frames of mischief are open to his eye. There are no such corners upon earth, as can give their wickedness a full secrecy. *Hell is naked before him, and destruction has no covering* (i). It is possible indeed the haters of *Sion* may dig low for the undermining of the cause which bears heaven's stamp. The design in itself may be cunning and probable, defended with the best confederacy and darkness. We may be wrapt up in our own ease, without the least whisper of scruple and jealousy; and all this time iniquity may be upon its march to our destruction.

But God numbers the steps of the contrivance. He has stinted their policy, and *said to the proud waves, Hitherto shall ye go, and no farther.* So that the very *wrath of man has praised him, and the remainder of that*

C 3

wrath

(e) John xvii. 24.

(f) Rev. v. 6.

(g) Rev. v. 13.

(b) L. od. xxxiii. 15, 16.

(i) Job xxvi. 6.

wrath he has restrained. *They shall surely gather together, but not by me; whosoever shall gather together against thee, shall fall for thy sake (k).* He sees with what caution and leisure they proceed forwards, what reputation and confidence they give to their own inventions: and all this time he jeers their devices, beholds them with a generous scorn, knowing how small a turn of Providence can dissolve them. *He that sits in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall have them in derision; saying, Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Sion (l).* Their design is bold and foolish, their methods of obtaining it poor and vain: they aim at no less than the dethroning of that Prince, whom **GOD'S** oath has assured of eternal grandeur. But in defiance of their mischief, he shall reign, and bathe his sword in the blood of the mighty. Thus you see our defence is from him that *keeps Israel, who neither slumbers nor sleeps (m).* For *except the Lord keep the city, the watchmen watch but in vain (n).*

3. *Readiness to give seasonable relief.* Thus in the context, he is called a *present help in time of trouble (o)*; which explains his being *in the midst* of his people: and the words that immediately follow are to the same purpose, *God shall help her, and that right early.* He is not afar off, when calamity urges his appearance. We have not a **SAVIOUR** to seek, when we should use him. He is to be found *in the midst of Sion.* Enemies cannot get the start of him. He was never so slow in his mercy, as to come too late. *Abraham* acknowledges this, when he calls a place, *Jehovah-jireh, in the mount of the Lord it shall be seen (p).* There may indeed be a long delay, but it is only to sweeten the deliverance, and take a fuller blow at rebellious sinners. *The vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it shall speak, and not lie; though it tarry, wait for*

(k) *Ist.* liv. 15.(l) *Psal.* ii. 4, 6.(m) *Psal.* cxxi. 3.(n) *Psal.* cxxvii. 1.(o) *Psal.* xlvi. 1.(p) *Gen.* xxii. 14.

for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry (q). He is always furnished with arrows to humble the contradiction of men, and proclaim *salvation for Jacob*; and sometimes his readiness to save, shews itself with so much wonder, that the same report tells us both of our danger and our escape. We never come to know that mischief was upon the stocks, till we are fully assured that God has blasted it. When he *turned again our captivity, we were like them that dream (r)*. Providence does with the same breath intimate, what might have been our case, and shew us what the overruling votes of heaven were.

We have often received a mercy, which we never saw any necessity to pray for; our first address to God has been in a joyful gratitude. He has always a sufficient number of blessings ready for every distress that can befall his people. That promise carries a wonderful encouragement in it. *Before they call, I will answer; and whilst they are yet speaking, I will hear (s)*. We account it an extraordinary privilege to have the ear of God, and humbly to wrest deliverance with strong cries and petitions: but here are stranger methods of love. Mercy is in haste to save us: as if prayer and salvation were at strife which should run the faster. The very moment of intreaty is often the set time wherein God visits *Sion*; deliverance flies on with that resolution and vigour, that we have scarce leisure to conclude the request, before we see it answered. We are forced to be abrupt, and break off with a pleasing disorder and confusion. The returning prodigal had framed an address to his Father: he designed not only to own the foulest guilt, but to express his value for the meanest favour; *I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son, make me as one of thine hired servants (t)*: But ere he could get his speech out, his discourse is

C 4

interrupted

(q) Hab. ii. 3.

(r) Psal. cxxvi. 1.

(s) Isai. lxxv. 24.

(t) Luke xv. 18, 19.

interrupted by an hasty love: he cuts it off by the half; his concluding part is prevented with a full assurance of welcome and kindness. So ready is God to appear for the salvation of his chosen.

III. What are the *grounds* and *reasons* of so near a presence? Or, what cause have we to hope for for so great a blessing? *The reason of the hope that is in us*, I shall just mention in three particulars.

1. The *nature of God's love* is such, that it gives us ground to look for this privilege. He has *chosen Sion*, and he does not run back from his choice, but will *redeem her poor with judgment, and her converts with righteousness (u)*. *The gifts and calling of God are without repentance (x)*. *Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will not I forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands, thy walls are continually before me (y)*.

2. The express language of that covenant, that is ordered in all things and sure, doubles our encouragement. He has declared his heart in a promise, that *by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have strong consolation (z)*.

3. The *interest of his glory* is nearly concerned herein. He is no loser by any goodness to his people. It puts a reputation upon his name. The upright adore such a Providence with gratitude; and a praise is forced out of sinners in their complaints and vexation. *The righteous shall see it, and be glad, and all iniquity shall stop her mouth (a)*. *Ye shall know, that I am in the midst of Israel; and that I am the Lord your God, and none else; and my people shall never be ashamed (b)*. Nay, those witnesses that stand at a distance, who are not parties either in the disappointment

(u) *Iſai* i. 27.(x) *Rom* x. 29.(y) *Iſai* xlii. 15, 16.(z) *Iſai*. vi. 18.(a) *Pſal*. cvii. 42.(b) *Joc* ii. 27.

ment or the relief. These can read a GOD in such proceedings. *They said among the heathen, The Lord has done great things for them (c). Jethro professes, Now I know, that the Lord is greater than all gods, because in the thing wherein they dealt proudly, he was above them (d).*

A P P L I C A T I O N.

I. Learn the happiness and safety of GOD'S own people, *Cry and shout, thou inhabitant of Sion, for great is the holy One of Israel in the midst of thee (e). There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rides upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky; the eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are everlasting arms; and he shall thrust out the enemy before thee, and shall say, Destroy them: happy art thou, O Israel, who is like unto thee? A people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and the sword of thine excellency: thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee, and thou shalt tread upon their high places (f).* If GOD be in the midst of Sion, then the weapons formed against her strike equally at him: so that when the enemies cry out, *Rase, rase it even to the ground (g)*; if they will make clear work, they must humble the Majesty of heaven. He is in the midst of his people; and if sinners prevail, God and Saints fall together. And what comfort is this to the sons of Sion, to think that their interest is so woven into his, that if they be injured, he must be a loser? *He that touches them, touches the apple of his eye (b).* When the Egyptians were ready to make Israel the morsel of their pride, God steps in as a wall of partition between the two armies, so that there was no way of getting at the Jews, but by striking through Omnipotence. *Happy*

is

(c) Psal. cxxvi. 3.

(d) Exodus xviii. 11.

(e) Isai. xii. 6.

(f) Deut. xxxiii. 26, 27, 29.

(g) Psal. cxxxvii. 7.

(b) Zech. ii. 8.

is the people that is in such a case; yea, happy is that people, whose God is the Lord (i).

2. Let us behave ourselves *suitably to such a presence*, lest we provoke him from his post, and cause him to say, *I abhor the excellency of Jacob, and hate his palaces* (k).

And if GOD'S being *in the midst* of a people speaks their happiness, and calls for their gratitude, then all who are concerned for *England*, or the *Protestant interest*, may at once see their mercy and duty; what *David* says of the *Jews*, Providence allows me to apply to this nation. *He exalteth the horn of his people, the praise of all his Saints; even of the children of Israel, a people near unto him. Praise ye the Lord* (l). We are not only put in mind of that ancient deliverance, which is engraven upon the worship of this Day, but also those *late appearances* that GOD has made on our behalf: so that I may say, as *Moses* to the *Israelites*; *Know you this day, for I speak not with your children which have not known, and which have not seen the chastisement of the Lord your God, his greatness, his mighty hand, and his stretched-out arm; but your eyes have seen all the great things of the Lord which he did* (m).

He is a stranger in *England*, that needs telling how much, in some distant reigns, the throne has been a curse to the nation. It is a public calamity, when persons, lodged in so great a trust, are either benumbed with debauchery, or imbittered with a cruel zeal; when they have a fair claim to no other title, than that of *active tyrants*, or *royal drones*. But it is our happiness, that GOD has recovered the credit of the land, by giving us *one*, who is framed for the greatness which he appears in. He has been used in the most noble services. He is known to be the scourge of tyrants, the moderator of *Europe*, and the best example of government. He maintained the

WAR

(i) Psal. cxliv. 15.
(k) Amos vi. 3.

(l) Psal. cxlviii. 14.
(m) Deut. xi. 7.

Serm. I. *God's Presence the best Security.* 27

war with glory and success, and at last changed it for an honourable peace. Providence has made him its happy charge. Let not us *put out the light of Israel* by sinning away so great a mercy; for *if we still do wickedly, we shall be consumed, both we and our King* (n). Let us be serving him with fervent prayers, engaging the best guards in his defence. *Blessed is he that comes to save us in the name of the Lord; we have blessed him out of the house of the Lord* (o).

(n) 1 Sam. xi. 25.

| (o) Psal. cxviii. 26.

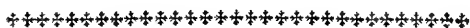






S E R M O N II.

The Nature of that Joy which GOD's Government of his CHURCH obligeth to.



Preached at NEWCASTLE, 1701.



P S A L M CXLIX. 2.

Let the children of Sion be joyful in their King.

COME tell us, that the Psalms are ranged into such an order, as to describe the believer's passage through the world. They let us see his first change, and his gradual advances. They begin with a true apprehension of *bleſſedneſs* (a); that which first has an influence upon our choice: they are continued in a mixture of lamentation and triumph, very much resembling the compound life that we have upon earth: but they end with such intire praise, as if one foot were already in heaven. The Book is shut up with pure rapture, in such language as becomes an inhabitant of *paradise*, rather than a passenger to it.

The occasion of this Psalm, seems to be some remarkable deliverance that God afforded his people; for we find they are allowed a superiority over those that used to affright them. *A two-edged sword was put into their hand, to execute vengeance upon the heathen, &c. This honour have all his Saints* (b). The

Psalm

(a) Psalm i.

(b) Psal. cxlix. 6—9.

Pfalm begins with a demand to gratitude. *Praise ye the Lord, hallelujah*; this is one of heaven's notes. *Sing unto the Lord a new song*, as fresh as the mercy that supplies it, *in the congregation of his Saints* (c). Make the name of his goodness general; that as every serious person has a share in the Providence, so he may bear his part in this consort. The ground of this is hinted at, *Let Israel rejoice in him that made him; let the children of Sion be joyful in their King* (d). Here the Church names GOD under two titles, both of which do not only oblige but sweeten praise.

1. As a *Creator*. *Let Israel rejoice in him that made him*; understand this either of *his omnipotence*, that framed all things, both the righteous and the wicked: his interest in our Being is matter of joy. *Praise him sun and moon, all ye stars of light; ye heavens of heavens, and waters above the heavens; let them praise the name of the Lord, for he commanded, and they were created* (e). We may also interpret this of *his peculiar goodness* to them as his people. He is more immediately *the maker of Israel*. *Every one that is called by my name, I have created him for my glory, I have formed him, yea, I have made him* (f). He is more nearly the author of his Church, the spring of all Religion. *Sion* is the creature of his love, and that first care which built her up calls for gladness. We may rejoice in that GOD, who made the Church, and who has graciously brought us into it.

2. As a *King*. *Let the children of Sion be joyful in their King*. Consider him not only as one that first brought them into a covenant with himself, but admire the continuing mercy of his protection and government. He does not collect a society, and then leave it: no, there is a steddiness in his rule, and a constant presence of authority with them: as he was
 their

(c) Pfal. cxlix. 1.

(d) Pfal. cxlix. 2.

(e) Pfal. cxlviii. 3, 4, 5.

(f) Ifai. xliiii. 7.

their Maker, so he will be their King. That love that gave them their first Being will secure it.

The text is a summons to the work of praise. We have,

1. The *persons* called to this employment, *The children of Sion*. This title is applicable to believers under the New Testament. *We are come to Mount Sion (g)*; and we stand in the relation of children, for *the Jerusalem above is the mother of us all (h)*. So that here we are to understand such as are united to her in affection, interest and hazard: who love nothing so highly as the general good of Religion, and venture all that they have in defence of it. *Sion* being the *place of worship*, this title may express their temper, that they were *the generation of seekers*, a people who made their stated visits to God, and scorned to be ashamed of their intimacy or service. *Sion* also was the seat of a *peculiar presence*, where the Almighty took up his abode. And so *the children of Sion*, are such as derive a nature from the God that dwells there; who wear his image, and consequently must have principles of allegiance to defend his glory.

2. The *duty* they were to join in, or the *affection* of soul which they were to stir up on this occasion; *Let them be joyful*. Though they have work enough for tears, yet that must now give way. All the springs of vigour should awake, and fill the glad solemnity. Let every heir of the kingdom unloose his bondage of spirit. Whatever soul is akin to *Sion*, let his relation make him a sharer in the common joys. Let praise rise with mercy, and as the courses of Providence are extraordinary, strive to imitate them with something peculiar in duty.

3. The *object* and *provocation* of this joy: that which *receives* it, and that which *stirs* it up. *Let them be joyful in their King*; in what he *does*, and in what he *is*: let his works quicken it, let himself have it.

This

(g) Hab. xii. 23.

(h) Gal. iv. 26

This is to be understood of CHRIST, whom the Father has appointed to the chief place of note. *I have set my King upon My holy hill of Sion (i)*. That hill from which believers take their titles, and to which they aim their devotions. The truth of our LORD's government the Church then believed, and the application of it they foresaw. For if *Abraham saw his day, and was glad (k)*, we may well suppose the same of that age, that did not look through so great a distance; but who found the promises ripening, and had their faith enlarged with new discoveries. *David speaks concerning him, for being a prophet, he knew that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne (l)*. CHRIST then, is the King of Sion, and carries on the duties of his empire two ways :

(1.) *Spiritually*; in the controls of grace: his *people are made willing in the day of his power (m)*: he binds them in cords of love, and makes all their perverseness yield to the arguments that give it battle. He maintains them with a secret influence: they are *kept by his mighty power through faith unto salvation (n)*.

(2.) *Providentially*. He is the *head over all things unto the Church (o)*. He has authority to dispose of thrones, tumble down kingdoms, and shake the foundations of the world, for their security. He, that took such care to furnish the *mansions (p)* in heaven for them, will not lose them by the way. And we often find what remarkable changes his Providence works upon their account; if earthly greatness will not serve his Church, it shall be crushed under it. The interest, that is usually sunk so low, may have the lift of a kind hand, and come to trample upon pomp, and debase oppression. Now this is matter of joy.

(i) Pſal. ii. 6.
 (k) John viii. 56.
 (l) Acts ii. 25, 30.
 (m) Pſal. cx. 2.

(n) 1 Pet. i. 5.
 (o) Ephes. i. 22.
 (p) John xiv. 1, 24

joy. *Thou shalt thresh the mountains, and make the hills as chaff: thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them: and thou shalt rejoice in the Lord, and glory in the holy One of Israel (q).*

The meaning of the text may be contained in this proposition.

All true Christians are especially bound to rejoice in CHRIST, *the King of the Church*, upon any extraordinary favour that he vouchsafes to it. I shall,

- I. Enquire what there is in the consideration of his being *their King* to excite this joy.
- II. Explain the nature of this affection or joy in him.
- III. Shew why this is more peculiarly a duty after some eminent deliverance.
- IV. Application.

I. Let us consider the object of this joy, *Sion's King*: And here I will restrain myself with the context of these words, and the business of *this day*; both of which oblige my thoughts to his providential kingdom. And there are three things more especially, which deserve to be the matter of a Christian's joy.

1. *His great perfections.* He has all royal qualities.

A King's nature; every thing to fill a glory, and claim our love. He has both an ample capacity, and a state that is level to it. *I speak the things that I have made, says David, touching the King*: and this is his first character, that *grace is poured into his lips, and God has blessed him for ever (r)*. And as his furniture for this work is *above the sons of men*, so is his refreshment and solace in it; *God has anointed him with the oil of gladness above his fellows (s)*. He has an arm

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that

(q) Isai. xli. 15, 16.

(r) Psal. xlv. 1, 2.

(s) Psal. xlv. 3.

that is fit to rule, a wisdom that never darkens, a power that cannot yield. *In thy Majesty ride prosperously, because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things: thine arrows are sharp in the hearts of the King's enemies, whereby the people shall fall under thee (t).* He tells us no less himself, *Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom; I am understanding, I have strength (u).*

The angels adore his capacity in a cheerful homage. All the people of that upper world, where he has fixed his throne, cannot but reverence the Majesty that is within view. This is *the song of the Lamb, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are all thy ways, thou King of Saints: Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? All nations shall come and worship before thee, for thy judgments are made manifest (x).* This is a sovereign that fills his empire; he governs without difficulty or mistake: and this may be matter of joy to GOD's people, to think that he, who has the management of them, is so capable of answering his trust. He has a purity that adorns his person, inspires his laws, and glorifies his palace; such an one *becomes us, who is holy, harmless, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens (y).*

He has a *King's heart*, a love as wide as his dominion; and may not this stir up the affections of those who are named after him, and have put their trust in him? Consider him in all his Titles, and they express an amiable grandeur. *His name is Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace (z).* The noble attendants that surround him do not *make* his excellencies, but only *admire* them. His perfections are not the effect of praise, but rather the matter of it. This is a King, whom

(t) Psal. xlv. 4, 5.

(u) Prov. viii. 14.

(x) Rev. xv. 3, 4.

(y) Heb. vii. 26.

(z) 1 Tim. ix. 6.

whom we may name with courage. *The Lord shall reign for ever, even thy God, O Sion, to all generations (a).* Something of his worth is seen here; and though it be but little, yet there is so much as will bear up a Christian's triumph. He is *glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders (b)*: and as far as this is discovered, it cannot but heighten our joy. *Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary; who is so great a God as our God? Thou art the God that dost wonders, thou hast declared thy strength among the people (c).* Honour and majesty are before him, strength and beauty are in his sanctuary (d).

2. His actual government. *The Lord reigns, let the earth rejoice, let the multitude of isles be glad thereof (e).* He does not let his qualifications sleep unemployed, but declares them in the most beautiful conduct. *The Lord reigns, he is clothed with majesty, he is clothed with strength, wherewith he has girded himself*; and, because of this, *the world is stablished, that it cannot be moved (f).* He has Power to conquer for his people, Wisdom to contrive their steps, and Love to save them. *His throne is in the heavens (g)*; but this lower world is subject to his rule. Though the enemies of the Church may think themselves the only gods upon earth, yet they have had a terrible necessity to own that there is One above them. He may, for a long time, hide his sovereignty, and seem to neglect the courses of government: but justice will run in its old channel again. The space of indulgence that sinners had, shall wear out, and he will put on a new zeal for his people. *For the Lord will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance; but judgment shall return to righteousness (h).*

(a) Pfal. cxxvi. 10.

(b) Exod. xv. 11.

(c) Pfal. lxxvii. 12, 14.

(d) Pfal. xcvi. 6.

(e) Pfal. xcvi. 1.

(f) Pfal. xciii. 1.

(g) Pfal. ciii. 19.

(h) Pfal. xciv. 15.

Sometimes we are afraid that GOD has forsaken us : the wicked threaten and succeed : there is a constant obedience in all things to their wishes : but all this while GOD *laughs at them* (i), and will in a little time publish the disdain in providential thunder. What the Psalmist prays for, is a mercy that all ages of the Church have met with, that the GOD *to whom vengeance belongs, the Judge of the earth, would lift up himself, and render a reward to the proud* (k). He takes care that ambition do not swell too large, that innocency be not quite destroyed. And certainly this is matter of joy to Sion's children, to think that their GOD is universal monarch. He who loves us, has all things under his control, and will not suffer our ruin. The Psalmist repeats his summons to praise upon this consideration : *Sing praises to our God, sing praises to the King, sing praises ; for God is the King of all the earth. Sing ye praises with understanding : God reigns over the heathen, God sits upon the throne of his holiness* (l). *Nebuchadnezzar* had this doctrine preached to him by the captive Jews, and proved, beyond all contradiction, by seven years banishment from human society. He then learned, that *the most High rules in the kingdoms of men* (m).

Though sinners are under no subjection to grace, yet there are resolutions of Providence which they cannot break. The enmity of their natures makes them angry at heaven ; but actual disobedience is a thing out of their reach. *The counsel of the Lord shall stand* (n). He is the only King of the creation ; and though they are adversaries of his holiness, he can make them the tools of his power. The *Affyrian* was used to variety of purposes : he is first the *rod of God's indignation*, and then the *mark* of it (o). Grace may be resisted, but sovereignty will not. They that *would not have him*

(i) Psa. ii. 4.

(k) Psa. xciv. 1, 2.

(l) Psa. xlvi. 6, 7, 8.

(m) Dan. iv. 32.

(n) Prov. xix. 21.

(o) Isa. x. 5, 16.

him to reign over them, are brought out against their wills, and slain before his face (p). The Spirit is often quenched, but Justice lives. Sinners have life and death, obedience and misery offered to them; the first choice is theirs, but after that is done, God will choose next. He puts it to them, whether they will own him or no; but it does not lie at their choice whether misery shall avenge their refusal. Had it not been so, the Church would, long ere this, have sunk under the tumult of malice. But *God rules in Jacob to the ends of the earth* (q). He sits at the helm of Providence, and directs all its courses according to his own pleasure. So that we rejoice in a King who fills every part of the world, every moment of time, with a great presence of sovereignty.

3. The Church's propriety in both. He is their King. His qualifications are to entertain their love, his actual government to secure their privileges. What he is, makes up their portion; what he does, is for their advantage. They have an interest in his nature, and a benefit in all his providences. *He said, Surely they are my people, children that will not lie; so he was their Saviour* (r). He is a father to them, when they lie under oppressive cruelty. These clouds may hide the relation from public view, but they cannot bury it: and in a little time, his bowels will break through the opposition, and *command deliverance for Jacob* (s). Thus saith the LORD to *Pharaoh, Israel is my son, my first-born; and I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me* (t).

The enemies of the Church are sometimes tampering with divine love, trying how long it will bear their rudeness, without an open repentment: but they usually carry the experiment too far, and draw out their cruelties to the Saints, till consuming zeal is

D 3

weary

(p) Luke xix. 17.

(q) Psal. lix. 13.

(r) Isai. lxiii. 8.

(s) Psal. xlv. 4.

(t) Exod. iv. 22, 23.

weariness of forbearance. The *covenant* that GOD has brought his people into, is, like his own nature, unchangeable and *everlasting* (u). *Thou Israel art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend. Thou, whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant. I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away* (x). Till enemies can quench the love of his heart, disturb the firmness of a promise, and break the relation between him and the Church, their malice must live in vain, and die in contempt. He cannot look upon believers, but he remembers the bond he is in to them, and that eternal love which inclined him to begin this relation. *Whosoever, saith he to his Church, shall gather together against thee, shall fall for thy sake* (y). Not for any worthiness of thine own, but *for thy sake* as joined in the same covenant *with me*; and so the reason devolves again upon himself.

And what a ground of joy is this to those *whose God is the Lord* (z)? Is he so capable of ruling, and actually possessed of government? *Be glad, O ye righteous*; see what an arm it is you trust in. His qualifications are glorious, his actual rule uninterrupted; and both these are for you. Is he excellent? that is to make your portion the better. Is he busy in every providence? that is to secure you from the enemy's rage. *Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.*

II. What is it to *joy in Zion's King*, after a remarkable deliverance?

Answer. This may be expressed several ways:

1. In a more admiring opinion of his excellencies. *Who is God, save the Lord? Who is a rock, like our God?*

(u) 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

(x) 1 Sai. xli. 8, 9.

(y) 1 Sai. liv. 15.

(z) Psal. cxlv. 15.

God (a)? The soul that is truly gracious, cannot but have some valuable thoughts of GOD at the lowest; but when discouragements are removed, and heaven is peculiarly kind, then adoration should fill with the mercy. *Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O Lord, has dashed in pieces the enemy (b).* The wicked make their whole conversation a slight upon GOD, as if his arm were not deserving of reverence, or his grace of choice. *They say unto God, Depart from us; and what can the Almighty do for them (c)?* And the hypocrite is really of the same temper, though he has the art to conceal it. His devotion is a strain; the gravity of his looks and actions is no more than a compliment. His inward part despises the Majesty whom he pretends to adore. He has no awful prospect of Omnipotence, no sensible taste of the divine love. Nay, the Christian himself may run low in this temper, and *lightly esteem the rock of his salvation (d).*

When Sion said, *God had forsaken her (e)*; was there not reproach enough in that language? As the *strength of faith gives glory to him (f)*, so the successes of unbelief are a robbery upon his honour. Could infinite goodness fail, or eternal truth die? Can the supreme nature change, or the articles of an everlasting covenant be repealed? No less than this horrid blasphemy is lodged in these desperate strains. Now when the King of the Church declares his majesty and kindness in some providence, it is time to drop our suspicions with shame. *When he turned again the captivity of Sion, we were like them that dreamed (g).* We were so far from believing beforehand, that we doubted of it when the mercy came: but *then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing:*

D 4

(a) Psal. xviii. 31.

(b) Exod. xv. 6.

(c) Job xxii. 17.

(d) Deut. xxxii. 15.

(e) Isai. xlix. 16.

(f) Rom. ii. 20.

(g) Psal. cxxvi. 1, 2.

singing: The Lord has done great things for us. Our first duties of joy are performed this way: we should here take occasion to see the height of his throne, the compass of his government, and the closeness of his love to us.

2. In an hearty gratitude for all mercies received. The kindness that comes from heaven should draw our hearts back again with it. *What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord (b)*. I will relish my deliverance: as the salvation is my mercy, so it shall be my cordial. When GOD speaks peace with such a powerful language, we should not be silent in his praise. We cannot reward his love, any more than we could deserve it; but it is highly reasonable that we make a serious acknowledgment of it. *Give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, his mercy endures for ever: let the redeemed of the Lord say so (i)*. Though all are obliged to own it, yet they peculiarly. *Their dumbness is inexcusable*.

Have we not prayed with all the violence of distress for this favour? And is it not worth our gratitude? There should be a flame of love in proportion to our former earnestness. A serious petitioner usually vows something of this kind beforehand. *Arise, O Lord, in thine anger, lift up thyself because of the rage of mine enemies: awake for me to the judgment thou hast commanded; so shall the congregation of the people compass thee about: for their sakes therefore return thou on high (i)*. It is a scandal upon the wicked, that though affliction makes them *howl upon their beds (l)*, yet they are careless of all returns to the kindness that saves them. Our SAVIOUR takes notice, that *ten lepers* were cleansed, but *nine* of them had no regard to the mercy, or their great Benefactor (m). Let not this

(b) Psal. cxvi. 12, 13.

(i) Psal. cvii. 1, 2.

(l) Psal. vii. 6, 7.

(l) Hof. vii. 14.

(m) Luke xvii. 17.

this be our reproach, that, when heaven took so much pains to deliver us, we were graves to our blessings: that they lay dead in our memories, and did not stir us up to any payments of gratitude.

3. In a fresh devotion to his will, and a more zealous study of his honour. The gratitude that is not practical, both affronts GOD, and shames the deliverance. At such a time, he owns us for his people, and expects we should do the like back again. *The Lord is my strength and song, and is become my salvation. He is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him (n).* Jacob resolved, when he came back to his father's house, the Lord should be his God(o): he had chosen him before, and certainly would not leave him upon so low a condition; if he never came thither, that should be no parting matter: but upon this mercy, he will do it over again with a fuller love, and a more close attention to the vows that he made.

The joy that only loves to swill in an excess of riot, is *earthly, sensual, and devilish (p)*. What, will you praise GOD with sin, and use all these favours as so many instruments of his dishonour? If serious Religion doth not gain ground in your hearts and lives, your mercies are lost, and your joys provoking.

4. In an open proclamation of his perfections and kindness. It is not enough that we have a rising love in our own hearts, and tell him in private our sense of his hand in the deliverance; but we are to spread his name, and *make his power known (q)*. The mercy is public, and so should our expressions of gratitude be: that all those who see the Providence may hear it repeated in our gladness.

5. In a resolution to trust him in future straits. Our joy must look both ways; backwards, to the blessings

(n) Exod. xv. 2.

(o) Gen. xxviii. 21.

(p) Jam. iii. 15.

(q) Psal. cvi. 8.

blessings that are wrought out already ; and forwards, to those providences that are but now ripening. It is a reproach upon the Author of our mercies, if we dare not put confidence in him when trouble revives. *Let Mount Sion rejoice, let the daughters of Judah be glad, because of thy judgments (r).* But this is not enough, he would have the memory of this kindness handed to following ages, as so much heartning to the faith of the Church then : *Mark well her bulwarks, consider her palaces, that ye may tell it to the generations to come : for this God is our God for ever and ever, and he will be our guide until death (s).* We do not get our full discharge from fears, till we drop a sinful nature, and fly above a noisy world. After we have received a mercy, we may expect that affliction will take the next turn with us ; and the use we are to make of present favours, is to venture ourselves upon the same goodness in time to come. The forty-sixth Psalm was framed on purpose to admire God, because he had made the nations silent, had quashed their tumult ; making *wars to cease to the ends of the earth, breaking the bow, cutting the spear asunder, and burning the chariot in the fire (t).* Now the Church takes heart in the sense of this, and makes a challenge as general as her troubles, *The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge (u).*

III. Why is this joy in Sion's King so peculiarly a duty after some eminent deliverance ?

Ans. I. Then is God most glorified. He appears to be *greater than all gods (x).* Unbelief flatly denied him, and faith staggered before him : but when he makes these remarkable appearances, wickedness is dumb, and grace recovered. The Church has then an answer ready at hand to all the charges of profaneness.

(r) Psal. xlviii. 11.

(s) Psal. xlviii. 13, 14.

(t) Psal. xlvi. 9.

(u) Psal. xlvi. 11.

(x) Exod. xviii. 11.

profaneness. When *the Heathen say, Where is now their God?* They can not only point upwards, and say, *Our God is in the heavens*; but can also add, *He has done whatsoever he pleased (y)*. When the sons of men were so bold, as to dare his power, who could be joyful? What serious person could act in so much discord to Providence, not to bleed when his LORD is wounded? *As with a sword in my bones, do mine enemies reproach me; while they say continually, Where is thy God (z)?*

But in these signal mercies, he fetches up the honour that he seemed to lose. The greatness that was denied comes to be felt. Experience baffles Atheism. The wretched cabal of enemies cannot disbelieve the arm that is so heavy upon them. How great does a SAVIOUR appear, when sinners are crawling, policy befooled, and oppression humbled? And will it not strike a joy through the honest heart, to see his LORD's praise in these fresh ornaments? *The children of Sion* must be glad, when *their King reigns* in despite of malice, and sets his name above all robbery.

2. Then we have peculiar obligations to this work, because this comes in as an answer of Faith and Prayer. *In that day it shall be said, This is our God, we have waited for him, and he has saved us: we have waited for him, and will be glad and rejoice in his salvation (a)*. Perhaps we have had many a struggle with the throne of grace; and to find that we did not believe and cry in vain, must needs make our joy glorious. We have had but dull thoughts of this mercy before it came: necessity made us pray, and promises bid us hope; but we were sometimes flat in request, and oftner sunk in expectation; ready to shut up an address with despair, rather than keep asking. It was an imagination that frequently returned, *We have cleansed our hearts in vain (b)*; God would not lend any regard to us.

Now,

(y) Pfal. cxv. 2, 3.
(z) Pfal. xlii. 10.

(a) Isai. xxv. 9.
(b) Pfal. lxxiii. 13.

Now when petitions come back again changed into mercies; when faith is hung with those blessings, that it has been fighting for, may not the soul then rejoice? *I love the Lord, because he has heard my voice, and my supplications (c).* We then cry out as they, *Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy, and with our God is plenteous redemption (d).*

3. Our outward hindrances in this work are all removed. We have then an open door; wide enough for the most extended zeal. In the heat of affliction, we had the scorn of enemies to flatten our joys. They were jeering us with the *songs of Sion*; and such a derision as this must be always painful. We could not manage our part in that work of gratitude, whilst *Sion, the city of our solemnities*, lay in rubbish. But now God has baffled them: our hopes cannot be their jest any longer. Their plots are unravelled, their threats are dissolved. Heaven has plunged them into contempt, and made them infamous. They are now past bantering our Religion, or making their scurrility palatable with our seriousness. We may now rejoice, and have none to make us afraid. We durst scarce tell them, that we had *a King in Sion*, whilst ourselves lay at their mercy: but divine sovereignty has at last appeared and we may well rejoice in that arm, which themselves cannot deny.

A P P L I C A T I O N.

The mercies, that are united to the memory of *this day*, are such as represent the *great Keeper of Israel* in all his glory. We, in this nation, have seen an Arm greater than earth, and a Wisdom deeper than hell. God seems to have chosen *England*, as the stage, where he would act his wonders, and glorify his love. When the Devil and Sinners joined in one club, tempered their plots with so much cunning, and guarded them with a powerful interest; nothing below Almightyness could break the design, and quench their industry,

(c) Psal. cxvi. 1.



(d) Psal. cxxx. 7.

If the Lord had not been on our side, may Israel now say, the waters had overwhelmed us, and the stream gone over our soul: but the snare is broken, and we are escaped. Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth (e).

When Religion lay gasping, bruised with open persecution, and undermined with hypocrisy; GOD stunn'd the violence that was public, and expos'd the mischief that kept working under disguise. Who could have thought, when there was so great a venture both of Gospel and civil Liberty, that there should be any room for a SAVIOUR upon Mount Sion? The gates of deliverance seem'd to be locked up: a piteous zeal could have no likely passage to us; and yet, through all this defence and croud, GOD made room.

All thinking persons cannot but know, how he *restrained our Rulers* for some time, and when that would not do, he kindly *changed them*: that if *the earth* would not *help the woman*, one of her own breed should. We have indeed several things to dis-tune our gladness: the reformation halts; mutual charity, the soul of our Religion, is starving; consciences harden; practical serioufness fails. But yet we shall wrong heaven, if we deny these extraordinary favours. GOD has hitherto helped us with a kind omnipotence; and now, *Let Israel rejoice in him that made him, let the children of Sion be joyful in their King.*

(e) Psal. cxxiv. 3.





S E R M O N III.

The great Value of a Seasonable Deliverance
Considered and Applied.

Preached at NEWCASTLE, 1702.

DEUT. XXXII. 36.

*The Lord shall judge his people, and repent himself
for his servants, when he seeth that their power
is gone, and there is none shut up or left.*



THESE words are part of that song which *Moses* was to leave the children of *Israel* as a legacy to their succeeding ages. He had served them with courage and integrity all along : and now, at his death, he is thoughtful about them ; and accordingly pens this divine composure, and charges them to be often repeating it. It was a project of *GOD'S* own forming, as a preservative from that apostasy which they were already sliding into. They had dangerous symptoms upon them of idolatry and faction. The presence of this great ruler could scarce restrain them from a perverse carriage and a sullied Religion. *I know*, says he, *thy rebellion, and thy stiff neck ; behold, whilst I am yet alive, ye have been rebellious against the Lord, how much more after my death ? For I know, that after my death ye will utterly corrupt yourselves,*
and

and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you, and evil will befall you in the latter days, because you will do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger, through the work of your hands (a).

The song is well adorned with serious rhetoric, that it might at once give them both conviction and pleasure. Here is work enough for conscience to move about, and yet the affections do not want their proper charms of eloquence. His doctrine dropped as the rain, and distilled as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and the showers upon the grass (b).

This song is a mixture of history and prophecy: a memorial of what had been, and a conjecture at their future carriage and dispensations; as they had always shewn an undutiful stiffness, so Moses takes it for granted, that the old temper would revive after his death. They were breaking into parties under his government, and threatening to ruin the whole state with confusion. They often endeavoured to mix their worship with Heathenism, as if they would quarrel with God in their devotion: and it was but too possible, that this principle would break out with more violence, and less correction, when Moses was removed.

But he gives them an awful assurance, that if they did practise their rebellions over again, they might expect a revival of former punishments. This would blast all their endeavours, dispirit them in battle, and put gall into every providence. *How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, except their rock had sold them, and the Lord had shut them up (c)?* God would not always endure their provocations, but should at last seek the defence of his glory in their fall, if they did not promote it in a way of actual duty. Thus the words, that immediately forerun my text, represent him as speaking

our

(a) Deut. xxxi. 27, 29.
(b) Deut. xxxii. 2.

(c) Deut. xxxii. 30.

out his designs of wrath to a wicked people: *To me belongs vengeance and recompence, their foot shall slide in due time, for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste (d).* Though they were never so firm and secure in the possession of their privileges, yet heaven would give them a trip, and bring them down. With such dispensations as these would he *visit their iniquity.*

Now this verse lets us hear a change of notes, more calm and healing language. He supposes them almost wasted with the long corrections of Providence; and in this desolation, he breathes a reviving promise: *for the Lord shall judge; &c.* Where we may observe,

1. A signal glorious mercy: *The Lord shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants.* It is laid down in two expressions, to intimate the fulness of the blessing, that it shall answer all their necessity and complaint.

1. *He shall judge his people.* He now supposes them to be hardly dealt with by the oppressor: in a lonely desolate condition, crushed with a barbarous arrogance. And indeed, it is no strain upon reason to imagine, that the enemies of the Church should break the laws of *justice*, as well as *charity*. An opposition of nature to all seriousness, is apt to make them over-do it. But GOD will right his servants, and own their cause, with a favourable appearance. He will not suffer imperious malice to sin both against equity and love. He has a constant over-sight of their carriage, and sometimes speaks as if he were suspicious of them. *Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I am jealous for Jerusalem, and for Sion, with a great jealousy; and I am very sore displeas'd with the Heathen that are at ease; for I was but a little displeas'd, and they helped forwards the affliction (e).* But the other branch of the promise springs a richer vein of comfort.

(d) Deut. xxvii. 35.

!

(e) Zech. i. 14, 15.

2. *He will repent himself for his servants.* They might consider, that he was their adversary, and all the courage of nature must bend under this reflection. If sinners persecute them, they know it is so much pride, cruelty and injustice: but GOD never strikes an unrighteous blow; all *his ways are judgment and truth (f)*. Now, though the punishment was so deserved, yet it shall be removed. He did them no wrong, when he vowed their calamity; but he will call in the resolution again, and change the face of Providence towards them. *Since I stroke against him, I do earnestly remember him still; therefore my bowels are troubled for him, I will surely have mercy on him, saith the Lord (g)*. So that, here is justice for them against enemies; here is a relent and turn of heart in GOD. The adversaries malice shall be avenged: the divine anger shall thaw down and run out in streams of compassion. This is the promise that he makes, and stamps with heaven's own seal. *When he has blessed, no man can reverse it (h)*.

2. Here is the season when he would make good his promise. *When he sees that their power is gone, and there is none shut up or left.* His presence is never more needful than in such a scarcity of friends. He will thus time his favours, and publish them in the moment of danger. Here is a variety of words to express the wild and frightful case that they might be brought into. I shall not amuse you with the different interpretations that learned men have put upon this text: that is the way to lose our time in an explication, and perhaps may rather give your thoughts an intanglement, than a discovery. This brief account you may take of the matter. Their helpless state is set out in two particulars.

1. Their incapacity of self-relief. *Their power is gone.* They are not in a condition to fence against the

(f) Deut. xxxii. 4.

(g) Jer. xxxi. 20.

(h) Numb. xxiii. 20.

the enemy. All their ability is wasted. Thus the complaint runs : *He has made me desolate and faint all the day. The yoke of my transgressions is bound by his hand ; they are wreathed and come up upon my neck. He has made my strength to fall ; the Lord has delivered me into their hand, from whom I am not able to rise up. The Lord has trodden under foot all my mighty men in the midst of me ; he has called an assembly against me to crush my young men (i).*

2. Their despair of foreign assistance : *There is none shut up or left.* Not a friend to appear for them and espouse their sinking interest. *For these things I weep, saith the Church, mine eye, mine eye runs down with water, because the Comforter, that should relieve my soul, is far from me : my children are desolate, because the enemy prevailed : Sion hath spread forth her hands, and there is none to comfort her (k).* We cannot imagine a case more distressed and cloudy than the Church is here supposed to be in. But when it is *thus* with her, when she has neither power within, nor friends abroad ; when her defence is gone, her outward alliance broke, then will *God judge his people, and repent himself of his servants.* The sense of the text is this :

The Church's greatest distress and danger is a fit time for God to shew himself in her deliverance : that is a proper season of mercy. A time of hazard and agony, is a time of love. *When he passes by, and sees them in blood, then he saith unto them, Live (l).* This might be made good from the records of the Church in all ages. He promises to save us after the manner of *Egypt* ; and that was a mercy of this nature in all its steps.

When the *Israelite's* bondage was most severe, then he sets up *Moses* on the stage of service (m) : when *Pharaoh* was hardened by a long train of miracles, so that none could imagine there should be any reserve

E 2

of

(i) Lam. i. 13, 14, 15.

(k) Lam. i. 16, 17.

(l) Ezek. xvi. 8.

(m) Exod. iii. 7. 9

of tenderness in him, then death drops an arrow into every family (*n*): upon this the people, who before endeavoured to keep possession, *thrust out* their captives (*o*). And when they would needs recover all, and fetch them back again with a mighty hand, the power and spirit of the nation is quenched in the *Red sea* (*p*). So that you see how Providence has acted by this rule already. And several years after it is said, that *the Lord saw the affliction of Israel, that it was very bitter; for there was not any shut up, nor any left, nor any helper for Israel: and then the Lord said, that he would not blot out the name of Israel from under heaven* (*q*).

The method shall be,

- I. Briefly to shew, why God's interest is ever suffered to run so low, that his people shall want their power?
- II. To represent the fitness of a providential appearance at such a time: or how peculiarly reasonable it is to visit them in this distress.
- III. To make some application. And, lastly, To conclude with some remarks upon *this day*, and the mercy that we are called to remember in it.

I. Why does God ever let his interest be so much a sufferer, that it shall want both inward power and sufficient alliance? We might largely account for such an order and method of Providence; but you may be satisfied in these two answers.

1. Hereby he shews a just resentment of his people's folly and disobedience. There is in them *a spirit that lusts to envy* (*r*), which sometimes gets vent, and proclaims itself in actual rebellion. They have not parted with the infirmities and disorders of nature: they often shew

(*n*) Exod. xii. 29.

(*o*) Exod. xii. 33.

(*p*) Exod. xiv. 22.

(*q*) 2 Kings xiv. 25.

(*r*) Jam. iv. 5.

shew that their holiness is mixed, Their contempt of God and mutual strifes; their fellowship with those of a wicked conversation and boldness in tampering with sin: All these are lamentable arguments, that there is something else besides grace in their hearts. Now these out-breaks of corruption wound the name of God with a peculiar dishonour.

Should this escape the censure of Providence, it would look as if he indulged their sins. What a rant of blasphemy might the enemies of Religion allow themselves in? Or at least it would give their atheism a secret pleasure to observe God's indulgence of all this folly. To prevent such odious reflections upon himself, he draws a cloud over his disobedient children: he lets the world see, that though their persons are favourites, yet this rudeness of nature is an abomination. *You only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore you will I punish for your iniquities (s).*

For this cause he has crumbled Churches, loosed the bands of society, because they were not preserved by a temper of love. *I will kill her children with death, and all the Churches shall know, that I am the Lord, which searcheth the reins and the heart, and I will give unto every one of you according to your works (t).* Upon such a provocation he has wasted a people, and scorned a nation at once. When their fulness has softened them into luxury and atheism, he has dried up the springs of relief, and born a dreadful testimony against their abominations. *The banquet of them that stretched themselves shall be removed. The Lord God has sworn by himself; saith the Lord God of hosts, I abhor the excellency of Jacob, and hate his palaces; I will deliver up the city, with all the people that is therein (u).*

E 3

2. This

(s) Amos iii. 2.

(t) Rev. ii. 23.

(u) Amos vi. 6, 7.

2. This way he purifies and reforms them. When Religion flows in a channel of peace, many fall in with it, who have no heart at all to GOD and his interest, but love the dalliance of prosperity. Whatever service these may do the Church by accident, yet it is certain, as their natures abhor it, so they are usually a distemper in it. *One sinner destroys much good (x)*: their hypocrisy imbitters those that observe it against Religion: nay, whilst they lie unsuspected, they are a rot to the fellowship. They clog the work of the LORD by a cold profession. They are sometimes explained in scandalous crimes; but when they are most secret, yet then they lie as a dead weight upon the society. Thus it has been in all ages, and the trick yet continues. Persons will observe where the sky looks clearest: they love a Religion that is most pampering to their ambition and interest. *Many of the people of the land became Jews, for the fear of the Jews fell upon them (y)*.

Now in a time of great trouble, the Church is scoured and gets fairly rid of this stench and corruption. They will not endure rubbing; a sitting Providence discovers them. Perhaps no Church-censures could remove them, but Providence wipes them off with honour enough to the society they fell from. Thus the Church is often melted down again, scummed of its dross, and made more amiable and solid. *Though they have lain among the pots, yet they shall be as the wings of a dove, covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold (z)*. At such times does Religion unload, and cast the burden that it has long groaned under. *He that receives the seed into stony places, is he that hears the Word, and with joy receives it; yet he has not root in himself, but endures for a while; for when tribulation and persecution arises, because of the Word, by and by he is offended (a)*.

II. Why

(x) Eccles. ix. 18.

(y) Esther viii. 17.

(z) Psal. lxxviii. 13.

(a) Matt. xiii. 20, 21.

II. Why is a time of this distress and calamity so fit for GOD'S appearing in his people's deliverance ?

1. He may then very honourably save them in a way of justice to his enemies. Then *the Lord awakes, as one out of sleep, and like a mighty man that shouts by reason of wine; he smites his enemies in the hinder parts, and puts them to perpetual reproach (b)*. It is usual in these black days, that blasphemy opens its mouth; malice and cruelty shew themselves upon every tongue. *All the enemies of Sion open their mouths against her, they hiss and gnash their teeth; they say, We have swallowed her up; certainly this is the day we have looked for, we have found, we have seen it (c)*. The persons, who durst not speak their malice in prosperous times, are unchained from their reservedness when Christianity is under a cloud: that is *their hour, and the power of darkness (d)*. They can easily trample the interest that is already prostrate before them. Sinners have the cowardice of their master; as Satan was the fiercest upon CHRIST *in the wilderness*, so the tools of his interest pour in upon the Church when she is in the like solitude. The reins are taken off in a time of Sion's troubles: such as flattered her before, or however behaved themselves with a calmness, will now declare a more tempestuous enmity.

When so much of this rancour is stirring, it is time for God to appear: *Thus saith the Lord God, My people went down aforetime into Egypt, to sojourn there, and the Assyrian oppressed them without cause: Now what have I here, that my people is taken away for nought? They that rule over them, make them to bow, and my name continually every day is blasphemed (e)*. He suffers by every reflection, and more especially in the actual cruelties of wickedness. Persecution cuts into CHRIST

E 4

himself,

(b) Psal. lxxviii. 65, 66.

(c) Lam. ii. 16.

(d) Luke xxii. 53.

(e) Isai. lii. 4, 5.

himself, *crucifies him afresh, and puts him to open shame (f)*. Now when Religion is sunk so low, by the pressure of enemies, it is but justice to throw off the load. At that time it may be presumed that the sinner has *filled up his measure of guilt, and is ripe for slaughter*. Therefore *the Lord shall go forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up his jealousy like a man of war: he shall cry, yea, rore; he shall prevail against his enemies. I have a long time holden my peace; I have been still, and refrained myself: now will I cry like a travailing woman, I will destroy and devour at once (g)*. He will give a reward to the proud. If he was no more than the Governor of the world, and stood in no particular relation to his people; yet he would stir up himself to the repairs of that honour which enemies violate: *Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompence tribulation to those that trouble us (b)*.

2. A deliverance so timed will bring all the glory to himself. *The earth mourns and languishes; Lebanon is ashamed, and hewn down; Sharon is like a wilderness; Bashan and Carmel shake off their fruits; Now will I arise, saith the Lord; now will I be exalted, now will I lift up myself (i)*. He has sometimes expressed a caution, lest his people should rob him of any rightful honour. He knows how apt Self is to be creeping into God's throne, and catching at his share of reputation. To prevent this, he makes a double reform in Gideon's army. He thinks it dangerous to prosper a multitude, lest he should lose his part amongst them. *The people that are with thee, are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand has saved me (k)*. The person that either dives into himself, or observes the greediness of pride

(f) Heb. vi. 6.

(g) Isai. xlii. 13, 14.

(b) 2 Thes. i. 5.

(i) Isai. xxxiii. 9, 10.

(k) Judg. vii. 2.

pride in the world, will see the need of such a caution. As it is dangerous to run away with GOD's honour, so it is a sin that we cannot easily guard against. Conceit and self-applause is the freest breath of nature.

Now when the Church is in her afflicting solitude, abandoned to an helpless unpromising condition; Deliverance then will proclaim its Author. At such a time GOD writes his name upon the mercy in great letters, for the common perusal and wonder of his people. *They got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them; but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favour unto them (l).* Thus he puts a stop to the creature's claim, and gathers up all the glory of the action to himself. Such a Providence is the work of pure divinity: it is above human reach, and pulls the serious heart upwards in songs of gratitude. *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy and thy truth's sake (m).*

3. His appearing so seasonably will continue the impression of the mercy upon his peoples minds. It is thus with particular souls. *Abraham* rears a monument to the honour of God, and names it after the Providence that he would remember by it: *Jehovah-jireh, in the mount of the Lord will be seen (n)*; so does *David*, *I was brought low, and he helped me (o)*. *Hezekiah* is another instance to this purpose: *The Lord was ready to save me, therefore will we sing my songs all the days of our life, in the house of the Lord (p).* And thus will the whole Church do: They will not be so apt to forget the deliverance which caught them up in the moment of ruin. When they were in a daily expectation of misery, and saw what trains of destruction were laid for them, the face of salvation then is like

(l) Psal. xlv. 3.

(m) Psal. cxv. 1.

(n) Gen. xxii. 14.

(o) Psal. cxvi. 6.

(p) Isai. xxxviii. 20.

like the sun's rising at midnight ; it is too strange not to sink into the memory.

God lets his people tremble upon the lips of a gulph that would swallow them ; and when the ground begins to give way with them, he pulls them back by an arm of love. And is not this enough to perpetuate the mercy, and make it so inseparable, as if it were rather a part of the mind, than a guest lodged in it ?

4. It will determine and encourage their hope in his goodness for the time to come. When Deliverance cuts a glorious way through so many hazards, it lets us see what a God can do : so that upon the return of the like difficulties, we may freely trust in ONE who is so well acquainted with the methods of salvation. *Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord ; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old ; art not thou it that hast cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon (q) ?* As this is a good argument in prayer, so it may serve as a prop to our faith, when it bends under heavy discouragements.

It is easy to argue from past experience to future mercy : there is a connection between old kindneses, and those we are now begging for, because they are the work of the same God. As he got such an ample victory over our calamities once, so a capacity of saving us again is still laid up in his omnipotence. These tastes of his power and love will put more sweetness into the promise, and activity into our hope. It shall both swell the breast, and teach the mouth to draw it. *Thou shalt bring them, faith Moses, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in ; in the sanctuary, O Lord, which thine hands have established ; the Lord shall reign for ever and ever (r).* How can he tell all this ? He gives gives a reason of the hope that was in him in the next words ; *For the horses of Pharaoh went down, with his chariots and horsemen, into the sea, and*

(q) Hsa li 9.

! (r) Exod. xv. 17, 18, 19.

and the Lord brought again the waters of the sea upon them, but the children of Israel went on dry land in the midst of the sea (s).

5. Deliverance is very seasonable in times of greatest danger, because it usually comes upon the exercise of such grace as is most honourable to GOD. He punisheth us for his glory; and he lets his hand lie heavy upon us, till the very removal of it shall add a brightness to his name. *When the Lord has performed his whole work upon mount Sion and Jerusalem, then he will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the King of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks (t).* Humanly speaking, he would have been a loser had the salvation made more haste, and given an earlier interruption to the scourge that his people lay under. In this case, the cordial had come before the ill humours were cleared off. But when they are sunk so low, they are commonly in a fit temper to receive the mercy. Because,

First, Their humility qualifies them for the deliverance. It was not meet to restore the prosperity, which pampered their ambition till they had parted with the abusive temper. They must *enter into the rock, and hide themselves in the dust, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his Majesty (u).* But when their spirits are upon a just level, as low and declining as their condition, then its not so dangerous to trust them with the mercy. *Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Sion, put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, thou holy city; for there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean, shake thyself from the dust, arise and sit down, O Jerusalem! Loose thyself from the bands of thy necks, O captive daughter of Sion (x).* GOD brings them by his grace to value his meanest appearances, to love Religion in its ruins. Thus he takes off that wantonness of temper which provoked him in the day of their solemn feasts. He
gives

(s) Exod. xv. 20.

(t) Isai. x. 12.

(u) Isai. ii. 10.

(x) Isai. lii. 10.

gives them an appetite to the crumbs that fall from his table. And how honourable is his conquest over all their pride and lightness? Is not that deliverance well-timed that finds them in tears for sin, melted down under the rebukes of a Father, and embracing the wounds of Christianity? *The time to favour Sion, the set time is come, when God's servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof (y).*

Secondly, They receive deliverance at such times upon the wings of prayer, so that he appears to be a GOD who *bears the cry of the humble*, and this is one of his darling characters: *Many times did he deliver the Israelites, but they provoked him with their counsels, and then were brought low for their iniquity: nevertheless he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry (z).* Distress has sent them often to the throne of grace, to beg the dawn of that salvation that GOD has promised. *Turn us unto thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned, renew our days as of old (a).* It may be, they seldom minded the common interest of Religion, when there was no apparent hazard of it: they carried it slightly enough, and with a continual trifle of spirit, till the scourge made them feel. *There is none calls upon thy name, none stirs up himself to take hold of thee (b).* But when they came to find a reproach and vexation upon the name of CHRIST, when GOD *hid his face from them, and consumed them, because of their iniquities*, it has taught them the way to their knees. *But now, O Lord, thou art our Father, we are the clay, and thou art the potter, we are all the work of thine hand. Be not wroth very sore, O Lord, neither remember iniquity for ever; behold, see, we beseech thee, we are all thy people (c).*

Thirdly, Salvation, at such times, comes after an eminent trial and conquest of faith. When faith tells

(y) Psal. cii. 13, 14.

(z) Psal. cxi. 43, 44.

(a) Lam. v. 21.

(b) Isai. lxiv. 7.

(c) Isai. lxi. 8, 9.

us of the mercy, it looks at two attributes in the divine nature, Power and Goodness, though it has principally to do with the former. It lays down this as a certain rule, that *God is able to save us*: and it strives to be assured that he actually *will do it*. Indeed, our distress may be so great, as to give us a suspicion of the latter; but perhaps in the darkest moment of unbelief upon that head, we may have unusual convictions of Omnipotence. *Our God, whom we serve, say the three Worthies, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O King: but if not (d)*, if he not actually save us, yet we believe his power, and will not worship another God. Now this puts a credit upon his name, when we can trust him in defiance of all danger and objection. *Abraham* considered not his own, nor *Sarah's* age; *he staggered not at the promise, through any unbelief of this kind, but was strong in faith, and hereby gave glory to God (e)*.

A P P L I C A T I O N.

1. See what secure guards God's people are under. When stripped of all created help they may run to a confederate Omnipotence. *Their Redeemer is strong, the Lord of hosts is his name (f)*.

2. Let us carry it with an ingenuous caution to this great and perpetual friend, that when others leave us, we may be sure of an Almighty reserve. *I, even I, am he that comforteth you; Who art thou then, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and the son of man, that shall be made as grass, and forgettest the Lord thy maker (g)?*

3. In the time of Sion's troubles, see your relief: flee to him with confidence; hang about his throne, and let no unbelief beat you from it. If Deliverance take but slow steps, yet still act faith in the promise, and

(d) Dan. iii. 17, 18.

(e) Rom. iv. 19, 20.

(f) Prov. xxiii. 11.

(g) Isai. li. 12, 13.

and keep yourselves quiet with these two considerations.

First, That you have deserved a longer bondage : should he draw out the thread of your captivity, yet he is righteous. *All this is come upon us for our great trespass, and our evil deeds ; thou, our God, hast punished less than our iniquities deserve (b).*

Secondly, Rather believe that you are unfit for the mercy, than that God is unwilling to give it. Suspect your own disorders, and keep up a venerable opinion of his love. This is both safe and dutiful. It will preserve your spirits cool and temperate : you will never study any revenge upon heaven, but believe yourselves still under a course of providential medicine, and will be desirous, that *patience should have its perfect work (i).*

Thus I have done opening and applying this doctrine. We have a most remarkable proof of it in those providences that are recorded upon *this day*, to the memory of after-generations.

It is now fourteen years since God blessed us with a kind of Revolution in *England*. Our case before answered the most dismal characters of this text : *Our power was gone, nor was there scarce any shut up or left*, to appear for Religion and Liberty : these the enemy had damned to ruin. We may apply *Deborah's* words to that troublesome state : *They chose new gods, then was there war in the gates ; yet there durst not be a shield or a spear seen among forty thousand in Israel (k).* Those brave and gallant spirits, who ventured to oppose an exalted tyranny, were, many of them, cut off. The cause, which they wanted strength to defend, they sealed with their blood ; and conquered in martyrdom, when they could not do it in battle. And though they lived to see themselves disappointed, yet they died in the belief of what we have found.

Their

(b) Ezra ix. 13.

(i) Jam. i. 4.

(k) Judg. v. 8.

Their last breath was something like *Joseph's*: *God will surely visit you, and bring you up from hence (l).*

You may remember how the channels of equity were choked up with arbitrary power. The confusion that begun *Israel's* captivity, was the forerunner of our deliverance. *In those times there was no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in, but great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the country (m).* The Religion we now profess cast but a dim light, and was almost extinguished. But in this desperate moment, GOD appeared to judge his servants, that *the man of the earth might oppress them no more (n).*

He put a fresh reputation upon *this day*, by the arrival of his late Majesty King WILLIAM; a person richly formed to all the duties of government, and whose name is embalmed with *Mordecai's* character; *He was great among the Jews, accepted of the multitude of his brethren, seeking the wealth of his people, and speaking peace to all his seed (o).* The blessings we enjoyed in his reign, were so many intimations, that a peculiar sway of heaven directed him all along. He had a soul both for the camp and the palace. His battles retrieved our honour and grandeur, and his councils maintained them. It was a signal mercy that he had life enough to make the nation ready for a war, and the throne secure to a Protestant Queen. We owe the blessing of this government to GOD's presence with the last. The same hand that raised up our first Deliverer, has continued his own work in her present Majesty, who has given the most gracious assurance, that *the same war* shall be maintained abroad, and *the same peace* at home. *The spirit of Moses rested upon Joshua (p)*; the person of the ruler was only changed: and so it is in *England*, though King WILLIAM is dead, we have a living Copy of him

(l) Gen. l. 25.

(m) 2 Chron. xv. 5.

(n) Psal. x. 18.

(o) Esther x. 3.

(p) Deut. xxxiv. 9.

him upon the throne. The same God that taught his hands to war, has blest the same cause under another Sovereign. Her armies have shrunk the common enemy of Europe, to that degree, that we hope, he only lives for Sifera's fate, to fall by the hands of a woman. Let this text be our consolation in a time of danger, and the voice of our gratitude when salvation comes.

The Lord judges his people, and repents himself for his servants, when he sees that their power is gone, and there is none shut up or left.





S E R M O N IV.

The Reputation that a great Deliverance has
in future Memory.













Preached at WAPPING, 1703.



N U M B. XXIII. 23.

*Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, nor
divination against Israel; according to this time
it shall be said of Jacob, and of Israel, What
hath the Lord wrought?*

    HIS Book is part of the history of God's
 T  dealings with the Jews in their travels
  from *Egypt* to *Canaan*. It was a thing
  so remarkable, to be pulled out of bond-
age with miracles, and led through a wil-
derness with safety, that they are charged to keep an
exact journal of their motions and experiences. *Moses*
wrote their goings out, according to their journies, by
the commandment of the Lord (a).

Here are three chapters that tell us what treatment
they met with from the King of *Moab*. They had
an especial caution *not to meddle with a foot of his*
land (b), because he was the seed of righteous *Lot*.
The LORD said unto *Moses*, *Distress not the Moabites,*
VOL. I. F *neither*

(a) Numb xxxiii. 2.

(b) Deut. ii. 5.

neither contend with them in battle; for I will not give thee their land for a possession (c). Yet this man looks upon them as enemies. He is in all the terror of despair and jealousy. *Moab said unto the elders of Midian, Now shall this company lick up all that are round about us, as the ox licketh up the grafs of the field (d)*. And his methods of relief are as wild as his fears. He had no hopes of crushing them in battle, but strives to get hell on his side. He sends to *Balaam* for a curse upon this numerous people, and tempts him with all *the rewards of divination (e)*; which the New Testament brands with another name, by calling them, *the wages of unrighteousness (f)*.

We find that God denies him leave at first to go upon this wretched errand: and afterwards, when he allows him to comply with *Balak*, yet he gives his thoughts and words such a wonderful turn, that instead of sinking the people, he raises them: he pronounces the success which he was hired to blast. He runs quite contrary both to his own covetous and malicious bias, and also to the design that *Balak* had in sending for him.

So that here we have a lofty account of *Israel's* happiness. We cannot suppose that a man, whose *ways were perverse before the Lord (g)*, spoke his own heart in all these beauties of eloquence and praise. No, he was over-ruled and commanded by a superior Being. *The Lord put a word in Balaam's mouth, and he said, Return unto Balak, and thus shalt thou speak (h)*. Thus he had told him at their first meeting. He had as much inclination to have damned them with a curse, as he had afterwards to corrupt them with his more sensual arts. But he knew his malice was hampered, and therefore says, *Lo, I am come unto thee, have I now any power at all to say any thing? The word that*

(c) Deut. ii. 9.
 (d) Deut. xxii. 4.
 (e) Deut. xxii. 7.

(f) 2 Pet. ii. 15.
 (g) Numb. xxii. 32.
 (h) Numb. xxiii. 5.

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that God puts into my mouth, that shall I speak (i). And when the King was startled at the blessing he pronounced, he gives the same reason, *Must I not take heed to speak that which the Lord has put in my mouth (k)*: So again, *I have received commandment to bless, and he has blessed, and I cannot reverse it (l)*. So that we may look upon all this parable as GOD'S voice, a peculiar communication of his mind and will to this person. *Spake I not unto thy messengers, which thou sentest unto me, saying, If Balak would give me his house-ful of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the commandment of the Lord, to do either good or bad of my own mind; but what the Lord saith, that will I speak (m)*.

In the words we have *Israel's* safety and glory.

1. Their safety. *There is no enchantment against Jacob, nor divination against Israel; i. e.* None shall attain their end. Every plot and attempt is blasted. It is in vain to fetch the arts of ruin out of hell. The most accomplished intrigues of darkness cannot do their part upon a nation that is fenced about with Omnipotence.

2. Their glory or character. *According to this time, &c.* Here observe,

1. The general extent and surprize of the mercy. *It shall be said.* It will be a thing of notorious view, exposed to universal admiration.

2. The particular relation it had to them. *It shall be said of Jacob and of Israel;* the people whom hell invades, and heaven defends.

3. The Author of it: his name is inscribed upon it, *What has the Lord wrought?* They shall all look at him, when they are wondring at the Providence. Though enemies deny him, and others are apt to forget him, yet such an act of greatness would make its way to their consciences.

F 2

4. The

(i) Numb. xxii. 38.

(k) Numb. xxiii. 12.

(l) Numb. xxiii. 20.

(m) Numb. xxiv. 12, 13.

4. The occasion of it, and that is some particular deliverance : *According to this time, &c.* Perhaps he has respect to the whole train of mercies that reached from *Egypt to Canaan*. This was a thing of long and honourable memory ; it was often said of them, *What has the Lord wrought (n) ?* This entred into his character, *The Lord liveth that brought up the children of Israel from Egypt (o).* But it may be *Balaam's* remark does not take so large a circuit ; he is only considering the particular favour which himself was the unwilling instrument of ; and *from that time* it might be said, *What has GOD done for his people ?* Now, that he has given them such an eminent rescue from the designs of men and devils ?

The sense of the words may be expressed in this proposition.

God's signal appearing for a people, is a surprising evidence of his power, and a continual honour upon them.

- I. What sort of an appearance is it that will bear this glorious character ?
- II. How is this so general and surprising an evidence of his power ?
- III. How does it put a continual honour upon the people whom he thus delivers ?
- IV. The Application.

I. We must consider the Providence itself which the text gives us so magnificent an account of ; and that is God's appearing with such a largeness of mercy, as does not only proclaim himself, but fixes a lasting reputation upon his people. This I might answer in several particulars, but I will only instance in four cases, all of which are visible in *Israel's* deliverance, which we are considering in this chapter ; and the late Revolution in *England*, which we are called to remember *this day*.

I. GOD

(n) Jer. xvi. 15.

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(o) Jer. xxiii. 8.

1. GOD declares himself and honours his people, when he saves them against the most likely attempts of enemies. Here *Israel* was inclosed with a great number of envious monarchs, who grudged the success of their arms, and strained their inventions to swallow them up. We read of none that entered into a league with them, but a little handful afterwards. GOD had *hardned their hearts* (p). They acted with a froward zeal against this pilgrim nation. This is afterwards mentioned both for the honour of GOD's people, and to secure a reputation to himself; as a monument of their privileges and his greatness: *Because he loved thy Fathers, he chose their seed after them — to drive out nations from before thee greater and mightier than thou:—Know therefore this day, and consider it in thy heart, that the Lord is God in heaven above, and in the earth beneath, there is none else* (q).

There was all the policy of nature to weave out the intrigue of destroying this people; and because this was too little, they must have a scholar from below, to inspire their councils. The court of *Moab* was not sufficient, and therefore they sent to *Balaam*; that what they could not do with courage, they might make out with charms. And you may observe, though they had no great comfort in their own projects, yet they set an high rate upon his curse. *I wot that he whom thou blessest, is blessed; and he whom thou cursest, is cursed* (r). As if the scales of Providence were hung in hell: as if GOD had resigned the government of the world to the vilest rebel against his own throne. But this is the usual giddiness of the Church's enemies; when they have lost their natural courage, they supply it with a whimsical faith in some wretched contrivance or other. There are *many devices in a man's heart, nevertheless the counsel of the Lord shall stand* (s). The GOD who had terrified *Balak*, could manage

F 3

Balaam.

(p) *Iosh.* xi. 20.

(q) *Deut.* iv. 37, 38.

(r) *Deut.* xxii. 26.

(s) *Prov.* xix. 21.

Balaam. The heart of the one sinks and falls, and the tongue of the other is hurried into a rapture of blessing.

And thus it has been in *England's* case. Our histories tell us of a pompous fleet, that once came from *Spain*, with all the gallantry of that nation, on purpose to lay waste our Religion and Liberties. And, that it might work a more expeditious ruin, they sent to *Rome* for a blessing; that the *Balaam* of that place might stamp his name upon the undertaking, and insure the success: for they imagined, that *such as he blessed, were blessed; and they that he cursed, were cursed.* Thus they came with more stateliness to enjoy the prey, than they had courage to secure it. This gave them immoderate expectations, because a Church-gale blew them on. But God took this affront, and declared a loud resentment in his providence: for the armado sunk under the blessing it was so proud of. Now this is an eminent discovery of his greatness, and the peculiar indulgence that he followed us with. *The day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up, and he shall be brought low; and upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant pictures: And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day (t).*

2. When he works after an extraordinary manner, without the help of his people. Perhaps he uses them as he did his armies against *Sisera*, though *the militia of heaven* did the main execution (u). *God brought them out of Egypt, he has as it were the strength of an unicorn (x).* And this particular deliverance was of the same kind. His saving them from *Moab*, was after the manner of *Egypt*. He changes *Pharaoh's* heart from stoutness into trembling, from unwillingness

(t) *Iſai. ii. 12, 14, 16, 17.*(x) *Judg. v. 22.*(u) *Judg. v. 20.*

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ness into a compliance; and now he sets *Balaam's* tongue to a quite different purpose than it was designed. It could be no act of theirs, that fetched a blessing from those lips, which were hired for a curse. Here GOD wrought alone: he is seen in the affair throughout.

Their victory was very glorious over the *Amorites*, whom they scattered in battle: but now they are only to stand still. As the enemy had trusted all their cause with an hellish agent, so GOD would answer them in a more immediate battle. With these mixtures did they go triumphant into *Canaan*: *they are saved by wonders, by war, by a mighty hand, and a stretched-out arm* (y). Sometimes they must undergo the toil and hazard of war, to teach them their own duty; and at other times, they are only the spectators of a fighting Providence, that they might know *whose hand it was that drove out the heathen*. *They got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them; but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favour unto them* (z). In this Scripture we read both the author of their salvation, *God's right hand*; and the motive, *the favour that he had to them*. Thus he is seen, and *they* are owned in the same Providence.

Had they been engaged in a doubtful war, yet the success must have come from him: but now he does the whole; both gives them the victory, and actually completes it without them. This was *Israel's* case several generations after, in a new quarrel with *Moab*. In good *Jehoshaphat's* days they were in danger from this enemy, and could have no other prospect, but of desolation and ruin. Their condition was so hopeless, that their only recourse is to a friend in heaven; and he saved them after this wonderful manner that I am speaking of. *Be not afraid*, says the Prophet, *neither be dismayed by reason of this great multitude*;

F 4

(y) Deut. iv. 34.

(z) Psal. xlv. 3.

multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's; you shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves; stand you still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed, to-morrow go out against them, for the Lord is with you (b).

And how often has he thus expressed himself to his Church in *these nations*? when there has been none to help, his own arm has brought salvation. *All they that devour thee shall be devoured, and all thine adversaries, every one of them shall go into captivity; and they that spoil thee shall be a spoil; and all that prey upon thee will I give for a prey. For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the Lord, because they called thee an out-cast, saying, This is Sion, whom no man seeketh after (b).*

3. When it is all clear gains without any loss or damage to his people. Had *Israel* fought the *Moabites*, though they might have come off with honour and victory, yet it is not to be supposed but some of them would have fallen in the battle; so that whilst the generality of the people were glorying in their mercy, some desolate families might be mourning over their dead. The public interest was promoted, but their relations were cut off; others rejoice at their cost: but here is no occasion for this mixture in their gladness; the conquest is cheap and intire to them.

And, my friends, the great Revolution which begun this day in *England*, was thus inanced. God delivered us without any expence of blood and slaughter. The Person that came to save us, may wear the character that God gives to *Cyrus*. *I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways; he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the Lord of hosts (c).* Had we come by our mercies with the waste of several armies, the most usual way of prevailing, then we should

(a) 2 Chron. xx. 16, 17.

(d) 1st Chron. 16, 17.

(c) Isai. xlv. 13.

should have thought the gains glorious : but we have the deliverance in all its sweetness, without the charge of those troubles that once lay in the way to it.

And it is the more remarkable, that a government begun with murder and policy, and maintained with cruel revenges, should be overturned without a drop of blood. As the errand upon which the *late instrument* of our safety came was peaceful, so there was nothing destructive in the methods that he took. Providence gave this continual testimony to his glorious design ; that as he came to rescue the people, he should do it without any damage to them. We may well cry out with the awakened church, *When the Lord turned again our captivity, we were like them that dreamed (d)*. Sense out-did faith ; we saw what we had scarce the power to believe ; victory without a battle, a general tumult and no war. The great preparations of the enemy, nourished the cause that they were to strangle. *Was not this the doing of the Lord ? was it not once marvellous in our eyes ?*

4. When it is a *comprehending mercy* ; including many deliverances, and reaching a vast length. Of this sort was *Israel's conquest over Moab*. This ruffle of their plots, was a double rescue, they were at once saved from earth and hell, men and devils.

Sometimes GOD seems to neglect his interest for a season ; he does not scatter his favours in drops as he used to do, here a little and there a little : but when he appears, they may see that his love has neither been idle nor unkind. He has taken the whole bundle of mercies which they have been waiting for, and wrapped them up in one great deliverance ; so that as soon as *Sion travailed she brought forth (e)*. It was not a tedious lingring Salvation.

God

(d) Psalm cxxvi. 1.

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(e) Isa. lxvi. 7.

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GOD cut the work short in righteousness (*f*); and these are glorious evidences of his power and love.

This miscarriage of *Balaam's* malice, was enough to dishearten all attempts of the like nature: Hell would be struck into despair when so great an agent talks in a strain as if he had been a refugee from darkness, a profelyte to *Israel*; so that he speaks the common language of a distressed world, who cannot bring about their designs of wickedness: *Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, and divination against Israel.* There is no assaulting them that way: All the engines of spiritual wickedness are not able to cut through the *pillar of fire*; the burning guard that goes along with *Israel*. There is more than *Balak's* disappointment in it, for this is equivalent to a victory over all the forceries of *Canaan*.

And then besides, it was a favour of *long memory*, and like to have an influence upon their future lot. Had *Balaam* succeeded in his arts, they might have expected enough of those engagements from other nations. The *Canaanites* would have plundered hell of its armory, rather than lose their country. But this disappointment in the first venture, broke all their designs that way. Of this nature was their deliverance at the *Red-Sea*. *The people shall bear and be afraid, sorrow shall take hold of the inhabitants of Palestina* (*g*).

Such a mercy was our Revolution: (as it is said of *Rebecca*) there were *nations in its womb* (*b*). It brought us a revival of the Protestant interest, that was almost driven out with *new gods, whom our fathers knew not* (*i*). It gave us a security to our lives and liberties; it restored that fence that we have of both, the laws of our nation, which had been shattered with a prosperous tyranny: nay, it brought
dominion

(*f*) Romans ix. 28.

(*g*) Exod. xv. 14.

(*b*) Gen. xxv. 2, 3.

(*i*) Judges v. 8.

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dominion to *England*, which was before but the tool of one country, and growing the jest of others.

We were too much like *Israel*; though *Balaam* could not reach them with a curse, yet he found another way to bring a plague among them; and that was by the *midianitish woman* (k). *Cozbi* was his most effectual charm. This made the people degenerate, and engaged heaven's anger against them. With the same abomination was *England* allured into bondage. The corruption was getting ground, making its way over law, sobriety, justice, and every thing that is sacred, *pertaining to life and godliness*. We might bewail the degeneracy in those words, *How does the city sit solitary that was full of people? How is she become as a widow? She that was great among the nations, and princess among the provinces, How is she become tributary* (l)? Thus was *England* at the Revolution. And from this unhappiness, she advanced to be the scourge of a common tyrant, the defence of abused and threatened states, and the supreme moderator of *Europe*.

I could enlarge with pleasure enough, upon a theme where God and Mercy are writ in great letters; but I will only mention one thing more, which gave the completing stroke to our other privileges: And that is, the same Revolution which begun this day, gave us not only the reign of a King, who had an equal largeness and inclination to secure a peace in his own dominions, and be glorious in an useful war abroad: but it has given us a happy and promising Succession, so that our liberties are not buried with the Great Prince that restored them; but they are continued, and graciously defended by our present Sovereign, whose government stands upon the same foot, and who is (blessed be God) a prosperous agent in those great affairs, which his late Majesty begun
with

(k) Numbers xxv.

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(l) Lam. i. 1.

with so much vigour; and besides, the crown is intailed upon an illustrious Protestant family. So that you see, if we were to unbowel the deliverance, we should find it contains all the national privileges we are now possess of, and the whole security we have in view. And may it not be said according to this time, of *England, Scotland and Ireland*, What has the LORD wrought? This was the first link of that glorious chain; that which begun the mercies we enjoy, gave the crown its present settlement, and the kingdom all its expectation of a continuing happiness.

II. How is this a surprising evidence of God's power? What I have already said, would furnish out an answer to this question. The opposition that he cut his way through; the pure unassisted divinity that appeared in the whole; the safety of his people, and the vast croud of favours that lay in the general bulk of our deliverance; these are proof enough of his greatness and conduct in the Providence; so that having enlarged upon these things before, I might dismiss them with a transient reference; I will only here take notice, that at such times, he usually conveys an impression upon the general part of mankind; so that it is almost the universal cry, *This is the finger of God.*

1. It is surprising to his own people; such as are most conversant with all the sweetness of the Providence: To be sure they will be looking through sense, and above nature: This dispensation will be a glass, not to hide their father, but to show him in his glory. This remark do the *Israelites* put upon the time of their deliverance out of *Egypt*. *It is a night much to be observed unto the Lord, for bringing them out of the land of Egypt; this is that night of the Lord, to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations (m).*

In

In their afflictions they considered his hand, and mourned under it. Their addresses for relief were presented to his throne; and now they take this deliverance as an answer to all the arguments and intreaties which they have prayed out. Their faith and hope were creeping upon the ground, rather feeding upon dust than promises: unbelief lodged a cloud in their minds, and a burden in their obedience: And now, when God splits the darkness, and makes his own way through it, they must ascribe all to him. It is a reasonable debt to his love, and the genuine effect of theirs. *I will not trust in my sword, neither shall my sword save me; but thou hast saved us from our enemies, and put them to shame that hated us: in God we boast all the day long, and praise thy name for ever (n).*

2. It is wonderful to strangers, those that have no personal interest, either in the vengeance or the mercy of this dispensation. *The labour of Egypt, the merchandize of Ethiopia, and of the Sabeans, men of stature shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine; they shall come after thee, in chains shall they come over: they shall fall down unto thee, and make supplication to thee, saying, Surely God is in thee, and there is none else, there is no God (o).* They cannot but observe how wonderfully a people are caught from ruin, who lay trembling upon the very lips of the pit. And though the conviction may not be religious in these persons, though it is no more than a startle of nature, yet there is a glory redounds to God from it. Thus *Jethro* beholds the exploits of heaven for *Israel*, with a sweet surprize. *Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods, for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly, he was above them (p).* And in another national deliverance, the gazing kingdoms took their part in admiration. *They said among the heathen, The Lord has done great things for them (q).*

(n) Psalm xlv. 6, 7, 8.

(o) Isa. xlv. 14.

(p) Exodus xviii. 11.

(q) Psalm cxxvi. 2.

It is surprising to enemies, the creatures whose plots are disordered and blasted. They cannot but be sensible that a favourable presence goes along with such persons; and sometimes the conviction is so powerful as to squeeze a wish out of them, *Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my latter end be like his* (r). Indeed it is not with any pleasure that they see GOD in this triumph, much less have they a pious repentment of it: But *the wrath of these men shall praise him* (s). He gets a glory by their vexation and despondency. *The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked. So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous; verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth* (t).

III. What honour doth this put upon his people?

1. It distinguishes them from the rest of the world: *I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee: since thou wast precious in my sight thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee; therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life* (u). He sweeps over other nations, and drops his mercy here. He is doing that for them which the neighbouring countries can only look at, but not taste. *From the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him; for the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations* (x). The same does Moses take notice of; *Did ever a people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live? Or hath God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptations, signs, and wonders, by war, and a mighty band, and a stretched out arm, and by great terrors? — Unto thee it was shewed* (y).

Indeed

(r) Numb. xxiii. 10.

(s) Psalm lxxvi. 10.

(t) Psalm lviii. 10, 11.

(u) Isa. xliii. 3, 4.

(x) Numb. xliii. 9.

(y) Deut. iv. 33, 34.

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Indeed these peculiar vouchsafements do not always proclaim a singular worth in the people that receive them: for, if this had been requisite, *England* must have perished for want of a title to the deliverance. *Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel* (z). But it shews his especial goodness to such a nation, when they are in this happy case, rolling in fulness, their liberties guarded by Providence, their arms successful, whilst others want both the bread of this life, and that which feeds a better. He does not so resent their folly as to cast them off. *He has not beheld iniquity in Jacob, nor seen perverseness in Israel; the Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them* (a). I may repeat the Psalmist's words, and apply them to our land, and more especially this year, wherein God has blest us with a peculiar harvest. *Our garners are full, affording all manner of store; our sheep bring forth thousands and ten thousands in our streets: our oxen are strong to labour; there is no breaking in nor going out, no complaining in our streets. Happy is that people which is in such a case; yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord* (b).

2. It is an assurance of further kindness. We are allowed to plead that long thread of mercies we have already received, and to desire it may be drawn out yet further. It gives *the ransomed of the Lord* (c) a peculiar greatness of mind and courage. It is heartening enough against all the fierceness of hell, to consider that we are got into so strong an alliance. *The people shall rise as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion; he shall not lie down until he eat of the prey, and drink of the blood of the slain* (d).

A P P L I-

(z) Ezek. xxxvi. 32.
 (a) Numb. xxiii. 21.
 (b) Psalm cxxiv. 13, 14, 15.

(c) Psalm cvii. 2.
 (d) Numb. xxiii. 24.

A P P L I C A T I O N.

Let not us forget either this deliverance, or the God that appeared so full in it. Let this enter into *England's* character, that heaven has blest us with such a Revolution. *According to this time may it be said of us, What has the Lord wrought?* You know this is the day which God pitched on to give us his late Majesty King WILLIAM: And hereby he equally retrieved the liberty of the people, and the glory of the crown, which were both lost in tyranny and darkness. Indeed this noble work at first was struck at with a vain opposition, and afterwards submitted to with an ungenerous regret. *It grieved them exceedingly, that a man was come to seek the welfare of the children of Israel (e).* But the design made its own way, and swept off resistance with such a dispatch, as if it had run on *celestial wheels*. Such as now gall the undertaking with censure and reproach, were then as clumsy at banter, as they were at fighting. Though their malice was not cured, yet it was dazzled by those beams of divinity that blazed out of the Providence. *When all our enemies heard thereof, and the heathen that were about us saw these things, they were much cast down in their own eyes, for they perceived that this work was wrought of God (f).*

And though the impression is much wore off, yet God still continues to glorify the Revolution, by raising up another Sovereign on that bottom, and making her the life of a just confederacy, against that monarch who begun to sink in a former reign, and perhaps may tumble in this. As we are to own God in gratitude for what is past, so we must do it with prayer for what we yet expect. I will conclude with the prophet's words, applied to this great Providence, *Who raised up the righteous man from the East*

(e) Neh. ii. 10.

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(f) Neh. vi. 16.

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East, called him to his foot, gave the nations before him, and made him rule over kings? He gave them as the dust to his sword, and as driven stubble to his bow. He pursued them and passed safely, even by the way that he had not gone with his feet. Who has wrought it, and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? I the Lord the first, and with the last, I am he (g). This has the Lord wrought.

(g) Isa. xli. 2, 3, 4.






S E R M O N V.



T O T H E

R E A D E R.

 HIS Sermon was designed for no other sense than the ear, and no further a spread than among a single congregation; and therefore it is easy to observe, with how little guard either of accuracy or language it comes out. As my own hurry in making it ready for the press allowed me only time to transcribe it, so indeed I durst not be at any new pains to prepare it for the public taste, lest it should appear more like a gaudy jest, than a memorial, or an improvement of the late storm. I am sure, the tempest, which occasioned this discourse, blew no softness of rhetoric, but a plain indignation. That long roar of wind, *November 25, 26, and 27, 1703*, which tumbled down houses upon their inhabitants, and lodged the ships, with their unhappy contents, in the gaping ocean, this is too solemn for an airy flaunt of words.

It was therefore my chief study, as Providence is only the Bible repeated in action, to give a scriptural account of God's Sovereignty, and of our carriage under such a discovery of it: I have found, in my little experience, that inspired words have sunk with the most penetration and empire within the hearts of men: when God speaks Judgments, he refers us to

the lively Oracles : the doctrines, threatnings and promises there, are level into all his dispensations in the world ; they tell us as much of his Majesty as we can ever see in Providence : the latter is but a vindication of the former ; it is GOD'S reply to the challenge of unbelief and presumption : he then lets mankind feel that he will be steady to his word. That we may take both these together, has been my endeavour in the following discourse,

It was some ground of encouragement on the Fast-day, to find most congregations in this city and the adjacent parts, not only crouded, but with such persons as declared a good sense of their business there. And perhaps one thing that both filled and regulated our assemblies, was, that other Storm that we were apprehensive of, in the moment of worship. God seemed to be repeating the former quarrel, though not in the same degree of loudness, and extent of ruin ; as if he would catch our departing seriousness back again, and restore something of that awe that we felt in the great Tempest.

But it is equally certain and deplorable, that these impressions soon wore off. The people, that could not but tremble at the sound of this judgment, have profanely mocked it since. It is dismal to think that so sweeping a calamity as this, should ever become the entertainment of the stage. That men should act the mimic so far, as to make ruin a diversion, by dressing it up with atheism and foppery. The banter of this ungodliness is so extreme, that the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of *Oxford*, thought fit to arraign it that day in a Sermon before the House of Peers : there is a vein of sweet and serious eloquence runs through the whole discourse, but upon this subject his lordship discovers so much of a christian warmth, that I shall transcribe the passage, and cover my own insignificant regret with this venerable authority.

“ To show how far we have exceeded the impieties
of

“ of the *Jews*, permit me to mention one instance,
 “ though I cannot do it without horror, of a late
 “ daring affront to GOD, unparalleled by the *Jewish*
 “ or any civilized nation, which looks like a defying,
 “ if not a ridiculing, of his Judgments; I mean
 “ that impudent representation of a mock Tempest
 “ on the Stage, so soon after we had felt that dread-
 “ ful one, that gives occasion to our meeting this day.
 “ I think I should not have been just to my subject,
 “ if I had omitted to take notice of this unprece-
 “ dented piece of profaneness; and certainly it
 “ will be no digression from it, to add, that whilst
 “ these nurseries of lewdness are suffered to corrupt
 “ the age, it is in vain to hope to see it reformed.”

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If there were more of this noble spirit among those whom Providence has raised above the common level, it would either make such as profess one LORD drop their little varieties, or continue them without any violation of harmony and peace. I will only add, that if this zeal was kindled where it is now wanting, enlarged where it has begun to live, and successful in every attempt and flame that it breaks out in, it would be an hopeful security to the nation's present happiness, and a good sign that Glory shall yet dwell in our Land.

That the various Sermons which are printed upon this occasion, may stir up a courage against the wickedness that makes GOD our enemy, is the hearty desire of

T. BRADBURY.

WAPPING,
 Feb. 21, 1703-4.



SERMON THE FIFTH.

God's Empire over the Wind, &c.



Preached on the FAST-DAY, *January* the 19th, 1703-4.



PROVERBS XXX. 4.

— *Who hath gathered the Wind in his Fists?*

The whole verse is thus ;

*Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended?
Who hath gathered the Wind in his fists? Who
hath bound the Waters in a garment? Who hath
established all the ends of the earth? What is his
name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst
tell?*

THIS chapter is a collection of instructive sentences, ascribed to *Agur the son of Jakeb (a)*, and they are added to *Solomon's Proverbs* as being much of the same contexture with them. Though we have no further account of this person in Scripture, yet there is sufficient ground to believe that he was a man of peculiar reputation for wisdom; one that stood highly advanced in the esteem of the world, and it is also very natural to suppose, that *Ithiel* and *Ucal* were either his scholars, or his intimates, that expected great advantages by his converse: they apply

(a) Prov. xxx. 1.

themselves to him as a walking Oracle; so that we may, without any strain, imagine, that this chapter is an answer to their importunity.

He begins his discourse with words that express both a decent modesty, and an awful surprize. He at once confesseth his own narrowness of thought, and also adores that mysterious head of knowledge which he entered upon.

He tells them, that, as for himself, they had over-rated him; his accomplishments were no way parallel to their expectations; instead of having any peculiar degree of wisdom, he will not take with a common share. *Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom, nor have I the knowledge of the holy (b).* And indeed, thus it usually is, such as have treasured up any intellectual riches, know the scantiness of their own attainments; whilst, on the other hand, persons who are strangers to any solid learning, do oftentimes make the greatest pretence and flourish. Where the waters are deep, they generally run smooth and silent, but when they are shallow, they proclaim themselves with a rumbling noise. This good man sunk lower under all his discoveries: he found himself ignorant of much more than he could pretend to an acquaintance with; so that as he fills with light, he has a more humbling view of his own darkness. This is the front of his discourse; he blames that excess of character, which his friends had given him.

But afterwards he throws a slight upon all the human race. Persons of the greatest figure in learning, who have the richest hoards of experience, and the best penetration of mind, lose themselves in their contemplations of God. They are but blundering in the dark, when they pretend to study his infinite nature and surprising works.

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Who has ascended up into heaven? and who has descended? This intimates, that it is impossible there should be any full knowledge of these things but what is first learned above, and then declared upon earth by a messenger from that world of light. This character, that he speaks of, agrees only with JESUS CHRIST the great prophet of the church: *John the Baptist gathers up this glorious title for a mediator: No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten son, which is in the bosom of the father, he hath declared him (c).* And afterwards in another place, *He that cometh from above is above all: He that is of the earth, is earthy, and speaketh of the earth: He that cometh from heaven is above all. And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth: He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God (d).*

After this he mentions some things, which must be ascribed to no other than GOD, and which none can have a comprehensive knowledge of. *Who has gathered the Wind in his Fists? Who has bound the Waters?* &c. The meaning of this question may be twofold.

1. Who but GOD has done these things? Who can lay a plausible claim to such divine performances? To this purpose agree the Psalmist's words, *Among the gods, O Lord, there is none like unto thee; neither are there any works like thy works: for thou art great, and doest wondrous things: thou art God alone (e).* Or,

2. Who can thoroughly understand this? He does not only speak of it as a truth, but a mystery. It claims faith, and it is above comprehension.

The last words seem to express a *Messiah's* interest in these things; *What is his name, and what is his son's name?* He was concerned in rearing the fabric of this world: *Without him was not any thing made that was made (f).* He has also a share in propping the
great

(c) John i. 18.

(d) John iii. 31, 32, 34.

(e) Psalm lxxxvi. 8, 10.

(f) John i. 3.

great bulk of the creation. *By him all things consist (g).* He challengeth this glory to himself, as a party in the vast performance. *When he, that is the Father, prepared the heavens, I was there; when he set a compass upon the face of the depth: When he established the clouds above, when he strengthened the fountains of the deep: When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: When he appointed the foundations of the earth: Then was I by him (h).*

And as to the Winds, we know they were made subject to him in his lowest abasement. When he appeared only in the form of a servant, he shewed himself the Lord of nature. This way he surpris'd his company. At his command *the wind ceased, and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered (i).* Another Evangelist gives us an higher account of this impression, and tells us what they observed convinced them of his deity. *They worshipp'd him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God (k).* We read also of another instance of his authority over the Winds, that out of the mouth of two witnessing miracles the thing might be established. We may first observe their distress; *There arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship (l).* After this we are told of their wondrous deliverance. *He arose and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still: and the wind ceased, and there was a great calm (m).* And the history is concluded with the remark they pass upon this performance. *They feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him (n)?*

These other works are ascribed to him. *He has bound the waters in a garment:* The clouds are those vast

(g) Col. i. 17.

(h) Prov. viii. 27—30.

(i) Mark vi. 51.

(k) Matt. xiv. 33.

(l) Mark iv. 37.

(m) Mark iv. 39.

(n) Mark iv. 41.

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vast extended sheets, which he has wrapped them up in. *He has established the ends of the earth.* This world is fixed by his authority, and though it is *hung upon nothing* (o), yet he maintains it with his own arm.

But I shall confine my thoughts to that clause which I first read to you, which you may take the sum of in this Proposition.

The whole stock of wind is in God's hand.

Here I shall briefly shew you,

I. What we are to understand by this phrase.

II. What use we are to make of this truth.

I. *The wind's being gathered into his fists*, shews us his power over it. That it is no more than the instrument of his sovereign pleasure. He gives it all its breath, and disposeth of it to the service of his will. It is the vassal of his authority: this is three times asserted in the same words, *When he utters his voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens, and he causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth, he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures* (p).

Though Satan is sometimes called *the prince of the power of the air* (q). We are not to suppose, that he has got the supremacy of the wind. Whatever leave he may have, upon some occasions, to affright and disturb this lower world, yet the government is in a greater hand. *For lo, he that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, and declareth unto man what is his thought, that maketh the morning darkness, and treadeth upon the high places of the earth, the Lord, the God of Hosts is his name* (r). We scarce read that ever the devil had a larger scope to his

(o) Job xxvi. 7.

(p) Psalm cxxxv. 7. Jer. x. 13. and li. 16.

(q) Eph. ii. 2.

(r) Amos iv. 13.

his malice, than against *Job's* family: he begins his mischief with an army of the *Sabeans* (s). After this he burns up the servants and cattle with *lightning* (t). Then he plies the remainder with *three bands of the Caldeans* (u). And his last havock is of the children by *a wind from the wilderness* (x), which shattered the house, and destroyed the persons: but all this was owing to a commission from above; *The Lord said unto Satan, Behold, all that he has is in thy power, only upon himself put not forth thy hand* (y).

It is God that rules the whole armory of nature: whatever can be dreadful lies under his management; he has not quitted his own right of disposal. The creation received a Being from him, and must pay a complete deference to his will. It is he that troubles the air, and spreads an universal faintness through the world. The seamen see *the work of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep: For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof* (z).

2. The wind's being *gathered into his fist*, intimates, that this power belongs to him alone. No creature hath a breath of wind to dispose of, it is all collected into the divine hand. This God takes to himself as his own prerogative. *He has his way in the whirlwind, and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet* (a). And it is *a way that the vultur's eye sees not*. None can trace his footsteps, or pretend to imitate him. Sometimes the Almighty pleads against idolaters from the ordinary courses of nature, that lie under his rule. The prophets challenge, banter, and reproach the heathen gods. *Are there any among the vanities of the Gentiles, that can cause rain? Art not thou he, O Lord our God* (b)?

When

(s) Job i. 15.

(t) Job i. 16.

(u) Job i. 17.

(x) Job i. 19.

(y) Job i. 12.

(z) Psalm cvii. 24, 25.

(a) Nah. i. 5.

(b) Jer. xiv. 22

When he is displeas'd, nature groans under the weight of a single frown. There is an universal distress that the creation feels: this he threatens, *I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger (c)*. This is all his own appointment: whatever calamity befalls us, it is in obedience to his supreme order; *snow and vapour, and stormy wind fulfil his word*.

Mankind are very apt to swell, when they imagine themselves possess'd of any singular capacities; but they are sometimes put to the blush by considering their inability to perform the least acts of Providence; they *cannot make one hair white or black; or by taking thought add one cubit unto their statures*. Much less are they capable of turning the great wheels of government.

Good *Jehoshaphat* entred into a league with the King of *Israel*; and, to make this alliance more stately and pompous, they build a fleet: this was to strike an awe upon the adjacent countries; but they could neither fix their endeavours under a blessing, nor guard them against a curse. A judgment from God blunders all their schemes and imaginations. Thus the Prophet told the King, *Because thou hast joined thyself with Abaziab, the Lord hath broken thy works; and the ships were broken, that they were not able to go to Tarshish (d)*.

What great havock has he made of kingdoms and rulers? He has taken those into his own hand who loved to be the general plagues of mankind. All their terror and preparations for war, are no resistance to his sovereignty. Crowns and scepters are toss'd like the ball of Providence: the nations and princes, that once shew'd the fullest upon earth, are sunk with an hasty ruin: he takes away *the man that made the earth to tremble, and shook kingdoms (e)*. And the country,

where

(c) *Isai. xiii. 13.*

(d) *2 Chron. xx. 37.*

(e) *Isai. xiv. 16.*

where he ruled and gathered up materials for tyranny, is swept with the besom of destruction (f).

3. *The wind is gathered into God's hand*, that it may have a secure abode there. *In measure when he shooteth it forth, he debates with it; and stays his rough wind in the day of his east-wind* (g). If any other had the disposal of it, there would be a continual havock of nature: he alone can check its violence: it will allow of no bridle but his command; it is above all other control. *The four angels were his servants, who stood on the four corners of the earth, holding the wind, that it should not blow on the earth, nor the sea, nor any tree* (h).

And it is well for us, that the sway of this judgment is in God. I have let you see, under a former head, what dreadful ravage Satan makes, if he has but a commission to indulge his malice; he would shew no more pity to the world, than he did to Job's family. Should enemies have the disposal of storms and national miseries, what sad confusions would they bring upon the earth? But here is our comfort, this is heaven's own artillery: these are judgments wherein mankind have no interest; they are not so much as the tools of God's supremacy in this case.

4. *The wind is said to be gathered into his fist*, to shew us how easily he can let it out: it is but opening his hand, and the tempest flies upon its master's errand: his commission is fulfilled with all the dispatch and integrity of nature. *He scatters his bright cloud, and it is turned round about by his counsels, that he may do whatsoever he commandeth upon the face of the world in the earth. He causeth it to come, whether for correction, or for his land, or for mercy* (i). Whatever the design be, it is easily accomplished: he is always in readiness to deal with an obstinate world; he hath a stock of terrors at command. And if the sons of men will

(f) Isai. xiv. 23.

(g) Isai. xxvii. 8.

(h) Rev. vii. 1.

(i) Job xxxvii. 11—13.

will go on to harden themselves, they shall feel the mistake of all their vain thoughts. He can with as much ease destroy us as terrify us; it calls for no more expence and fatigue of power: we are as soon crushed as reprov'd. It is the same thing with God, to let out all his wrath at once, as to give us a weaker taste of it: he has greater reserves than sinners are willing to imagine; he does not put his whole strength into one blast of wind; but can raise a more expeditious tempest, and let us feel the terror of those words, *In my jealousy, and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken; surely there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel: So that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence; and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground (k).*

The reason why a provoking wretch, or a sinful nation are spared, is not because justice is unfurnished for execution; but *God is willing to make his power known, and therefore endures with much long-suffering, the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction (l).* He will glorify his patience in forbearing them a while, and then they shall be *visited with thunder, and earthquake, and great noise, with storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire (m).* How easy a matter is it for him to blow an hurricane in a moment? He can at once put nature into a ruffle.

The *Assyrians* spread a formidable siege before *Jerusalem*; there was number enough to pave their own way to victory; but you see what short work God makes with them. It is little more than an hour's toil to sweep them out of this life, and make them only an army of carcases; *That night the angel of the*
Lord

(k) Ezek. xxxviii. 19, 20. |

(l) Rom ix. 22. |

(m) Isai. xxix. 6.

Lord went out, and smote an hundred fourscore and five thousand, and in the morning they were all dead corps (n). And the same may he do with his wind: he has a tempest within call, which he may, at any time, unloose upon a stubborn people: thus he informed Job of his power, when He answered him out of the whirlwind (o). Hast thou entred into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail, which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war (p)?

Thus I have considered the import of this phrase; but I principally design the Application.

And this I shall do three ways:

- I. Shew what general use we are to make of this truth.
- II. How the consideration of GOD's rule over the winds should influence us, when we are humbling ourselves before him.
- III. What comforts true believers may gather from such a text and providence as this.

[1.] For the general improvement, we may take these four heads of advice: *If the wind is in God's hand,*

1. Let us learn to adore his power, which is wonderfully expressed this way: bow before him; *serve him acceptably with reverence and godly fear (q).* He will be acknowledged in all his peculiar steps of government: he is adorning his own name, fixing a greater reputation upon it in a time of public judgment; *he causeth his glorious voice to be heard, and shews the lightning down of his arm, with the indignation of his anger, with scattering and tempest, and hailstones (r).* This use does *Agur* make of it: he is filled with

(n) 2 Kings xix. 35.

(o) Job xxxviii. 1

(p) Job xxxviii. 22, 23.

(q) Heb. xii. 28.

(r) Hai. xxx. 30.

with a religious dread of that Majesty, which inscribes itself upon these providences.

This is the end why God declares an unusual greatness to the whole race of mankind at once, that they may cease to abuse his glory by their vain thoughts of him, and the open contempt of their practice. If we refuse to tremble before him; if we study more impenitency, he may load us with a terror that has no mercy at all in it. When sinners scorn to humble themselves, his indignation shall do it for them: one brush of his arm shall separate them from the vanities that they trust in. *The day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up, and he shall be brought low;—And upon all the ships of Tarshish;—And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his Majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth (s).* Therefore it highly concerns us to break the approaching storm, by *seeking the Lord whilst he may be found, and calling upon him whilst he is near (t).*

If we do not this way improve the stroke, it is lost upon us, and we may fear there is worse in reserve. We have all of us found, that there is a Power superior to our own, that the wind is under an higher management than we can give it: and what is this for? Why should God step out of his way, but to bring us into ours? Let us henceforth preserve a dutiful veneration for him upon our spirits. *I know, says the Psalmist, that the Lord is great, and that our Lord is above all gods; he bringeth the wind out of his treasures (u).* We see he is terrible, when he does but fight us with outward afflictions, how dreadful then is that wrath, which is pointed at the conscience? *These are no more than part of his ways, it is but a*

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little

(s) Isai. ii. 12, 16, 19.

(t) Isai. lv. 6.

(u) Psal. cxxxv. 5, 7.

little portion that we know of him? The thunder of his power who can understand (x)?

2. We may learn to rest satisfied in his will, knowing, that if the wind be under his command, it is wisely disposed of. The Scripture represents him as considering the case of a nation, and measuring the judgments that he sends against them. *He looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven, to make a weight for the winds, he weigheth the waters by measure; when he made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning and the thunder, then did he see and declare it, he prepared it, yea searched it out (y).* I am not only pressing you to silence under this dispensation, because we cannot help it; but as it is *the work of him who is excellent in counsel (z).* He never took a false or imprudent step in the kingdom of Providence. Though things have but a cloudy face at present, and perhaps there is not much appearance of wisdom in them, yet we may conclude that **GOD** orders them all aright.

We read of *darkness being under his feet (a).* The work itself that he goes about, and all his advances in it are hid from the sons of men: there is a cloud between our eyes and him; but still wisdom has the sovereignty in all these affairs. Though his power admits of no control in the ordinary stream of Providence, yet this we are assured of, that every dispensation is the birth of a wise model. *The balancing of the clouds is called the wondrous work of him who is perfect in knowledge; the wind's passing and cleansing them, is brought in as an argument, that with God is terrible Majesty: but yet he concludes, touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out: he is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice; he will not afflict (b), i. e. not without valuable cause.*

3. See

(x) Job xxvi. 14.

(y) Job xxviii. 24—27.

(z) Isai. xxviii. 29.

(a) Psal. xviii. 9.

(b) Job xxxvii. 16, 21—23.

3. See how dreadful a thing it is to displease him, who is so well provided of methods for our punishment. It is usually the fulness of earthly delights that makes us secure and unthoughtful of God: but we have lately felt what a dispatch his anger can work, when he designs to narrow our substance, when *he rents it with a stormy wind in his fury (c)*. That which has been the gains of long hazard and toil may be gone in a moment. This was threatned against *Ephraim*, that *though he be fruitful among his brethren, a wind of the Lord shall come up from the wilderness, and his spring shall become dry, and his fountain be dried up: he shall spoil the treasure of all pleasant vessels (d)*.

If we take a look at sinners through this text, we may see how stupid they are to engage such a power against them: we have lately known the truth of that threatning, as if it had been designed for our days: *The rich man shall lie down, but he shall not be gathered; he openeth his eyes, and he is not: Terrors take hold on him as waters, a tempest steals him away in the night (e)*. And does not this let us see the folly of a quarrel with God? We may pamper a vain mind with one idle imagination after another, but this only prepares us for a more dismal surprize of ruin. There is scarce any thing that sinners design with more pleasure and arrogance, than the destruction of the godly: they would raze out all the prints of seriousness from this world: and every struggle in this project is attended with as much assurance, as nature can either give or take: but their eyes are too low fixed; they only look at the persons whom this malice is directed against. They do not consider what a powerful alliance believers are brought into: so that when they push on their methods of iniquity, it is only to receive a baffle from Omnipotence: thus the promise runs to GOD'S people; *Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry*

II 2

them

(c) Ezek. xiii. 13.

(d) Hos. xiii. 15.

(e) Job xxvii. 19, 20.

100 *God's Empire over the Wind, &c.* Serm. 5.
them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them; and thou shalt rejoice in the Lord, and glory in the holy One of Israel (f).

4. See to whom you must direct yourselves for the blessing of the winds. Many of this auditory do more especially know how serviceable they are to the greatest concerns of life: and you here learn who has the disposal of them. They are sometimes the chief instruments of your prosperity, and when their commission is altered, they can as easily destroy your fulness as promote it. Now as GOD must be acknowledged in all your ways, so it is highly becoming your profession to be often upon your knees, to maintain a correspondence with him, who is the great Insurer. He alone can breathe a blessing upon your attempts. The gales that must carry you on in every voyage, are laid up in the hollow of his hand, let it be your work to fetch them out by prayer. You may also see, who it is that has blessed and secured you; he has been *your refuge from the storm (g).*

[2.] We are to make such an improvement of this, as more especially suits with our design *this day.*

We are come to humble ourselves before the LORD for a late dreadful blow that he has given to these parts of the world. We may apply the Prophet's words to our case: *The fir-trees have been terribly shaken; the gates of the rivers opened, and the palace dissolved (h).* We have first, *the call of heaven* to the present duty; every blast sounds the exhortation: and this is echoed to from our earthly powers, who both confess the obligation and enforce it. By giving our presence here, we answer the commands of civil authority; but there is something more required, if we would come up to God's expectations. A bare attendance upon him in worshipping crouds is not enough.

(f) *Isai. xli. 16.*

(g) *Isai. xxv. 4.*

(h) *Nah. ii. 3, 5.*

enough. He complains of a people that were very exact in observing times of humiliation, but they did not look far enough. *When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth, and eleventh month, did ye fast unto me, even unto me (i) ?* Now he seems to demand the following duties of us.

1. Let us humbly submit to his work. It becomes us not to reply and clamour at Providence, but to look upwards with a silent devoutness, and consider who has done it : One who never stood at the creatures bar ; who *gives no account of his matters (k)*. Whose dispensations are liable to no arrest, and patient of no censure. Methinks there is a particular appearance of GOD in a wind, more than in many other public calamities. Consumptions by fire should lead us to him, but these are brought on by instruments. General distempers tell us of his hand, but here also he makes use of second causes : but a tempest is a work that we can have no share in, and this calls for submission. *David* chooseth to have an affliction of GOD's bestowing, *Let me fall into the hands of the Lord*. Though he was more capable of acting with a ruinous dispatch than enemies could do, yet *there is mercy with him (l)*. When *Job* understood that his children were swept off immediately by the hand of Providence, he submits with a religious patience. The messenger told him, *There came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead. Then Job arose, and fell upon the ground, and worshipped, and said, The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away ; blessed be the name of the Lord (m)*.

2. Let us look narrowly into ourselves. In a time of public judgment every one is to *know the plague of his own heart*. How many of us may say with *Jonah*, *I know that for my sake this great tempest is come upon you ?*

H 3

(i) Zach. vii. 5.
(k) Job xxxiii. 13.

(l) 2 Sam. xxiv. 14.
(m) Job i. 19, 20.

you (n) ? We have contributed our part to the common miseries. We may this day denounce a *Wo to the crown of pride, and the drunkards of Ephraim, when the Lord with a destroying storm is casting down to the earth* (o). Though perhaps we do not run to the same excess of riot with a great many. Debauchery, lewdness and swearing may be crimes above our size. But are we not chargeable with abominations of another sort ? Our contempt of the divine ordinances, the ravage that we make of Christian love, the sloth and dulness of our zeal for God, these are things that have their cry for vengeance. But if we are hardened against a cure, and resolved that these follies should be our inseparable darlings, a more extensive and overflowing scourge may be prepared for us. There is nothing but fury and black dismay, for a people that hate to be reformed. Thus GOD complains, *Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots ? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil. Therefore will I scatter them as the stubble that passeth away by the wind of the wilderness. This is thy lot, the portion of thy measures from me, saith the Lord, because thou hast forgotten me, and trusted in falsehood* (p). Sometimes the very face of a judgment tells us that the world is deeply charged with guilt : and of this sort was our late storm. *The earth is utterly broken down, clean dissolved, and moved exceedingly : The earth reels to and fro like a drunkard, and is removed like a cottage, for the transgression thereof is heavy upon it* (q).

3. Let this put us upon a speedy reformation. This the Psalmist begs, *Persecute them with thy tempest, and make them afraid with thy storm ; fill their faces with shame, that they may seek thy name, O Lord* (r). If any of you are stained with scandalous crimes,

(n) Jon i. 12.

(o) Isai xxviii. 1, 2.

(p) Jer. xlii. 23—25.

(q) Isai xxiv. 19, 20.

(r) Psal lxxviii. 15, 16.

crimes, take your last farewell of them; from this moment hold them at a distance. Do not dare to go on sinking the nation still lower in guilt and unhappiness. Now that GOD has brought upon us, as he calls it by the Prophet, *A dry wind of the high places in the wilderness, not to fan nor to cleanse, but a full wind*; his cry to us is the same with that to Jerusalem; *O wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayst be saved: how long shall vain thoughts lodge within thee (s)!* And as for others, who think this is a charge that flies over them, let them examine what is amiss, and begin an universal amendment.

There is one thing that I would more especially recommend to you, as the lesson of this Providence, and that is, a zeal for the REFORMATION OF MANNERS. That good work goes heavily on, through the cowardice and baseness of some that pretend to wish well to it. It is a *national stroke* that we are now lamenting, and I know no greater piece of *national service* that we are capable of. Our Fleet is the very picture of hell. They scarce breathe any thing but blasphemy against God. We have dreadful tastes of their vileness ashore: you neglect the due methods that should be made use of to reclaim them, and therefore God has taken the work into his own hands: such as you would not rebuke, he has drowned. Let this warn us not to be so careless and remiss in a service of general importance. Labour to prevent such another stroke. When the whole nation of *Israel* was infatuated with the spirit of idolatry, GOD tells his mind to *Elijah* in such a chain of terrors, as perhaps was the model of his future dealings with that people. *The Lord passed by, and behold, a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks, and after the wind an earthquake (t).* Let us endeavour to break this succession of judgments.

(s) Jer. iv. 11, 14.

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(t) 1 Kings xix. 11.

4. Let us be earnest with him for mercy and pardon. O God, *thou hast cast us off, thou hast scattered us, thou hast been displeas'd; O turn thyself to us again: Thou hast made the earth to tremble; thou hast broken it, heal the breaches thereof, for it shaketh (u)*. That there are notorious abominations among us, is a thing that will sooner bear a complaint than a denial. That GOD has declared his resentment with a peculiar thunder, is also plain: is it not therefore our necessary duty to beg off his wrath, and solicit the return of that favour, which has been interrupted? And for your encouragement, consider that sometimes a public judgment goes before the most valuable mercies. GOD tells the *Jews*, *I will shake the heavens, the earth the sea, and all nations, and then the desire of all nations shall come (x)*. And CHRIST gives a promise of the same kind to his Disciples: *There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars, and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring: Mens hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things, which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. But when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh (y)*.

[3.] I shall conclude with an address of peace to GOD'S own people, in two particulars.

1. How great is your Friend? How able to deliver and protect you? This *David* remembers with adoration: *In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God: The earth shook and trembled; he rode upon a cherub and did fly, he was seen upon the wings of the wind (z)*. When the Prophet tells us that GOD brings the wind out of his treasuries, he calls him, *the portion of Jacob, and Israel the rod of his inheritance*.

(u) Psal. lx 1, 2.

(x) Hag. ii. 6, 7.

(y) Luke xxi 25, 26, 28.

(z) Psal. xviii. 6, 7, 10.

tance (a). You are now tossing in a restless tempestuous world; *the floods of ungodly men make you afraid*: but raise an eye to the Almightyness that has undertaken your welfare. For though *the floods have lifted up their waves*; yet *the Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, or the waves of the sea* (b). With how much cruel pomp and thirst did *Pharaoh* pursue the trembling flock of *Israel*? There was nothing to disoblige his malice and stun his confidence, till *GOD blew with his wind, and covered him*; he sunk as lead in the mighty waters (c).

2. How happy a thing is it to be interested in a covenant? Because,

(1.) That either gives you a protection from these calamities, or a blessing with them. *CHRIST* is called *an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest* (d). Sometimes *GOD* steps in visibly between his people and danger; according to that promise, *A thousand shall fall at thy right hand, and ten thousand at thy left, but the evil shall not come nigh thee* (e). Or if you do take a share in the common distress, yet you are not equal sufferers with others: they get no good by it, but it is a means of spiritual advantage to you. So that you need *not be afraid of evil tidings; your hearts are fixed, trusting in the Lord* (f).

(2.) You have other blessings that are not liable to these hazards. *The Lord will create upon every dwelling-place of mount Zion, and upon all her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for upon all the glory shall be a defence: And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the day time, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm, and from rain* (g). No wind can blow away your inheritance. *CHRIST* has compared you to *an house built*

(a) Jer. x. 13, 16.

(b) Psal. xciii. 3, 4.

(c) Exod. xv. 10.

(d) Isai. xxxii. 2.

(e) Psal. xci. 7.

(f) Psal. cxii. 7.

(g) Isai. iv. 5, 6.

built upon a rock, which fell not, though the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon it (b). It is said of the upright soul, that *he shall dwell on high; his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks; bread shall be given to him, and his waters shall be sure (i).* You hear that GOD has the disposal of storms, but he has a nearer hold of your portion. The winds are gathered into *his fist*, but your happiness is in *his heart*. *The Lord shall roar out of Sion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem, and the heaven and the earth shall shake; but the Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel (k).*

(3.) You are going to a *place* where there shall be *no more* of these frights and confusions. The Apostle tells us, there must be *a removing of those things which may be shaken, as of those things that are made; that those things which CANNOT BE SHAKEN may remain. We have received a kingdom which cannot be moved (l).* You are born for a state of eternal calmness. The ruffle and distraction that this world is liable to, have no place in those glorious regions where your SAVIOUR lives. Therefore look within the veil, where there is nothing else but sedate purity and satisfying enjoyment. I will shut up all with the Psalmist's words, giving them a little variation, *Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with a strong wind: but this we have heard, and this we shall see, in the city of our God, that God will establish it for ever (m).*

(b) Matt. vii. 24, 25.

(i) Isai. xxxiii. 16.

(k) Joel iii. 16.

(l) Heb. xii. 27, 28.

(m) Psal. cxviii. 7, 9.






S E R M O N VI.

Public Revolutions the Work of GOD.



Preached at STEPNEY and CROSBY-SQUARE, 1704.



 Suppose, every one that knows this to be the fifth of *November* will easily call to mind, that it is the birth-day of several deliverances to this nation: And as *the way of the Lord is so eminently in the sanctuary*, so *they that are wise will observe these things (a)*; and they lie in the way of a rich promise, that *they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord*. I shall therefore do as *Moses* did, when he saw the bush on a flame, and yet unwafted, *viz. turn aside* (from the subject of some late discourses) *and see this great thing (b)*. The mercy we are chiefly to look at, is our glorious Revolution, wherein we had an amazing rescue from tyranny and darkness, by the arrival of his late Majesty King WILLIAM, and the success of his wonderful arms. Now that we may see the greatness and lustre of a GOD in that affair, and take some instruction of duty from it, I would recommend to your attention what you find,

DANIEL

(a) Psalm cvii. 43.



(b) Exodus iii. 3.

DANIEL II. 20, 21.

— Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever ;
for wisdom and might are his. He changeth the
times and seasons ; he removeth kings, and setteth
up kings.

THE history which these words are a part of, may be crowded into a little compass. The Jews being now captive in *Babylon*, some of them are chosen out to the preferments of the court. They must be *cunning in knowledge, and skilful in all wisdom, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace (c)*. To these beauties of nature, they were to add the improvements of a nourishing education, and be brought up in all the learning of the *Chaldeans*. After this settlement, *Nebuchadnezzar* has the trouble both of finding a dream, and losing it. He had forgot the thing, but it had left a terror behind : what the memory had discharged, the conscience felt.

Upon this he calls his Magicians together, such as pretended an intimacy with things out of the common view. He demands of them, *what the dream was*, as a trial of their skill about *the interpretation (d)*. He imagined it was as easy to know these things, as to expound them. Their ignorance puts him into an extravagant fury, and he resolves they shall all fall a sacrifice to his humour (e). *Daniel* and his fellows, being reckoned of their company, were to take a share in the common ruin. This makes him beg a little *respite (f)* from the king which he fills up with a confederate address to the majesty who could relieve them ;

(c) Daniel i. 4.
(d) Daniel ii. 9.

(e) Daniel ii. 12, 13.
(f) Daniel ii. 15.

them; for he went to his house, and made the thing known to his companions, that they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret, that Daniel and his fellows might not be slain with the wise men of Babylon (g). This was to put a glory upon God's wisdom and sovereignty: here was the allegiance and courage of their faith. Their success takes the next place in this history; *Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision (h)*. And my text is the beginning of those returns which his gratitude supplied. There are two things that urge this adoration.

1. The discovery of the dream, which prevented an expence of innocent blood. This he mentions with veneration and thanks. *He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him. I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee; for thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter (i)*. This was an extended mercy; but, besides this, there seems to be another thing, which draws out his affection into praises; and that is,

2. The matter of the dream. It gave him a view of those great changes and convulsions that were to happen in the world. That which affrighted *Nebuchadnezzar*, and made his resolutions desperate, has a more gracious influence upon *Daniel*. He is neither sunk with an inward darkness, nor hurried to the ravages of cruelty. He praises GOD both for the discovery and the thing itself. *Blessed be the name, &c.* Here you may see,

First, His tribute of praise; and that is, eternal adorations to the Majesty of Heaven; *Blessed be his name for ever and ever*. The prospect that GOD had given

(g) Daniel ii. 17, 18.

(h) Daniel ii. 19.

(i) Daniel ii. 22, 23.

given him reached to several ages. This dream represented a long roll of successions: and as they were all to be sustained by an infinite arm, so he would have them attended in all their motions with praise to the author. Nay, when the things themselves are run out, they might still be reviewed as the memorials of a divine perfection.

Secondly, Here is what he grounds it upon, and that is the glory of God's Nature and Providence. This is,

1. *Afferted.* *Wisdom and Might are his.* Wisdom to observe the most distant purposes, and Might to bring them out upon the stage of time.

2. *Proved.* By the actual dispensations which were figured out in the dream. *He changeth times and seasons; he removeth kings and setteth up kings.* He mentions those monuments of a divine authority, which are seen in the chief places of the earth. He tumbles down thrones, lays aside rulers with a disdain of Providence, tears the sceptre out of their hands, and advances others upon the rubbish of their greatness.

And we may be said to have much of *Daniel's* view. Such things as he admired, are what God has represented to us: only he saw them in the distance and shadows of a dream, and we in the actual rollings of Providence. The matter of his night-vision, is the apparent blessing of our day. He had a knowledge given him, but we have a more sensible revelation of the things themselves. We want nothing that he had, but that gracious temper of mind with which he improved all. We are upon higher ground with respect to advantage; let us be upon a level with him in obedience and zeal. And that this may be our study, I shall endeavour to sound the voice of such a Providence, and show you what we are to learn by it.

Doctrine. The great Revolutions that GOD makes in the kingdoms of the world, should stir up his people to bleſs and praise him.

The method ſhall be to ſhew,

- I. How GOD manages theſe Revolutions in the kingdoms of the earth.
- II. What praise is that which his people are obliged to upon this account.
- III. Whence the obligation ariſes, or what there is in his removing kings and ſetting up kings; that calls for this revenue of honour.
- IV. The Application.

I. What methods does GOD take to work theſe mighty changes in the world. I cannot pretend to follow Providence in all its latitude and variety. I will only mention three heads which lie open to the firſt and eaſieſt view.

I. He works theſe Revolutions by the death of kings. That the higheſt orders of men are akin to duſt and mortality, is a thing that neither bears a denial, nor needs an argument. They muſt in a little time have all their pride quenched in a grave, and change a gaudy retinue for worms and corruption. They may have names that are lacquered over with a falſe divinity; be called ſacred, high and mighty, invincible, and heap together abundance of ſwelling words; but ſtill death has as fair a blow at majeſty, and can as ſoon make it totter, as he has at the meaneſt beggar. They are called *Gods, and the children of the moſt High, but they ſhall die like men (k)*. And this appears to be the LORD's work; if we conſider that the *keys of hell and death (l)* are hung at his girdle. The breath that ſwims through our noſtrils,

can

(k) Pſalm lxxxii 6, 7.

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(l) Rev i. 18.

can have no current without his leave. He can presently stop up the channels of a royal life. Kings and princes are but his tenants. He has authority to dislodge them, being that *God in whose hands their breath is, and whose are all their ways (m).*

We read of some great men, *that their inward thought is, their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling-place to all generations (n).* But as for themselves, they are sliding in the streams of time, and making haste to no other palace than the chambers of death, as the Psalmist tells us in the further course of his meditations. *Nevertheless, man being in honour, abideth not (o).* Whatever privileges they may boast of, that they are above control, yet they must surrender upon the demand of a superior King. When his messenger comes, there are no guards to resist him. He degrades all the fences of state, and hurries away his prisoner. *For no man has power over the spirit, to retain it in the day of death, and there is no discharge in that war (p).*

They may weave out the splendid schemes of ambition, and resolve to pursue them with all the greediness of nature. But it is all in vain, without the consent of Heaven. The finest contexture of policy unravels all at once, when GOD gives his negative voice. They are like a spider's web, brushed away with a single stroke of Providence. Therefore we are bid *not to put our trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help; for their breath goes forth, they return to their earth, and in that very day their thoughts perish (q).*

2. God removes princes, by giving them up into the hands of foreign enemies. They are not too high for the discipline of Heaven. Sometimes he has them upon their good behaviour; *If they be bound with fetters,*

(m) Dan. v. 23.
 (n) Psalm xlix. 11.
 (o) Psalm xlix. 12.

(p) Eccl. viii. 8.
 (q) Psalm cxlvi. 3, 4.

fetters, and held in cords of affliction, then he shews them their work, and their transgression that they have exceeded (s). He lets them see that they have strained the law, and abused their authority. He opens their ears to discipline, and commands that they return from iniquity (t). If they obey and serve him, they shall spend their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasure (u). But if they obey not, they shall perish by the sword, and die without knowledge (x). Their life is among the unclean (y). What wrecks and rubbish of governments do we find in history? How has a deluge of people broke in upon a nation, first sweeping off their rulers, and then possessing themselves of the place? How many resemblances of that prophecy have we found? *A mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will: And when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and divided towards the four winds of heaven; though not to his people; nor according to the dominion which he ruled; for his kingdom shall be plucked up even for others besides those (z).*

Thus has Providence cut into the banks of government, interrupted successions, and made authority flow in another channel. He has dashed one tyrant against another, that he might break them both like a potter's vessel; so that we may say that in modesty, which *Rabshakeb* did in a huff, *What have the kings of Assyria done to all lands, destroying them utterly? as Gozan and Haran, and Rezepb, and the children of Eden, which were in Thelasar? Where is the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, and the king of the cities of Sepharvaim, of Hena and Ivah (a)?* They are all swallowed up in a greater government, and united in the same captivity.

VOL. I.

I

Upon

(s) Job xxxvi. 9.

(t) Job xxxvi. 10.

(u) Job xxxvi. 11.

(v) Job xxxvi. 12.

(v) Job xxxvi. 14.

(z) Dan. xi. 3, 4.

(a) 2 Kings xix. 11, 12, 13.

Upon his command, an army of the lowest creatures have appeared volunteers in the battle. He plied *Pharaoh* with squadrons of *flies, frogs, locusts, and caterpillars* (b). This the magicians confessed was the finger of God. And surely the characters of divinity appear no less full and legible, when he stirs up one ruler against another. He sent *the Assyrian as the staff of his band, and the rod of his indignation, against an hypocritical people* (c); that by feeling their punishment, they might remember their God. When the nation was tinctured with the vices of the court, he makes but one labour of it, by crowding rulers and people in the same drove of captives. He gave them fair warning of this. *The Lord shall bring thee, and thy king whom thou hast set over thee, to a nation which neither thou nor thy fathers have known* (d). He threatens this also to another people. *I will deliver the Egyptians into the hand of a cruel lord, and a fierce king shall rule over them* (e). Sometimes he does these things in mercy to his own interest. When they that call upon him are ripe for deliverance, he can soon find out instruments to bring it about. He said of *Cyrus*, *He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure, saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid* (f). And therefore he saith further to *his anointed, even to Cyrus, whose right hand he upheld, I will subdue nations before him, and he shall smite through the loins of kings* (g). There is none so high, but he can easily abase them: he ordered the prophet *Jeremiah* to assert this, and alarm a sensual court: *Say to the king and the queen, Humble yourselves and sit down; for your principalities shall come down, even the crown of your glory* (h).

3. God brings about these Revolutions, by stirring up people to assert their just rights and liberties. That notion,

(b) Exodus viii. 19.

(c) Isa. x. 5, 6.

(d) Deut. xxviii. 36.

(e) Isa. xix. 4.

(f) Isa. xlv. 28.

(g) Isa. xlv. 1.

(h) Jer. lii. 18.

notion, that all we have lies at the ruler's mercy, and that he can do us no wrong, was different from *Jonathan's* opinion: he supposes that the tyranny of a prince, is all an injustice upon the subject, and therefore pleads, *Let not the king sin against his servant, even against David, because he has not sinned against thee (i)*. And again, *Wherefore wilt thou sin against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause (k)? Naboth* thought himself bound in conscience to keep his vineyard from *Abab*. *The Lord forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers to thee (l)*. And the method which that unrighteous king observed, proved that he had no honest claim, which was first to kill, and then to take possession: A thing that has been often repeated. But sometimes God makes a people weary of this bondage, and resolved to conclude it. He gives them an opportunity of unyoking from the captivity they are in, and then fires up a general resolution to take the advantage.

Thus it was with *Israel*, after they had groaned under their slavery to *Moab* for many years. God is said to *raise them up a deliverer (m)*, upon their crying to him; the man was *Ebud*, and the methods he was directed to were as violent as the troubles they endured; to stab the tyrant that held them captive. After this, he *blew a trumpet in mount Ephraim (n)*, and headed the people whom he had begun to rescue. Nay, we have an earlier instance of a nation's heaving off their burden. We read, that *the kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboim and Zoar, served Chedorlaomer the king of nations twelve years, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled (o)*. Now, though their first attempt made their chain the heavier; yet God bore a signal testimony to their cause afterwards, by making *Abram* the instrument of their full release. And this was so remarkable a piece of service,

I 2

and

(i) 1 Sam. xix. 4.

(k) 1 Sam. xix. 5.

(l) 1 Kings xxi. 3.

(m) Judges iii. 15.

(n) Judges iii. 27.

(o) Gen. xiv. 2, 3, 4.

and so worthy of him whose seed *should proclaim deliverance to the captives*, that he is not only met and blessed by the king of Sodom, but by *Melchizedeck the king of Salem* (p), a type of the promised Saviour and the oracle of more divine blessings.

What a joyful reflection does *Deborah* make upon that brave and generous spirit which the *Israelites* shewed in their pursuit of liberty? *Praise ye the Lord for the avenging of Israel, when the people willingly offered themselves* (q). She afterwards gives a doleful character of those times when they were kept in awe; and from this darker view she takes her rise, and embalms the courage of their nobility who assisted in that Revolution. *The travellers walked through by-ways* (r). *The inhabitants of the villages ceased, they ceased in Israel* (s). *Then was there war in the gates; yet was there not a shield or a spear seen among forty thousand in Israel* (t). After this complaint comes a noble memorial of praise: *My heart is towards the governors of Israel that offered themselves willingly among the people; bless ye the Lord* (u).

It is sad when a nation are folding their hands, and putting themselves into a posture of slavery. This is represented in scripture so far from being a piece of religion, that it is an unmanly sottishness. It may be generally observed, that the people who so easily part with their liberties, do it not in any mortification or self-denial, but as an indulgence to some personal luxury. *Issachar is a strong ass, couching down between two burdens; and he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant; and he bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant to tribute* (x). Because he would not run the hazard of a battle, therefore he bends to the yoke; and the reason that is given for

(p) Gen. xiv. 17, 18.

(q) Judges v. 2.

(r) Judges v. 6.

(s) Judges v. 7.

(t) Judges v. 8.

(u) Judges v. 9.

(x) Gen. xlix. 14, 15.

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for it is because he saw that *rest was pleasant*: How debased are those apprehensions that call bondage rest? His name stands in the catalogue of tribes as a foil to that which comes next. *Dan shall judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel: Dan shall be a serpent by the way, and an adder in the path, that bites the horse-beels, so that the rider shall fall backwards (y)*. He will not suffer himself to be trampled on; tyranny shall have no high road over him; but like a serpent he rolls himself about the foot that treads down his liberties; and herein he appears like *one of the tribes of Israel*; he vindicates and fills up so great a title. And thus in the use of his policy and courage *he waits for the salvation of God (z)*.

Usually in the worst of times, when the generality of people are tainted with cowardice, God stirs up some few, that the cause may twinkle when it cannot blaze out. Sometimes it so happens, that a brave designing worthy is almost alone. The persons whom he would deliver, tie up his hands by their notions and their faintness. Thus it was with *Samson*; the *Israelites* seem to repine that they had a victorious captain among them. They come and advise him to a *non-resistance*, and make use of their subjection as an argument for it. *Knowest thou not that the Philistines are rulers over us? What is this then that thou hast done unto us? We are come down to bind thee, that we may deliver thee into their hands (a)*. Thus that sluggish generation usually left him to fight alone, till at last he died conquering, and perished in a triumphant slaughter.

There was a more noble spirit in *Israel* in the concluding and dreggy part of *Saul's* reign. Many were touched with a just resentment of his arbitrary measures, and a compassion to *David*, who was fleeing from an unrighteous enemy. And that the records of

(y) Gen. xlix. 16, 17.
(z) Gen. xlix. 18.

(a) Judges xv. 11, 12.

these worthies might not be lost, we have a large catalogue of their names and proceedings. There are so many passages in that chapter (b), that have a blush of our late Revolution, that I cannot but turn you to them. You find some of the nearest relatives of the court began this revolt. *These are they that came to David to Ziklag, while he yet kept himself close because of Saul the son of Kish: They were among the mighty men, helpers of the war — even of Saul's brethren of Benjamin* (c). We have afterwards the description of another company, who were warmed with the spirit of their cause. *Of the Gadites, there separated themselves unto David, into the hold in the wilderness, men of might, and men of war fit for the battle, that could handle shield and buckler, whose faces were like the faces of lions, and were as swift as roes upon the mountains* (d). David meets them with a declaration or manifesto; *If ye be come peaceably to me to help me, my heart shall be knit unto you; but if ye be come to betray me, seeing there is no wrong in my hands, the God of our fathers look thereon and rebuke it* (e). They answer like persons who were acted from above. And such was the language of those noble peers and gentlemen who helped on the change of government that begun this day. *The spirit came upon Amasai, who was the chief of the captains, and he said, Thine are we David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse; peace, peace be unto thee, and peace be to thine helpers, for thy God helpeth thee* (f).

Again, the army that came to rescue *England*, was much like *David's*, it gathered strength and numbers with rolling. *At that time there came people day by day, till it was a great host like the Host of God* (g).

And

(b) 2 Chron. xii.

(c) 2 Chron. xii. 1, 2.

(d) 2 Chron. xii. 8.

(e) 2 Chron. xii. 17.

(f) 2 Chron. xii. 18.

(g) 2 Chron. xii. 22.

And lastly, we find the design of this people parallel to that which completed the mercy of ~~our~~ Revolution. *They were ready armed, and came to David, to turn the kingdom of Saul unto him, according to the word of the Lord (b).* I have been the longer in this quotation, because if the names were changed, it would be an history of our deliverance. This is all the LORD's work, he calls the removing of Saul his own action. *I gave thee a King in mine anger, and I took him away in my wrath (i).* That is, he influenced the courage and resolution of the people.

There seems to be such a struggle for liberty in the subjects of *Babylon*, though they were under a King that obeyed very little law but his own will. *Nebuchadnezzar* is deposed for seven years: it is true, the thing was a divine appointment; but his people are employed as the executioners of it. This is the phrase of the threatning, *They shall drive thee from men, and they shall make thee eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven (k).* And upon the recovery of his honour and reason, he was restored to the empire by their means; this he acknowledges, *My counsellors and my lords sought unto me, and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added to me (l).* Now the sin that might stir up both GOD and man against him, seems to be injustice and cruelty, the scandals of an arbitrary government; for it must be something contrary to *Daniel's* advice, *viz.* That he would *break off his sins by righteousness, and his iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor, if it might be a lengthning of his tranquillity (m).* This account of the same matter *Daniel* gives to *Belshazzar*; speaking of his grandfather, he says, *when his heart was lifted up, and his mind was hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him (n).*

I 4

II. The

(b) 2 Chron. xii. 23.

(i) Hof. xiii. 11.

(k) Dan. iv. 25.

(l) Dan. iv. 36.

(m) Dan. iv. 4.

(n) Dan. v. 20.

II. The next thing is, to give you an account, what PRAISE is owing to GOD for such remarkable changes as these. How must it be expressed? This I have no time to answer with an enlargement. In short, it is to be done by a great opinion of his power and love, a devotedness to his will, a zeal for the interest of his glory, a cautious distance from whatever offends him; a strong hope in his mercy for the time to come, and an acknowledgement of his agency in the whole deliverance. This being too much for our time, I shall,

III. Inquire into the GROUNDS of the obligation; or why such Revolutions as these should engage us to bless and adore our LORD. Here I will mention some of those designs that these Providences are aimed at; which are these,

1. To assert GOD's sovereignty, and make his name glorious. To teach us, that *promotion comes not from the east, west, or south, but God is judge; he pulls down one, and sets up another* (o). At such times he vindicates that character, *he accepteth not the persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor, for they are all the works of his hand* (p). And therefore our practices fall in with the genuine design and course of the Providence. All the terrors that *Nebuchadnezzar* felt, were to beat this conviction into him. *Seven times were to pass over him, till he knew that the most High ruled in the kingdom of men, and gave it to whomsoever he pleased* (q). He must live the life of a beast, till he comes to use the reason of a man.

Such as lie soft in all the delights of greatness, are very apt to have their consciences dozed with what they enjoy: and they seldom want those who help on the charm with flattery. There are some who
make

(o) Psal. lxxv. 6, 7.

(p) Job xxxiv. 18.

(q) Dan. iv. 25.

make the King glad with their wickedness, and the Princes with their lies (r). They also make him sick with bottles of wine, so that he stretcheth out his hands with the scorers (s). They call them gods on earth, but tempt them to live as if there were none in heaven. Many pretend to represent the Majesty above, but, alas, too often it is no otherwise than a traitor may be said to represent his Sovereign, because he rebels in the royal livery.

To be sure the great Fountain of all equity and goodness, can give them no power to violate and oppress the liberties of their subjects.

For, as one has lately observed *, he has no such power himself, and consequently it is a falsehood to pretend any is received from him. He made it the *magna charta* of Israel, that their King should be often reading in his law, that his mind might not be lifted up above his brethren, and that he might prolong his days in his kingdom (t). When they receive the flatteries of people who love not the strictness of Religion, and humour a sensual court, they throw off all regard to heaven. After the death of good *Jeboiada*, the Princes of Judah came and made obeisance to the King, and the King hearkned unto them: and they left the house of the Lord God of their fathers, and served groves and idols, till wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this their trespass (u). He parted with his Religion for a compliment.

Now, when they are running out into this extravagance, it is time to draw the reins, and let them know there is an higher Sovereign. *Samuel* calls *Saul* a rebel, because he had not paid a suitable deference to the Majesty above; and tells him that God would distrain for his right. *Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry; because*

(r) Hof. vii. 3.

(s) Hof. vii. 5.

(t) Deut. xvii. 20.

(u) 2 Chron. xxiv. 17, 18.

* Mr *Fleetwood*, in his Thanksgiving Sermon.

cause thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, the Lord has rejected thee from being King (x). We read in this prophecy of a King, whose power shall be mighty, but not by his own power; and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper and practise, and destroy the mighty and the holy people: And through his policy he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand, and shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: but when he stands up against the Prince of princes, he shall be broken without hand (y). They that will not give the things that are God's, are likely to lose the things that are Cesar's.

2. To punish the injustice and cruelty which the earth has groaned under. *The King that faithfully judgeth the poor, his throne shall be established for ever (z).* But as a roaring lion, or a raging bear, so is a wicked ruler over a poor people (a). God will wrest a government out of the hands of those that defile and abuse it. The wise man was so fully assured of this, that he would have the injured believe a time of recompence is coming. *Seest thou the oppression of the poor, and the violent perverting of judgment and justice in a province; marvel not at the matter, for he that is higher than the highest regards it, and there be higher than they (b).* He has often given battle to those that delight in blood and haughtiness; as they have shown no pity to their inferiors, nor veneration for the laws, so they have had judgment without mercy. It is so great a part of the divine character to save the oppressed, and punish evil-doers, that David makes his importunate claim for such an appearance. *O God, to whom vengeance belongs, O Lord, to whom vengeance belongeth, lift up thyself, thou Judge of the earth, and render a reward to the proud; how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked triumph (c)?*

And

(x) 1 Sam. xv. 23.

(y) Dan. viii. 24, 25.

(z) Prov. xxix. 14.

(a) Prov. xxviii. 15.

(b) Eccles. v. 8.

(c) Psal. xciv. 1, 2, 3.

And is not this matter of praise? It mingles the glories of his power and justice: we behold him both as a mighty and a righteous God in the same view. And when he founds his own praise with such a loudness of Providence, can *they that love his salvation be silent?* They must say, *Let the Lord be magnified, who takes pleasure in the prosperity of his servants; he is known by the judgment which he executes; the wicked are snared in the work of their own hands (d).*

3. To relieve and succour his own people. He will not suffer the cause of his servants to perish. Though Princes and the great ones of the earth should be the assailants, yet they *imagine a vain thing (e)*. Religion shall have a settlement and a glory, either by their favour, or in their ruin. *No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment, thou shalt condemn: this the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord (f)*. Nay, so jealous is he of their peace, that he has expressed his resentment of any haughtiness toward them, though one of his own people should be the offender; their religious liberties, the appointments of his house, must not be rifled.

Uzziah has the character of one that *walked in the ways of the Lord (g)*. He is also represented as a great artist in war, so that *his name spread far abroad, for he was marvellously helped till he was strong*. But when he had the vanity to break in upon the institutions of the temple, and commit a rapine upon a divine inclosure, immediately God stains his honour with a leprosy. He is separated from all public affairs, and *cut off from the house of the Lord*. God has always shewn a tenderness of heart for them, who have any tenderness of conscience for him. They are

(d) Psal. xl. 16. xxxv. 27.

ix. 16.

(e) Psal. ii. 1.

(f) Isai. liv. 17.

(g) 2 Chron. xxvi. 15.

are dear in his eyes, he sets an higher rate upon them than he does on a vicious ruler. They have the preference in his care: *He suffers no man to do them wrong; nay, He reproveth kings for their sakes, saying, Touch not mine anointed (b).* It is spoke to the honour of *Asa*, that *he removed Maachab his mother from being queen, because she had made an idol in a grove (i):* and this God owned with a reward of prosperity in his affairs.

Now, may not this awaken all the powers of gratitude? Here is a glorious vein of compassion to us running through the whole bulk of the Providence. Though there is so much terrible in it to the ungodly, yet it is all checquered with *love to the daughters of Jerusalem.*

4. To make way for CHRIST's further advancement. All these Revolutions are so many pioneers to *prepare the way of the Lord, and make his paths straight.* He will *overturn, overturn, overturn it, until he come whose right it is, and will give it him (k).* That list of changes which *Daniel* saw in his dream, were all so many steps to a Mediator's empire. *In the days of these things shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all those kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever (l).*

All power is now given to him in heaven and earth: he has a claim to the allegiance of the world, and we hope the day is coming, when he will more visibly assert it; when promises shall quicken into Providence, and what he has told his people in words he will give them in things. This is a government that shall never cease, *a King who must not be removed; his name shall endure for ever, his name shall continue as*
the

(b) Psalm civ. 14, 15.

(i) 2 Chron. xv. 16.

(k) Ezek. xxi. 25, 26.

(l) Daniel ii. 44.

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the sun ; men shall be blessed in him, and all nations shall call him blessed (m).

A P P L I C A T I O N.

See how dear God's people are to their LORD, and how soon they may come by their deliverance. He can dethrone those ruling powers, who are the chief movements in any design against them ; such as guide and stir all the inferior wheels. The success of these vast intrigues against religion usually depends upon the power of some one man: now, how easily can God crush the numerous hopes that are gathered up in that person? He threatens to *cut off the King of Samaria as some upon the water (n).*

And this is that great exploit of love which we are come to admire. Some years ago the eyes of *Europe* were waiting to see *England* plunged either in popery or blood. Every thing seemed to promise the mother of abominations either a conversion among us, or a conquest over us. They had actually got a monarch in our own nation to head the interest. We were already beginning to have a religion without gospel, and a government without law. What a treachery and compliance was there amongst those who should have contended earnestly for the purity of their faith, and the rights of their country? What an unhappiness would the notions of those times have brought us to, when we must neither defend the life that we now have, nor inquire into that we hereafter expect? Our hold of this life was lost in the doctrine of non-resistance, and our study of a better was to be drowned in an implicit faith. But *blessed be God for ever and ever, wisdom and might are his, he changeth the times and seasons, he removeth Kings, and setteth up Kings.*

He stirred up his people to depose the man whom they could not before exclude. Though they failed in

(m) Psalm lxxii. 17.

{ (n) Hosea x. 7.

in resisting his claim, yet they effectually seized his forfeiture. He graciously found them a person, who was first their Captain to recover Christian Faith and English Liberties, and then their King to defend them. And by his rich furniture of courage, wisdom, integrity and temper, he appeared to be one of heaven's own rearing, *a King whom God himself had set up*; prepared with valour to empty the throne, and with conduct to fill it. With what an expedition and calmness was all this done? Though there was such a waste of noble blood in bringing King JAMES to the crown, yet there is none spilt in chasing him from it. GOD put this early credit upon the Prince of *Orange*, by making the easiness of his victory describe the virtue of his cause, which was not to destroy *England*, but to save it. And this was the time which was *turned unto us from sorrow to joy, and from mourning to a good day (o)*.

We may also bless GOD that he has guarded his own work from the ravage of men. Some have taken pains to unhinge our settlement, by setting up the degenerate plant of a strange vine. They say of *England*, as others did of *Judah*, *Let us go up against it and vex it, and make a breach therein for us, and set a king in the midst of it, even the son of Tabeal (p)*. But see the goodness of our GOD. We have not only escaped their mischief in our own borders, but have been able to crush it in distant nations. The *English* sword has both defended its own inclosure, and dugged up the *French* plants in other parts.

He has quickened the principles of our Revolution in *France*; and though the persons that espouse that cause are but an handful, yet they may spread out like *Elijah's* cloud, till they darken the face of that heaven. He has maintained the same principles in *England*, by giving us another Sovereign upon the Revolution foot, and making her so zealous to secure
our

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our liberties from the invasion of those abroad, and the peevishness of several at home. May the same blessing still go along with her, to smother both intestine broils and foreign tyrannies; to preserve the rights of people where they are established, and restore them where they are lost. Let our chief regard be gathered up to the supreme fountain of these mercies. Let us live like a people saved by the LORD, and be preparing for that august and blessed day when the governments of this world shall all dissolve, and our eyes see the King of Heaven in his beauty, and the glory of the land that is now afar off (9).

(9) Isa. xxxiii. 17.



S E R M O N





S E R M O N VII.

The Divine Right of the Revolution.

Preached NOVEMBER 5, 1707.

I CHRON. XII. 23.

These are the numbers of the bands, that were ready armed to the war, and came to David to Hebron, to turn the kingdom of Saul to him, according to the word of the Lord.

THIS chapter is the history of a noble Revolution in the land of *Israel*; and there are several things in it so like *ours*, that the same lines of character may describe them both. The courses of Providence towards us, are so plain a copy of what we read in the Bible, as if that Book did not tell us the case of other people, but was prophetic of our own. I believe indeed, that such passages are a fair account of what happened in those days; we here read the great works that GOD did *in the times of old*. But they are capable of a more extensive notion, and may be considered as the rule and sample of future wonders. When we look over this chapter with the nearest application to ourselves, it will bear the remark that

our LORD made upon another place, *This day are these Scriptures fulfilled in your ears.*

We have here a list of those brave Worthies that gave up themselves to *seek the welfare of Israel*, and have it secured in a better establishment. Some of them are more early in their appearance than others.

First, We have their names set down who came to David to Ziklag, whilst he kept himself close because of Saul the son of Kish; and they were among the mighty men, helpers of the war (a). GOD inspired them with a tender sense of the injuries offered to that good man, and their own common peace. These join with him in an evil day, when the tyranny of a distorted court had driven him out of the land, from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord, and laid him under temptations to go and serve other gods (b). Their generous friendship has a peculiar record, *There fell some of Manasseh to David, when he came with the Philistines against Saul to battle* (c). These made the first attempt to break the bondage that they were under to a cruel Prince, and took a share with David, whilst he was driven like a partridge upon the mountains. This gave them such an endearment to him, that he sends up their names to heaven, and recommends them there. *Let them shout for joy, and be glad that favour my righteous cause; yea, let them say continually, Let the Lord be magnified, who has pleasure in the prosperity of his servant; and then my tongue shall speak of thy righteousness, and of thy praise all the day long* (d).

Secondly, Here is another catalogue of those that flowed in to the same undertaking; but it was after their King had been cut off for his transgression (e), as GOD himself calls it. They all knew he had left a son behind him, and there was a party who could never so well fix their own interest as upon that bottom:

(a) 1 Chron. xii. 1.

(b) 1 Sam. xxvi. 19.

(c) 1 Chron. xii. 19.

(d) Psa. xxxv. 27, 28.

(e) 1 Chron. x. 13.

tom: but the main body of the tribes had their thoughts better turned, they do not suffer their reason and the public peace to be enslaved with a groundless notion; but get themselves *ready armed to the war, and came to David at Hebron, to turn the kingdom from Saul to him, according to the word of the Lord.*

Here you see *First*, The design with which they unite, a common inclination to *turn the kingdom from Saul to David*; and, *Secondly*, what it was that guided them in it; *the word of the Lord.*

The design or cause that they came about was, to turn the kingdom of *Saul to David*. He was now dead in battle under a signal frown of Providence. God had laid him aside with a more than ordinary scandal upon him. And as he forfeited the crown himself, so he destroyed the claim of his family. It is true, he kept up the name and figure of a King, till his woful life sunk upon mount *Gilboa*; but his title was demolished, God had publicly disowned him: those words were leveled at him in person, when *Samuel* refused the common civility of a subject, and told him, *I will not return with thee: thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord has rejected thee from being King over Israel* (f). And when Providence made the full seizure afterwards, it was but the late execution of this sentence. He was virtually dethroned when the Prophet told him, *The Lord has rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou* (g). To fulfil these things, was that which these people came about to *Hebron*.

That which gave the design all its life, and made it prosper, was, its being *according to the word of the Lord*. This may signify one or both of these things;

1. It made good the prophecies that God had given his people by *Samuel*. These are the express words of the story. *All the elders of Israel came to the King*

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to

(f) 1 Sam. xv. 26.

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(g) 1 Sam. xv. 28.

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to Hebron; and David made a covenant with them in
Hebron before the Lord, and they anointed David King
over Israel, according to the word of the Lord, by Samuel (b).
This divine institution was a thing universally known.
Besides the threatening against Saul, which I have but
newly read, David was set apart to the government
with the deepest solemnity in the presence of all his bre-
thren. He owns this, when he comes to disrobe, and
lay down the authority that he had worn forty years.
He resigns it, as he took it, under the notion of a
grant from heaven. *The Lord God of Israel has chosen*
Judab to be the Ruler, and of the house of Judab the house
of my father, and among the sons of my father, he liked
me to make me King over Israel (i). And the interval
between his consecration to the office and his enjoy-
ment of it, cleared the title: he was disposed of into
such a life, as proved a working him up for the throne.
In his troubles he went to dwell with Samuel at Naioth
in Ramah. This fixed the eyes of all the people upon
him. It was the universal sense of the nation, that
GOD had chosen him to rule *the tribes of his inheritance.*
Nay the persons who set themselves against this design,
were stung with a conviction that thus it would be:
as Jonathan tells David, when he went to him in the
wood, *Fear not, says he, for the hand of Saul my fa-*
ther shall not find thee: thou shalt be King over Israel,
and I shall be next unto thee, and that also Saul my fa-
ther knows (k). And Abner himself, who made such
a bustle to keep the succession in the right line as he
pretended, when he comes over, has his tongue very
ready at the common argument: *The Lord hath spoken*
of David, saying, By the hand of David my servant will
I save my people out of the hand of the Philistines, and
out of the hand of all their enemies (l).

2. Their doing this according to the word of the
Lord, may signify those particular directions that he
gave

(b) 1 Chron. xi. 3.

(i) 1 Chron. xxiii. 5.

(k) 1 Sam. xxiii. 17.

(l) 2 Sam. iii. 18.

gave them in the management. He did not only appoint the mercy, and nourish their hopes of it, but he stirs up the people with an especial force and life to close the design. He makes use of their unanimity and zeal as the tools of Providence. *As for God his way is perfect, the word of the Lord is tried: he girds me with strength, and makes my way perfect: he makes my feet like hinds feet, and sets me up on my high places. Thou hast given me the shield of thy salvation; thy right hand has holden me up, and thy gentleness has made me great; thou hast enlarged my steps under me (m).* In that song he enlivens the whole story of this mighty change, and turns it into praise. For, as you see in the title of it, *He spake these words to the Lord in the day that he was delivered from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul.*

If you take the text in both these senses, it may be applied to any deliverance in our days. They are *according to the word of the Lord.* Though we have not the names of persons, and the particular forms of mercy set out so plainly as the Jews had them; yet they are all conducted by the general funds of promise that refer to New Testament ages. They may be called his *arising to visit Sion (n)*; it is the breaking forth of *his thoughts of peace towards us*, and giving his captives *an expected end (o)*. We wait for the enlargement of the Church, the tumble of *Babylon*: when the pomp and forceries of *the harlot* lie floating as a great wreck, then *the year of his redeemed is come*. And this is no other than words quickened into life; the Bible breathing in Providence; it is *the mystery of God that should be finished, as he has declared to his servants the Prophets (p)*. And then it is *according to the word of the Lord.* If you consider what a noble display of Providence the happy scenes have opened

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with.

(m) Psa. xviii. 30, 32, 33, 35, 36.
(n) Psa. cii. 13.

(o) Jer. xxix. 11.
(p) Rev. x. 7.

with. It is *the recompence of God, the vengeance of his temple; the inquisition that he makes for blood, and his kind remembering the cry of the humble.* So that I may give you the general truth of the words, and adapt them to the mercy of the day in this

Doct. Such Revolutions in government, as make for the common advantage and peace, fall in with God's purpose, and are under the conduct of Providence.

We mean no less than all this, when we say, they are *according to the word of the Lord.* I must neither forget the text nor the day; but as the one leads me into the other, I will consider what is remarkable in them both, under the following method.

- I. I shall observe what account we have of this Revolution, the *turning of the kingdom* from the house of *Saul* to *David*.
- II. Consider that great affair, as it was *according to the word of the Lord.*

I. Here is the history of a change in the government, that God himself allowed among his people. I shall not run through the whole account, but only touch upon some things that are most valuable in their case, and may be easily transferred to ours. What I have to say upon this subject shall be ranged under these two heads, *Saul's forfeiture, and David's title.*

(1.) The kingdom is rent from *Saul*, who may be called *the Lord's anointed* in a more significant way than any person in the world now can be. He was mentioned by name to *Samuel.* He had a *vial of oil* poured upon his head, and the ceremony expounded the same moment; *Is it not because the Lord has anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance (q)?* To make it more evident, he had another heart given to him, *the Spirit of the Lord came upon him;* he prophesies,

(q) 1 Sam. x. 1.

phesies, and was in all his actions so much above himself, that all who knew him before-time said one to another, *What is this that is come unto the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the Prophets?* He was afterwards chosen by lot, and then presented to the people, who received him with shouts of approbation. His royal guards were *a band of men whose hearts God had touched.* He gives a noble handsel of his having the spirit of government, by raising the siege at *Jabesh-Gilead*, and defeating the *Ammonites* so completely, that *not two of them were left together.* This was so visible an instance of GOD's appointing him, that they go to *Gilgal*, and *renew the kingdom there; they sacrifice peace-offerings, and Saul and the men of Israel rejoiced greatly before the Lord.* And yet, though his title is so well confirmed, he dissolves it by mal-administration; and this was publicly known. Indeed, with much ado, he gets *Samuel* to *honour him before the elders of the people,* but he *came no more to see him till the day of his death;* and though he *mourned for him,* yet this was testimony enough of *the Lord's repenting that he had made Saul King over Israel.* The notions of an indelible character, and a sacred person who could do no wrong, and must suffer no justice, belong rather to the language of *Ashdod,* than of *Canaan.*

There are six things that the Scripture has laid to his charge as the provocations of Almighty justice against him.

1. The first miscarriage of his reign was a woful diffidence of God. The story is a very awful one. When *Samuel* had anointed him, he gives him several signs that might be as a prop to his faith and courage: but, among the rest of the things, he lays before him one plan of his duty that was not to take place till some time afterwards. *Thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal, and behold I come down unto thee, to offer burnt-offerings and to sacrifice sacrifices of peace-offerings;*

seven days shalt thou tarry, till I come unto thee, and shew thee what thou shalt do (r). It is the first act of obedience that GOD required of him, and it seems to be given as a test of his behaviour. And indeed it proved the turning point, upon which the continuance or the dissolution of his authority depended. It was two years after that he came to *Gilgal*, his army was trembling, the *Philistines* ready to swallow him up. At that time he had the weight of this charge upon his conscience. He remembered with what solemnity the command was given, but here is a mighty encounter between fear and duty. *He tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel had appointed (s), i. e. to the beginning of the seventh day, as that passage is usually understood, but Samuel came not to Gilgal, and the people were scattered from him, and Saul said, Bring hither a burnt-offering to me, and peace-offerings.* Some writers think the crime of this action was his own presenting the sacrifice, which was a work that GOD had separated an whole tribe to. But we need not go so deep in conjecture to find out his wickedness. Here is a visible slur upon the Providence that had kept him thus far. You see how little he makes of a command, when he suffers the appearance of danger to get the mastery over his convictions. You find, he does it with a regret; *I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that thou, says he to Samuel, camest not within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered themselves together to Michmash, therefore said I, the Philistines will come down to me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication to the Lord, I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt-offering (t).* This made a gap in his conscience, and was the beginning of a careless dissolute reign: we read of few applications to GOD afterwards: for *David* complains and gives this as the reason why he would

(r) 1 Sam. x. 8.

(s) 1 Sam. xiii. 7, 9.

(t) 1 Sam. xiii. 11, 12:

would bring back the ark of God, because, says he, we enquired not at it in the days of Saul (u).

This is a case so very much personal, that it was intirely his own: but yet there may be a parallel to it in the carriage of others. It is a crime of the same malignity, when princes have no regard to the chief obligations of their place; when they fall into measures of their own, and do any thing that either fear or passion hurries them to, rather than take the plain dictates of law and conscience. These forces of justice make a person odious in the sight of GOD and man. *The King by judgment establisheth the land; but he that receiveth gifts overthroweth it (x).*

2. Another thing that Saul was charged with, is, his partiality to the *Amalekites*. They were the first of the nations that made an attack upon Israel when they came out of Egypt; but as Balaam said of them, *Their latter end was to be destroyed for ever (y)*. There was so much inhumanity and baseness in that action, that God preserved it in the memory of his people, and consigned it over to their vengeance. *Remember what Amalek did to thee by the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt: how he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee, and feared not God; Therefore it shall be when the Lord thy God has given thee rest from all thine enemies round about, in the land which the Lord thy God has given thee for an inheritance to possess it, that thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under Heaven; thou shalt not forget it (z)*. Here was an awful resentment of their cruelty, and it is in pursuance of this quarrel that God put Saul upon that expedition. *I remember what Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him by the way when they came out of Egypt. Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not, but slay man*

(u) 1 Chron. xiii. 3.

(x) Prov. xxix. 4.

(y) Numb. xxiv. 20.

(z) Deut. xxv. 17, 18, 19.

man and woman, infant and suckling, oxen and sheep, camel and ass (a). Here, instead of hearty obedience he does the work of the Lord deceitfully: he spared Agag, and the best of the sheep and oxen, and the fatlings and lambs, and all that was good would be not utterly destroy, but every thing that was vile and refuse they destroyed utterly (b). So that his obedience was lust rather than duty.

This shuffling with the command proved fatal to him. God has an early repentment of it, and tells Samuel, *It repents me that I have set up Saul to be King, for he is turned back from following me, and has not performed my commandment (c).* The ingratitude of this is what the prophet urges upon his conscience. *When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made head over the tribes of Israel? and the Lord anointed thee king over Israel; and he sent thee on a journey, and said, Go, and destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed. Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the Lord, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the Lord (d)?*

A little recollection will help us to turn these things upon our own case. I need not tell you what people have the vilest name in our laws, and are always most ready to embroil the constitution. They have fallen upon us, *when we were faint and weary; and feared not God:* and yet these *Amalekites* are more than spared. Indeed, christianity is no doctrine of blood; there is nothing more remote from it, than persecution and cruelty. But it is very ill when they, who have been the tools of our public confusions, are received into places of honour and trust, in defiance of law and all the common cries of danger. The party, who have the blood of above two hundred thousand laid at their doors in a neighbouring kingdom;

(a) 1 Sam. xv. 2, 3.

(b) 1 Sam. xv. 9.

(c) 1 Sam. xv. 11.

(d) 1 Sam. xv. 17.

kingdom; these were impowered with new capacities of doing mischief. A few links more to their chain, would have given them compass enough to have destroyed our religion, parliament, and all the courses of justice, and leave us to the discipline of a ravenous army. We may look upon our protection in those days with wonder. It was the blessing of that promise; *Thou shalt keep them, O Lord, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.* When the wicked walk on every side, and the vilest men are exalted (e). The faction, whom our Kings are sworn to guard us from at their coronation, these had the power of the sword and the bench. The extreme zeal that appeared in the prosecution of our best nobility and gentry, might lead us into that lamentation, *Our necks are under persecution, we labour and have no rest: Servants have rule over us; there is none that delivers out of their hand* (f). Men of low and base original, *viler than the earth*, but raised to be the engines of tyranny. *Princes are hanged up by the hand, the faces of the elders were not honoured* (g). And that apparent invasion of our privileges, in denying us a parliament, may be fitly expressed in these words, *The elders have ceased from the gates* (h). Is not this sparing and advancing a people that have shewn so long an antipathy to the peace of *Israel*? We may easily forget *the cry of the humble*; but God remembered what *Amalek* did; and the sin of *Babylon* is as deeply engraven, as we shall know, when they who are *drunk with the blood of the saints, and the martyrs of JESUS*, come to have their *flesh eaten, and burnt with fire*.

3. *Saul's* killing the *Gibeonites*, is another of those crimes that lay heavy upon him. These were a people received into solemn covenant, and had enjoyed a limited privilege for several ages; but at last there are some

(e) Psalm xii. 7, 8.

(f) Lam. v. 5, 8.

(g) Lam. v. 12.

(h) Lam. v. 14.

some reasons of state for cutting them off. Indeed, we have no full account of this, till the beginning of *David's* reign, and then the wickedness of doing it is revived in a terrible famine. This public calamity raged among them for three years, and God tells *David*, *It is for Saul, and for his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites (i):* Which he is said to do out of his zeal for the children of *Israel* and *Judah*. It is strange, that the man who spared the *Amalekites*, should be so cruel to those that never offended him: he has an air of compassion against a precept, and none at all for it. Will not God be avenged on such a nation as this?

The iniquity of our times that bears a parallel to it is writ with a pen of iron, and the point of a diamond; it is engraven, as God says, in the rock for ever. Need I tell you now how jails and gallows, persecution in the most hideous forms, were the usual arguments of the party; and that for no other crime, than the serving of God with a peace of conscience. We had witnesses and juries contrived on purpose, and thus by swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, they break out, and blood toucheth blood (k). Can a course so vile as this be to represent God? Must a person that rages beyond all the bounds of temper be called his anointed? What dreadful Ideas will an oppressed people have of these titles? Such barbarous treacheries cry for vengeance to the Lord God of *Sabaoth*. He remembered the case of the *Gibeonites* a long while after the injury was given, and he is not to be appeased, till justice is done on the offenders. *The man that consumed us, and devised against us, that we should be destroyed from remaining in any of the coasts of Israel; Let seven men of his sons be given us, and we will hang them up unto the Lord in Gibeath of Saul, whom the Lord did choose (l).*

4. His

(i) 1 Sam. xxi. 1.

(k) Hof. iv. 2.

(l) 2 Sam. xxi. 5, 6.

4. His unnatural cruelty to *David*: this had no other provocation to lead it on, but the worth of the person against whom it was directed. *Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who can stand before envy (m)?* When people are affronted with the integrity of another, the christian has a sad choice, either to lose his peace with man or that with conscience. Besides *David's* service to the public, there was another engagement upon *Saul*, I mean, the relation he had brought him into; though it was no love on the father's part that guided it, but a meer selfish policy, *he gives him his daughter, that she might be a snare to him (n).* Yet, after an obligation so enhanced, he pursues him upon the mountains, though *there was no iniquity in his hand.* He is uneasy at the favours that *Jonathan* shews him, and speaks in a language, one would think, beneath a throne; *Thou son of a perverse rebellious woman, do I not know, that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thy confusion; for as long as he lives upon the ground, thou shalt not be established in thy kingdom (o).* And if you look into the fatal occasion of this uneasiness, you will be able to think what it was that kept it working. When *David* came from the slaughter of the Philistines, the songs of Israel attended him with that praise, *Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands;* and it is said, *the king eyed him from that day forwards,* and complained, *What can he have more but the kingdom?* The furious pursuit of this quarrel I will not turn you to; it lies abroad in the history, he that runs may read it.

You need not be at any violent pains to fix this matter upon ourselves with a pertinent application. The methods that were taken to defraud the late King with his royal Consort, and her present Majesty, are notorious enough; they flung in the meanest imposture, shams beneath the dignity of a throne, as
a bar

(m) Prov. xxvii. 4.
(n) 1 Sam. xviii. 21.

(o) 1 Sam. xx. 30.

a bar between the nation and their happiness. *Solomon* has taught us what to think of a court that gives any protection to forgery. *When a ruler hearkens to lies, all his servants are wicked* (p). When ill designs are carried on by worse methods, can any name make the delusion sacred? Does a fair title need to be supported with artifice and violence, or can a bad one be defended by it? No, *GOD* has *broken the net, and we are escaped* (q). We live to see, that all their intrigues to hinder our settlement were in vain; he has disappointed the devices of the crafty, so that their hands could not perform their enterprize.

5. Another fatal miscarriage that we meet with in *Saul's* history, is, his *killing the priests of the Lord*. This was a passion inflamed by a private jealousy. *Abimelech* had given *David* some bread, and *Goliath's* sword; and this was observed by *Doeg the Edomite*. Upon which, the king charges them with conspiracy against him; and to make out the plot, there is only the evidence of a profane stranger. *Saul* commands the soldiers to shed their blood, but they started back from a thing so vile and hateful: but the man, who had so little conscience as to be an informer, takes upon himself the last part of that tragedy: so that *on one day, there fell fourscore and five persons wearing a linen Ephod* (r).

Such a brutal excess as this, is enough to set the crown a tottering. *Mercy and truth preserve the King, and his throne is upheld by mercy* (s). And the reverse to these, carries an unavoidable ruin in it. It is time for Providence to take the alarm, and scatter a diffusive thunder. Here is profaneness and cruelty joined, when the ministers of the *LORD's* house are made *the off-scouring of the earth*. These severities have strained the constitution of empires. When once men run into the fury of persecution, they are only

(p) Proverbs xxix. 12

(q) Psalm cxxiv. 7.

(r) 1 Sam. xxii. 18.

(s) Proverbs xx. 28.

only digging a pit for themselves. *Jerusalem* is to be both a *cup of trembling*, and a *burdensome stone to all the people that are gathered against her* (t). The cry of those *under the altar*, shall be heard at last against them that *live on the earth*, and then *the things that shall come upon them make haste*. Whilst our land was covered with a deluge of perjury, rapine and blood, *the glory was departed from Israel*; our public reputation in the world vanished; we looked like a people neglected by God; till he *breathed upon our slain*, and made *the dry bones live*.

6. His applying to Satan for advice, was that which gave the last blow to his government. *Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the Lord, even against the word of the Lord, which he kept not; and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to enquire of it; and enquired not of the Lord: therefore he slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse* (u). It is hard indeed, to speak of any people who go under the name of Christians, and suppose that a story so profane can belong to them! But, really, the application is fairer and more genuine than I could wish it. For, besides their cries to departed saints, and the clumsy dealings they pretend to have with evil spirits, the measures they took to promote their cause were indeed a work of darkness. No treachery or blood could stop the career of their zeal. Instead of keeping up to the christian rule, they sunk too low for human nature: and whence could they have their assistance, but from beneath, where they got their cause? This is the language which the holy spirit gives of such whose profession breathes out cruelty, the people themselves are called, *The synagogue of Satan* (x); and the suffering party are told who it is that heads the tumult, *the devil shall cast some of you into*

(t) Zech. xii. 2, 3.

(u) 1 Chron. x. 13, 14.

(x) Rev. xi. 9.

into prison, and they shall have tribulation ten days (y). And they that bear their testimony for CHRIST in a superstitious place, are said to do it *in the city where Satan's seat is* (z).

These were some of the things that gave an effectual blast to *Saul*; and so, after he had gone his round of oppression and baseness, the God that lighted him up blew him out again; and he went away in a snuff. *I gave thee a King in my anger, and took him away in my wrath* (a).

II. *David's* title fills up a large part of the history. His being *the King's son-in-law*, set him more to the view of the people, and gave them a resentment of his ill usage; but the scripture has mentioned several other things, as his right to the crown.

I. He was chosen by God himself: There is nothing can have a brighter evidence than this. The Apostle, who speaks of it so many ages after, refers it all to Providence. *After God had removed Saul, he raised up unto them David to be their King, to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, who shall fulfil all my will* (b). *Samuel* foretold it, and as an assurance of what was to be, they had it upon the credit of a great solemnity: he was *anointed in the midst of all his brethren*: and it is this that clenches the argument at their Revolution; *We are thy bone and thy flesh. And also in times past, when Saul was King, thou wast he that leddest out, and brought in Israel: and the Lord thy God said unto thee, Thou shalt save my people Israel, and be ruler over them* (c). So plain an election as this God has never promised to any other kingdom: it is confined to the Jewish history.

2. He

(y) Rev. xi. 10.
 (z) Rev. xi. 13.
 (a) Hof. xiii. 11.

(b) Acts xiii. 22.
 (c) 1 Chron. xi. 2.

2. He had the unanimous call of the people. Several came to *Ziklag*, and others afterwards to *Hebron*. There was, indeed, a faction that had *Abner* a veteran soldier for their head; but these dwindled away; the general revolted, the pretender lost his life, and they that herded with him all their fair expectations.

3. His fitness for the work is very accurately laid down in the history. He is sometimes called *a man after God's own heart*: and when *Samuel* tells *Saul* of his forfeiture, he lets the sentence fall with the weight of this in it: *The Lord has rent the kingdom of Israel from thee, and given it to a neighbour of thine better than thou.* And indeed, without this it is in vain to say, that rulers are of God's raising up, in any other sense than public calamities are.

4. To mention no more, he had been prepared for the tender part of the government by many adversities; it is upon this that they could say, *Lord, remember David and all his afflictions (d).* The public enemies of religion had almost *destroyed his life to the ground*, and a malignant party among themselves gave him an equal disturbance. Thus he was happily moulded by the difficulties that he met with, to a reign of universal clemency. These were all preparations for a throne. He was *taken from the sheep-folds, from following the ewes great with young, to feed Jacob and Israel; so he fed them according to the integrity of his heart, and guided them according to the skilfulness of his hands (e).* The troubles of his own life were of great advantage to soften him in the course of his government. This was so just and equal, that there is a threefold honour put upon it in scripture. He was a pattern to all his successors; for when any of them are commended, it is under this character, he *walked in the ways of David his father.* But more than that, the King and ruler whose goings

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(d) Psalm cxxxii. 1.

(e) Psalm lxxviii. 70, 71, 72.

forth have been of old from everlasting (f), takes a name from him; I mean our great Mediator. *I will set up a shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even David my servant; I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David a Prince among them* (g). And then in the last place; when the LORD revives his work in the latter days, such as he employs are to be thus qualified; *He that is feeble among them shall be as David, and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them* (h).

You will easily imagine, that in turning over these characters I have a later example in mine eye; the NOBLE PRINCE who landed amongst us *this day*. GOD had shewed him sore troubles, and afterwards enlarged his greatness and comfort on every side (i). His bravery of soul was pent up for a time within a sphere of more private action. But, as it is said of David, when he was only a General, *Wherever he went he behaved himself wisely, so that his name was much set by* (k). Providence made him capable to stand the shock of many an assault in his younger life, that at last he might be fixed as a bank to stop the raging waves of tyranny. The early dangers that he met with were to temper his soul for a more copious service. After he had been the defence of his own country from a French deluge, he comes to rescue ours when verily *there was but a step between us and death*. The passions of stoutness and clemency, that are so remote from one another, mingled all their force in him; that he might answer both the offices of a King, a General to fight our battles, and a nursing Father to the welfare of his people. And what reason have we to admire the divine goodness that turned the kingdom from Saul to such an one? There is another part of the text, which my thoughts had their chief design upon, when I begun
with

(f) Mic. v. 2.
(g) Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24.
(h) Zech. xiii. 8.

(i) Psal. lxxi. 20.
(k) 1 Sam. xvii. 30.

with it; and that is, the conduct of Providence in these Revolutions; they are *according to the word of the Lord*. But I cannot proceed to these things, without giving you too much enlargement, or them too little; I will therefore venture upon another opportunity for that. What you have heard may close your attention, with a general remark or two upon it.

We see from these changes, that *God is King, he puts down one, and sets up another*. The wicked may deal in proud wrath, but he is above them. *Come and behold the works of the Lord, the desolations that he has made in the earth: he has broken the bow, and cut the spear asunder, and burnt the chariot in the fire (l)*. We may justly say on *this day of good things, Be still, and know that he is God*. And then,

This may teach us what to do with our hopes of any new blessings; turn them into Prayer, and send them towards heaven. *The salvation of Israel is not yet come out of Sion; but the vision is for an appointed time; at the end it shall speak, and will not lie*. Our successes this year have not run so smooth as they did the former; we have had some rubs to a campaign that our hopes had magnified beforehand. But you see from whom we are to fetch the remains of victory. Let faith rise out of the disappointment. Bewail and plead together, as the Psalmist does: *Who will bring me into the strong city? Who will lead me into Edom? Wilt not thou, O God, who didst cast us off? And thou, O God, who didst not go forth with our armies (m)?* We have *this day* a sample of Almighty love; the liberties and peace that were restored at the great Revolution, tell us what God can do. The continuing mildness we are under at home, when the gains of war are so rich abroad, lets us see, that the mercies which began with the last reign did not end with it. He has so owned our settlement, as gives us the clearest evidence, that this *turn of the kingdoms*

L 2

from

(l) Psal. xlvi. 8, 9.

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(m) Psal. lx. 9, 10.

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from one to another, was according to the word of the
Lord.

When the late King WILLIAM was called into his
Master's joy, *Many were gathered together, that said,
Let her be defiled, let our eye look upon Sion. But they
know not the thoughts of the Lord, neither do they under-
stand his counsel* (n). He has graciously given us an-
other Sovereign upon the foot of the Revolution, and
guided her by the same Spirit. This has been a reign
of wonders in the field, and no less admirable for an
union among ourselves. The devices that were set on
foot to embroil us were happily crushed. *God has
scattered the people that delight in war.* Let him have
the glory of all our gratitude for what we have got,
and of an unshaken dependence for what remains.
I will say no more, when I have put the Psalmist's
words into your mouths: *Thy God has commanded
thy strength; strengthen, O God, that which thou hast
wrought for us* (o).

(n) Mic. iv. 11.

|

(o) Psal. lxxviii. 28.





S E R M O N VIII.

The Divine Right of the Revolution.

Preached NOVEMBER 5, 1708.

I CHRON. XII. 23.

These are the numbers of the bands, that were ready armed to the war, and came to David to Hebron, to turn the kingdom of Saul to him, according to the word of the Lord.



THE last year I told you these words belong to the history of a Revolution in *Israel*, and may be considered with an eye to ours, which begun by the favour of Heaven this day twenty years: there are two parts in the text; *First*, The design that those people came about to *Hebron*, and it was a cause worthy of their being armed; it deserved their drawing a sword: it was *to turn the kingdom from Saul to David*. *Secondly*, This is all *according to the word of the Lord*, i. e. either the birth of the many prophecies that he had given them; or it may signify, that what they did was by the peculiar direction of Heaven; and so the sense of the words lies in this plain observation:

Such Revolutions as make for the common peace, are *according to the word of the Lord*. They agree with his purpose, and fall under the conduct of his Providence.

The method I made choice of was,

I. To consider this Revolution among the tribes of *Israel*.

II. Show how these great and happy things are *according to the word of the Lord*.

The former of these, the turning the *kingdom from Saul to David*, had two branches; *Saul's* abdication or forfeiture, and *David's* title.

Under the first, I run through the several parts of his mal-administration, and shewed to what it is that the scriptures impute the rending the kingdom from him, and giving it to another. Though, when he was called *the Lord's anointed*, it signified no less than his being the very man whom God had chosen by name. An honour confined to those people, and what none else can pretend to, without an impudence that deserves to be laughed at rather than argued with. And yet this man, who had an undoubted grant of the kingdom by Heaven itself, is rejected from being a ruler, and another chosen.

David's title was a divine appointment, and a popular concurrence; the tribes *came to Hebron to turn the kingdom from Saul to him*; and this is said to be *according to the word of the Lord*, which is

The second part of the text. I have already given you two things as the sense of this expression, and shall now consider it at large with an eye to them both.

First, That such Revolutions fall in with his design: And,

Secondly;

Secondly, That they are supported by the blessing of his Providence.

I. The rending of the kingdom from those that have abused their trust, and putting it into better hands, is not only the right of human nature, but it is *according to the word of the Lord*, and answers the designs that he has published. This has been the course of his Providence in all ages. *Ask thy father, and he will shew thee; thine elders, and they will tell thee.* It is an observation as old as Job's days, *He shall break in pieces mighty men without number, and set others in their stead*(a). And lest we should think this only means their dying, he goes on to shew us, that a visible justice is acted upon them; *He strikes them as wicked men in the open sight of others* (b). And this is with regard to those, who are under their yoke; *The hypocrite shall not reign, lest the people be ensnared*(c). God spoke his mind at large to the Jews upon this head. He had ordered them a long while before-hand, if they would have a King, to make them *like other nations*, he must have *a copy of the law before him, lest his heart should be lifted up above his brethren, and turn aside from the commandment; to the end that he might prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel* (d). This was the condition of the government: for, as here is the promise of an enduring honour to him and his race, whilst these rules of empire were sacred to him, so the reverse to it must be understood in the case of his rebellion against God, and his tyranny over the people. When they hurried on to have a King, *Samuel* tells them on the coronation-day, *if they will do wickedly, both he and they shall be destitute* (e). From these general hints they had warning enough, and the schemes of government laid down before them; but

L 4

the

(a) Job xxxiv. 24.

(b) Job xxxiv. 26.

(c) Job xxxiv. 30.

(d) Deut xvii. 20.

(e) 1 Sam. xiii. ult.

the case is still plainer, when he comes by divine order to confront *Saul* at the head of his army: *Thy kingdom shall not continue; the Lord has sought him a man after his own heart, and commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept the word which the Lord commanded thee* (f). This he repeats upon the occasion of another crime, *The Lord has rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou* (g). In both those places, the prophet argues from *Saul's* being unqualified; and grounds the Revolution that should happen among them upon the general advantage of that change. After this, when *David* was anointed, that all *Israel* might know it, the spirit of the Lord came upon him from that day forward. This was such a discovery of God's mind, that *Saul* himself owns it under a violent impression. *I know that thou shalt surely be King, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thy hand.* *Abner* falls in with the argument, *The Lord hath spoken, saying, By the hand of my servant David will I save my people* (h).

Indeed these are things that we have no immediate concern with; it cannot be said of any now, that they are governors according to the word of the Lord, if you take the expression in this stricter sense. He no further names the persons in our age, than as his Providence gives them a fitness for the work, and an endearment to the people. But yet such Revolutions may be said to be according to the word of the Lord, as they fall in with those designs, that he has told us, are very dear to him.

1. The reforming of his worship.
2. Restoring the rights of human nature.
3. Making

(f) 1 Sam. xiii. 14.
(g) 1 Sam. xv. 28.

(h) 2 Sam. iii. 18.

3. Making inquisition for the blood of his people.
4. The advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom.

1. It is certainly *according to the word of the Lord*, that all the abominations which have run into his worship shall be taken away; *we have a sure word of prophecy to tell us the things which will shortly come to pass.* We have lived to see what the Apostle spoke of in his day, that *the man of sin, the son of perdition, should be revealed, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, so that he as God sits in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God (i).* The mystery of iniquity has been working for a long time: and we know, that *that wicked one shall be consumed by our Lord with the spirit of his mouth, and destroyed with the brightness of his coming (k).* There is a day, when he will take his *fan into his hand, and thoroughly purge his floor (l).* Whatever unconcern there may now be upon the churches, yet the time will come when they who are *written among the living in Jerusalem shall be jealous for the Lord of Hosts.* *We, according to his promise, look for a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness; the brightest Reformation that ever yet was seen; when a zeal for God's ordinances in their purity will swallow up all carnal affections; according to that prophecy, It shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of Hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered: also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirits to pass out of the land; and it shall come to pass, when any shall yet prophesy, that his father and his mother that begat him, shall say unto him, Thou shalt not live, for thou speakest lies in the name of the Lord; and his father and his mother that begat him, shall thrust him through when he prophesies (m).*

The

(i) 2 Theff. ii. 3, 4.

(k) 2 Theff. ii. 8.

(l) Matt. iii. 12.

(m) Zech. xiii. 2, 3.

The wisdom that descends from above, as it came out of CHRIST'S hands, was pure and peaceable; and with this native simplicity it run through the kingdoms of the earth: it is represented as a stone cut out without hands (n); there was no human art to give it a beauty, or make its way more prosperous; and yet it breaks to pieces the image of iron, clay, brass, silver and gold. The powers of this world are so little able to stand before it, that they become like the chaff of the summer threshing-floor; and the stone that smote the image was a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. Thus it was that Christianity enlarged itself at first, not by might nor by force; but by the spirit of the Lord of Hosts. But when the beauty of holiness decayed, people endeavoured to supply what was gone, by dressing it up to the luxury and pride of men; till at length, instead of a gospel and a worship that are the power of God, we had it new modeled; it was only the creature of human prudence. And what confusion has this made in the world? First, They refined upon the institutions of Heaven, and then established their own amendments with as much terror as they could. That order has stood a long time, That whoever will not worship the image of the beast, shall be killed. And he causeth all, both rich and poor, small and great, free and bond, to receive a mark on their right hand or their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that has the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name (o). These were things foretold by the Apostles, it begun in their day. There would be false teachers who privately brought in damnable heresies, denying the Lord that bought them, and bringing upon themselves swift destruction. Many should follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth would be evil spoken of, and through covetousness, with feigned words, they

(n) Dan. xi. 34, 36.

| (o) Rev. xiii. 15, 16, 17.

they would make merchandize of the people (p). That church of Ephesus in particular, where St. Paul for the space of three years declared to them the whole counsel of God, was to have grievous wolves enter in among them: nay, of themselves should men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them (q). But when the day of the Lord comes, it is over and over again called, *The vengeance of his temple* (r). He will turn to the people a pure language, that they may call upon the name of the Lord, and serve him with one consent (s). We know, that the mother of abominations shall come down, that the Heavens, and the Apostles, and Prophets may rejoice over her. The nations of the earth shall have day-light to set them at liberty from the superstitions that they are fallen into. These are things according to the word of the Lord. And

This is one of the blessings that came with our Revolution. As the time was hastning that *the Kings of the earth should hate the whore, and make her desolate*; God put it into their hearts to fulfil his will (t). England had made an admirable stand in the general Reformation, under the short reign of that excellent Prince Edward VI. in whom there was so many good things towards the Lord God of Israel, in the house of Jeroboam. After that Queen Mary over-run the work with blood and ravage, the men who had done so famously by the word of their testimony, came to plead another way, by not loving their lives unto the death. For the elects sake those days were shortned. The bloody and deceitful did not live out half their days; and in a little time the indignation was over-past. But, in many respects the glory of the second house was not equal to that of the first. From that time, they have been making their secret encroachments upon us,

as

(p) 2 Peter ii. 1, 2, 3.

(q) Acts xx. 29, 30.

(r) Jer. l. 28. and li. 16.

(s) Zeph. iii. 8.

(t) Rev. xvii. 16, 17.

as if they would bring us to that by degrees, which could not be proposed without danger all at once. They took up with lower conquests for a while, pleasing themselves that we had got a smattering of their superstition, when we spoke *half the language of Ashdod, and half that of Canaan.* Calling ministers of the gospel by the name of priests, *the Lord's table* an altar, and *the communion of the body of Christ* a sacrifice. This is a perverting the phrases from what the New Testament means by them. *Whilst we slept, an enemy sowed tares (u).*

They carried on *the mystery of iniquity* through several reigns, and were at last so powerful as to get a furious champion of their cause upon the throne. We were then in the worst condition of *leprosy*, and must cry out *utterly unclean, when the plague was in the head (x).* But God had pity on his great name, which we had profaned, and once more rescued our religion from *the pride of men, and the strife of tongues.* This was one thing saved at the Revolution, and it is *according to the word of the Lord*, as it falls in with a design that we so often read of in scripture. We are told that the time will come, when nothing that belongs to idolatry shall stay behind. All the terms and ways of expressing ourselves that we have got from a superstitious crew, must be sent to the place whence they came. *I will cut off, saith he, the remnant of Baal from this place, with the names of the Chemarim and priests (y).* We are no longer to talk like them. *In that day thou shalt call me Isbi, i. e. my husband; thou shalt no more call me Baal (z),* which signifies my Lord; *because I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name.*

2. It is *according to the word of the Lord*, that the rights of human nature shall be established, *to crush under his feet all the prisoners of the earth; to turn aside*

(u) Matt. xiii. 25.

(x) Lev. xiii. 44.

(y) Zeph i. 4.

(z) Holca ii. 16, 17.

aside the right of a man before the face of the most High, to subvert a man in his cause the Lord approveth not (a). It is pity the doctrines of slavery should be promoted under the Christian name, when there is nothing wider from the design of our LORD's coming into the world, and the rules that he has left for his people to walk by. What can be more absurd and cruel than to tell us, that he who came to deliver us from Satan, has made it essential to our peace with him, that we submit to all the excesses of tyranny. It is a *reasonable service* that we are called to, as it includes our behaviour both to God and man. There is nothing in it that nature itself will start at when it is well informed. But if this is a truth, that a set of people have a divine right to our obedience, and *to resist them is damnation*, when they are going on with a notorious injustice, we must by no means say, that *the yoke of CHRIST* is an *easy* one.

There is nothing in reason to persuade me that my life is another's property, and am I brought into this misery by the Gospel? Our LORD *came not to destroy mens lives, but to save them*; and are his rules so much a discord to himself? I know two or three sentences in the thirteenth chapter to the *Romans* come under a yearly execution by some that *walk in craftiness, and handle the word of the Lord deceitfully*. But it is plain the Apostle could never say, that a tyrant is *an ordinance of God*, in any other sense than our afflictions are; the Prophet indeed has told us, that *God has ordained them for judgment, and established them for correction (b)*. But if that is all, they are no more *jure divino* than a distemper is; and we may apply to the rational methods of cure in one case as well as the other. The reason that he gives for our obedience, strikes off so wild an opinion as this; that *they are not terrors to good works, but to the evil: Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? If thou dost that which is good,*

(a) Lam. iii. 34—36.

| (b) Hab. i. 12.

good, thou shalt have praise of the same. He is the Minister of God to thee for good; but if thou dost evil, be afraid, for he bears not the sword in vain. He is the Minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that does evil (c). Yet this text that shows us the just measures of our submission has been abused by the flight of men, to make rulers above law, and subjects beneath it.

In this doing the work of an Evangelist, and making full proof of their Ministry? Are these men preaching up repentance and remission of sins in the name of Christ? Can such hard sayings belong to the glad tidings of great joy that shall be to all people? That which our LORD called the Gospel, was to preach deliverance to the captives, and the opening of the prison doors to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort them that mourn in Sion (d); and it is pity that they who pretend to have his name upon them, should have no doctrines so much at heart as those for the enslaving of mankind. It was a sad part of Jerusalem's misery, *Thy prophets have seen vain and foolish things for thee, and they have not discovered thy iniquity, to turn away thy captivity, but have seen for thee false burdens, and causes of banishment (e)*. Now when a people fall in with those measures that make for the rescue of their liberty, it is according to the word of the Lord. We have promises upon record, and God will establish his word unto his servants, that there shall be no hurting nor destroying in all his holy mountain (f). When the high-way of holiness comes to be opened, the unclean are not to pass over it. It will be so plain and easy, that no lion shall be there, no ravenous bird go up thereon (g). And this we understood at the Revolution. There was a contest whether we should be governed

(c) Rom. xiii. 3, 4.

(d) Isai. lxi. 1, 2.

(e) Lam. ii. 14.

(f) Zeph. iii. 1.

(g) Isai. xxxv. 8, 9.

verned by the King or by the Law ; and when it was brought to this, that *no man could serve those two masters*, we turned out the one, and kept in the other.

3. It is according to the word of the Lord, that there shall be an inquisition for the blood that is shed. God is jealous and revengeth, he is furious and takes vengeance on his adversaries, and reserveth wrath for his enemies. The Lord is indeed slow to anger ; but he is great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked : he has his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet (b). Saul's killing the priests of the Lord, and his eager pursuit of David, came heavy upon him at last, when his shield is vilely cast away upon the mountains of Gilboa, and the beauty of Israel was slain upon the high places of the uncircumcised (i). God suffers a tyrant to go on frowardly in the way of his heart for some time, but they that shewed no mercy, shall have judgment without mercy (k). There is a cup in the Lord's right hand, and the wicked shall wring out the dregs of it (l). There is to be a reckoning for all the blood of his servants that is shed. The souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and the testimony they held, are received under the altar, and are pleading there, *How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood upon them that dwell on the earth?* It is observed, that white robes were given to every one of them, and it was said unto them, that they should rest for a little season, till their fellow-servants also and brethren that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled (m). And when this is over, we read of the Kings of the earth and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains fleeing to the dens and rocks of the mountains, because the great day of the Lamb's wrath was come.

There

(b) Nah. i. 2, 3.
 (i) 2 Sam. i. 19, 20.
 (k) Jam. ii. 13.

(l) Psal. lxxv. 8.
 (m) Rev. vi. 9—11.

There are the materials of a long quarrel with *Babylon*, because *in her was found the blood of the Prophets and Saints, and of all that dwell upon the earth* (n). I need not go far back into our history to tell you what violent measures have been carried on to sink our Religion and Liberties. It is within the memory of several yet alive, that near two hundred thousand innocent people fell in the year 1641, in that hideous massacre of *Ireland* *. And it is still fresher, if I put you in mind of the woful persecutions in *Great Britain*: how many families were ruined? Some starved in jails, others driven into *dens and mountains of the earth, of whom the world was not worthy*; tho' *the Lord God of gods he knows, and Israel he shall know, that it was not for any rebellion or transgression against the Lord*. Swearing some great men out of their lives; poisoning, stabbing and cutting the throats of others; the garbling of corporations, the packing of juries, were some of the steps for a general conquest over us. And when things were ripe enough, we had a standing army in the time of peace; and most of these forces under the command of *Irish* Papists, in open defiance of the law. But these people were the best used to Protestant blood, and so the more prepared for another slaughter. Though *this turning of things upside down was esteemed as potters clay*; in a little time, *the terrible one was brought to nought, the scorner consumed, and they that watch for iniquity, cut off* (o).

Ahab, when he had got *Naboth's* life and vineyard, was easy enough for some time; but the Prophet found him, *Hast thou slain, and hast thou taken possession? In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine* (p). From that moment the decree commences, and the execution

(n) Rev. xviii. 24.

(o) Isai. xxix. 16, 20.

(p) 1 Kings xxi. 19.

* See Dr *Lambert's* Sermon preached before the Protestant nobility and gentry of that kingdom, at *St James's*, Oct. 23, 1708.

tion comes at several times. For when *Jobu* had slain his son, he says to *Bidkar* his Captain, *Cast him into the portion of the field of Naboth; for remember, how when thou and I rode together after Abab his father, the Lord laid this burden upon him. Surely, I have seen yesterday the blood of Naboth, and the blood of his sons, saith the Lord, and I will requite thee in this plat of ground (q).* It is a maxim that is laid down in Scripture, and founded upon everlasting morality, *Ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer that is guilty of death, he shall surely be put to death. Ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye dwell: for blood it defiles the land: and the land cannot be cleansed from the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it (r).* If this is neglected by men, Providence takes up the quarrel, and sometimes *lays up the iniquity of fathers for their children.* We read in some cases, when the satisfaction of public justice is deferred, it has only fallen heavier at last. *Joab* the son of *Zeruiah* had shed the blood of war in peace; but he was useful to the Revolution; and *David*, though anointed King, found his hands too weak: however it is left as a death-bed charge to *Solomon*, that his boary hairs should not come down to the grave in peace. And his rebellion in favour of *Adonijah*, lets in the long-designed misery. This is what we are waiting for, in the present confusion of war, that when *the cities of the nations are falling, great Babylon* may come in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath (s).

4. We know that the Gospel is to have a free course, and be glorified, and the kingdom shall be the LORD'S: *From the rising of the sun, to the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles (t).* The earth shall be full of the knowledge of

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the

(q) 2 Kings ix. 25, 26.

(r) Numb. xxxv. 31, 33.

(s) Rev. xvi. 19.

(t) Mal. i. 11.

the Lord, as the waters cover the sea (u). The kingdoms of this world are to become the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever. He will take to him his great power and reign. The time shall come, that he will give reward unto his servants the Prophets, and to his Saints, and to them that fear his name, small and great, and will destroy them that destroy the earth (x). He is to have the Heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession; to break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel (y). Now whatever falls in with this design, must be accounted the word of the Lord. And what can do it more than a Revolution that baffles Popery and Tyranny? For these two are the things that *have let, and will let, till they be taken out of the way* (z). I know those people pretend to vast expences for spreading the Gospel in foreign parts; but it is only as the Pharisees compassed sea and land to make one profelyte; and when he is made, says our LORD, *he is twofold more a child of bell than themselves* (a).

This party has notoriously hindred both the salvation of *Israel*, and the fulness of the Gentiles, by the stumbling-block of their iniquity. I will give you an instance of each: in the year 1666, there was a general expectation, that it was the time when the *Jews* would be converted in a body: and there were some hopeful steps towards it; for men of the brightest figure among them, both for learning and riches, met from all parts of the world, and had a free conference about *him whom their fathers had pierced*. The great question was, *whether the same JESUS of Nazareth, whom they crucified, was now made both LORD and CHRIST?* The argument was managed with

(u) Isai. xi. 9.
 (x) Rev. xi. 15, 17, 18.
 (y) Psal. ii. 8, 9.

(z) 2 Thess. ii. 7.
 (a) Matt. xxiii. 15.

with a great deal of temper among themselves: and several of them pleaded our cause with that strength of reason, and those forcible quotations of the Prophets, that it was verily thought the majority would have *received the love of the truth*. But when *the children were come to the birth, there was not strength to bring forth*. The *Romish* priests, who pretended to stand there as the *servants of the Lord Jesus*, proved only so to *their own bellies*. They flung in the doctrines of the Pope's supremacy and transubstantiation; and laid before them all the parts of a ridiculous superstition; and so sent away the poor wretches more hardned than they came. And well they might, when Christianity appeared so ill to them, to be made up of principles that contradict their senses, a discipline that only contrives to exalt the pride of *Rome*, and a worship that deals with those little fopperies that human nature would be ashamed of.

They had a strange way of converting the *Moors*; baptizing them first in water, and then in their own blood. And, indeed, such a vein of cruelty has run through their schemes, that their taking upon them the christian name, is enough to make it scandalous. Our Revolution begun to break off this yoke, and put us into the way of asserting the empire of CHRIST over the consciences of men. This is not only the great doctrine of the Protestants, but, indeed, of the Bible, that we ought to *call no man master. Ye are redeemed with a price; be ye not the servants of men* (b).

2. This being *according to the word of the Lord*, may signify that the design was carried on under the favour of his Providence. This was so remarkable in the case of the *Jews*, as they came out of *Babylon*, that when *the enemies about them saw these things they were much cast down in their own eyes; for they perceived this work was wrought of God* (c). There are

M 2

those

(b) 1 Cor. vii. 23;

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(c) Neh. vi. 16;

those lines of divinity in such Revolutions as proclaim themselves. *When the Lord turned again the captivity of Sion, they said, among the heathen, He has done great things for them (d).* There is a twofold glory that he secures to himself this way.

1. In an awful justice over his enemies.
2. A seasonable mercy to his people.

I. His justice in such a Providence gives a recompence to what is past, and warning for the time to come.

1. It is the day of *the Lord's recompence*. He is known by the judgment that he executes, when the wicked are snared in the work of their own hands (e). He lets them see the vanity of what they used to be so pleased with. People confuse them with flattery, and then leave them in the snare whither they had brought them. We cannot suppose that *Saul* wanted his dependents, who told him that their lives and fortunes were at his service, if we may put it into the modern language; and yet, when he dies he has never an *Israelite* near him besides his own armour-bearer. This is the usual round, for people to make a noise of their loyalty, and when they have infatuated the man that believes them, then they leave him to shift for himself, and resolve to have no part in the hazard that their deceit has led him to. But the justice of God is seen in this: *It is a righteous thing with him*, that they who depend so much upon the vows and devotion of men, as to neglect plain duty, should find that they lean only on a *broken reed*, that instead of bearing them up, will cut them in pieces. *Let not him that is deceived trust in vanity, for vanity shall be recompensed (f).*

2. †

(d) Psalm cxxvi. 1, 2.

(e) Psalm ix. 16.

(f) Job xv. 21.

2. It is a warning to others; and if they do not take it, themselves are like to go the deeper in misery. *Belsbazzar* was the son, or the grand-son of a King, who had strained his authority so far, that he was turned both out of the government and human society too. From a brute on the throne he is made one in the field. This was so awful a Providence, that to neglect it is a defying of Heaven to do something worse: and therefore when the son is so debauched as to *drink with his wives and concubines, and a thousand of his Lords*; and so profane as to do it in *the vessels of the temple*, *Daniel* argues with him. *The most high God gave thy father Nebuchadnezzar a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honour: And for the majesty that he gave him, all the people, nations and languages trembled and feared before him; whom he would he slew, and whom he would he kept alive; whom he would he set up, and whom he would he pulled down. But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him. And thou, his son, O Belsbazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this (g).* And what was the issue of this daring impenitency, but a greater adversity to himself? *Thou art weighed in the balance and found wanting: thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians (h).* And the tragedy begun both early and roughly with him, *that night was Belsbazzar the King of the Chaldeans slain.*

II. It is in mercy to an oppressed people.

1. By letting them see, that they are yet in God's hand. When *the foundations are out of course, what can the righteous do?* Their only relief is, that *the Lord is in his holy temple, and that the Lord's throne is in the Heavens (i).* It is with a recoil of hope,

M 3

that

(g) Daniel v. 18—22.

(h) Daniel v. 27, 28.

(i) Psalm xi. 3, 4.

that we can dare to believe he is among us in an evil day. As *Gideon* says to the *Angel*, *O my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? And where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of (k)?* But when he raises up a *Saviour*, and a *Great One*, it is like his returning to the many thousands of *Israel*: as it proved in *Gideon's* case, which methinks was not unlike ours. *The Lord looked upon him, and said to him, Go in this thy might, and save Israel.* Had there not been something of a *Revolution-spirit* left in *Great Britain*, we might have thought, that he had cast us off for ever, and his anger smoked against the sheep of his pasture; *We see not our signs and wonders, nor is there any among us that knows how long (l).* It would have been sad indeed, if the things that were so dear to former generations, their *Religion* and *Civil Rights*, should then have perished, and no man laid it to heart. But *the Lord awaked as one out of sleep, and put his enemies to a perpetual reproach (m).*

2. By stirring them up to assert their just liberties. When *the Lord hath cast out thine enemy, in that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear not; and to Sion, Let not thy hands be slack (n).* Conscience and courage were each of them shackled for some time. People thought it well enough if themselves could save any thing, whatever desolation came upon the public. But surely, there must be a day when a nation shall be weary of her chains, and suffer the infatuation no longer. Some way or other Providence will bring a contempt upon those nations that have made gods of brutes, and brutes of men. It is a strange way of dividing a kingdom, that some among them must be beasts of prey, and the rest beasts of burden. This is a doctrine that will jade itself when it comes to be used. When people talk of passive obedience, and

(k) Judges vi. 13.

(l) Psalm lxxiv. 1, 9.

(m) Psalm lxxviii. 66.

(n) Zeph. iii. 15, 16.

and quiet sufferings, they never mean their own. It is a duty only for others; for when it comes to themselves, they cannot endure to practise upon what they have taught. *They bind heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and lay them on other mens shoulders; but themselves will not move them with one of their fingers (o).* We can remember enough of this hypocrisy. The men that gave our unhappy Prince a right to fill the jails, and dip his foot in noble blood, to mould our charters anew, and have an army under his command, yet these think his breaking the laws of a College, worthy an invitation to a foreign Prince. Thus it was with *Abner*, he knew that *David* was chosen by the LORD himself to be head over *Israel*, a long while before he pleaded it: but he asserts the right of descent in favour of *Saul's* son; till that pretender and he fell out about his debauchery, and then he is as loud and full of the prophecies as any. *So do God to Abner, and more also, except as the Lord has sworn to David, even so I do to him, to translate the kingdom from the house of Saul, and to set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan even to Beersheba (p).* Thus God will find out proper ways to engage a people in defence of those liberties that can never be fairly lost.

3. By uniting them in this common blessing. It was the artifice of some mercenary pens to divide us among ourselves, that whilst we were *biting and devouring one another*, we might be *consumed one of another*. *Ephraim* used to *envy Judah*, and *Judah* to *vex Ephraim*; but they could *fly together upon the shoulders of the Philistines*, and *lay their hand upon Edom and Moab (q).* We read of several animosities among the tribes; *Benjamin* quarreled with all the rest; *Gilead* with *Ephraim*; *for the divisions of Reuben there were great searchings of heart (r):* but it looks

M 4

like

(o) Matth. xxiii. 4.

(p) 2 Sam. iii. 9, 10.

(q) Isa. xi. 13, 14.

(r) Judges v. 15.

like his doing, who has *the hearts of men in his hand*, when all disputes are hushed, and there is no contention but for the general peace. All private jars were laid aside; they did not so much heed the interest of a tribe, as that of the whole nation. *Praise ye the Lord in the congregation, saith David, even the Lord from the fountain of Israel, q. d.* They are now as much united as if they all flowed in one channel. *There is little Benjamin, with their ruler; the Princes of Judah and their council; the Princes of Zebulun; and the Princes of Naphtali: Thy God commands thy strength (s).*

In this chapter you have an account of the people who revolted to David: it begins in the court; some that had been advanced in the former reign, draw off to meet the new Prince upon his coming. *Of the children of Benjamin, of the kindred of Saul, three thousand, for hitherto the greatest part of them had kept the ward of Saul (t).* We meet with persons of various capacities among them. The Gadiates were *men of might and men of war, that could handle shield and buckler, whose faces were like the faces of lions, and they were as swift as the rees upon the mountains (u).* Of the children of Issachar, that had understanding of the times, and knew what Israel ought to do, two hundred; and all their brethren were at their commandment (x). Of Zebulun, such as could keep rank, and were not of a double heart (y). These have a solemn interview with him, which I cannot read, without thinking over the case of our late King at his landing. His small number had a daily increase, and he so behaved himself in that affair, as if this chapter was both an history for Israel, and a prophecy for us. *David went out to them to meet them, and said, If you be come peaceably to help me, my heart shall be knit unto you:*

(s) Psalm lxxviii. 26, 27, 28. |

(t) 1 Chron. xii. 29. |

(u) 1 Chron. xii. 31. |

(a) 1 Chron. xii. 32.

(y) 1 Chron. xii. 33.

you : but if you be come to betray me to mine enemies, seeing there is no evil in mine hand, the God of our fathers look thereon, and rebuke it. Then came the Spirit upon Amasai, who was the chief of the Captains, and he said, Thine are we David, and on thy side thou son of Jesse. Peace, peace, be unto thee, and peace be to thy helpers ; for thy God helpeth thee. GOD inspired them with a general sense of their danger ; so that at that time, day by day, they came to David to help him, until it was a great host like the host of God (z).

4. By putting them under a better government. There is a particular reputation upon the clemency of his reign ; he fed them according to the integrity of his heart, and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands (a). We read how general a satisfaction the people had. So many thousands were with David three days eating and drinking ; for their brethren had prepared for them. Moreover, they that were nigh them, even Issachar, Zebulun and Naphtali, brought bread on asses and camels, and mules, and oxen, and sheep, and meat, and meal, cakes of figs, and bunches of raisins, and wine and oil, and oxen and sheep in abundance ; for there was joy in Israel (b). They now fell under the care of one who had fought their battles, and shewn a tenderness for them upon all occasions. Here was an happy turn to Religion among them. David said to the congregation of Israel, If it seem good to you, and that it be of the Lord our God, let us send abroad to our brethren every where, that are left in the land of Israel, and with them also to the Priests and Levites, which are in their cities and suburbs, that they may gather themselves unto us ; and let us bring again the ark of our God to us : for we enquired not at it in the days of Saul. And all the congregation said, that they would do so : for the thing

(z) 1 Chron. xii. 17, 18, 22. |
 (a) Psal. lxxviii. 72.

(b) 1 Chron. xii. 40.

thing was right in the eyes of all the people (c). This was a Revolution worthy of their joy, when there was such a mutual tenderness between King and people. They move together in things of the best design.

This gives me a fair occasion to look back upon the mercies that landed in *England*, with our great DELIVERER *this day*. All these things that make up the sense of my text, may be brought over to that case. It was eminently *according to the word of the Lord*, that a SAVIOUR should come upon *mount Sion*, and judge the *mount of Esau* (d). We had sold ourselves into the hands of a *cruel Lord*, and had the judgment of a *fierce King* ruling over us. Our abominable wrangling about lesser matters made us at first the sport of the Papists, and then their prey. We were in the same case with *Isaac*, forced to travel a long while *carrying wood and fire*, not knowing that ourselves were to be *the burnt-offering*. May *Jehovah-jireh* be inscribed upon *this day*; when we were bound and stretched out, there was an angel to catch the blow, that would have been as much against nature as *Abraham's*: for they that called themselves Fathers of their country were to be the executioners of this wo. Was not this *the Lord's doing*? Then,

First, Let us resolve that he shall have the glory. Indeed the names of those men will be very dear to our last history, *who jeopardated their lives in the high-places of the field*, and were resolved that either Religion should live with them, or they would die with it. But still the chief praise is owing to heaven. *Deborah* admires the courage of the nobility, and the unanimity of the commons, but it is with an entire reference of the whole design to God. *My heart is towards the governors of Israel, who willingly offered themselves among the people: Praise ye the Lord* (e).

Secondly,

(c) 1 Chron. xiii. 2, 3, 4.

(d) Obad. i. 21.

(e) Judg. v. 9.

Secondly, Another improvement that we should make of GOD's hand in it, is to desire that he who *laid the foundation* would build upon it: and when he brings *the top-stone*, the cry of a rescued people will be *Grace, grace.* He will perfect that which concerns us. It is not his way to lead out of *Egypt*, and *slay in the wilderness*. Though there is a generation that were lately *making themselves a Captain, and returning to their bondage*; yet we are thus far preserved. We have seen an impudent Invasion blasted with a contempt of Providence, though it was a design laboured with all the force of the enemy. There were severe days of fasting in *Ireland*, and the occasion kept very private, till the fleet came out of *Dunkirk*, but then they told their hopes with the same confidence that the *French King* did his in all the courts where he had an ambassador. *Rome* was to help it with money and a blessing; *France* with ships and soldiers: and what did the mighty preparation come to? It brings to my mind what you read in the Prophet, *Why are thy valiant men swept away? They stood not, because the Lord did drive them. They did cry there, Pharaoh King of Egypt is but a noise, he has past the time appointed (f).*

Thirdly, Let us walk as a people thus *near to the Lord*, with a religious taste of the blessings we enjoy, and an humble contention for those we want. Thus shall *violence be no more heard in our land, nor wasting and destruction in our borders*; but we shall call our walls *salvation*, and our gates *praise (g)*. Above all, let us put on *charity, which is the bond of perfectness*. Do not suffer the design to take of widening the difference between Protestants, *but follow the things that make for peace*. Avoid them who have *the instruments of cruelty in their habitation*, and pretend to help Religion by the ruin of such as do not agree to their model.

(f) Jer. xlvi. 15, 17.

I

(g) Isai. lx. 18.

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model. *Ob my soul! come not thou into their secret ;
unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united ;
for in their anger they would slay a man, and in their
self-will would dig down a wall. We have many
promises upon record, let us hope and quietly wait for
the salvation of our God, till he has made Sion an eter-
nal excellency, the joy of many generations (b).*

(b) Isa. lx. 15.





S E R M O N IX.

The Son of T A B E A L.

Occasioned by the *French* Invasion in Favour of
the P R E T E N D E R.

Preached MARCH 14, 1707-8.

ISAIAH VII. 5, 6, 7.

Because Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah have taken evil counsel against thee, saying, Let us go up against Judah, and vex it, and let us make a breach therein for us, and set a King in the midst of it, even the son of Tabeal: Thus saith the Lord God, It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass.

S *****

Sometimes God speaks so loud in Providence as to call our meditations after him. *The lion has roared, who will not fear? The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy (a)?* When he answers a people by terrible things in righteousness (b), it is not merely to set us a gazing, but to make Religion circulate in our hearts and lives. There is an adoration in every true regard that we have to his proceedings.

To

(a) Amos iii. 8.

(b) Psal. lxxv. 5.

To observe what he does with an humble reverence, is more than a speculation; it has a place among the solemnities of worship: for *his way is great in the sanctuary, when he does wonders, and declares his strength among the people* (c).

You will all know the reason of my choosing these words by the very sound of them: I leave your own thoughts to fix a connection between what you read and what you hear. That duty may have a share in our concern and discourses about the present Invasion, that we may think and talk of it like Christians, I have led you back into a case of the same complexion with your own.

You need look no farther than this chapter for the whole story that the text belongs to. *In the days of Abaz King of Judah, Rezin the King of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliab King of Israel, went up towards Jerusalem to war against it* (d). This war was begun in his good father's days; it was a quarrel of a long continuance (e). They pursued it in this King's reign with a great advantage: it is probable we have two separate stories in that woful account; *The Lord God delivered him into the hand of the King of Syria, who smote him, and carried away a great multitude of them captives, and brought them to Damascus.* Besides this, *Pekah the son of Remaliab slew in Judah an hundred and twenty thousand in one day, all valiant men; and Israel led captive of their brethren two hundred thousand women, sons and daughters, and exceeding much spoil* (f): though, by the solemn persuasion of a Prophet, they refunded the captivity, and sent the people back again to their own land. These two enemies had each of them crushed *Abaz* apart, and now they are joining to make the next desolation more complete. The news of this expedition comes to court, with such an influence upon them, as a people under
the

(c) Psal. lxxvii. 13, 14.

(d) Itai. vii. 1.

(e) 2 Kings xv. 37.

(f) 2 Chron. xxviii. 5, 6.

the frown of GOD are most liable to. They, whose hearts are fixed, trusting in the Lord, need not be afraid of evil tidings (g); but when it was told the house of David, that Syria was confederate with Ephraim, his heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees are moved with the wind (h).

We do not find any tincture of piety in all the disturbance: that Prince has a brand upon his name, as one of peculiar stupidity. He was neither to be allured nor frightened into his duty. A desperate humour of folly is what the Holy Ghost records for his most notorious character: *In the time of his distress he trespassed more against the Lord God of Israel; this is that King Abaz (i).* But here behold the divine goodness! GOD deals with the Jews in those surprises of love that are promised to the Gentiles: we may say of this people, that he sends to them *who asked not for him, and is found of those who sought him not (k).* Though prayer has never a message to him, yet mercy has one to them. Thus kind is he to *the unthankful and the evil.* And how truly may this be wrought into our accounts of privilege under the Gospel? We are the charge of a Mediator, who *received gifts for men, even for the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell amongst them (l).*

The Prophet comes upon a gracious errand, to hush the waves of terror and direct a calm: and you may observe with how much contempt he speaks of the invaders, and the noisy preparation they had made. *Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither be faint-hearted, for the two tails of these smoking firebrands; for the fierce anger of Rezin with Syria, and the son of Remaliab (m).* These are terms that Abaz could not dare to give an enemy, who had scoured through the land before; his fear would rather magnify the danger

(g) Pfal. cxii. 7.

(h) Ifai. vii. 2.

(i) 2 Chron. xxviii. 22.

(k) Pfal. lxxv. 1.

(l) Pfal. lxxviii. 18.

(m) Ifai. vii. 4.

danger than banter it. But GOD *sees not as man sees*; *he sits in the heavens*, from whence he surveys all the motions of nature, and there *he laughs* at them, there *he has them in derision* (n). My text is the grand resolve of eternal justice, where we see the enemy's confidence exposed as a thing most provoking; and then their sentence fixed, *because Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliab, &c.* The device and assurance of these confederates are the crimes that fasten a ruin upon them. GOD loves to *take the wise in their own craftiness, and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong* (o). It is true there were many abominations in *Judab*. *Abaz* is one of the most infamous names in all their roll of Kings; but that was no excuse to a ravening neighbour. The idolatry, violence, falshood, and unbelief of the people, deserved that GOD would *stir up all his wrath, to make a full end of them*: and yet he takes it ill that *Syria* and *Ephraim* are combined in a gloomy war against them. I will swell up the history into a general case, and give you the sense of it in this proposition:

GOD doth and will resent the designs and confidence of those who aim at the ruin or slavery of his people.

The parts of the text and doctrine are the same, and shall be considered together in the following method:

- I. I will open the provocation of those, who design no less than the subjecting of GOD's people and interest to their own tyranny.
- II. Enquire into the resentment of it, that has so good an aspect upon those in danger.
- III. Apply the Discourse.

I. The

(n) Psal. ii. 4.

1

(o) Job v. 13.

I. The device and confidence of the enemy, that is scandalous in the eyes of heaven, and shall be made so to the world, may be considered in the several branches of my text.

1. There is a vigorous application to the most formidable measures. Though it looks like a force upon nature, and shews what a power of infatuation cruelty may pretend to. The *Syrians* and the *ten tribes* were people whose interests and designs used to lie far asunder. In religious affairs they bore a very differing character: we find in their histories a great many quarrels and confusions among them; and yet these two unite in a design against *Jerusalem*. This was very provoking to God, that mischief should do what inclination could not; he therefore threatens to take off the restraint, and let the people who were now *confederate with Ephraim* return to their usual hatred. *The Syrians before, and the Philistines behind, and they shall devour Israel with open mouth* (p). This may put us upon lamenting the reputation that our various opinions have grown to. What pity is it that they should be thought worthy to divide us in the measures we pursue, and the conversation we choose? How much *wiser are the children of this world in their generation than the children of light* (q)? When there is any famous opposition to be made against Religion, men of jarring thoughts can unite in it; all varieties are laid asleep, and not suffered to damp the vigour they conspire with; the noise of passion is quieted; there is a suspension of mutual jealousies, when they have some common drudgery in hand against the peace of Christians.

David foretold this of our days; for though he found it so in person, yet the truth of the prophecy out-lived him, and belongs to these latter ages. *The Kings of the earth set themselves, and the Rulers take*

VOL. I.

N

counsel

(p) *Isai. ix. 12.*

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(q) *Luke xvi. 8.*

counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed (r). The Apostles, in their exposition of this passage, apply it two ways: *First*, It helps them to understand the violence that was offered to our LORD, *Of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, persons divided by interest and envy, with the Gentiles and people of Israel (s),* who were so mutually inflamed, that the one was always jealous of losing a government, and the other groaning under the weight of it; yet these were *gathered together to do whatever God's hand and counsel determined before to be done.* *Secondly*, It is what they fetch their own supports from, looking upon the mischief done to themselves as things aimed at in the prophecy: *Now, Lord, behold their threatenings, and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word: q. d.* They are pursuing the same track now; these are the standing politics of hell: the prince of darkness uses them as the most prevailing methods for his empire. He is and will be a rival to that *King who rules in righteousness,* and shall extend his dominion *from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth.* To these purposes he knows how to cement a multitude, and keep them entire to a design against Christianity: *They have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and consulted against thine hidden ones. They have said, Come, let us cut them off from being a nation, that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance. They have consulted together with one consent, they are confederate against thee (t).*

2. They speak with a great deal of pleasure in the design, and of confidence about the success; *Let us go up against Judah, and vex it, and make a breach therein for us, and set a King in the midst of it, even the son of Tabeal.* This is what GOD calls *evil counsel* in the former verse, and indeed there is every thing

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(r) Psal. ii. 2, 3, 4.

(s) Acts iv. 27, 29.

(t) Psal. lxxxiii. 3, 4, 5.

to make it so ; a contempt of him, and a cruelty to his people. He has blamed the former, when it is the spirit of an Invasion, and they say, *Let us take to ourselves the houses of God in possession* (u). And as for the latter, their trampling upon the rights of mankind, it is the *abominable thing that his soul hates*. When once persons have frozen up the compassions of human nature, and learned to act without tenderness, as they are a burden to the earth, so they must needs be odious in the eyes of heaven. Indeed violent measures are oftentimes needful for the rescue or the protection of liberty. God has owned them with his blessing, and, upon some occasions, has enforced the terrible duty in a peculiar manner. *Cursed be he that does the work of the Lord deceitfully, and cursed be he that keeps back his sword from blood* (x). But they are people of another sort whom he calls *bloody and deceitful men* ; who are compared to the *troubled sea that casts up mire and dirt* : *There is no peace, saith our God, to these wicked persons* (y). *He ordains his arrows against the persecutors* (z) ; and has hung a peculiar vengeance over them, which shall *rebuke the multitude of spearmen, and scatter the people that delight in war* (a). *The Lord trieth the righteous, but the wicked, and him that loveth violence, his soul hates* : *Upon these he will rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest* ; *this shall be the portion of their cup* (b).

This is usually the temper of those who take their aim at Religion : the two things that made up the unrighteous Judge's character are seldom parted, *he feared not God, and he regarded not man* (c). Superstition is the high road to cruelty. When once people have subdued all sense of divinity, they become like

N 2

the

(u) Psal. lxxxiii. 12.

(x) Jer. xlvi. 10.

(y) Isai. lvii. 20, 21.

(z) Psal. vii. 13.

(a) Psal. lxxviii. 30.

(b) Psal. xi. 5, 6.

(c) Luke xviii. 2.

the brutes that perish. And this falls under the censure of a God whose ways are judgment. He blames Edom because he pursued his brother with a sword, and did cast off all pity; and his anger did tear perpetually, and he kept his wrath for ever (d). It is in opposition to a design thus inflamed, that he puts on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and covers himself with zeal as a cloke (e). He prefers the same charge against mount Seir, that they could, without asking him leave, seize the land of Israel as their own; that is, they did it in meditation and scheme, but there was an interposing fury to ruffle their measures. *Because the enemy hath said, Aba, even the ancient high places are ours in possession; because they have made you desolate, and swallowed you up on every side, and ye are taken up in the lips of talkers, and are an infamy of the people: Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Surely in the fire of my jealousy have I spoken against the residue of the Heathen, and against all Idumea, which have appointed my land into their possession, with the joy of all their heart, with despiteful minds to cast it out for a prey (f).*

3. The Design itself. The matter it consisted of was displeasing, for which cause he devotes it to ruin: for *who is he that speaketh, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not (g)?* There were two things aimed at by this Invasion.

1. Destruction and cruelty at present; *Let us go up against Judah, and vex it, and make a breach therein for us, i. e.* Work out the design by the unquiet and factious spirits that are amongst them. God may have one end in unchaining the enemy, and they be pursuing another; though it is our comfort, that *there be many devices in man's heart, notwithstanding the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand (h).*

There

(d) Amos i. 11.

(e) Isai. lix. 17.

(f) Ezek. xxxvi. 2, 3, 5.

(g) Lam. iii. 37.

(h) Prov. xix. 21.

There is no evil in the city but he has done it (i). He gave Jacob to the spoil, and Israel to the robbers (k). It is mentioned as an act of his Providence, that he begun to send against Judah Rezin King of Syria, and Pekab the son of Remaliab (l). When we consider his hand in it, we must call it by no harsher a name than correction; take it with patience, and cry for mercy. If the Lord has stirred thee up against me, says David to Saul, there is no disputing the case with him, let him accept of a burnt-offering (m). But this is consistent with a vigorous opposition to the designs of men; he seldom sanctifies the tools of such a discipline: they have nothing of his glory in view, but are merely passive to the gracious purpose of heaven; it is no part of their enquiry what such a people have done to dishonour God; the principles that breathe life into their cause, the measures they take to ripen it, and the end they are reaching to, are all comprehended in themselves. The distinction between God's design in sending them, and theirs in coming, is very plainly opened; I gave him a charge to take the spoil, to take the prey, and tread them down like mire in the streets: howbeit, he meaneth not so, neither does his heart think so, but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few (n). Sometimes an enemy has the confidence to boast a divine commission. Am I come up without the Lord? The Lord said unto me, Go up against this land, and destroy it (o). Which was true, but not in his sense: these are part of the words with which he came to reproach the living God. When a tyrant has been the common scourge of nations, tho' Providence may over-rule the violence, and use it to our spiritual advantage, yet the thing itself is most abominable to those pure eyes that cannot behold evil, and look on iniquity (p); so that it is no wonder that

N 3

God

(i) Amos iii. 6.

(k) Hsai. xlii. 34.

(l) 2 Kings xv. 37.

(m) 1 Sam xxvi. 19.

(n) Hsai. x. 6, 7.

(o) Hsai. xxxvi. 10.

God dissolves a power thus vexatious. *He that smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he that ruled the nations in anger, is persecuted, and none hindreth: the whole earth is at rest and quiet, they break forth into singing (q).* But another thing that these invaders aimed at was,

2. Conquest and usurpation for the future. It was not enough to plunder them in one battle, but they design a continuing advantage over them: *Let us set a King in the midst of it, even the son of Tabeal.* Who this titular Prince was, that must be the THING they work with, is neither certain nor material. Be he of what line he will, there were three flaws in his pretences.

First, He was not of David's family, whom God had chosen by name, and *ordained a lamp for his anointed (r).* For, though it was of the Lord that the ten tribes should revolt, when *Reboam* denied their claim of right, yet still David was not to want a man before him. The reason of this was rather prophetic than historical; not so much for his heart's being right all his days, as because of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne (s). This honour of having the government run in his family, was peculiar to him. This is the only race of Kings that could ever claim a divine appointment. *Abijah's* argument for a succession could be pleaded by none out of that family: *Ought ye not to know, that the Lord God of Israel gave the kingdom over Israel to David for ever, even to him and to his sons, by a covenant of salt (t)?* He had taken away his loving kindness from Saul; but promises to build David a sure house. So that this PRETENDER, the son of Tabeal, by his Invasion, was clashing with a positive order of heaven, and in open rebellion

(p) Hab. i. 13.
 (q) Isai. xiv. 6, 7.
 (r) Psal. cxxxii. 17.

(s) Acts ii. 30.
 (t) 2 Chron. xiii. 5.

rebellion to a Messiah, who was to be *of the seed of David according to the flesh* (u). But this argument was peculiar to the *Jews*, and to those ages of their constitution; God had limited and directed them both in worship and government; *He has not dealt so with any other nation* (x).

Secondly, This man did not come with the consent of *Judah*. It was a good argument in *Hushai the Archite*, though *Absalom* had no claim to it: *Whom the Lord and his people, and all the men of Israel choose, his will I be, and with him will I abide* (y). And this last branch of the claim is the highest that any in the world can pretend to. For though *the powers that be are ordained of God* (z), yet it is a staring impudence for men to tell us that he names the persons, or any other way shews his approbation than by the voice of the people. This gives the fairest title to one *in authority*, and the best hopes of a *quiet and peaceable life* to those that are *under him*. Imposing a governor is an act of presuming cruelty, and usually an inlet to all national miseries at once. God has therefore thrown it in amongst the plagues of a people whom he contended with: *I will give the Egyptians over into the hands of a cruel Lord, and a fierce King shall rule over them* (a). When the decree was brought forth against *Israel*, what a dismal compass of ruin did it take? Their religion was defiled; *The adversary spread out his hand upon all their pleasant things; the heathen entred into the sanctuary, whom God did command that they should not come into the congregation* (b). Their civil liberties were equally the jest and property of others; *Their inheritance turned to strangers, and their houses to aliens* (c). And therefore when God smiles upon them, it is with a

N 4

rescue

(u) Rom. i. 3.

(x) Psalm cxlvii. 30.

(y) 2 Sam. xvi. 18.

(z) Romans xiii. 1.

(a) Isa. xix. 4.

(b) Lam. i. 10.

(c) Lam. v. 2.

rescue of this privilege: *I will bring again the captivity of Jacob's tents, and have mercy on his dwelling-places; and the city shall be builded on her own heap, and the palace shall remain after the manner thereof. Their nobles shall be of themselves, and their governors shall proceed from the midst of them (d).* This is more than the son of *Tabeal* could pretend to.

Thirdly, He was only to be the tool of those that raised him to the throne. His authority was not a government, but an engine that others were turning round at their pleasure. So that they make him a jailor rather than a King: one that is to keep a nation of slaves in awe; and not be the head of a people who have any privileges to enjoy, or any to lose.

This was the provocation of the invaders, and this the miserable state which they would humble *Judab* into. But the people, thus endangered from abroad, are fenced about with a promise; *Thus saith the Lord God, It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass.* These words will have their place under the second general head; which is,

II. To inquire into GOD'S resentment of it. He *breaks* them and their design *with a rod of iron, he dashes them in pieces like a potter's vessel (e).*

1. This way he fulfils a providential anger against the enemy. It is but the issue of a displeasure that has been long a gathering: *a performing the intents of his heart (f).* When a people have prepared themselves for ruin by the slower and more common acts of injustice, they usually take the final plunge by some visible opposition to the interest of CHRIST. *For the violence against Jacob, shame was to cover the Edomites, and they must be cut off for ever (g).* The ten tribes were run very deep in score to justice; there was

(d) Jer. xxx. 18, 21.

(e) Psalm ii. 9.

(f) Jer. xxx. 24.

(g) Obad. 10.

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was a growth of guilt for several ages to deserve a captivity. But when they enter upon this expedition, vengeance deals more plainly with them; *Within three-score and five years shall Ephraim be broken that it be not a people (b), i. e.* so long from the date of some former threatning. For according to the clearest computation that I can make from scripture, *Samaria* was taken about eighteen or nineteen years after this; though indeed the captivity grew: armies were sent afterwards to glean the country, and fetch away the little that a former desolation had left. They were told before that ruin would come upon them; but now God fixes a period, and tells them that these threatnings were of no longer than three-score and five years running, a great part of which time was spent when *Isaiab* delivered this message. This may be an useful consideration to his people, when they are molested by such as God has a long reckoning with. *He will avenge the blood of his servants that is shed, though he bear long with the enemy. Iniquity shall have an end.* Let us therefore take fast hold of that promise, *Thou shalt bring down the noise of strangers as the heat in a dry place, even the heat with the shadow of a cloud: the branch of the terrible ones shall be brought low (i).*

2. Thus he secures the honour of his name, not only to shew himself a God *glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders*; but a God that *keeps covenant and mercy to those that fear him*. That is the favourite, the darling glory, for he has *exalted his word above all his name (k)*. It is in this language that he props the faith of *Israel*, and enables them to brave the enemy: *Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken to pieces; and give ear, all ye of far countries: gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken to pieces; yea, gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken to pieces. Take counsel together, and it shall come*

(b) Obad. 8.
(i) Isa. xxv. 5.

(k) Psalm cxxxviii. 3.

come to nought ; speak the word, and it shall not stand, for God is with us (l). Thus he promises the Jews a deliverance from the Assyrian, that the First-born of the poor shall feed, and the needy lie down in safety (m). And what is the fountain-mercy that the salvation springs from ? You see, *The Lord has founded Sion, and the poor of his people shall trust in it* (n). The confidence of those that were united in this invasion upon Judah, did equally strike at their happiness and God's honour. They disposed of things and persons, as if success was their property, and Israel their claim. But God takes this occasion to let them know, that he *rules in Jacob to the ends of the earth*. As they can do nothing without him any where, so in a particular manner they have no right to meddle here. I will read you a passage which you can scarce hear without an application : it lets us see how tender God is of his honour, the honour of being related to a people, of having an interest in the worship they pay, and the liberties they enjoy. Whenever these are touched, vengeance awakens itself upon the criminal. The words are ; *Because thou hast said, These two nations and these two countries shall be mine, and we will possess it, whereas the Lord was there : Therefore as I live, saith the Lord God, I will even do according to thine anger, and according to thine envy, which thou hast used out of thy hatred against them ; and I will make known myself among them, when I have judged thee. And thou shalt know that I am the Lord, and that I have heard all thy blasphemies which thou hast spoken against the mountains of Israel, saying, They are laid desolate, they are given us to consume. Thus with your mouth ye have boasted against me, and have multiplied your words against me ; I have heard them. Thus saith the Lord God, When the whole earth rejoiceth, I will make thee desolate* (o).

3. This

(l) Isa. viii. 9, 10.

(m) Isa. xiv. 30.

(n) Isa. xiv. 32.

(o) Ezek. xxxv. 10, 11, 12.

13, 14.

3. This is in answer to the prayers of his people. Though *Abaz* took very irregular steps, we cannot imagine that all the remains of piety were gone. There were some few, of whom the Prophet could use those words that are typical of CHRIST; *Behold I and the children thou hast given me are for signs!* In what? *I wait upon the Lord, who hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him* (p). This will do: it has done, with little or no concurrence of nature. *The people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah, when Rabshakeh was bauling at their gates: that which heartned them was, With them is an arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God* (q). It is an ill sign upon a nation, when God saith of them, *I sought for a man among them that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found none* (r). Things are brought to a sad pitch indeed, when there is no good return to that enquiry: *Run to and fro, and see now and know, and seek in the broad places, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth, and I will pardon it* (s). But when the spirit of grace and supplication is poured out, it makes a people terrible as an army with banners. This was the usual round of the *Jews*, unbelief and revolt betrayed them into captivity; but *when they cried unto the Lord, he raised them up a deliverer* (t). They that are in such a case may sing, *We have a strong city, salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks* (u). Let there be more of this amongst us, that our deliverance may be capable of that title, *When the enemy cometh in like a flood, the spirit of the Lord lifteth up a standard against him* (x).

4. It

(p) Isa. viii. 17, 18.
 (q) 2 Chron xxxii. 8.
 (r) Ezek. xxii. 30.
 (s) Jer. v. 1.

(t) Judges iii. 15.
 (u) Isa. xxvi. 1.
 (x) Isa. lix. 19.

4. It is a preparation for the government he has given to a Mediator. This deliverance out of the hands of *Syria* and *Ephraim* was a long way removed from CHRIST'S appearance upon earth, and much longer from the kingdom that he is to have; and yet what the Prophet speaks of one mercy flows into the other: *A virgin shall conceive a son, and call his name Immanuel (y)*. And in the next chapter he runs up the argument to the same pitch: *Say ye not a confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say a confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid: Sanctify the Lord of Hosts himself, and let him be your dread; and he shall be for a sanctuary, but for a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel (z)*. This LORD of Hosts is he of whom the Apostle says, *To them that believe he is precious, but to the disobedient a stone of stumbling (a)*. *He must reign till he has put all his enemies under his feet (b)*. Besides the conquest that he has over the hearts of men, making them a willing people in the day of his power; he also smites through Kings in the day of his wrath, wounding the heads over many countries (c). Let us learn then to carry a deliverance forwards. A Redeemer's blood has deserved it, and his glory is promoted by it. Every temporal salvation is the creature of his argument in heaven, and a step towards his empire upon earth. *The burden shall be taken away from thy shoulder, and the yoke from thy neck: the yoke shall be destroyed, because of the anointing (d)*; or because of the Messiah, that he may shew himself to be a Priest, who atones and pleads for them to purpose; and a Priest upon his throne (e), who has all authority committed to him, and must have a name above every name.

The

(y) Isa. lix. 14.

(z) Isa. viii. 12, 13, 14.

(a) 1 Pet. ii. 6.

(b) 1 Cor. xv.

(c) Psalm cx. 2, 5.

(d) Isa. x. 27.

(e) Zech. vi. 13.

The Application of this Discourse may be summed up in *David's* words, *Be still, and know that the Lord is God (f)*. We are to confess him upon such an occasion five ways.

1. By an expectation and rest upon his arm in all our dangers: *If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established (g)*. When he writes bitter things against us, it is to let us know, that *without him we shall bow down under the prisoners, and fall under the slain (b)*. Indeed preparations and counsels are needful. Our hope of success is limited to a road of endeavour. *But an horse is a vain thing for safety, neither can he deliver any by his great strength (i)*. Though he is prepared for the battle, yet *salvation is from the Lord (k)*. And if he do not *keep the city, the watchman watcheth but in vain (l)*. He blames on one hand the confidence and stupidity of a people that are dead to all impressions of danger; and on the other, those unruly fears that act as if we had lost a God. *Who art thou that art afraid of a man that shall die, and the son of man that shall be made as grass, and forgettest the Lord thy Maker (m)?*

2. By earnest importunity for his help. We are now got into the Prophet's case, who cried out, *Make ye mention to the nations, behold, publish against Jerusalem, that watchers are come from a far country, and give out their voice against the cities of Judah. I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war (n)*. The way to relief lies very open to us. When *Hezekiah* had an enemy in his land, he makes a religious matter of it, and sends this message to *Isaiab*: *It is a day of blasphemy, rebuke and trouble; wherefore lift up thy*

(f) Psal. xlvi. 10.
 (g) Psal. xlvi. 11.
 (b) Isai. x. 4.
 (i) Psal. xxxiii. 17.

(k) Prov. xxi. 31.
 (l) Psal. cxxvii. 1.
 (m) Isai. li. 12, 13.
 (n) Jer. iv. 16, 19.

thy prayer for the remnant that is left (o). And what an immediate answer does GOD make to it? *I will send a blast upon him, and he shall bear a rumour, and return to his own land (p).* That good King does not recommend the duty to others, that he may shift it out of his own hands, but begs in person: *Incline thine ears, O Lord, and hear; open thine eyes, O Lord, and see (q).* And when the mercy is given in, it is under the notion of an answer to him: *Whereas thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib the King of Assyria, this is the Word which the Lord has spoken concerning him (r)—He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shields, nor cast a bank against it; by the way that he came, by the same shall he return (s).*

3. By a conversation that becomes the Gospel of of CHRIST, and our hope of a providential mercy. *Wash ye, make ye clean, put away the evil of your doings, cease to do evil, learn to do well: If you be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the fruit of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall all be destroyed by the sword; the mouth of the Lord has spoken it (t).* Our greatest danger is from those crying provocations which make the earth to mourn, and the heavens to gather blackness. Let not iniquity separate betwixt you and your God. *Trust in the Lord, so shall ye be established; believe his Prophets, so shall ye prosper (u).*

4. By returning all the praise of our deliverance to him. He stamps his own name upon the slur that was given to the Assyrian Invasion: *I will put my hook into thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips; and I will turn thee back by the way which thou camest (x).* He speaks to him as a brute and a slave. It is a comparison that

(o) Ifai. xxxvii. 3.
 (p) Ifai. xxxvii. 7.
 (q) Ifai. xxxvii. 17.
 (r) Ifai. xxxvii. 21, 22.

(s) Ifai. xxxvii. 33, 34.
 (t) Ifai. i. 16, 17, 19, 20.
 (u) 2 Chron. xx. 20.
 (x) Ifai. xxxvii. 29.

that *stains the pride of all glory*, showing him the baseness of his nature, and of his condition too.

5. By an application to him for the spiritual benefit, and the everlasting issue of all these mercies. Every believer has a greater salvation in his eye, than those that are now wrought out in Providence. There is *a city that has foundations, whose builder and maker is God (y)*: as it is never to sink with any weight of its own, so it is eternally above the danger of being invaded. All our deliverances now, without a title to this, are but a short respite from a worse and a longer captivity. Let us therefore make it our chief desire, that the supreme *redemption* may be *drawing nigh*. This hope enlarges and shews itself by a *patient continuance in well-doing*: for *the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness, and assurance for ever (z)*.

(y) Heb. xi. 10.

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(z) Isai. xxxii. 17.







S E R M O N X.

On the Thanksgiving-Day appointed for her Majesty's Successes in *Flanders* and *Spain*.

Preached NOVEMBER 7, 1710,

ISAIAH XXIV. 16.

From the uttermost parts of the earth have we heard songs, even glory to the righteous: but I said, My leanness, my leanness, wo unto me! the treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously, yea, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously.

✿✿✿✿✿ T is all one to the solemn occasion upon which I have called your thoughts to these words, whether you consider them as a Prophecy of what was to happen afterwards, or a history of what really came to pass in the days when they were writ. Though they may be understood of the Salvation that would find its way to the *Gentiles, the uttermost parts of the earth*, and the sad calamity that *Israel* must be left under, when GOD had *concluded them all in unbelief* (a); yet they were true enough in the Prophet's

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(a) Rom. xi. 32.

own time. He lived in *Hezekiah's* reign, when the King of *Affyria* had made one invasion upon them, and was threatning them with another; several good designs were blasted, when they had almost got their perfection: *The children were come to the birth, and there was not strength to bring forth (b)*. They had great discoveries of a Messiah, who was to *raise up the tabernacle of David*; but a flood of impiety and violence gave them the prospect of a desolation before those *times of refreshing should come*. Their public mercies were interlined with danger, which obliged them to worship with a composition of praise and sorrow, to *serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling (c)*. In the day of prosperity their duty was to *rejoice, in the day of adversity they were called to consider*; and now God had set the one over against the other (d).

The ill face of their concerns in one place should not make them forget what GOD had done for them in another; and the success they had abroad was to be admired with a serious dread of what they were suffering at home. Our Prophet takes his part in both these reflections:

- I. He owns the public mercy they had received, though it was afar off; *From the uttermost parts of the earth have we heard songs*: or, that which was the happy occasion of them, *even glory to the righteous*.
- II. He calls in the joy that was running so freely upon one act of Providence, to the different views they were led to by another: *I said, My leanness, my leanness! Wo unto me! the treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously, yea the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously*.

That

(b) *Isai.* xxxvii. 3.
(c) *Psalms* ii. 11.

(d) *Eccles.* vii. 14.

That I may comprehend my whole design from these words within one Sermon, I can do little more than take them afunder, giving you both the sense and the improvement of them as we go along.

I. In his account of those public mercies that Providence had given them, you may observe three things :

The place where they happened, *the uttermost parts of the earth.*

The work they inclined the people to, which is here expressed by the *songs* that were heard.

And the nature of the blessing itself; the happiness it either consisted of, or was tending to, *glory to the righteous.*

(1.) The mercy that our Prophet takes notice of, was something that happened at a great distance from the place where he lived, so that his family and country were not immediate gainers by it; it was *from the uttermost parts of the earth* that they heard these *songs*, and yet they fall into the comfort, from the sympathy there is among all good people, who *will rejoice with those that do rejoice.* From such a temper, on this occasion, we may

Observe, That every religious person is so unconfin'd in his thoughts and wishes, that he can be glad in a mercy that falls to the share of others. The reasons of this ingenuous diffusive concern are plain.

1st, It is from that common interest that unites all believers. They are represented as the *body of Christ, and members one of another*; to tell us, that besides the humble relation they bear to him, there is a mutual tenderness that circulates among themselves; *Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it (e).* The Apostle could be glad at the

prosperity of the *Corinthian* church, though a very different way of living fell to his lot: *Ye are full, ye are rich, ye have reigned as Kings without us; and I would to God that ye did reign, that we also might reign with you. We are fools for Christ's sake, ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, ye are strong; ye are honourable, we are despised (f).*

Thus it ought to be in the reverse of this case: when we are delivered from the hand of those that hate us, and can serve God without fear, we should remember them that are in bonds, as being bound with them; and those that suffer adversity, as being ourselves also in the body (g): not out of the reach of those evils which are actually their lot, and may soon be ours. This is bearing one another's burdens, and fulfilling the Law of Christ (h). Though gratitude should put us in mind of the happy distinctions God has made between us and others, yet compassion has a noble way of forgetting all that, and placing our own souls in their case. Thus it was with the Jews in their Revolution: *When God turned again their captivity, filling their mouth with laughter, and their tongue with singing (i), they could not forget those they had left behind, but beg it as a new mercy; Lord, turn again our captivity, as streams in the south; that they who yet sow in tears may reap in joy; and every one who now goes forth weeping, bearing his precious seed, may come again rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.*

And the same spirit of universal concern should guide us when the scales are turned. Though we may be on the suffering side, it is a mercy that God deals in softer methods with any of our brethren. The poor Christians in *Judea*, who lived on the contributions of other churches, *they abounded in many thanksgivings to God; it was with no envy that they considered other people in better circumstances,*
but

(f) 1 Cor. iv. 8, 10.

(g) Heb. xiii. 3.

(h) Gal. vi. 3.

(i) Psalm cxvii. 1, 2.

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but rather *by the experiment of this ministration, they glorified God for their professed subjection to the Gospel of Christ (k)*. Religion sanctifies and improves such a temper, it helps us to take a part in the good of others. People thus inclined are prepared to be called in by those words, *Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her; rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her (l)*. David begs to have his mercies in a public way; *O visit me with thy salvation, that I may see the good of thy chosen; that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation; that I may glory with thine inheritance (m)*. It was this that fetched out so many good wishes from the people as they went into *the house of God; Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces: For my brethren and companions sake, I will now say, Peace be within thee (n)*. And it is promised as the greatest encouragement to *the man who fears the Lord; God shall bless him out of Sion, and he shall see the good of Jerusalem all the days of his life (o)*.

2. The honour of God and our dear Redeemer is advanced by this means; so that though we should seem to be more out of the way of his care, yet we must *bless him that comes in the name of the Lord, and sing to the Providence, peace in heaven, and glory in the highest*. If he does but *increase*, and a way is opened for the enlarging of his kingdom; though we are in a *decreasing* state, therein *we do rejoice, yea and will rejoice (p)*. It was a sad consideration to the Apostles, that their own countrymen, the *Jews*, had so many marks upon them of a people cast off by God; but under this melancholy view, they had the satisfaction to see, that though the Gospel removed its place, it did not lose its virtue. Thus, though *Israel* was not gathered, a Redeemer would

O 3 be

(k) 2 Cor. ix. 12, 13.

(l) Isa. lxvi. 10.

(m) Psalm cvi. 4, 5.

(n) Psalm cxxii. 7, 8.

(o) Psalm cxxviii. 5.

(p) John iii. 30.

be glorious, by forming an interest among the *Gentiles*: and so it ought to be with every Christian; though he cannot think of losing what God has given him without a dread (for *wo unto us when his soul departs from us*) yet his good wishes follow the *Lamb whithersoever he goes* (q). He rejoices at the success of religion, and the establishment of liberty in those places where he is never like to come: he loves to hear of songs, and glory to the righteous, though it be from the uttermost parts of the earth.

3. It is an argument upon which faith can plead, and wait for a return of mercy to ourselves. The God who had given this Prophet songs from abroad, was able to cure the *leanness* he complained of at home. It is a sign that *his arm is not shortened* (r); nor has he totally abandoned his people, but *judgment will return unto righteousness, and all the upright in heart shall follow it* (s). These are plain demonstrations, that the case is not desperate, upon which we may thank God and take courage (t); such a turn as this puts a new credit upon the promises, when we begun to think they were growing out of date: and thus, *to the upright there arifes light in the midst of darkness* (u). We may hope, though we have been answered by terrible things in righteousness, yet he is still the God of our salvation; when we hear that *he is the confidence of all the ends of the earth* (x), it is an argument that he will not be unmindful of us when *they who dwell in the uttermost parts are afraid of his tokens*.

With these expectations we may look upon the late victories in *Spain* and *Flanders*, as an evidence that God yet goes forth with our armies, and will be to the residue of his people as in the former years. It is good pleading on such an instance, *Will thou not revive us again,*

(q) Rev. xiv. 4.

(r) Isa. lix. 1.

(s) Psalm xciv. 15.

(t) Acts xxviii. 15.

(u) Psalm cxii. 4.

(x) Psalm lxxv. 5.

again, that thy people may rejoice in thee (y)? And we may humbly conclude, that surely his salvation is near unto them that fear him, that glory may dwell in our land (z).

(2.) Another thing observable in this mercy, is the duty that it led the people to, and that was songs. *We have heard these, i. e.* We have heard the joy that it put them into: they are glad at the breaking of a yoke which they could not bear. Or, we have heard the things, and improved them into songs at home; for when God's works praise him, his saints should bless him (a). This signifies two things, which the news of every public mercy ought to produce in us.

1. A pleasure in ourselves. *Be glad for ever,* says God, *in what I create; for behold I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy (b).* *When the Lord turned again our captivity, we were like them that dreamed;* the thing stole in upon the senses, before it could make its way to reason: it was equally hard to deny it and believe it; the former would be acting against facts, and the latter against hopes. On such occasions our gladness should have the control of every other passion. The Jews, when they went out of captivity, met with a great many difficulties, and they wept when they heard the law: but *Nehemiah, Ezra, and the Levites* that taught them, said to them, *This day is holy unto the Lord your God, mourn not nor weep; but go your way, eat the fat and drink the sweet, and send portions to them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto the Lord: neither be ye sorry, for the joy of the Lord is your strength (c).* And indeed our zeal for God's glory and the concerns of religion, deserves to bear down any present affliction.

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Whe's

(y) Psalm lxxxv. 6.

(z) Psalm lxxxv. 9.

(a) Psalm cxlv. 10.

(b) Isa. lxx. 18.

(c) Neh. viii. 9, 10, 11.

When they sat by the rivers of Babylon, though there was no singing the Lord's song in a strange land (d), yet they could not forget Jerusalem, or cease to prefer it above their chiefest joy.

2. A gratitude to the God who has given us this great mercy. We are to turn it into devotion: *Ye shall have a song as in the night, when a holy solemnity is kept, and gladness of heart, as when one goes with a pipe, to come into the mountain of the Lord, to the mighty one of Israel (e).* This is what he expects from us as a return to any kindness. When *Hezekiah* recovered from his sickness, he went into the temple with this resolution, *The Lord was ready to save me, and therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our lives (f).* And the bestowing of a favour is called *putting a new song into our mouths, even praise to the Lord (g)*; which is an argument that we should receive it under such an influence. This lets us see what course our pleasure in a mercy should be directed to: it ought to go off in a veneration for him whose work it is. Besides the serenity that it spreads over our own minds, we should *offer the sacrifice of praise, even the fruit of our lips, giving thanks unto his name (h).*

(3.) We need not wonder that the mercy is expressed in *songs*, when we read what it consists of, even *glory to the righteous*; either,

1. To a righteous God, or the Messiah, who is so often called the Holy One: he is to have the glory of every Providence; the song is devoted to him: Or,

2. To a righteous cause; which freedom of worship, according to the Scriptures, and quiet enjoyment of civil properties, always was and always will be.

This

(d) Psalm cxxxvii. 4.

(e) Isa. xxx. 25.

(f) Isa. xxxviii. 10.

(g) Psalm xl. 3.

(h) Heb. xiii. 15.

This will have a glory put upon it, by those displays that GOD gives of himself in favour of his own people.

Or,

3. To righteous men. They will have a share in the glory, which an envious world would not allow them; but it shall rise from the success and blessing that GOD has followed them with. All these interpretations may be comprehended in the sense of the words, which you may take in this

1. *Observ.* The public mercies we receive at the hands of GOD, are for his own and his peoples glory; to advance his name in the world, and preserve *a seed to serve him, who will be accounted to the Lord for a generation (i)*. It is to make religion more triumphant in the hearts and lives of men; that *being delivered from the fear of our enemies, we may serve him in righteousness and holiness all our days (k)*. And if that is the design of such a Providence, then,

1. It ought to be improved to these noble ends: not to *make provision for the flesh, and fulfil the lusts thereof (l)*; but rather to take heart in the practical part of Christianity: to abound in faith and holiness, learning to be more cool towards a world, where every thing is uncertain, and uniting our main regard to an interest in heaven. From such a dispensation we should get a spirit above the fear of men: for after GOD has over-ruled *the fury of the oppressor*, it is our glory not to be *afraid of a man that shall die, and the son of man that shall be made as grass, and forget the Lord our maker (m)*.

2. We may use it as an earnest of those good things that GOD has told us of in his word: for if *the glory of the righteous* is promoted by every conquest of the enemy, what a happy state will that be, when they are all taken away who *rejoice in their pride, and are haughty because*

(i) Psalm xxii. 30.

(k) Luke i. 74, 75.

(l) Romans xiii. ult.

(m) Isa. li. 12, 13.

because of his holy mountain? When the remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies, neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth; for they shall feed, and lie down, and none shall make them afraid (n)? This is a glory that shall be revealed in us (o): and though things continuing as they were from the beginning, or rather growing worse, may lead us into the question, *Where is now the promise of his coming (p)?* yet the time to favour Sion, yea the set time will come. And the miseries that fall upon God's people are no contradiction to their hope: for there is nothing gives a greater dawn to that mercy, than when they are taking pleasure in the stones, and favouring the dust thereof (q).

Follow every victory then with prayer and faith: do nothing upon these occasions unworthy of the glory you bear at present, or that you expect hereafter. Remember that all these confusions and dashing of one monarch against another, are to promote the interest of Religion, that *the kingdom may be the Lord's, and he the governor over the nations*; and that some may arise, and declare to a people yet unborn, that he has done this (r).

Thus you see with what temper of mind the good Prophet in our text regarded the songs that he heard from the uttermost parts of the earth. He took a share in them, as they imported glory to the righteous. The whole argument may be easily brought over into our own case. God has lately renewed our hopes of seeing the enemy distressed in *Flanders*, and driven out of *Spain*: and in this his Providence seemed to remove the only impediment to a general peace. The article that came most into debate, appeared in a fair way of being answered, when the *French* were preparing to receive the man, whom they would not agree to re-call.

Obliging

(n) Zeph. iii. 11, 12.

(o) Rom. viii. 18.

(p) 2 Pet. iii. 4.

(q) Psal. cxxii. 14.

(r) Psal. xxii. 28, 31.

Obliging him to quit that kingdom, which they objected against, was a work put into other hands, and the difficulty almost over. And if we could hear what is *sung* in those *uttermost parts*, it would be to the glory of that *learned hero*, who has been *mighty both in deed and word*; and having so nobly defended a Revolution in *Britain*, has had the success to begin one in *Spain*. A person equally happy at his pen and sword, to *convince gainsayers*, and *put to silence the ignorance of foolish men*. May liberty always prosper in those good hands, when he either pleads it as an argument, or pursues it as a cause! But,

II. The Prophet had something very melancholy in his case, when he gave these *songs of glory to the righteous* so much interruption, as to complain, *My leanness, my leanness! Wo unto me! the treacherous dealer dealeth treacherously; yea, the treacherous dealer dealeth very treacherously*. Here you may observe,

I. The matter of his lamentation is *leanness*: and it must signify a dismal case, when he repeats it, as if it had dissolved his hopes, and unraveled all that God had been doing for them abroad. We can scarce understand it of a personal calamity, though he calls it *his leanness*; unless it may be supposed that he was a man pointed at by a malicious world, as one that should be given up to popular fury, as he had once complained before: *Behold I, and the children God has given me, are for signs and wonders in Israel (s)*.

But *the leanness* here seems to include the misery of several others besides himself: it is threatened upon all *Israel*. *In that day it shall come to pass, that the glory of Jacob shall be made thin, and the fatness of his flesh shall wax lean. And it shall be as when the harvest-man gathers the corn, and reaps the ears with his arm. Yet gleaning grapes shall be left in it, as the shaking of an olive-tree, two or three berries in the uppermost bough,*
four

(s) Isai, viii. 18.

four or five in the outmost fruitful branches thereof (t). And I the rather choose to understand the judgment to be thus extensive in this chapter, because we find some of those words repeated: *When thus it shall be in the midst of the land, among the people, there shall be as the shaking of an olive-tree, and as the gleaning grapes when the vintage is done* (u). Now the leanness that gave him so deep a concern may include two things.

(1.) The abounding of sin and wickedness among them. And the book is full of these complaints: *Thy Princes are rebellious and companions of thieves; every one loves gifts, and follows after rewards* (x). Nothing could save them but a thorough reformation; *restoring their Judges as at the first, and their Counsellors as at the beginning* (y). In another chapter he gives a most tragical account how they had sunk from the figure they made abroad, and the sedateness they once enjoyed at home: *The mighty man, the man of war, the judge, the prophet, the prudent, the ancient, the captain of fifty, and the honourable man; the counsellor, the cunning artificer, and the eloquent orator* (z): these were all partners either in the crime or the infelicity of those days. And they seemed to be going on fast to ruin, when common civility and justice failed among them; rudeness ran loose and wild, the laws were hushed that it might have no control: *I will give children to be their oppressors, and babes shall rule over them: The people shall be oppressed every one by another, and every one by his neighbour: The child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honourable* (a). Nay so unhappy was their case, that *they who led them caused them to err, and destroyed the way of their paths*. But it would be too much to collect all that he has said on this melancholy theme. I only take these as being most
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(t) *Ifai. xvii. 4, 5, 6.*(u) *Ifai. xvii. 13.*(x) *Ifai. i. 23.*(y) *Ifai. i. 26.*(z) *Ifai. iii. 2, 3.*(a) *Ifai. iii. 4, 5.*

in view, and shall add no more to them than one instance in the chapter before us: *The earth is defiled under the inhabitants thereof, because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinances, and broke the everlasting covenant (b).* This may well be called *their leanness*, and deserved to be the lamentation of every one who trembled for the fierce anger of the Lord.

(2.) It may also signify the miseries that were coming upon them. In this sense it was threatned against the *Affsyrian*, that God would *send among his fat ones leanness, and underneath his glory should be kindled a burning, like the burning of a fire (c).* And thus it was to be in *Israel*, as appears by this chapter. Their riches were going: *Behold the Lord makes the earth empty, and makes it waste, turning it upside down, and scattering abroad the inhabitants thereof (d).* That expression of *turning it upside down* carries an allusion too plain to be mistaken, that it should lose what it was lately so full of, and become as much the reproach of other nations as it had been their envy. They might endeavour to keep their feet, by staggering out of one project into another: but these measures are called their *reeling to and fro like a drunkard, till the earth was removed like a cottage; because the transgression thereof was heavy upon it, it should fall and not rise again (e).* And to all this you may add a dreadful circumstance, that in the days of this Prophet they were frequently alarmed with invasions. The word of the LORD came to him in the reign of *Abaz* and *Hezekiab*. It was against the former of them, that the Kings of *Syria* and *Israel* came up to *vex Judah, and make a breach in it, and set up the son of Tabeal (f):* and in the reign of the latter, *Rabshaketh* came with a powerful army. Now though each

(b) *Isai* iii. 5.(c) *Isai* x. 16.(d) *Isai* x. 1.(e) *Isai* x. 20.(f) *Isai* i. 1.

each of these attempts miscarried, yet when the Prophet saw the people beginning to be miserable, and not begin to be thoughtful, he might well cry out, *My leanness, my leanness!*

2. He tells us what the occasion of this was, how it came to pass that things had such an unhappy run as he now complained of. It was not owing to the force of enemies, though they had reason in his day to be afraid of that: nor did it arise from any calamity brought upon them by the immediate hand of God. The earth did not fail of *yielding her increase*, nor the heavens of *dropping down their dew*. Though these are threatned as things that would be, yet they either had not fallen with their full weight upon them then; or if they had, he turns his eyes to something more lamentable, worse than the miseries of drought and famine; what lay nearer his concern, and had the main guilt of bringing this *leanness* upon them: and this is, that *the treacherous dealers had dealt treacherously; yea, the treacherous dealers had dealt very treacherously.*

First, He complains of a most formidable evil, and what there can be no guard against; treachery in those persons on whose integrity they had their chief dependence. It might be hard to know the men, but much harder to find out the schemes they acted by. This is a crime carried on with the fairest pretences to honesty and love; nothing could make a worse appearance to human reason than a kingdom so divided against itself, as that of *Judab* now was.

The case that he thus describes in his own nation, is parallel to what he had laid down as the judgment of *Egypt*. *Surely the Princes of Zoan are fools, the counsel of the wise Counsellors of Pharaoh is become brutish* (g). And what is the counsel that he thus animadverts on? That instead of advising their King, they were throwing flattery into his pride, and making

ing him great with mere names, at the time that his interest was really sinking in all the valuable branches of it; filling his ears with hereditary right, and the long race of Monarchs he had sprung from: *How say ye to Pharaoh, I am the son of the wise, the son of ancient Kings? q. d.* What is this to the purpose? Does it make his reign more honourable to himself, or more happy to his people? Well might he add, *The Princes of Zoan are become fools, the Princes of Noph are deceived, they have also seduced Egypt, even they that are the stay of the tribes thereof. The Lord has mingled a perverse spirit in the midst thereof; and they have caused Egypt to err in every work, as a drunken man staggers in his vomit (b): i. e.* The same wickedness has both made their heads giddy, and their way slippery.

Now that it should be thus with *Egypt* is not so surprising: but that *Judab* should fall into the most lamentable fate of the Heathen, that *in the land of uprightness they will deal unjustly, and not behold the majesty of the Lord*, is what would touch the severest cares of every good man. But,

2. The complaint reaches farther; it is more than repeated, he says it over again with an aggravation; *yea, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously.* As if they knew no bounds to their hypocrisy, but had *left off to be wise, and to do good (i).* They will stick at nothing, but allow themselves at the same time in the fairest pretences and the foulest actions: they can at once make Religion their imitation and their jest: *With flattering lips, and with a double tongue do they speak.* It was this that made *Jeremy* wish for a lodging-place in the wilderness, that he might leave his people and go from them, because they were all an assembly of treacherous men: every brother would supplant, and every neighbour walk with slanders; they would not speak the truth, but had taught their
tongues

(b) *Isai* xix. 13, 14.| (i) *Psal.* xxxvi. 4.

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tongues to speak lies, and wearied themselves to commit iniquity (k).

Now these are ways that bring a certain calamity along with them. Though the persons who are guilty may for a time defend themselves, and deceive others, yet such a connection of wickedness will be fatal at last. When *the Prophets prophesy falsely*, the snare begins there, *and the Priests bear rule by their means (l)*: and it is so far from making any uneasiness at present, that *the people love to have it so*, but what will they do in the end thereof? If such things are left only to their natural tendency, they will soon intangle a kingdom, and make every thing precarious that they once possessed.

You see the time is so full of this plain account that I have given you of the Prophet's words, that I have no room for an Application; instead of that, I will only endeavour to remove an objection that some may be ready to make against this good man's conduct, in a case so mingled as that of his country was.

The argument lies thus: "If *treacherous dealers* are so dangerous, no regard can be had to any mercies, especially those afar off. It signifies nothing what *songs* the *Jews* might fetch *from the uttermost parts of the earth*, when they had reason to think themselves undone at home by an extravagant hypocrisy, where the *treacherous dealers were dealing very treacherously.*" Thus would unbelief plead from the sad aspect in *Judah* itself, to sink the credit of a foreign victory.

I shall give you some few things in answer to this, and shew you, that supposing the case as lamentable as the Prophet had made it, yet it was nevertheless his duty to take part in those *songs* that proclaimed a *glory to the righteous.*

1. He

(k) Jer. ix. 2.

(l) Jer. v. 31.

1. He was hereby led to consider the perfections of God, who could as easily dissolve a *treachery*, as he had confounded an open force. These two are joined together; *With him is strength and wisdom, the deceived and the deceivers are his (m)*: his *strength* can protect the *deceived*, his *wisdom* can baffle the *deceiver*. This is what they are exhorted to think of a little before their return from *Babylon*, there was a conflict of hope and danger in their case; and therefore the advice is, *Ye that have escaped the sword, go away, stand not still (n)*. Here they are put upon fleeing, and yet they are charged to *remember the Lord afar off, and let Jerusalem come into their mind*; i. e. they were to sustain themselves with those things that God had done at a distance from them: and when their thoughts were rolling in his power and wisdom, they might turn towards *Jerusalem* with this argument, he that has *made bare his arm* in other places, can bring the salvation nearer and display himself amongst us. *If he is wise in heart as well as mighty in strength, no man can harden himself against him and prosper (o)*.

2. The Prophet could not but know there was a certain intail of vengeance upon all *treachery*; that God *abhors the bloody and deceitful man*; that such do *seldom live out half their days*. Sometimes when this justice of Providence is delayed, it has proved a fore temptation even to good men. *Jeremy* complains, *Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee; yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments. Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? Wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously? Thou hast planted them, and they have taken root; they grow, yea, they bring forth fruit: thou art near in their mouth, and far from their reins (p)*. But he gets over this difficulty in the best manner; first, it puts

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(m) Job xii. 16.

(n) Jer li 50.

(o) Job ix. 4.

(p) Jer. xii. 1, 2.

him upon looking within and inquiring into his own sincerity. *Thou, O Lord, knowest me; thou hast seen me, and tried my heart towards thee* (q). And after this important case is clear, he goes on to tell what shall become of them, *pull them out like sheep for the slaughter*. There is something so provoking in the carriage of a deceiver, that the vengeance of God usually condemns him to fall by his own arts, and perish in the same way that he has made others do. We have two dreadful woes against such people in this prophecy. The former you meet with, *Wo to them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord, and their works are in the dark; and they say, Who sees us? and who knows us? Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as potter's clay* (r). The other is, *Wo unto thee that spoilest, and thou wast not spoiled; and dealest treacherously, and they dealt not treacherously with thee. When thou shalt cease to spoil, thou shalt be spoiled, and when thou shalt make an end to deal treacherously, they shall deal treacherously with thee* (s).

3. The Prophet was further sensible, that it would be a public mercy to have these *treacherous dealers* better known; that they might no longer have it in their power to *wear a rough garment, and deceive: The hypocrite is not always to reign, lest the people be ensnared* (t). One of the mercies of that day, when the Gospel will have a *free course and be glorified* (u), is, that *the vile person will no more be called liberal, nor the churl said to be bountiful*. And sometimes God, in a righteous justice, suffers people to go on in new crimes, that he may bring upon them the punishment of their old ones. It is thus that they *fill up the measure of their iniquities*. *Joab* was too necessary to *David's* government, and early in the Revolution, and therefore had his life spared after a double

(q) Jer. xii. 3.

(r) Isa. xxix. 15, 16.

(s) Isa. xxxiii. 1.

(t) Job xxxiv. 30.

(u) Isa. xxxii. 5.

double forfeiture, for *shedding the blood of war in peace, killing two men better than himself.* Nay, it is observed he was stanch to the crown in the rebellion of *Absalom*, and yet he heads a party against the succession of *Solomon* in favour of *Adonijah*, because he was first in the line. Nay after this was overlooked, and he only condemned to a private life; he is quickly again in a plot, as if *his hoary hairs were not to go down to the grave in peace*: And therefore, though he runs *to the horns of the altar*, it was only to fall as a national sacrifice there. When the hypocrisy of men is thus opened out, *The people shall no more stay themselves upon him that smote them, but upon the Lord, the holy one of Israel in truth* (x).

4. The Prophet was sure that the interest of God would prevail, and the happiness of his people be established. He was not without hopes of seeing a public turn in favour of *Sion*; but whether that came in his days or no, there was no cheating him of heaven: *the treacherous dealer could not extend his policy so far.*

We find a case very like this, that our Prophet had before him in the days of *Ezekiel*; *The spirit of the Lord lift him up, and brought him to the east gate of the Lord's house, which looked eastward: and behold at the door of the gate were five and twenty men, among whom he saw Jaazaniah the son Azur, and Pelatiah the son of Benaiah, princes of the people* (y). And God tells him, *Son of man, these are the men that devise mischief, and give wicked counsel in this city.* But when they are threatned with *falling by the sword*, and being judged in the border of *Israel*, such as they thought to ensnare are taken into the tenderest protection; secured in peace of conscience, and the beauties of holiness. For, though the inhabitants of *Jerusalem* would have banished them, saying to them, *Get ye far from the Lord; unto us is the land given in possession* (z); yet God promises that

P 2

they

(x) Isa. x. 20.

(y) Ezek. xi. 1.

(z) Ezek. xi. 15.

they shall have the honour to *take away all detestable things and abominations thereof*: and he would give them one heart, and put a new spirit within them; that they might walk in his statutes, and keep his ordinances and do them; for they should be his people, and he would be their God.

And in this chapter our Prophet declares his hope of better times, that *the Lord would punish the Host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth*; they should be gathered in the pit, and shut up in the prison: And then shall the moon be confounded and the sun ashamed, when the Lord shall reign in mount Sion, and before his ancients gloriously (a). These are the blessings with which he designs to close the confusions his people are now lamenting. And, though it is not for us to know the times and seasons, which the father has reserved in his own power, yet every believer may take the advice given to Daniel, to go his way, till the end be; for he shall rest, and stand in his lot at the end of the days (b).

(a) Ezek. xi. 21, 22, 23. | (b) Daniel xii. ult.





S E R M O N XI.

T H E O C R A C Y.

The Government of the JUDGES, considered
and applied to the Revolution 1688.

Preached NOVEMBER 5, 1711.

J U D G E S II. 18.

And when the Lord raised them up Judges, then the Lord was with the Judge, and delivered them out of the hands of their enemies all the days of the Judge: for it repented the Lord because of their groanings, by reason of them that oppressed them, and vexed them.

✠✠✠✠ HIS Book gives us the first ages of *Israel* in the promised land, and what happened to them, after their settlement there, before they came to be governed by a succession of Kings? It is a sad account we have of them: *That the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the works of the Lord that he had done for Israel. But when all that generation were gathered unto their fathers, there arose another generation after them, who knew not the Lord,*

nor yet the works that he had done for Israel (a) : and the national crime here charged upon them, is a prostitution to the idols of the country after they had conquered the inhabitants : *They followed other gods, the gods of the people that were round about them, they bowed down themselves unto them, and provoked the Lord to anger, they forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtaroth (b) :* this was a revolt so foolish and ungrateful, that their defence departs from them when they depart from it. For a long train of calamity and bondage was their conviction, that *it is an evil thing and bitter, thus to pervert their ways and cast off the Lord God of their fathers.*

The following verses, which tell us the misery they brought upon themselves, and the way that God took to save them upon their return to him, may be called an abridgment of the whole history : it gives us the sum of that case which is afterwards drawn out quite through this Book. *The anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them ; he sold them into the hand of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies ; whithersoever they went out, the hand of the Lord was against them for evil, as the Lord had said, and as the Lord had sworn unto them, and they were greatly distressed. Nevertheless, the Lord raised up Judges, which delivered them out of the hands of those that spoiled them, and yet they would not hearken to their Judges, but went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them ; they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandment of the Lord, but they did not so (c).* This round they kept of sinning away their mercy, then repenting of that wickedness, then being delivered, and afterwards losing their zeal when they got their liberty. *For it came to pass, when the Judge was*

(a) Judg. ii. 7, 10.

(b) Judg. ii. 12, 13.

(c) Judg. ii. 14—17.

was dead, that they returned, and corrupted themselves more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way (d).

The verse that I have taken out of this history, to be the subject of my discourse, lies between their first misery and their relapse, and gives a noble account how divine and happy the way of their deliverance was; that *when the Lord raised them up Judges, then the Lord was with the Judge, and delivered them out of the hands of their enemies, all the days of the Judge: for it repented the Lord because of their groanings, by reason of them that oppressed them, and vexed them.*

The design I am pursuing from these words, is to lay before you some few hints about that form of government that the *Jews* lived under when they were first planted in *Canaan*. And in doing this, I take all my information from the history that is delivered to us in the Word of God: and because I foresee it will carry me a considerable length, I shall therefore wave the usual method of Sermons; and instead of giving you the Doctrine and Application asunder, shall mingle the one with the other.

In describing the government of the Judges, I would call in your attention to these seven heads.

- I. The nature of the office.
- II. The honourable character that it bears.
- III. The persons who were advanced to it.
- IV. The antecedents, or the things that prepared the way of the Judge.
- V. The credentials they came with to their station.
- VI. The qualifications of the men.
- VII. The happiness of the administration.

The Scripture hath given us a sure light into all these particulars, so that under every one of them, I

shall first lay down the case as it is in this history, and then shew you how we may improve it, and make it our own concern.

I. In discoursing of those Judges that governed *Israel*, we are to begin with the nature of the office, and inquire what sort of a Ruler the person was who wore the honour of this title : now it is plain there are two senses attend that word in the holy Scriptures.

The *First* and more ordinary work of a Judge was to try causes and determine between man and man : for this end they were directed by *Moses*, to make *Judges and Officers in all their gates which the Lord gave them, through all their tribes, who should judge the people with just judgment (e)* : But,

Secondly, This word is used for something more uncommon and out of the way ; and that is pleading their cause against a public enemy ; doing those offices that in our day are comprehended under the title of a General : thus you find it, when the people came to *Samuel*, saying, *Give us a King to judge us* ; they explain themselves, *that our King may judge us, and go before us, and fight our battles (f)*.

Both these interpretations do meet in the word when it is applied to God, because in him it signifies not only a regard to the rules of equity, but a resolution to make them effectual ; *The Lord shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants, when he seeth that their power is gone, and there is none shut up or left (g)* ; that is, he will both determine their right and procure it : each of these things come into the office of that person who was called a judge, in the extraordinary sense that our text refers to : one design of his name was to lead them in the battle, as is plain from the first account we have of this institution : *The Lord raised up Judges to deliver them, out of the bands of those*

(e) Deut. xvi. 18.

(f) 1 Sam. viii. 6, 20.

(g) Deut. xxxii. 36.

those that spoiled them; and that he was also to inculcate the moral and devotional parts of the law, is evident from what follows: that *they would not hearken to their Judges, but went a whoring after other gods (b)*; which supposes they were in some sense teachers of the people they governed.

From this account of the office, I think the deduction of these three things is very natural.

1st, That the chief design of the Judge was to fight their battles; and therefore,

2^{dly}, It was no part of his work to make their laws: but only,

3^{dly}, To impress the institutions that God himself had put them under.

I. The first and chief design of this officer was to fight their battles. And indeed this gave a revival to that dignity that God had conferred upon their ancestors; for though *Moses commanded them a law, even the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob*, yet besides that, he had the character of *King in Jeshurun, when the heads of the people, and the tribes of Israel were gathered together (i)*: these two are what the martyr Stephen observes of him, yet *he was mighty both in word and deed (k)*. And after him, *the Lord the God of the spirits of all flesh, set another man over them*, I mean *Joshua*, who succeeded *Moses* in his military capacity, though not in the legislature (l). Now as these Worthies died off, God raised up others to fetch them out of new dangers, that they might be *saved after the manner of Egypt*: he could have delivered them by the immediate executions of his own hand; their fighting was never necessary to him, he might have employed an angel, in the quality that one of them bore, *as a Captain of the host of the Lord (m)*; but

(b) Judg. ii. 16, 17.

(i) Deut. xxxiii. 4, 5.

(k) Acts vii. 22.

(l) Numb. xxvii. 16, 17.

(m) Josh. v. 14.

but instead of that, he will have them rescued in the use of their own valour, and therefore gives them a Judge to lead out their forces to battle.

And this, my brethren, may shew us the way how a nation is to be saved; they must be active for it: we are not to expect that God will always deal with *the kingdoms that call not upon his name*, as he did with *Sodom and Gomorrah*; for as it is an unchristian spirit to fetch fire from heaven, so it is an inhuman one not to use fire upon earth; I mean, a zeal for *the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free* (n). In those days when they seldom wanted a miracle, yet it is by *resisting even unto blood*, that they broke the captivity they were under; from whence it is easy to observe that those doctrines have as little antiquity as truth, that tell a people, they are to meditate no escape for themselves, when Providence hath brought them under the weight of tyranny.

The Jews, in all those cases that are summed up in my text, were fairly conquered; and if the title of their new Sovereign is to be strengthened by it, we may add that it is oftentimes said, *the Lord sold them into the hands of such a King*: suppose now any one had, in those wretched days, told them that it was unlawful to use the necessary means for their liberty, that *to resist the arbitrary power* they were under was to incur *damnation*; for it is plain *those powers were of God*; and if they could not *obey the decrees of idolatry*, they were bound to be *passive*; that *God's selling them* gave all those tyrants a divine right to rule them: I say, had this language been used to them in their slavery, might they not have complained as *David* afterwards did, *they persecute him whom thou hast smitten, and talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded* (o)? But though the craftiness of some hath extolled this notion, yet we see by the record of antiquity in

(n) Gal. v. 1.

(o) Psa. lxxix. 26.

in my text, *that from the beginning it was not so*: for then, though they had been brought into subjection and paid tribute, and it was a yoke that God himself laid upon them, *yet the Lord raised them up Judges, and the Lord was with the Judge, and delivered them out of the hands of their enemies.*

2. The Judge had no power to make laws for them; no, this was done before, *the law came by Moses*, and he ordered every thing *according to the pattern shewed him in the mount*: the institutions they lived under were not the contrivance of that person from whom they received them; for he was only *faithful to him who appointed him, as a servant in the house (p)*: though when he raised up a Judge; they all knew him to be an extraordinary officer, and that *the Spirit of the Lord had come mightily upon him*, yet this person could not alter *one jot or tittle* in the laws that either secured the peoples property or directed their worship: they were not to learn their duty from him; that was never God's design, in appointing a governor to fix any other authority over the conscience than his own; and therefore their King is ordered to *write him a copy of the law that Moses delivered*, and perhaps he is the only man that was obliged to transcribe it, for two reasons; as if God would have it impressed upon his memory more than others, and that in case of mal-administration, his own hand might be a witness against him: thus tender was he of his peoples liberties in the time of the *Jews*; and can we think them more unguarded under the Gospel? Hath Christianity destroyed so dear a privilege as this? If so, we can scarce say that it brings *peace upon earth*, or shews a *good-will towards men*. Yet,

3. The Judge might enforce the observation and execution of those laws they were under. It was their disobedience that made God give them up into the enemies hand; and therefore, when he raises a Deliverer,

(p) Heb. iii. 2.

liverer, he must be a reformer : that I think is plain from the verse that follows my text, *It came to pass, when the Judge was dead, they returned and corrupted themselves more than their fathers in following other gods ;* which supposeth that they were restrained by his authority whilst he lived. And we have a more particular account of this in the government of *Deborah* ; that she was a *Prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, and judged Israel ;* there the word is to be taken in this sense, for her impressing the laws, because we do not find that she leads them out to battle, but *dwelt under the palm-tree of Deborah, between Ramah and mount Ephraim ; and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment (q).*

And if this was the design on which God raised up a Judge, to fight their battles, not to make their laws, but only to enforce them ; methinks the Revolution that began *this day*, hath some resemblance of the office in it. The hand of heaven fitted up a man to deliver us, and we may say, *The Lord was with the Judge ; from the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, his sword returned not empty ;* and that he made no incroachments upon the law, but only revived it, is as plain, where the main grievance he removed was an enacting power where there was no law, and a dispensing power where there was : nor is it the least honour of that happy turn, that it begun with liberty to conscience, and correction to vice, that persons should have no restraint in serving God, and no protection in serving Satan : to this end the Act of Indulgence, and Reformation of Manners, received their life from the Royal Assent about the same time : so that we may be tempted to bring down this text into our own history, and say, *The Lord raised us up a Judge ;* one that answered the design, by being a *repairer of the breach* in our Religion, and a *restorer of paths to dwell in (r)*, in our Property.

II. The

(c) Judg. iv. 4, 5.

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(r) Isai. lviii. 12.

II. The next thing is to observe what the scripture hath said to the honour of this government, and here I will lay before you three things.

1st, That God always chose the person.

2^{dly}, That it was a solemn instance of his being their ruler; And

3^{dly}, The only form of government that had his institution.

I. The person who filled it, was one *raised up* by God himself: these are the express words of the text. The voice of the people was only an after-concurrence, and generally the honour fixed upon those that were most out of the way of fame; from whence we may draw in this great support, that God will never want hands for the doing of his own work: we are ready to say, *By whom shall Jacob arise, for he is small (s)?* The best noble blood is run out, those that were the pillars of our constitution are gone; but if it is so, he can either find a hero or make one.

And surely the Revolution is a standing memorial of this: the great hopes that the good people of this nation once had to preserve their Religion and Laws, was a *bill of exclusion* to keep out a Papist from reigning; who being a bankrupt in his own conscience, would be a plunderer of ours: but it pleased God that this brave attempt miscarried, and the noble persons who engaged in it, *overcame* in no other sense, than *by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives unto the death (t)*. After that there were some designs to retrieve what was almost lost under the duke of *Monmouth*, concerning whom many were ready to say, as *Samuel* did among the sons of *Jesse*, Surely the LORD's anointed

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(s) Amos vii. 2.

(t) Rev. xii. 11.

is before him : but when they were *looking on his countenance, and the height of his stature*, it is apparent *the Lord seeth not as man seeth ; man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.* And there seemed to be a suspense, most peoples eyes were hovering, not knowing where to fix, till Providence directed them to our late Deliverer with the voice of Heaven that fell upon *David, Arise, anoint him ; for this is he.*

2. There is another thing that may be affirmed as the honour of this government by the Judges, that it was a solemn instance of God's being the ruler of that people : *The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Law-giver, the Lord is our King, he will save us (u)* : and therefore it is notorious, that when they were for changing the form of their administration, GOD himself tells *Samuel, They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them (x).* So that he had good authority to begin the first coronation with that reproach to their politics : *Ye have this day rejected the Lord your God, who himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations, and ye have said unto him ; Nay, but set a King over us.* And when they renewed the kingdom, he still rubs them with the old fault, as if they could never hear it too often : *Ye said unto me ; Nay, but a King shall reign over us, when the Lord your God was your King (y).* And to confirm what he said, he calls for *thunder and rain in the time of wheat-harvest*, both to shew them the mind of heaven, and to give them an emblem of their new monarchy ; which, at that time, had such an impression upon them, that they cried to *Samuel, Pray for thy servants that we die not ; for we have added to all our sins this evil to ask us a King.* They would have made this change before, and put themselves into an hereditary government :

(u) Isa xxxiii. 22.

(x) 1 Sam viii. 7.

(y) 1 Sam. xii. 12.

ment: but *Gideon* refused it, for the reason I am now upon; *I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you, the Lord shall rule over you* (z).

So that the Judges were more properly the LORD's Vicegerents than any of their Kings; as the Prophet says in this very case; *They had cast off the thing that is good, they had set up Kings, but not by him, and Princes, but he knew it not* (a). This must refer either to the first King they had, which was *Saul*, or the revolt of the ten tribes under *Jeroboam*: but there is one reason, which in my opinion holds it to the former; for *Jeroboam* had more of a divine right to the government than *Saul* had: the design of advancing him came first from God himself by the Prophet *Abijah*, before he or the people ever thought of it: but *Saul* had no more than Heaven's connivance: it was only *Samuel's* having leave *to hearken to their voice*; in which sense the words have a very easy found, *They made Kings, but not by me*; they did it in such a way as *to cast off that thing that is good*: and though it is true, they were called the *Lord's anointed*, yet it is plain they never were, nor ever could be, his representatives in that sense the Judges were; for every one of them was received as a new grant from heaven; as the Apostle observes, *He gave them Judges by the space of four hundred and fifty years* (b).

3. This was the only form of government that had God's institution; all the rest can plead no more than permission: but this was his own, brought about by the plain direction of Providence: he never called himself King of any people but the *Jews* in a political sense; and the way of his shewing this, was by raising up the person that should rule them.

How monstrous a folly was it then in a people so happy, to destroy their peculiar, and put themselves upon a level with the heathen world? One would wonder

(z) 1 Sam. viii. 23.
(a) Hof. viii. 3, 4.

(b) Acts xiii. 20.

wonder that it should ever be given as a reason why they would have a King that they might be *like other nations*, when it was their glory to be unlike them : and perhaps therefore those words carry a political sense in them ; *O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, quite ruined thy constitution, but in me is thy help ; I will be thy King : where is there any other that may save thee in all thy cities, and thy Judges, of whom thou saidst, Give me a King and Princes (c) ?* Thou wast weary of those officers that I appointed, and therefore *I gave thee a King in mine anger, and I took him away in my wrath.* This hath the Scripture told us for the honour of that government that the *Jews* were under during the administration of the Judges.

III. We are to inquire what persons were raised to this office, whence he took them : now here the history is so expressed, that *he that runs may read it ;* that GOD was never confined either to tribe, sex, or quality.

1. He never confined himself to a tribe ; it was not hereditary, nor any thing like it. *Moses* came from *Levi*, *Joshua* was of *Ephraim*, *Othniel*, (the first of the Judges, after they entered the promised land) was of *Judab* ; and so little was primogeniture minded, that we are expressly told of his being *Caleb's younger brother.* *Ehud* descended from *Benjamin*, *Baruch* was of *Naphtali*, *Gideon* of *Manasseh*, *Tolah* of *Issachar*, *Jephthah* of *Gilead*, *Elon* of *Zebulun*, *Samson* of *Dan*, *Eli* and *Samuel* were of *Levi* ; and thus the office ended in the tribe where it begun. It was a long time before that came to be true, *that Judab prevailed above his brethren, for out of him was the chief ruler (d).*

2. He was not so much as limited to the sex that seems fitter for this undertaking : there were some parts

(c) Hof. xiii. 9, 10.

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(d) 1 Chron. v. 2.

parts of their time when God himself gave this *honour to the weaker vessel*. Thus happy was the administration under *Deborah*, she appears at the head of their Revolution, to the memory of which noble act that song was penned: *The inhabitants of the valley ceased until that I Deborah arose, until I arose a mother in Israel(e)*: She encouraged their nobles to rendezvous, by saying, *My heart is towards the governors of Israel that willingly offer themselves among the people(f)*; and, as a consequence of that revolt, she seems to have the sovereignty, *He made the person that remains have dominion over the nobles among the people, the Lord made me have dominion over the mighty(g)*. It is again observed in a particular way, that she was amongst them at their insurrection, when they threw off *the yoke that they were not able to bear*, it was under her conduct: *The Princes of Issachar were with Deborah(b)*; nay, indeed the great fame of that deliverance hung all one way, it was both contrived and executed by the same sex, for as it begun with *Deborah's* order to *Baruch*, so it ends with God's *selling Sisera into the hand of a woman*; who is said to be *blest above women in the tent, for putting her hand to the nail, and her right hand to the workman's hammer, and smiting off his head, when she had pierced and stricken through his temples*: so richly can our God adorn persons with those qualities that are not the ordinary disposals of nature; when he fits them for their work, *the weak shall say, I am strong*.

It hath pleased him to set a Princess over us now, who had the first of these characters, who appeared at the head of a generous army, and encouraged *the governors of Israel, when they willingly offered themselves*, and if what is yet unimitated in *Deborah's* glory be reserved for the same person, she may at last say, *O my soul, thou hast troden down strength!*

VOL. I.

Q

How

(e) Judges v. 7.
(f) Judges v. 9.

| (g) Judges v. 13.
(b) Judges v. 15.

How such things as these will be brought about, we cannot tell; but the method that *Jaël* took to make an end of *Sisera*, was upon the foot of a treaty, crying, *Come in my Lord, and covering him with her mantle.* The song saith, *He asked water, and she gave him milk, she brought forth butter in a lordly dish:* This was only to stupify him, that she might take the fairer blow; for *at her feet he bowed, he fell, where he bowed, there he fell down dead (i).*

3. He did not always take the persons who seemed to be most likely. Thus *Gideon* is called from *the threshing-floor*, though *his family was poor in Manasseh, and himself the least in his father's house.* Yet these objections were over-ruled by a cast of the Divine Majesty, for *the Lord looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel (k).* *Jephthab* is fetched from the country, whither his brethren had banished him, and from being denied the least place in the family, he comes to have the greatest in the nation: *Samson* was the unexpected produce of his mother, who had been barren; and as nature was over-ruled in his birth, it seems to be out-done in his life.

This was their government for above four hundred years, and though it is a form that no other people came under, yet there are some turns in the affairs of our nation that may be thought to look like it: when God calls in help from afar, and *changeth the times and the seasons*, when he appears to rule in the kingdoms of men, by giving them to whomsoever he will; that scripture comes true in our history, *He hath raised up the righteous man from the east, and called him to his foot, gave the nations before him, and made him rule over Kings; he pursued them, and passed safely, even by the way that he had not gone with his feet (l):* and when he strengthens the hands of a woman against

one

(i) Judges v. 25, 27.

(k) Judges vi. 14.

(l) Isa. xli. 2, 3.

one who never had the courage of a man, it is raising Providence above the common rules that it goes by ; and this we had the pleasure lately to see, that what the *French* call a *salique law*, was submitting to a necessity that hath no law : and the sex that must not rule them, had gone so far as to conquer them. Such Revolutions as these are the picture of Christianity itself, that comes not *of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, nor of blood, but of God.*

IV. We are to inquire into the antecedents of this honour, or those things that prepared the way for raising up a Judge ; and these are chiefly three, oppression, reformation, and prayer.

I. One thing that led on God's giving them a Judge was the oppression of their enemies. This is plain from the words of my text, where it is brought in as a reason why *he was with the Judge, and delivered them ; for that it repented the Lord because of their groanings, by reason of those that oppressed them, and vexed them* : though he gave them up into the hands of a fierce and cruel King on purpose to suffer hardship, yet he had always a resentment of the tyranny itself ; which shews that he doth *not chasten us for his own pleasure, but for our profit.*

I need not lead you through the particular miseries they felt from the *Moabites*, the *Amorites*, the *Edomites*, and the *Philistines* : some of them were so pressing that *the highways were unoccupied, the travellers walked in by-ways (m)* ; and the people were so much out of posture for their own defence, that *there was not a spear or shield seen among forty thousand in Israel : Gideon was threshing the wheat in the night-time for fear of the Midianites (n)*. And perhaps there are two reasons why the inhabitants of those lands used to deal so hardly with them. One was be-

Q 2

cause

(m) Judges v. 6, 8.

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(n) Judges vi. 11.

cause they looked upon themselves as a conquered people, who had lost their country to the *Jews*; and the other, because the religion of *Israel* was so different from what the *Canaanites* had been used to: and the quarrel founded upon these two resentments was so dreadful, that it was time for GOD to raise up Judges.

It is easy to see that these are the things that procured so much danger to *Britain*: the prodigious ignorance of the wild *Irish*, their hatred of us both as *Englishmen* and Protestants, had made them in several reigns a certain tool of tyranny. The dreadful massacre in 1641 recommended their posterity to the design that was carrying on in 1688. And they whose parents had been famous for the slaughter of two hundred thousand in cold blood, were the persons for whose sake the King thought fit to dispense with the known laws of the land; as our Saviour said of the *Jews*, *They were witnesses to themselves, that they were the children of them that killed the Prophets*. That we had been under the severities of a party who neither loved justice, nor knew mercy, is plain enough: private assassinations, the more public control of bloody Judges and infamous Juries; the bullying of parliaments, the raising of armies without a war, the establishing of an high-commission-court, for those persons to govern the consciences of others, who had none of their own: these and a thousand more illegal methods, filled up the measure of their iniquity; till the fulness of their iniquity had the same effect with that of the *Canaanites*, that *the land spued them out, and made them wanderers among the nations*.

2. Another thing that led on the great blessing of a Judge was their Reformation; for as it was guilt that made *their rock to sell them, and the Lord to shut them up*, so there must be a returning to him from whom they had back-slidden: *They put away their idols*
which

which had cost them so dear; and as they had changed their liberties for their corruptions, they now make the exchange back again: and indeed till there is something of this temper, till a people have some dissolution of their impenitency, it is pity they should be delivered; the mercy will be lost upon them *if their uncircumcised heart is not humbled, and they accept of the punishment of their iniquity.*

Some of you may remember, that it was from such a dawn as this that our Revolution grew *more and more unto a perfect day*: though for several years the whole cry of the pulpit had been little else but obedience to the King, and persecution to their Protestant brethren, yet they were then as *Israel* shall be when they *turn to the Lord, the veil was taken off* from their hearts and eyes: they came to find, that by indulging *the wrath of man*, they had lost *the righteousness of God*; so that the world hath been told in a very public way, that Archbishop *Sancroft* himself was the person who proposed a comprehension with the Non-conformists. And it is plain that he, and the rest of the Bishops who were sent to the *Tower*, declared, “That they were ready to come to any accommodation with their Dissenting brethren in a parliamentary way.” Then *GOD shewed them their error, that they had exceeded, and opened their ears to discipline*: and these sentiments of peace and union led the way to our deliverance, from whence it need be no wonder to you, that they who are for widening the difference with Protestants, and contracting that with Papists, are so much out of love with the work of *this day*, that they have in their hearts appointed to themselves a Captain to return to *Egypt*.

3. Another introduction to their having a Judge, was *the spirit of prayer and supplication*. *GOD heard their cry*, he would not be silent to them, as they had been to him; but first opened the heavens to let in the petition, and then *bowed them to come down and*

answer it. This is one of the Christian's weapons, and it is what he shall never be disarmed of: it was thus that *Jacob had power first with God, and then with man.* You have several examples of this in the history before you; and as our nation hath applied it, so I hope they may do it again.

You know how long it was the desire of those excellent persons, who had any sense of the common danger, that God would raise up a SAVIOUR; and those cries at length came *into the ears of the Lord God of sabbaoth*; for if *an unjust Judge, who neither fears God, nor regards man,* is to be moved with intreaty, you may be sure that *the Lord will speedily avenge the cause of his elect*: it was with this request that many of our Worthies breathed out their last, commending the cry of their blood to God's justice, and the desolations of this kingdom to his mercy. This they had begged from heaven, and argued with men, and at the end gave up their souls in good wishes to the cause for which they suffered; and what they prayed for upon the scaffold, they went to plead over again *under the altar.*

Nor was the cry in vain; for the earth had scarce well drank in their blood, ere God revived the punishment of *Cain* upon him that shed it, to make him *a fugitive and vagabond on the earth,* under a continual fear that *every one that found him would slay him.*

V. We shall consider the credentials of those persons who were to be Judges: what it was that must satisfy the people of their having a commission: now under this head it may not be amiss to produce three things;

1st, That sometimes their authority was not publicly received at the beginning; yet,

2^{dly}, It never failed of having a general approbation, sooner or later. And,

3^{dly}, That

3dly, That which led on the popular subjection to them, was usually some mighty action that GOD enabled them to do: this drew in the heart and zeal of the kingdom, to *blefs* the Person who *came to save them in the name of the Lord.*

1. It is plain that their commission was not always understood at the beginning; thus it happened with *Moses*, as he himself foretold it would be, when he affirmed *the Lord God of their fathers had sent him*, they would not believe, but said, *What is his name?* Nay, when he begun to act for them before, he did it by virtue of that authority, which was more revealed under a commission forty years after; *he then delivered an Israelite, and smote an Egyptian*, of which the martyr *Stephen* gives this account; *he supposed his brethren would have understood, how that God by his hand would deliver them, but they understood not (n).* And thus it was with *Samson*, who *slew a lion* in private, on whom *the Spirit of the Lord began to move at times, in the camp between Zorah and Eshtaol (o)*; but by the stupidity and indolence of the people, they did not seem to take the meaning of heaven in lodging so great a stock of nature in one man.

Thus does Providence love to keep a blessing secret till the day of its *shewing to Israel*: as it is observed by those who wrote the history of the late King, “ That the court of *England* designed to intangle him “ by his affections to the virtuous Princess, whom he “ married; but as he then declared he would not “ treat of that, until the affairs of the States were “ adjusted, and that he scorned to sell his country “ for a wife;” so we see how much farther GOD designed it; that instead of making that marriage the sale of one country, it proved the redemption of two: so little do we know what Providence means by those turns that appear with no great shew at present.

Q 4

2. Though

(n) Acts vii. 25.

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(o) Judg. xiii. 25.

2. Though the credentials of the Judge might be concealed for a time, yet sooner or later they were to have the universal approbation of the people. Not but that there was a number of disaffected persons among them, *murmurers and complainers, walking after their own lusts*: therefore it is said in the verse before my text, that *they would not hearken to their Judges, but went a whoring after other gods*: it grieved some of them, that a Man was come to seek the welfare of *Israel*.

But when I speak of the approbation that the people gave, I have no regard to those whose concurrence was not worth having: they who had felt the bitterness of captivity, and *lamented after the Lord*, took the proper ways of receiving a Judge, and declaring the value they had for so public a mercy: how readily did many of their tribes attend *Barak*, and threw in their several capacities to that good cause: *Out of Machir came down governors; and out of Zebulun, they that handled the pen of the writer; Gilead abode beyond Jordan, and Dan remained in ships; Asher continued on the sea-shore, and abode in his breaches; Zebulun and Naphtali were a people that jeopardated their lives unto the death in the high places of the field (p)*: and what a curse is there upon *Meroz*? it was *the angel of the Lord* that said, *Curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof, because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty (q)*.

3. That which led on this popular esteem, was usually some mighty action that God enabled them to do. *Moses* fixt his character among them by *signs and wonders*: this left the people out of doubt, and gave them hopes in a little time of being out of danger: and thus *Joshua's* authority was recognized; as *Moses* begun to have the full reputation of a Captain at the *Red sea*, so did *Joshua* at the waters of *Jordan*. We do not read that the children of *Israel* had any
more

(p) Judg. v. 16--18.

! (q) Judg. v. 23.

more regard to *Ehud*, than to make him the messenger of their subjection to *Eglon* the King of *Moab*; they sent a present by him, but he had an errand beyond that, a message of God unto him, which he delivered at the point of his dagger. This indeed gave the Jews a public sense of the office he entered into: after that, he blew the trumpet in the mount of *Ephraim*, and the children of *Israel* went down with him from the mount, and he before them (r).

And that Providence took these advances in the mercy of *this day*, is a thing fresh within our memory: Though some who cried to our Deliverer for help, would have had him left what he came for unfinished: yet there were others who had no mind to do the work of the Lord so deceitfully: as God blest his arms to make the throne vacant, so there were the best voices of the nation, that he that emptied it should fill it: Thus by degrees did all opposition fall before him, till he became our King and Governor.

VI. Another thing that we are to inquire into, is the qualification or endowments of that person whom God raised up to be a Judge: there were three things that none in this office ever missed of:

1st, A military spirit, the courage and wisdom of a soldier.

2^{dly}, A sincere love for his country.

3^{dly}, The true principles of Religion. They have had Kings who wanted all these, but none of their Judges ever failed to have them in a glorious degree: and the reason is plain, because in this government God himself furnished out the men, and he always took care that they should be equal to their service.

1. A Judge never wanted the true spirit of a soldier; courage against an enemy, compassion to a subject,

ject, and wisdom to guide and temper each of them. This is what you will find inscribed upon every one of their histories, that they were *mighly men of valour*, not softned to danger by luxury, or hardned to their people by flattering words; and though it is true none of them could boast of his descent from a long race of Kings, yet they had a glory above it; not taking the remains of a dignity which others had left them, but carrying the whole stock in themselves: and though they wanted what we call royal blood, yet that was made up in a divine spirit, which shewed them to be sent by the KING of Kings. They never thought *Gideon* the worse for being fetched out of a *threshing-floor*; his hands were noble enough to do the last execution upon two Princes and two Kings; for when he had *slain Oreb upon the rock Oreb, and Zeeb at the wine-press of Zeeb, he and his three hundred men went after Zebah and Zalmunna, faint, yet pursuing them* (s): they would rather lose their food than their prey.

This is a spirit so essential to government, that though the *Jews* desired a King, they always understood it in his character that he should be one to *lead them out, and fight their battles*: not a meer rake in robes; but one of whom they might say, as *Jotham* did of *Gideon*, *My father fought for you, and ventured his life far, and delivered you out of the hand of Midian* (t). It is true many of their Kings were brave men, but I do not remember one of them that had always in him the spirit of a Judge. *David* did the noblest acts among them, and yet he was guilty of indulging his folly at *Jerusalem*, when the ark of God, and the army of Israel abode in tents. An instance of this neglect and softness is not once to be found in any of the Judges. Though we have but a short account of some of them, yet there is nothing unworthy of the great name they bore.

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(s) Judg. viii. 5.

(t) Judg. ix. 17.

The application of this to our Revolution is easy enough : when it pleased God to give us a Prince who had an early disdain of what the Scripture saith *destroys Kings* (u). The great events of his battles with the *French*, had sent over his name long before we had his person ; he had no Priests in pay to flatter him, and force a reputation ; no, his army was a proper college for that, and every soldier had a better tongue to proclaim him : we just wanted such a one, who had been *a man of war from his youth*, to help and head the nation ; to unbind a people who were brought into so much danger by a standing Army and a fawning Clergy.

2. The Judge was always a hearty lover of his country. Never could any of them be guilty of making their court to an enemy, or putting themselves under a foreign yoke ; all their actions and cares were directed this way, that *Israel might rejoice in him that made him, and the children of Sion be joyful in their King* (x). And this may help us to understand some passages in *Samson's* life, more in his favour than they could be in an ordinary person : I will but mention one, and that is, his seeking a wife among the *Philistines*, which his parents were both surpris'd and troubled at, because there was a divine command against it : but saith the text, *his father and mother knew not that it was of the Lord, to seek an occasion against the Philistines* (y) : And this mysterious alliance led him into a twenty years quarrel with that nation, till they themselves called him *a destroyer of their country*.

Some of their Kings had more of an indifferency to the good of *Israel* ; and either through a fear to those abroad, or a desire to be absolute at home, neglected the improvement of a conquest. Thus does *Saul* spare *Agag* the King of the *Amalekites*, against the

(u) Prov. xxxi. 3.

(x) Psal. cxlix. 2.

(y) Judg. xiv. 4.

the plain voice of heaven; but *Samuel* does otherwise, who was the last of the Judges, and had yet in him the spirit of the office, though he had laid down the form: nor could there be a nobler conclusion to the public actions of the Judges, than to *hew* a tyrant in pieces *before the Lord*: it was the very last thing he did in that character.

Thus treacherous was *Abab* to the interest of his own country; first, by submitting to the King of *Syria's* claim, who sent him that message: *Thy silver and thy gold are mine, thy wives and thy children are mine* (z); how mean, and below the dignity of a Prince was it to return that answer, *My Lord, O King, according to thy saying, I am thine, and all that I have* (a)? Perhaps you may think that this was owing to the necessity of his affairs; but you find the same sneaking cowardice when matters had taken a turn in his favour: he beats the *Syrian* army twice, so that *Ben-badad* is in the distress to *run away on foot*; and yet afterwards he recovered by peace what he had lost in war. One would think *Abab* under an infatuation to enter into any terms with the man that had bullied him, that had disposed of his kingdom, as if he had some pretender to send thither, that he had vowed the ruin of *Samaria*, and dared the God of *Israel* himself, calling him *the God of the hills, and not of the valleys*: and yet *Abab* enters into a dishonourable treaty, which was founded upon a partition of their conquests: *Ben-badad said unto him, The cities which my father took from thy father I will restore, and thou shalt make streets for thee in Damascus, as my father made in Samaria. Then said Abab, I will send thee away with this covenant* (b). Could any thing be of more dangerous consequence to *Israel*? It was not mere pity and good nature, for at the same time that he is so tender to an enemy, he is persecuting the
Prophets

(z) 1 Kings xx. 3.

(a) 1 Kings xx. 4.

(b) 1 Kings xx. 34.

Prophets of the LORD : and no wonder then that God sends one of his servants with this message ; *Because thou hast let go out of thy hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore thy life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people (c)* : and these were not mere words of terror, for the new peace held but a little time ; we only read that *they continued three years without war between Syria and Israel (d)* ; but in the third year it breaks out again, and *Abab* loseth his life by the very Prince whom once he had pardoned.

The Judges never made such abatements, but asserted the rights of *Israel* against all the monarchs upon earth : how noble was *Jephthab's* message to the King of the *Ammonites*, *The Lord God of Israel hath dispossessed the Amorites from before his people Israel, and shouldst thou possess it ? Will not thou possess that which Chemosh thy god giveth thee to possess ? So whomsoever the Lord our God shall drive out from before us, them will we possess (e)*.

3. The Judges were always good men, persons of true Religion. Not that they were without the infirmities of human nature : *Gideon* desired the ear-rings of the people, and he *made an ephod of it, which thing became a snare to him, and his house (f)*. *Jephthab's* vow was so rash, and intangled others besides himself, that it can scarce be defended. *Samson* let his heart be *deceived by a woman*, and revealed a secret that God had lodged with him ; and after he had violated his trust, it was in vain for him to *go out and shake himself, as at other times, for God was departed from him*.

But you are not to take the character of them, or of any good man, by the success of a temptation upon them, but from the main tendency of their lives. Now notwithstanding these blemishes, yet *they have obtained a good report*. You find them among the
 Worthies

(c) 1 Kings xx. 42.
 (d) 1 Kings xxii. 1.



(e) Judg. xi. 23, 24.
 (f) Judg. viii. 27.

Worthies that begin with *righteous Abel*: Though the Apostle had almost filled his argument and time with the Patriarchs, yet he takes care that the reputation of the Judges be not quite lost; and therefore says, that *Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthab, David, Samuel, and the Prophets, through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, and obtained promises (g)*.

And indeed these are the fittest to be employed in a government, for though a bad Ruler, a Heathen, a Tyrant may be called *the Lord's anointed*, yet it is with an undeniable harshness in the sound. These two characters can scarce come together without confusion; that a man should represent God in his office, and yet serve nothing but Satan in his life. How unhappy is it, when for his station he is called a God, and yet his actions make every one take him for a Devil? The civil titles of a Prince never come off the tongue so clean as when they are given to *a man after God's own heart*. There the names of sacred Majesty, gracious Sovereign, Defender of the Faith, Christian King, and God's Vicegerent, have some meaning in them, they are not mere *swelling words of vanity*. These were the qualifications of the Judges, which every person brought along with him to that office: he had always courage to defend the people from a foreign power, no inclination to betray them to it; and he ruled, as *they that rule over men*, over creatures equally rational and immortal with themselves should do, *by justice, and in the fear of the Lord*.

That these endowments were eminently found in our late Sovereign, is an argument too much for the time, but it lies abroad in his history. His being a soldier is enough out of the question, our enemies were never capable of doubting that: that he had the interest of *Great Britain* at heart, appears by the hazards that he run, the honourable alliances that he made against an exorbitant power, that always hath been,

been, and always will be, our greatest danger; and the regard he shewed to Religion, appeared in the whole of his conduct, and by the particular care he took to advance Ministers of the best learning and probity; men famous for what they had done in the pulpit; well knowing, that the main credit of one *intrusted with the Gospel*, is to be a *workman*, not a *tool*: nor is there any thing that will better secure them from being *ashamed*, than *rightly dividing the Word of truth*.

VII. The happiness of this administration is but a natural consequence from all that I have said: we may well say, *Blessed is the people that is in such a case; yea, happy is the nation whose God is the Lord*: but, besides what you have heard, there are three things that will tell you the felicity of being governed by the Judges: they were always sure of success; never laid any burdens upon the people; and under no temptation of amassing great wealth to themselves.

I. The nation was always sure of success in the concern that the Judge led them to. Though they had the fatigue of a war, yet it was without its uncertainty: you never read that any of them failed of conquest; and indeed the prospect they had of getting the better, arose from God's own choice of the men, and avowance of the cause: his *raising up* a person was a presage that he would never leave him, and therefore they are joined in the words of my text, when *the Lord raised them up Judges, the Lord was with the Judge*. Thus when *Ehud* had slain *Eglon*, he gave the enemy so full a blow, that *the land did rest eighty years*; and in *Deborah's* story it is said, that *the hand of the children of Israel prospered till they had destroyed Jabin King of Canaan (b)*. *Midian was subdued before the children of Israel, so that they lifted up their heads no more, and the country was in quietness forty years in the days of Gideon*.

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(b) Judg. iii. 30.—iv. 24.

We do not find that any of them left the work incomplete but *Samson*, for he himself died in captivity : now this was not from any deficiency in him, but a wretched lowness of spirit in the people. We never read of their attending him to battle ; his victories were all personal : the *Jews* had not yet retrieved their sense of liberty : instead of following the strongest leader that ever they had, *Three thousand of them came to bind him, and deliver him into the hand of the Philistines* : their plea for it was a very slavish one, *Knowest thou not that the Philistines are rulers over us ? What is this that thou hast done unto us (i) ?* Which was a sort of charging rebellion against him. Now, though he could as easily have broke the argument, as he did the *cords* ; yet he makes no other terms with them, than that they would *not fall upon him themselves*. Such people as these were not fit for liberty ; leaving them in bondage, is but suiting their condition to their temper : and therefore we read no more of him, than that he should *begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines*.

We cannot now have the same assurance of success that they had, this was the peculiar of that government : and I wish the case of our Revolution could be better applied to any other history of the Judges, than what I have last mentioned : but it is not to be denied, with what toil of Empire his late Majesty reigned amongst us.

That there were some to cramp him in his measures, and who would *not know the things of their peace in that their day*, the length of this war does abundantly tell us : so that the parallel between him and *Samson* seems but too just, that they would *bind him with new cords*, what were never used to his predecessors : though blessed be GOD it held also in another case, that he did us the greatest service at last, by bringing about the Protestant Succession, which we hope hath

given

(i) Judg. xviii. 12.

given us a better security than any thing he did before; so that in this he expired as *Samson* did, in the fulness of service and fame: for *the dead that he slew at his death, were more than those that he slew in his life.*

2. Another happiness of this government was, the state which attended it laid no burden upon the people: there was no such thing as the nation groaning under a royal pomp: it was reckoned a judgment that *their King should take their sons, and appoint them for his horsemen, to run before his chariots, and make them captains over thousands, and hundreds, and fifties, and tens; and make them ear his ground, and reap his harvest, and prepare his instruments of war; and that their daughters should be confectionaries, cooks and bakers (k).* These are so far from being burdens now, that people catch at them as so many honours; but they had not so much as a court under the Judges, to give their superiority the least air of oppression to the people: so little did they understand the ceremonial part of dominion, that we read upon *Saul's* being King, *he came after the herd out of the field (l)*: therefore it is so often hinted as the felicity of those times, that *there was no King in Israel, but every one did what was right in his own eyes*: not that they lived in a lawless way, but there was nothing like prerogative to intrench on the liberty that God had given.

And thus they continued, as *Paul* says, *about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the Prophet*: that it was not so afterwards, is plain from their history: there was foundation enough for the distinction that *Solomon* made, *A Prince that wants understanding is a great oppressor; but he that hates covetousness shall prolong his days (m).*

3. The last thing that I shall mention among the felicities of that government was, that the Judge could

(k) 1 Sam. viii. 11—13.

(m) Prov. xviii. 16.

(l) 1 Sam. xi. 5.

be under no temptation of amassing great wealth to himself; because as his office was not hereditary, so he had no necessity of laying in the materials of a future state to his family: the tyranny of some thrones hath been the growth of several ages: *the mystery of iniquity* took time to work up to what it now is: but this was impossible in the reign of the Judges: because the honour of the family sunk with the person who had it.

And the circumstances into which God was pleased to cast our late King were not unlike to this: as he had none to bear his name in the world, so there was no temptation to make any incroachments either upon the peoples treasures, or their liberties. It is true, the intail of the crown was upon the heirs of his body, after those of her present Majesty: but that was a thing out of all prospect; and thus God fitted his condition to the greatness of his soul, and put him into the full scope of his temper, to act as if the Protestant Religion, and the Liberties of *Europe*, and in particular the honour of *Great-Britain*, were to be his heirs, to enjoy all that he had got or could leave: for this end he nobly refused the proposals that were made to him of leaving out the Queen or the House of *Hanover* from a claim to these kingdoms, though the temptation of making him easy and prosperous was used to persuade him.

Thus have I given you an account of the best government that ever was in the world, on a day that brought us to one of the best that ever we had in *England*: it hath been my endeavour in the history of the *Jews*, and the application that was made of it to our own case, to keep the hand of God in your view: it is thus that you are to regard the Revolution, as the conduct of a mighty Providence; this will both sanctify your value for what is past, and hold on your dependence for blessings yet to come: for he who

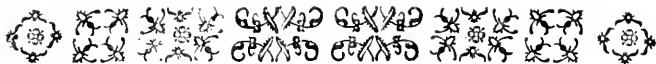
hath

hath shewn us his salvation, may put on strength as in the ancient days; here is our great security in every new danger: it is he that can diffuse a spirit of unity and resolution in the time we most need it; look to him then for the birth of that promise which refers to the MESSIAH, and we may challenge it when *the faith that be delivered to the Saints* is in any danger. *This man shall be the peace when the Assyrian shall come into our land, and when he shall tread in our palaces: then will we raise against him seven shepherds, and eight principal men, and they shall waste the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod in the entrances thereof; thus shall he deliver us from the Assyrian when he cometh into our land, and when he treadeth within our borders* (n).

(n) Mic. v. 5, 6.







S E R M O N XII.

Steadiness in RELIGION,

Recommended from the Example of DANIEL under
the Decree of DARIUS.

Preached MARCH 23, 1711-12.

DANIEL VI. 10.

Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house: and his windows being open in his chamber towards Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God as he did aforetime.

*Y*OU have here the great example of a man who ventured all his interest in this world to preserve it in another; and run the hazard of *losing his life*, that he might *save it to life eternal*. The words consist of two parts:

- I. The difficulty he was brought into *when he knew the writing was signed*.
- II. His behaviour upon it: *he went into his house, and the windows being open in his chamber to-*

wards Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God as he did aforetime.

I. I will give you some few thoughts of the case itself, that made his duty so dangerous to him : and if you would fetch this from its original, you will find in it these two things ;

The honour that had been conferred upon *Daniel* : And,

The uneasiness that it gave some great men at that court.

1. We are told of his advancement : *It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty Princes which should be over the whole kingdom, and over these three presidents, of whom Daniel was the first (a).* Where you see that King was unconfined in the distribution of his favours, and resolved never to lose the service of an honest man for the sake of any varieties in religion. He understood his interest better, and knew how to employ those of capacity and faithfulness, whatever opinions they might have different from his own. Herein hath the *Babylon* of the New Testament gone beyond that of the Old, in a decree that *no man shall buy or sell, save he that hath the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name (b).*

The reason of *Daniel's* having this place, shews how little bigotry was concerned in his promotion. It was *that the King should have damage in nothing : he was preferred above the Presidents and Princes, because an excellent spirit was found in him, and the King thought to set him over the whole realm (c).* Nor is it any wonder that *Darius* should be so early with his honours

(a) Daniel vi. 1, 2.

(b) Rev. xiii. 17.

(c) Dan. vi. 3.

honours to this great man, if you do but consider what a long reputation he had possessed in *Babylon*. He was prepared by as good an education as *Nebuchadnezzar* could give him: *In all matters of wisdom and understanding the King inquired of him, and his companions, and found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in his realm*(d). When he unfolded that prophetic dream about the golden image, it is said, *Then the King made him a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors of the wise men of Babylon; and he was placed in the gate of the King*(e). There he lived in so full credit, that upon another occasion *Nebuchadnezzar* says to him, *I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in thee, and no secret troubles thee* (f).

It is certain he had some public office in *Belshazzar's* time; for you read of a vision *in the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar*, and he had it *in Shushan the palace*(g). It is likely some employment kept him there; nay it is out of all doubt from what he saith at the end of it: *I Daniel fainted and was sick certain days, and afterwards I rose up, and did the King's business* (b). It is probable he was afterwards out of place, and seems determined against one by his answer to the King; *Let thy gifts be to thyself, and thy rewards to another* (i). *Belshazzar* speaks to him as one that had been a long while out of his presence; *Art thou that Daniel which art of the children of the captivity of Judah, whom the King my Father brought out of Jewry? I have heard of thee, that the spirit of the gods is in thee, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom is found in thee* (k). This looks as if he had been for some time laid aside from honour;

R 4

but

(d) Dan. i. 20.

(e) Dan. ii. 48, 49.

(f) Dan. iv. 9.

(g) Dan. viii. 1, 2.

(b) Dan. viii. 27.

(i) Dan. v. 17.

(k) Dan. v. 13, 14.

but a very solemn Providence brought him to read *the hand-writing on the wall*, that confounded the jest of *drinking wine in the vessels of the temple*. That King himself, who but a few hours before had all the contempt in the world for the *Jewish Religion*, comes with an awe to so great and good a man as *Daniel*: *He is clothed with scarlet, they put a chain of gold about his neck, and proclamation is made concerning him, that he shou'd be third ruler in the kingdom*. Thus does God bring men under a necessity of advancing the very persons whom they hate: *This honour have all the saints (l)*. It lets us see, that integrity carries its own reputation, and will make its way through all the slander of a party. *Belsazzar* had turned out *Daniel*, and now, at a great feast, resolved to be merry upon his religion; but his last work must be to restore him, for *that night was Belsazzar the King of the Chaldeans slain*. And as *Darius the Median took the kingdom*, he knew it could not be put into better hands, and therefore gave him the office I have mentioned.

2. Here is the uneasiness of the Presidents and Princes: *They sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom: but they cou'd find no occasion or fault, forasmuch as he was faithful, nor was there any error or fault found in him (m)*.

This might be from the desire of getting into his place: *Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous, but who can stand before envy?* that is a passion never to be conquered, because it grows upon a person's doing well. What need have good people to be looking out after a better world! *Solomon considered all travel, and every right work, that for this a man is envied of his neighbour; this also is vanity and vexation of spirit (n)*. How bitter an imagination does it give us of duty or public zeal, to have it so ill received, that

(l) Psalm cxlii. 9.
(m) Dan. vi. 4.

(n) Eccl. iv. 4.

that a man's usefulness is his guilt, and he shall provoke by all the measures he takes to oblige? But there is a state, where obedience will fit easier upon ourselves and those about us: as *Lucifer the son of the morning*, and his companions were the first examples of envy in Heaven, so they are the last; no unquiet temper comes there, but satisfaction and love circulate among them for ever.

Or it may be these Presidents and Princes had a mind to be more at liberty than *Daniel's* inspection would allow. They did not like the integrity of a man whose character answered this condition, *that the King should have damage in nothing*. The getting him turned out would give them an opportunity of revelling in *dishonest gain*, and upon these motives they are in a general design against him: *Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God (o)*. He must be thrown out upon a religious test; which though it was an instance of their wickedness, yet leaves an honour upon him that was to suffer by it. It is an argument those persons are blameless in their office, whom nothing but a new law can turn out of it. Thus it was here, they come to *Darius* with the usual compliment: *O King, live for ever! All the princes of the kingdom, the governors, the presidents, the counsellors and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, That whosoever shall ask a petition of any god or man for thirty days, save of thee (o) King, he shall be cast into the den of lions. Now, O King, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which alters not (p)*. The pretence of this was, that it would make for the King's honour, and give him an advantage of endearing himself to his new people: thus was loyalty a cloke of wickedness.

There

(o) Dan. vi. 5.

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(p) Dan. vi. 6, 7, 8.

There seems to be two parties in this design.

1. They that acted by malice and envy. It was formed in their minds, and covered with all the pretences of duty and zeal to the throne; though how void they were of that, you find by their insulting the King afterwards, giving him no room for his mercy, but resolving to huff him with the statute into which they had tricked him: *Know, O King, that the law of the Medes and Persians is, that no decree or statute which the King establisheth may be changed (q).*

2. There was another party that consented to this woful device, with more inadvertency than malice, and that was the King himself. One would wonder indeed that he should, upon any views whatsoever, come into so ill a design, or that the common prudence and conscience of a man should not have kept him out of it; but there is an enchantment goes along with flattery, it is hard to believe it and not to be stupified with it: *If a ruler hearken to lies, all his servants are wicked (r)*; when they find his weak side, where he is most unguarded, they will ply him there.

That the King was drawn into this by a mere error, appears from the honest unaffected pain that it gave him: *He was sore displeas'd with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him; and he laboured to the going down of the sun to deliver him (s).* Thus does a hasty resolution make way for a slow repentance; but he was *ensnared with the words of his mouth*. And you may observe the equity of Providence, that the man who was so weak as to make this bargain, is the first that feels the mischief of it.

Now it is out of his power to help the person who had served him best: he sees the intrigue when it was too

(q) Dan. vi. 15.

(r) Proverbs xxix. 12.

(s) Dan. vi. 14.

too late ; his favourite, his counsellor, and the greatest friend of the empire, must be given up to the lions. What a melancholy time this proved to *Darius*, you read : *He went to his palace, and passed the night in fasting ; neither were the instruments of music brought before him, and his sleep went from him. He arose early in the morning, and went to the den of lions ; when he came to the den, he cried, with a lamentable voice unto Daniel (t).* Thus you see this statute was agreed to by persons of different views ; the Princes for their own ends drew in the King to sacrifice the most able and upright counsellor in his dominions.

How long this matter was depending, we cannot tell ; the scripture hath left us uncertain whether there was any distance between presenting the decree, and having it pass into a law. If it was a thing done hastily, *Daniel* might not know of it, till it was too late to prevent it : if he had warning beforehand, and made his application to the King against it, yet the case is neglected by the man that had so much reason to value him. However this was, yet we are sure of that which is more our concern ; and that is,

II. His behaviour upon it : *When he knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house, and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.*

Here are some things to be explained before they come to be improved.

1. The place of his worship.
2. The manner of it.
3. The frequency.

4. The

(t) Dan. vi. 18, 19, 20.

4. The matter it consisted of.
5. The custom he observed in it.

1. As to the place of his worshipping God, it was in *his own house*: they had no other temples in *Babylon*, and were a great way off from that city and fabric where God had fixed his name: but neither his blessing nor their duty was confined thither; as it was happily observed in the consecration of that temple, that *the heaven of heavens could not contain him, how much less this house?* He would be a God, a friend, a benefactor to his people, when they could not come thither.

And if *Daniel's* worship was accepted in a private family during that age, when the holiness of places were allowed; the believer need be under no suspence now that all these ceremonial doctrines are laid aside: for *neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, shall they worship the father (u)*. It is all one where, provided the work be carried on *in spirit and truth: he dwells not in temples made with hands (x)*.

And then besides you may observe, though *Daniel* lived in a house suitable to his quality, as being the chief minister of state, yet he does not think it too good for a house of religion. He had other cares upon him above those of the kingdom: wherever he is an inhabitant, he will be a supplicant.

2. The manner of his worship is very remarkable, that *his windows were opened in his chamber towards Jerusalem*. This was not to give his enemies an advantage of seeing him; for it is no man's duty to court his own danger: nor was it any new thing, for it is said that *he prayed and gave thanks before his God as he did aforesaid*. And least of all can we suppose, that he did it from any low thoughts of the divine omniscience or favour, as if a prayer was easier to be heard from an open window, or went out under an

an advantage by being pointed to such a quarter: no, he knew that he had to deal with a God whose *presence fills the heaven and the earth* (y), and valued not which way his eyes were turned. Not but that some of the *Jews* run headlong into this vanity, as another Prophet of those times acquaints us: *There were five and twenty men between the porch and the altar, that were worshipping with their faces towards the east* (z). But as *Daniel* was above *these abominations*, so he does not so much as fall in with their ceremony: for *Jerusalem* was almost full south from *Babylon*; so that his opening the window that way must have another meaning, and several things offer themselves in answer to it.

(1.) It was complying with the original terms of the consecration: *Solomon* begged, *If thy people be carried away captive far or near, yet if they bethink themselves, and make supplication to thee in the land of them that carried them away captive, and pray towards the land which thou gavest to their fathers, the city thou hast chosen, and the house that I have built for thy name; then hear thou their prayer and supplication from heaven thy dwelling-place, and maintain their cause* (a). Nay before this, *David* said, *I will worship towards thy holy temple* (b).

(2.) It was to shew his faith and hope of the peoples return thither; according to that direction of *Jeremiah*, whose writings *Daniel* was often perusing: *Remember the Lord afar off, and let Jerusalem come into your mind* (c). God had told them that he would *bring back their captivity, that Jerusalem should be the throne of the Lord* (d): though it was for a long time without inhabitant, yet *the remnant should return, even the remnant to the mighty God*. He had called *Cyrus* his *shepherd* and *anointed* several ages before he was born, because in his reign *the foundation of the temple should be*

(y) Jer. xxiii. 24.

(z) Ezek. viii. 16.

(a) 1 Kings viii. 46—49.

(b) Psal cxxxviii. 2.

(c) Jer. li. 50.

(d) Jer. iii. 17.

be laid. Perhaps here was a great deal to obscure the promise, no dawn of that felicity now : but yet he takes his daily looks that way, under an assurance that the LORD would *perform that good thing to the house of Israel.*

And as he believed it, so by this you see how heartily he wished for it ; which shews us what an amplitude of zeal he had, and how much a care for the public interest of Religion swallowed up all that was due to himself. Why should a person in so much danger trouble his thoughts about the return of a people ? As he had not many hours to live, it seems to be a roving meditation that leads him into a concern for others : one would rather imagine he should think of nothing else now besides the *den of lions*. But as *Jerusalem* was his *chiefest joy* in prosperity, so it is his dearest care in a time of trouble. Though he might beg for mercies to himself, to be directed through the temptation, or delivered out of it, yet you see the opening of his heart, by that of his window, is to *Jerusalem the city of the great King.*

(3.) There he knew that the MESSIAH was to come : *He of whom Moses in the law, and the Prophets did write (e).* Whether this matter happened before that Prayer of his in the ninth chapter, I cannot tell : but it is plain that they could not be far asunder ; for that was *in the first year of Darius (f)*, and therefore I think it not improbable that the angel *Gabriel* might have appeared to him before this plot of the Princes took effect. And as in his Prayer he makes a very moving inquiry about the *temple that was desolate*, the city that was burnt, and the people who groaned under a long captivity ; so the answer was, that *Jerusalem should be built*, and there *the Messiah be cut off, but not for himself* : so that he opened his window that way, *in hope of the promise made of God unto their fathers. Isaiah had seen his glory, and spake of him,*

(e) John i. 45.

| (f) Dan. ix. 1.

him, that he should sit on a throne high and lifted up, and his train should fill the temple (g). And if you take this sense of the words, it lets you see that good people in those ages came to God by a Mediator; their Religion was a looking to Jesus, though the light did not shine out, as it does in our more perfect day.

3. The frequency of his worship: *He kneeled upon his knees three times a day.* The Scripture hath hinted at this circumstance with a great deal of variety: *It is good to shew forth his loving-kindness in the morning, and his faithfulness every night (b).* David resolves in one place, that evening, morn, and noon will I pray and cry aloud, and thou shalt hear my voice (i): in another place, *Seven times a day will I praise thee because of thy righteous judgments (k):* and here Daniel does it three times a day. This shews him to be a man like Enoch who walked with God, his general life was under that regulation. There is a being in the fear of the Lord all the day long; and from the temper we should have for this duty, we are bid to pray always, and to pray without ceasing. Daniel had found the good of this method before; it was by his own prayer, and the concurrence of his partners, that he obtained the revelation of the King's secret. Upon any solemn turn of affairs, he was fervent in this duty: *when he understood by books the number of the years in which God would accomplish the desolations of Jerusalem,* he closes the calculation with a cry to heaven, *i have set my face to seek it with fasting and supplication, and weeping and ashes (l).* But besides what he did upon these extraordinary cases, you find it was his usual business to kneel three times a day.

4. The matter of his worship, the parts that it consisted of: *He prayed, and gave thanks.* Here was work enough for prayer, to be delivered from the ungodly, and have

(g) Isai. vi. 2.
 (b) Psal. xcii. 2.
 (i) Psal. lv. 17.

(k) Psal. cxix. 164.
 (l) Dan. ix. 1, 2.

have his soul brought out of all adversity : that petition would have suited his case, *Keep me from the snare they have laid for me, and from the gins of the workers of iniquity : Let the wicked fall into their own nets, whilst that I withal escape (m)*. But one would think that there could be no praises, no *giving of thanks* expected from a man on the brink of the lion's den. But,

As no trouble can make the believer miserable, so none should make him silent : he hath mercies to own of a greater sort than can be taken from him here. The losing of honour, interest, and life itself, draws no ill consequence along with it upon holiness, joy, and *the inheritance reserved in heaven for us* : we may go through the fire, shouting in the prospect of what comes after it. When persecution hath taken away all we can lose, there is still a reserve that will oblige us to eternal praises.

5. The custom he observed. It was what he did aforesaid; not an unusual heat that this new danger had put him into : this was his way when he *sat in the gate of the King*. He came down from the dignity of a president to the humility of a petitioner. Greatness does not run away with his thoughts and time : though he had the accounts of an hundred and twenty Princes to settle, yet he vows to have leisure enough for his God : thus *happy is the man that fears always*.

From all which I may give you this note, as the sense of the whole story.

Doctr. That no prospect of loss or danger ought to hinder a good man in the course of duty that he owes to GOD. Nothing could be more perplexing than the case before us ; and therefore the person that can find his way out of Religion, may have that reproach left upon him that is given to the Prince of Tyrus ; *Behold ! thou art wiser than Daniel (n)*.

Here I must take a method that is a little unusual.

1. Give

(m) Psal. cxli. 9, 10.

(n) Ezek. xxviii. 3.

1. Give you some particulars as the foundation of this truth.

2. Consider the further light we may have into it from this story.

1. I might argue the Christian's obligation to *bold on the profession of his faith* in the face of all danger, from more heads than either the time will allow, or the case does need; but you may take these three.

1st, This shews that your religion is founded on no other authority than a divine one: it is not often that the Church of CHRIST hath been established by law; for as it never needs a law to make it better, so it seldom hath one to make it safer. Your duty is nothing else but a homage paid to him that hath made you, and *bought you with a price*; and his bare word is enough to claim it. Sometimes he will have this principle set out in a good light, when his people shew they understand an obligation that no commands of men can dissolve. His Providence hath wisely ordered it in most ages, that there shall be a clashing between the laws of God and Man. These are times that put the brightest honour upon religion, and prove how it is founded upon a will that is purely divine; but if you suffer it to be changed upon any new face of danger, it is plain you mean some other authority, and *stay yourselves upon him that smote you, rather than on the Lord, the Holy One of Israel (o)*.

2^{dly}, This also gives a testimony to the pleasure and benefit there is in serving GOD. When it is attended with the grandeur and profits of this world, Satan can play his accusation against those that profess it: *Does Job serve God for nought? Hast thou not made a hedge about him, so that his substance is increased in the land?*

Constantine did the Church of CHRIST more harm than ever Dioclesian did, though he did not design it; for by the loads of revenue and titles he gave to

the fawning bishops, he sucked out the love they had to one another under persecution; it was easier for them to agree in a prison than in a palace. But

A man that runs the hazard of losing what is dear to him, rather than he will take any undue liberties with his conscience, is a living record to the world, *That truly God is good to Israel, to every upright-hearted one* (p). Here is employment, honour, and the greatest article of interest gone; but it is for the sake of that which makes it richly worth my while to part with it. If I cannot have the blessings of both worlds, I will make sure of the better; and in all the miseries of a desert, *My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness* (q).

3dly, These troubles do but call you to use your satisfaction in the Divine Providence. Do you believe that GOD governs the world? Though it is what any one will readily grant, yet an infidelity upon this head is the most common of any. The Psalmist found it so hard to poise himself with this truth, *that his steps were well nigh slipt, and his feet almost gone*. Are you satisfied that CHRIST is *Head over all things to his Church*, that nothing happens but by his permission, and nothing but to your advantage? Must there not be some use of your Faith in his Providence, as well as in his promise? You depend upon him for another world, and so you must for a good journey through this: *This is our God for ever and ever, and he shall be our guide until death* (r).

Here is now a contest between my duty and interest; the former is plain to me, the latter's under a cloud. Let me then take the surer side; I may better trust Providence in a way of duty than out of it: withdrawing myself from the obedience I owe to him, is casting him off. And what? Shall I depend upon his
goodness

(p) Psalm lxxiii. 1.

(q) Psalm lxxiii. 5.

(r) Psalm xviii. ult.

goodness to feed me, when I deny his authority to rule me? And let me tell you, that

As GOD is never at a loss to supply the wants of his people, so every mercy that comes after such a resignation hath a double sweetness in it. He can revive my honour, and *satisfy me with bread*, though duty to him throws me out of the way of both. What method he will take to do it, I cannot tell; but how much beauty and joy will there be in the thing itself? Therefore *trust in the Lord, and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed* (s).

2. As an application to what you have heard, I will consider the case of this story under two heads.

(1.) Lay before you some plausible objections that might have been raised against *Daniel's* doing thus.

(2.) Tell the consequences of his integrity.

(1.) No doubt of it but several, who had a value for the man, would persuade him to keep out of the reach of this law. As,

1. They might argue, that it was a great deal to lose life, and especially in so dishonourable a way: that though it is true, what he did was plain duty, yet in a case so extreme GOD would be gracious; for he that *loves mercy rather than sacrifice*, hath allowed his people to have mercy on themselves, rather than give up their lives for a sacrifice to others. Had it only been disgrace, or some lower damage, then they would not have advised him; but certainly life is a more solemn possession than to be so easily parted with.

This could not shake his integrity, he was far from despising life, but he knew of a *loving-kindness* that was transcendent to it; and if he could not have it consistent with the honour of the GOD that gave it, it is better lost than kept. Or,

2. It might be objected, that this would have been a loss to the public. Here is a king well inclined to

the *Jews*, and his moderation drew the hatred of an hundred and twenty Princes upon him. The government is scarce well settled, *Daniel* seems to be the chief security that it can have; and if he will not be persuaded to keep his life, all must fall into confusion. But,

He knew that God is never in that distress for his own cause, as to oblige any man to take one wrong step in order to promote it. It is no maxim in the politics that he gives us, to *do evil that good may come of it* (*t*). It is enough that when his Providence opens a door of being useful, his grace makes us so; but when that opportunity is gone, he hath designed us for his honour some other way. *Daniel* was as much an ornament to his religion in the den of lions, as he had been in the palace; and brought more glory to God by losing his place, than ever he could have done by keeping it.

3. They might urge, that this was only a decree for thirty days; and therefore it was but excusing himself from his duty so long, and he might return to it again without any danger; and certainly it was worth his while to baffle the project of a tricking party. But,

He that knew not what might *be brought forth in a day*, hath no mind to run any hazard for a month. What if God had cut him off before the end of that time? though he might die safely, yet a good man desires to be *found so doing*, in the actual course of his duty. And besides,

If this project did not take, after the thirty days, they would concert another; for their business was not to honour the King, but to exclude *Daniel*: therefore he makes a stand at first, to shew they have nothing to do with his conscience. And such an example we have from the Apostle to the *false brethren, who came in privily to spy out the liberty they had in Christ*;

Christ; to whom they gave place by subjection no not for an hour, that the truth of the Gospel might continue with them (u).

4. They might urge that there was no express command for his praying so many times a day; and therefore it might be lawful to make some omissions: that a neglect of worship is not so bad as running into sin. This is not a case so dangerous as the decree of *Nebuchadnezzar*, that obliged them to *fall down before the golden image that he had set up*. Here was only a waving what the extremity of the danger would not allow. But,

He acts up to this principle, that no human authority can make any limitations to his duty; and if he would not lose one season of Prayer to save his life, it is a reproach to those who let every little trifle come in the way of that duty, and do not *continue therein with perseverance*.

5. If he would do it, they might advise him to use all the secrecy that was possible. There was other houses more proper than his own, where the enemies could not find him, and thus he might preserve his conscience and interest too. But,

He knew how much honour it would bring to God, to make religion a condition of life; that he will not have the one without the other: therefore he goes where he used to do, into the place where he knew his enemies would seek him.

Thus you see what *Daniel* had to conquer before he went to the lions, and that no persuasion of this kind could touch him: he receives the sentence with more temper than the King could give it. And that leads me to,

(2.) The consequence of this matter, which I will only mention in four particulars.

1. His miraculous preservation: *God sent his Angel, and closed the mouths of the lions*, as he himself tells

the King. The brutes in the den were easier to him than those in the court: there goes more to the turning of a politician than the muzzling of a lion. What a testimony did God then give to the Word of his Grace?

Here I expect it will be replied, *Daniel* was an extraordinary man, one that had the spirit of prophecy; and it is no wonder if a person who forefaw his deliverance should venture into danger: but I think it is very plain he had no assurance of his escape. The three men that talked to *Nebuchadnezzar*, seemed to be under the direction of some hope; *Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us, yea and he will save us out of thy hands, O King (x)!* but we find nothing of that in this other case; unless you suppose *Darius* himself to be the Prophet, when he took his leave of him, *Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee (y).*

If you say that miracles are ceased, these things are not to be expected now; I do not see any foundation in Scripture for that opinion: we ought not to limit the Holy One of Israel. And as he did this by the care of an Angel, these continue *ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation*, and are readier at their office since CHRIST is got to a place above them: for when he brought again the first-begotten into the world, he said, *Let all the Angels of God worship him.* Nor is this matter so much out of the way as we may imagine: we are directed to live by faith, as the good people in all ages have done; and though it is not likely that our names will be so famous as theirs, yet the principle is the same. It was *by faith that the elders obtained a good report*; and one of the exploits that is recorded of it is, that faith hath *stopped the mouths of lions.*

2. The

(x) Dan. iii. 17.

(y) Dan. vi. 16.

(z) Hebrews xi. 2.

2. The punishment of his enemies. The lions who were under a restraint to *Daniel*, are at liberty when his accusers were tumbled down; for *they brake their bones before they could reach the bottom of the pit*. Here seems to be the cry of common justice against those men. Though very often when a bad law is repealed, the procurers of it may escape; yet *Darius* would have his vindication in the hearts of the whole land, when he emptied such a court into such a den: every mouth admired the sentence. Thus did God *plead the cause of his servants reproach: The Lord is known by the judgments that he executes, when the wicked is snared with the work of his own hands.*

3. His own advancement: he is restored to his dignity again. So that you see the believer serves a good master: losing any thing for him is but putting it out to usury; we receive in *this world an hundred fold, and in the world to come life everlasting*. And how different is the figure that *Daniel* made upon his Restoration, from what it would have been had he evaded the law? It might then have been said of him, here is a man that makes a noise about his religion, but we now know the rate of his conscience, the price that he will sell it at; he is more steady to his place than any thing else: this is an insinuation that the world will come into; it is but talking as Satan himself did against *Job*, *Put forth thy hand and touch his bone and flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face.* But,

Daniel hath it without any reproach of that kind: every one sees him fit to be set over the whole realm, and owns him the man whom *the King* of heaven and earth *delighteth to honour*: nor would there be any objection against what he saith of himself, *My God hath sent his Angel to shut the mouth of the lions that they might not hurt me, because before him innocency was found in me, and also before thee, O King! have I done no hurt.*

4. It ended in the greater advancement of religion : Darius wrote to all people, nations, and languages, and made a decree, That in every dominion of his kingdom, men should tremble and fear before the God of Daniel; for he is the living God, and stedfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end : he delivers and rescues, he works signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions (z). And doubtless this was dearer to the good man than any other benefits of his escape.

Such an integrity strikes the world with an awe, to see that you are guided by a principle that they took for nothing else but fancy. The great dispute is between earth and heaven, which is better and more deserving of our affections. Now, at such a time, the believer hath the casting of the scales left with him ; and plainly shews that the cause of God is never the worse for any shame and danger that goes along with it. And thus, *The trial of his faith, which was more precious than that of gold that perisheth, will be found to praise and glory at the coming of Jesus Christ.*

(z) Dan. vi. 26, 27.





S E R M O N XIII.

The A S S ; or, The S E R P E N T .

A Comparison between the Tribes of *Iffachar* and *Dan*, in their regard for CIVIL LIBERTY.



Preached NOVEMBER 5, 1712.



G E N. XLIX. 14—18.

Iffachar is a strong ass couching down between two burdens. And he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant; and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute. Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel. Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path; that biteth the horse-beels, so that his rider shall fall backward. I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord.

THESE words are part of the prophecy
T that *Jacob* dealt among his sons when *the*
days drew near that he must die (a); and
they let us see with what variety of temper
those people acted, who all grew from the
same father: a full argument how well the distinction
is formed, that *all are not Israel, who are of Israel:*
Neither

(a) Gen. xlvii. 29.

Neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children (b): he here opens out *what shall befall them in the latter days (c)*, and how they would carry it when they came into the promised land; and because some of them should have little or no taste of liberty, and others would pursue it through all the expence and danger that lay in their way, he places these two together, that every one who reads may do justice upon the plain opposition there is between them.

I shall consider the words, first, as they describe a people that are sluggish and cowardly, who will venture nothing to save all, whose souls are beneath knowing the distinction of bondage and freedom: and on the other hand, as they give us the character of those who admire their liberties, and will dare to seek and fetch them where-ever they are carried; who reckon this a property that should not be lost as long as it can be kept, and will scarce submit to an existence under tyranny.

In these two branches you have the division of the text; here is a tribe of *Israel* that gives us an example of each temper: *Iffachar* is remembered for his neglect of that which *Dan* was resolved upon no terms to part with: and by observing what good old *Jacob* saith of these two that were so unlike one another, we may fix the characters that are due to those who either despise or value the deliverance of *this day*.

I. I shall begin with the account that you have of *Iffachar*, whose passive obedience, if you will call it so, is condemned to memory by these words; *Iffachar is a strong ass couching down between two burdens: And he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant, and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant to tribute:* where you have three things:

1. The

(b) Rom. ix. 6, 7.

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(c) Gen. xlix. 1.

1. The general temper of this people.
2. The subjection and bondage they fell into. And,
3. The reason they gave for this stupidity.

(1.) You may observe, that many of the tribes have their history couched in a resemblance that is given of them: they are compared to some creature of that very disposition that should obtain among them: thus *Judab is a lion's whelp*; *Naphtali a bind let loose*; *Joseph a fruitful bough*; and *Benjamin a ravening wolf* (d). Now these allusions would convey to us such thoughts of the people as bear up to the account we have of them afterwards: they are most of them to be understood as a reputation; but what is said of *Iffachar*, is as full of contempt as a metaphor can be: we are to know him by his likeness to the most heavy and stupid animal in the creation. Instead of having his name from something vigorous and beautiful, his father leaves this upon him, that he is *a strong afs couching down between two burdens*. The ground of the similitude you see is the little relish they should have for their liberties, the sorry and dull surrender they would make of themselves to tyranny; which is a temper exposed in this comparison two ways:

1. It is imputed to nothing else but the stupidity of them that submit to it; the tribe that sinks into those measures is resembled by an *afs*.

2. It is condemned by the insinuation that it was in their power to have it otherways; *Iffachar is a strong afs*: that very strength that makes him couch under a load, would be sufficient to throw it off.

1. What the comparison leads me first to tell you is, that the foundation of all passive obedience is laid in stupidity. They that *couch down between two burdens, who bow their shoulders to bear, and become ser-*
vants

(d) Gen. xlix. 9, 21, 22, 27:

wants to tribute, may here see what herd they belong to.

Though an afs was more used in those eastern countries than it is with us, yet the Old Testament hath accounted of it as so mean a creature, that the comparison is very just: it seems to be made for no higher a design than drudgery, bearing of burdens, no way remarkable either for its head or its heels, so little capable of being taught, that the folly of our nature is signified by it, that man is *born as a wild afs's colt*: and though it is true in those parts we find the greatest men riding on them, yet it is a creature that the ceremonial law hath branded in a very peculiar way: it must upon no terms whatsoever be thrown among the offerings of the LORD: the command was very general, *Thou shalt set apart unto the Lord all that opens the matrix, and every firstling that comes of the beast which thou hast, the males shall be the Lord's (e)*. This law was laid out in that compass, to put them often in mind of the MESSIAH, who should be *the first-born of every creature*; yet to this there is one exception, and the only animal left out is, *every firstling of an afs thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, thou shalt break its neck*.

So that when *Jacob* speaks of *Issachar* under this comparison, it is a viler name than he could possibly leave him by another; and it may intimate to us, not only the stupidity of their nature that run into this crime, but a particular unfitness for the service of God. They seem to be the outcast of both worlds; they give up all that is dear to them in this, and shew a dulness that can have no room in the other. The way of serving God is *without fear, being delivered from the wrath of enemies, in holiness and righteousness all our days (f)*. *The fearful and unbelieving are in the front of those sinners who fill the lake of fire and brimstone.*

(e) Exod. xiii. 12, 13.

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(f) Luke i. 74, 75.

stone (g). You may always observe it, that an indifference to civil liberties goes along with a neglect of that which is religious: a man that throws away the blessings of Providence, cannot have a due relish to those of Grace.

Though submitting to the impious will of a Monarch hath been exalted as if it was *the one thing needful*, yet it is easy to prove, both by the rule of Scripture, and the histories of men, this is so far from containing the whole of Religion, that it really possesseth no one part of it: there can be no *Faith* in it, for that would both *purify the heart* and *conquer the world*. It was this that made *Moses forsake Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the King* (b). And there can be no *love*, I mean to God or his people, for that would teach us to value what the one gives and the other enjoys: and though this may be called *patience*, yet it is a prostitution of the name to a temper which hath none of the thing; for this grace shews itself in bearing a burden, not in laying it on. The over-ruling hand of God we must submit to, but this will consist with all the zeal we can use against the tools he employs. The distinction is a good one, and as old as *David*, who knew how different his behaviour ought to be: *If the Lord hath stirred thee up against me*, saith he to *Saul*, *let him accept an offering*, I have deserved it from him, and cannot answer him one of a thousand; *but if they be the children of men, cursed be they before the Lord* (i).

It is plain that people lose their Christianity with their liberties; and when once an incroaching power hath made them slaves, there needs little more to make them Heathens. The Ministers that preach up this doctrine, will soon understand no other: it shall drive faith, repentance and holiness out of the Pulpit, and instead of feeding the children *with bread*, they will give them *a stone*: in a little while we shall hear
nothing

(g) Rev. xxi. 8.
(b) Heb. xi. 27.

(i) 1 Sam. xxvi. 19.

nothing else but obedience to the lust of men, as if CHRIST had no other errand in laying down his life, than to make the Kings of the earth a compliment of ours; that as he was a *servant of Rulers*, we must be so too; as if no sin could be dangerous but what they call rebellion, and the terms of *procuring to ourselves damnation* were never to be used but in one case, which is resisting of a civil power. We shall seldom hear a better application of that awful argument; it is not so warmly pleaded to make us *flee from the wrath to come*, that *being warned of God concerning things not seen as yet, we may be moved with fear*: they will but seldom trouble their heads about the danger of debauchery, that *whoremongers and adulterers God will judge*: they will tell us but little of the hazard such are in, who are *lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God*, who blaspheme the whole scheme of Religion, and use that book to make them laugh, which makes *the Devils tremble*; who rush into the retirements of our worship, the ordinances that ought to be kept clean and holy; I say, we hear little of their danger, tho' the Scripture hath given us the same dreadful word in that case which agrees so well with them in the other: *They that eat and drink unworthily, eat and drink to themselves damnation (k)*. These are the incroachments that slavery will make upon our Religion.

But we *have not so learned Christ*. The Apostles that went about with the Gospel, were often claiming the privileges of the law. For this did Paul argue with the *Centurion* on the stairs of the castle, and would not let the Christian run away with the Roman: for this did he threaten to shake the government of *Philippi*, and refuse to take his liberty at that easy rate of going out of the prison; no, he was resolved to let those Magistrates know, that as the laws of the empire had given him a protection, so he would never

ver lose it for want of zeal; and though the jailor, who was but converted the night before, brought him the message, *they have sent to let you go, now then depart in peace*; yet he useth the advantage that innocence gave him over tyranny, *they have beaten us openly, and uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison, and now do they thrust us out privily, nay verily but let them come themselves and fetch us out (l)*. So tender was he of his privileges, that though he knew as much as any man how to despise the pomp of the world, yet in this case he will insist upon a ceremony that perhaps was never demanded before; that the Magistrates of the town should come to the prison door and beg pardon, and bring them out, whom through a mistake they had put in, and desire them to *depart from their city*. For this did he refuse to answer the summons of *Festus*, who would have betrayed him to his enemies, but *appealed to Cesar*; and from this principle did he deal so roundly with *Ananias*, *God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for sittest thou there to judge me according to the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law (m)?*

This is the spirit of our Religion, it allows none of the stupidity that *Iffachar* was run down into; for an *ass* can no more be a *pattern* under the Gospel, than it could be a *sacrifice* under the law. But it is enough we are told what sort of creatures they are, by the metaphor in my text; despicable to men, and rejected by GOD; made for service and contempt. The comparison gives us the lowest opinion of those to whom it belongs. They are by this represented as a stupid servile people, for the word fits their heads as well as their shoulders.

2. The crime of their *becoming servants to tribute*, is hinted at by the farther account we have of them, that they lay under no necessity of doing it: they had it in their power to be otherwise, and might have compelled

(l) Acts xvi. 36, 37.

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(m) Acts xxiii. 3.

compelled a better lot for themselves and their posterity. Had they been drained and weakned, and sunk down to an inability, that which was now both their sin and punishment, had been only the latter. But *Iffachar* was a *strong afs*, able to refuse a load as well as to bear it.

Several annotators give us this note from the *Hebrew* word, that he was an *afs of bone*; which perhaps is a farther contempt of him, to tell us his want of spirit, as if he was only outside, a mere shell and frame of nature: and indeed they who so tamely give up all that can be dear, shew but little soul in that surrender. But I shall take the words in the first sense I gave you of them, that he is called a *strong afs*; to signify, that he had capacity to have done otherwise, only he wanted heart and courage to use it. He that *couched down between two burdens*, might easily have protested against one; he that *bowed his shoulder to bear*, could have clothed it with armour: and the wealth with which he paid his *tribute as a servant*, might have led him into the field as a rival.

All the instances that we have in Scripture of submission to an unrighteous power, represent the people as not able to do otherwise. We never once find a good man neglecting to resist an injustice when he could do it. *Moses* indeed fled from *Pharaoh*, because he had no prospect of conquering him; but when he had to do only with a single *Egyptian*, who was *smiting one of his brethren*, he is no longer about it than whilst *he looks this way and that way*, and then he *kills him, and bideth him in the sand* (n): and this is so far from having the censure that a slave would give it, that upon that action he was in hopes to have raised his public character, and by this justice upon the officer, thought to have led on that of the people upon the King, as the martyr *Stephen* tells us; for he brings in this as the reason why, *seeing one of the Jews suffer*

(n) Exod. ii. 11, 12.

suffer wrong, be avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian, because he supposed his brethren would have understood, how that by his hand God would have delivered them, but they understood not (o). If their zeal would have come on as fast as his would have led it, they would have been saved then; but they lost forty years by their unbelief. David run away from Saul, when he had no friend to stand by him, but he put himself at the head of a little army as soon as he could; and the only reason why he did not give him battle was, because he had not force enough: but when those great numbers came to him every day, he makes no scruple to go out into the field, for there fell some of Manasseh to David when he came with the Philistines against Saul to battle (p).

A just and holy God may indeed deliver us over to the will of evil men, but to say that he would have us deliver up ourselves, is to blaspheme his empire; for *he hath no fellowship with the thrones of iniquity, who frame mischief by a law (q).* That which held Zion in captivity, was GOD's making *her strength to fail; he had delivered her into their hands against whom she was not able to rise up (r):* but when she had more strength, there is a new exhortation to use it; *Shake thyself from the dust, O Jerusalem; loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O thou captive daughter of Zion (s).*

In these two things you have the woful temper of this people; they were stupid, and not to be imprest by a generous argument; and though it is true, they had strength and capacity, yet it was all thrown away upon a lazy nature that would not use it. *Issachar is a strong afs couching down between two burdens.*

(2.) We have the folly of their behaviour, and are told, how soon they parted with their liberties. And

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here

(o) Acts vii. 24, 25.

(p) 1 Chron. xii. 19.

(q) Psal. xciv. 20.

(r) Lam. i. 14.

(s) Isai. lii. 2.

here you meet with bondage in every form and shape. Here is oppression in all its weight, *he falls between two burdens.* Here is a slavery to his person, *his shoulder is brought to bear* what they lay upon him. Here is poverty in his concerns, *he becomes a servant to tribute*; and here is a necessity for him to be active in all this. Oppression stupifies the faculties, *he coucheth down beneath his burdens*, he bows his shoulder, he consents to be a servant: What a gulph of perdition was this people sunk into? Whither will tyranny lead those who have the heart to follow it? Can we ever begin to stop too soon, when it will be so dreadful to have it too late?

1. You observe here what weight this oppression was laid on with: it was not what *Rehoboam* threatned, *the heaviness of a little finger*; but *he couches down between two burdens.*

Some translate this between two hills; and understand it of the situation that *Iffachar* had in the land of *Canaan*: others suppose that it refers to the quarrels they might have with those two tribes that lay on each side of them; but the words seem to tell us what a load of misery they had brought themselves under.

Tyrants, who know no justice, will allow no mercy: they never think their grandeur advanced high enough; they will set no bounds to the lust of empire, but let it rove in all the license of their own fancy. Do not imagine that there is any dealing with an arbitrary government. Laws are only shackles upon you, but no rule to them. *Some remove land marks, they violently take away jacks and feed thereon, they turn the needy out of the way, the poor of the earth hide themselves together: Behold as the wild asses of the desert they go forth to work, rising burdens for a prey, and it is the tame asses of the villages that fall into their hands: they cause the naked to go without clothing, he hath no covering in the cold; they pluck the fatherless from the breast, and take a pledge of the poor; they take away the sheaf from the hungry:*

Men groan out of the city, and the soul of the wounded cries out (t).

If you would not *couch down between two burdens*, you must enter an effectual protest against one: for they that submit will, in a little time, be brought to that pass; *Her carriages were heavy loaden, they are a burden to the weary beast, they stoop, they bow down together, they could not deliver their burden, but themselves are gone into captivity (u).* Thus did the Ammonites with the men of *Jabesh Gilead*; though the poor people would have submitted themselves unto them, yet they will allow of no easier terms than *thrusting out the right eye, and laying it as a reproach upon all Israel (x).* So unlimited did *Ben hadad* make himself, in the court of a man, who had gone too far, in saying, *My Lord, O King, I am thine, and all that I have*: he does not only claim *his silver and gold*, but *his wives and children*; and would send his servants the next day to take out what was pleasant in their eyes.

This made *David* rather choose to *fall into the hands of God, than into those of man*: not but that the former could have destroyed him with more expedition than the latter; but *with the Lord there was mercy*, with men there is none. And indeed the process hath been very short; when once a tyrant hath said your laws were his, he hath soon come to affirm your lives were so too. And therefore it is the same thing, being his vassals, and being his cattle. All that you have *pertaining to life and godliness*, is thrown in as a morsel to *Cesar*: *They take up all of them with the angle, they catch them with their net, and gather them in their drag, therefore they rejoice and are glad; they will empty continually, and not spare to slay the nations (y).* And how unhappy must the case of a people be, who never know when they have done suffering? Such a

T 2

government

(t) Job xxiv. 2, 3. &c.

(u) Isai. xlvi. 1, 2.

(x) 1 Sam. xi. 2.

(y) Hab. i. 17.

government upon earth resembles one of the worst ideas that we have of hell; where there is *no sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for of more judgment and new indignation.*

2. Their persons were made vile and contemptible, *they bow their shoulders to bear.* There are some usages which God always reckoned an indignity to human nature. It is for this reason that he limited the number of stripes that were to be given to a malefactor, *lest thy brother seem vile to thee:* And the statute of murder is laid out upon this ground, that *in the image of God made he man.* Such an oppression did the *Jews* live under in *Egypt*; their burdens were very grievous in the *brick-kilns*, the task-masters obliged them to their whole quantity of work though they denied them *straw*, and then punished them for not doing what they knew to be impossible.

When this comes to be the lot of such as give up their liberties, the justice of God calls for our adoration; they that have *lived in pleasure and vanity*, are most likely to make a sale of all that they have; they have *eaten the bread of idleness*, and how righteous is it with heaven to give them that of sorrow? that they who are *brought up in scarlet*, should embrace *dungkils*? This is one consequence of slavery; and it fell heavily upon the Priests at *Jerusalem*, who might remember their sin in their punishment: they that used to lead the blind, came to *wander as blind men in the streets*, and so *polluted with blood*, that men could not touch their garments: *the anger of the Lord divided them, and he would no more regard them* (z). An absolute government swallows as fast as you can give, and what will this come to in time? *But the hanging up of Princes by the hand, not honouring the faces of the elders, taking the young men to grind, and making the children fall under the wood* (a).

3. If

(z) Lam. iv. 14.

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(a) Lam. v. 12, 13.

3. It runs out into poverty. This *paying of tribute*, must be understood of excessive taxes; impositions that are enough to drain a country: not what a people consent to for their own defence, but what are extorted from them. And then what signifies the goodness of the land, when the profits are offered up as a sacrifice to the luxury of a stranger? Thus hath *a fruitful land been brought into barrenness. The houses of the people were made a dunghil; and they that have lived in the midst of plenty, sought their bread to relieve their souls.* They consent to the lowest terms merely to enjoy what nature had made their own: *We have given the hand to the Assyrian to be satisfied with bread; and, better are they that perish by the sword, than such as are stricken through for want of the fruits of the field (b):* it was a dreadful article in their judgment, *thine enemy shall distress thee in all thy gates (c).*

4. That which makes the case deplorable to the last degree is, that the people themselves concur in it, either through a necessity, or the habit of bondage. *They bow their own shoulder to bear; and, by an unaccountable mixture of choice and force, become servants to tribute.* When a nation hath given up their liberties, they do not only lose the thing, but all the taste they used to have of it.

And this may be considered both as a growing vice, and a stupidity that the righteous God hath sealed them up under. The misery of such a case hath this in it, that the people are never likely to *remember from whence they are fallen, or do their first works; they sleep a perpetual sleep, and do not awake.* It is not a damage that sets them a thinking, or warms a powerful zeal to recover what they have lost; but by a long course of subjection it becomes their own act.

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(3). I

(b) Lam. v. 6.

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(c) Deut. xxviii. 55.

(3.) I will inquire into the reasons they give for this neglect of themselves, or what it is they get in exchange for their liberties; and you find there are two things that leave them under the power of this infatuation.

1. What they reckon the favour of the enemy, *they saw that rest was good.*

2. The natural advantages of their country, *the land it was pleasant.*

1. *They see that rest is good*; which shews us how their judgment is perverted, to suppose that there can be any such thing as *rest*, while the yoke of tyranny hangs upon their shoulders. Now, this opinion hath its only root in cowardise and laziness. They dread the noble toil of war, though the hazards people run that way, are far from being equal to those of a slavish temper; you can scarce lose so much by venturing, as you give away by submitting. Whilst the *Jews* resisted *Sennacherib*, they had what we call a chance for it; but he tells them roundly, if they *made an agreement with him by presents*, it must end in his *taking them away from their own land*. *And is this the rest wherewith they would cause the weary to lie down?* is this all that a people get by throwing themselves upon the mercy of a tyrant? we may well say, *Arise and depart, this is not your rest, because it is polluted (d).*

2. The benefits of their country was another thing that softened them into this compliance, *they saw that the land was pleasant*. They had no mind to be carried off, because here was enough for their own necessity, and for the humour of him to whom they paid tribute. But what a poor argument is this? if the place was so *good*, it deserved to be fought for; if the produce of nature there was so great, it is pity that they should have all the profit who had none of the pains. Thus they pleaded upon their return out of captivity,

captivity, *The land that thou hast given to our fathers, to eat the fruit thereof, and the good thereof, behold we are servants in it; and it yields much increase to the kings whom thou hast set over us because of our sins; also they have dominion over our bodies, and over our cattle at their pleasure, and we are in great distress (e).*

Thus have I laid out to you the former of these characters, and shewn you how poor a figure *Iffachar* made in the world. But,

II. We have an account of better things in the blessing that he pronounceth upon another tribe. *Dan shall judge his people like one of the tribes of Israel: Dan shall be a serpent by the way, and an adder in the path, that bites his horse's heels, so that his rider falls backward. I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord.*

What is said of this brave people, is so plain a reverse to the meanness of the other, that a very little enlargement will serve here.

1. He begins with a new sort of language to give us the description of these. What they did would be worthy the name they derived from their father; *Dan shall judge his people like one of the tribes of Israel.*

2. We have the measures that he will take in order to it; and that is, the use both of his policy and courage: he is like *a serpent by the way, and an adder in the path*; and, rather than be trampled on, *he will bite the horses heels*; he will undermine the foundations of tyranny, *so that the rider shall fall backward.*

3. These noble designs are what *Jacob* recommends to the blessing of God, in that prophetic rapture, *I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord.*

(1.) We have a general honour put upon them. *Dan shall judge his people like one of the tribes of Israel.* What judging of his people means, I had occasion to shew you the last year, that it includes an execution

of their laws, and a defending of their liberties from any that would oppress them. And this we find that *Samson* did, who was of that tribe, and paid less regard to an enemy, in whose country he lived, than any of the judges. Now, do but consider how this is placed in a full opposition to what was said of *Isaacbar*; and from thence you may collect, that those rulers do not judge their people, who persuade them to bow down under two burdens: these are inconsistent with one another.

But what I would observe to you, is, the honourable turn he gives this, that it is doing like one of the tribes of *Israel*: as if they that neglect it were sunk below the name. But *Dan* kept up the dignity of his family, and shewed that his descent from so many Patriarchs was not in vain. Those ancient worthies, whom God had called out from the rest of the world, led him the way to it. One of the most remarkable things that *Abraham* did in a public manner, was the taking of five kings captive (f); though the people, in whose quarrel he mingled himself, are the first rebels we read of: he had armour ready for three hundred and eighteen men, trained up in his house. Upon his return from this slaughter, *Melchisedek*, the priest of the most high God, meets him, and gives him a solemn blessing in his name who is the possessor of heaven and earth. And though it is true, he refused to be made rich by the spoils, yet the right that he had to bring down and plunder so many tyrants, appears from his paying tithes to *Melchisedek*; for we cannot think that he would have brought robbery for a burnt-offering. *Jacob* recovered a part of the land with his sword, and his bow, out of the hand of the *Amorites*; nay, he had the name of *Israel* given him in the field of battle, because by his strength he laid hold of the angel, and had power both with God and man, and prevailed: so that cowardice, in any of his posterity,

(f) Gen. xiii. 1, 2.

posterity, was a departure from that noble spirit their fathers had been eminent for.

And especially, if you will consider them as a people set apart to the worship of GOD, they were bound to run all hazards in defending what he gave them. When they were frightened with the *Anakims*, faint-hearted, and durst not go on, it was acting so far below themselves, that he will scarce own them to be his people; but says, that it is *a generation that do err in their hearts, they knew not his ways*. Their spirits had a wrong turn, and he swore, *that they shall never enter into his rest*; and if they should allow an enemy to break in upon the land of their possession, it was dishonourable to their name: but *Dan* bears up the old figure, and in *judging of his people, is like one of the tribes of Israel*.

(2.) Here are three ways that he takes to do it. Where you may observe,

1. The policy and wisdom of this people: they are compared to *serpents* and *adders*.

2. Their courage, or the hazard they run: they will throw themselves into the *path*, venture being crushed, rather than lose their end.

3. Their resolution to have the blessing whatever it cost them: if they cannot dismount a tyrant by mere force, they will *bite his horse's heels, so that the rider shall fall backward*.

1. They are represented as a wife and well instructed people; *a serpent in the way, an adder in the path*. Doubtless *Issachar* thought it a good *prudential* to humble themselves, and hold their lives upon no other tenure than the will of a prince; but *this their way was their folly*. *Dan* takes his maxims as they rise from the plain welfare of the community: he will neither be hector'd nor wheedled out of his privileges; he will lose them neither by war nor treaty: as he is serpent enough to understand what is best for him;

him; so, like *the adder*, he stops his ears against the voice of the charmer, charming never so wisely.

The want of such a spirit is the preface of ruin. *Thou hast hid their hearts from understanding, therefore thou shalt not exalt them* (g). CHRIST himself hath bid his people take to them the wisdom of the serpent; though here I would not have you mistake this for the mere *wrigling* of that creature. Fraud and artifice, lurking ways, and lying words, are as much below the wisdom that will save a nation, as they are against the honesty that must save a soul. Those men that came to *David*, and had understanding of the times, and knew what *Israel* ought to do, found that the wisdom of the serpent was consistent with the innocence of the dove.

2. Besides a capacity to contrive what is best, here is a courage to execute it. This is a tribe that *Moses* speaks well of in the blessing that he gave them. *Dan is a lion's whelp, and he shall leap from Bashan* (b). And we may observe a character of that sort in the verse before us, that he will venture himself as *a serpent in the way, as an adder in the path*; he will run the hazard of being trampled under foot, rather than take up with the poor and scanty terms that an enemy gives him. It is better being crushed at once, than condemned to a miserable existence: and these are things that will deliver a people over to the voice of fame: the good esteem and hearty wishes of the world will be to such as *offer themselves willingly, and jeopard their lives in the high places of the field*.

3. They are determined to have the blessing at any expence: nor will they lose things for want of mere names and forms; they will endeavour to bring down a tyrant by his own methods, if all the rest shall fail: and when he designs to ride over Liberty and Religion, if they cannot stop his career, they will break his neck; the

(g) Job xvii. 4.

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(b) Deut. xxxiii. 22.

the very *horse's heels*, which should have ruined them, shall receive the wound that will prove fatal to him. And indeed when a people are thus inclined to *loose the bands* of their captivity, it is no very hard matter to humble the wicked by the measures they have taken. Violence and iniquity do not so easily carry their load, but in a little time, their *rider may fall backward*.

(3.) When *Jacob* hath thus described his son by the brave measures that he will take, he recommends the whole design to the blessing of God; *I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord*.

Some imagine that the good old Patriarch was, at this time, almost spent upon his death-bed with going so far as he had done; and in these words he takes breath again: others think there is in them the horror of that idolatry that he saw the tribe of *Dan* would run into. But if you will take them for a pause, it is a sign, that what he had said of a people getting back their liberties, was of so much value with him, that his soul can rest a while upon it, before he proceeds to the other blessings.

Or you may understand it, as several would do, for a personal wish, *q. d.* "Let me turn aside for a moment from telling what will happen to you, and spend one thought upon myself. You hear what *Issachar* will give up, and *Dan* retrieve; but these things belong to a world I am going from. There is something nearer me than your prosperity; *I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord.*" If you take it thus, it tells us, That for good men to know that they who come after them will be zealous for God, and truly concerned for the public interest, is one cordial in a dying hour; as *David* saith to *Solomon*, *I go the way of all the earth; but be thou strong, and shew thyself a man (i).*

But I see no reason why *the salvation* that he *waited for*, may not be connected to the ways that *Dan* would take

take in *judging his people*. And then it includes in it these three things.

1. His hearty wishes to so good a cause, *q. d.*
 “ This will be thy temper, and my blessing go along
 “ with it. It is what I think of with pleasure, and in
 “ some of my last breath commit thee to the favour
 “ of heaven: *The God before whom my fathers walked,*
 “ *the Angel that redeemed me from all evil, establish the*
 “ *work of thine hand.*”

And this we have had many examples of; though good people were just at the gates of glory, yet they could not take leave of those that stayed behind, without a testimony for the cause they had been engaged in: which ought to be of the greatest value with us, that such a number of excellent persons have died praying for *the peace of our Jerusalem*. They have spoke well of the Liberties of mankind, when themselves were leaving all things of that sort; and we cannot think that God would let them go out of the world, either with a lie in their mouths, or a trifle in their hearts.

2. When he adds, *I have waited for thy salvation*; it may be understood as a direction to those brave people, to tell them, they must hope for success in a religious way. Second causes are employed; but the good old man would let them know, that *their salvation is of the Lord*: and if they will conquer in earnest, they must be a people that *wait for it*.

This comprehends the duty that they owe to him, their dependence upon his care, their jealousy for his honour. The profane, the unclean, the evil doers do not come into the number. If they have any hopes of being delivered, it is from something else, *for God is not in all their thoughts*. They that use his name without reverence, and his people without pity, cannot think that he hath any pleasure in their ways. But *Jacob* would have them give all their counsels and attempts a serious tincture, for when *the high praises*
 of

of God are in their mouths, it will add a weight to the two-edged sword that is in their hands (k).

3. This seems to be an act of his faith in the great MESSIAH; for it is under this name that another good old man received him: *Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation (l)*. Nor could this be thought improper to mingle with the zeal they had for civil liberties: it was by a faith in him that the elders obtained a good report, in *subduing kingdoms, working righteousness, stopping the mouths of lions, waxing valiant in fight, and turning to flight the armies of the aliens (m)*. The believer hath in him the truest courage. There is nothing in any one doctrine of Christianity that will tie up the hands of an injured people. One that hath *tasted that the Lord is gracious*, must have pity to the desolations of mankind. He cannot endure to see that nature ruined by a tyrant, that hath been honoured by a SAVIOUR.

And then besides, as the kingdom of a MESSIAH extends itself, it will *proclaim liberty to the captives*. It is an institution, as well as a prophecy, that there shall be *no hurting nor destroying in all his holy mountain*; and he is then said to *take to himself his great power and reign, when he destroys them that destroy the earth (n)*.

And again, one that hath faith in JESUS, is waiting for that time, when *Kings shall shut their mouths at him; Princes shall see and arise*, and he will *strike through Monarchs in the day of his wrath*, and wrench his glory out of their hands who have taken it from him.

Again, waiting for salvation, prepares a man for the day of battle. A Christian does not fight upon those hazards that others do, who lose two lives at once, that which drops in the field, and that which is eternal

(k) Psal. cxlix. 6.

(l) Luke ii. 29, 30.

(m) Heb. xi. 33, 34.

(n) Rev. xi. 18.

eternal. The believer in these dangers takes himself to be *fighting the good fight, and keeping the faith*; and if *his course* is at an end in this attempt, it will be *finished with joy*.

And thus have I set before you the two tempers that distinguished these tribes. Here is *death and life, and cursing and blessing*: the choice must now be your own act. My time hath suffered me to do little more than take the words to pieces, and consider the parts of them asunder; you will easily apply what you have heard these two ways.

1. Into a full repentment of those doctrines that would persuade you out of your liberties upon the same terms that *Iffachar* parted with theirs. It is pity that human nature itself should be so far debased; but it is with an aggravation that we see the holy name of CHRIST hath been blasphemed; that those mysteries must be our choice, which was the *Romans* abhorrence; as the Apostle saith in another case; it is *a fornication not so much as named among the Gentiles*. Do not take it for a small matter, for at this gap do they throw in all the superstitions of worship, their *damnable doctrines*, as well as their cruel measures. It is by this means they will steal away your Religion, and fill the nation with darkness and blood.

2. This calls us up to the praises of God, who delivered us from the stupidity of *Iffachar*, and inspired us with the temper of *Dan*, at our Revolution.

I am sensible this mercy hath had all the regards that the children of *Israel* gave to the *manna* which fell from heaven. At first we gathered it, we tasted it, lived upon it, and reckoned it *angels food*; now it is but *light bread*, and we want *flesh to eat*; nay, as it is said of *Sodom*, we are *going out after strange flesh*: and I doubt not but the parallel would hold farther, that it must come as soon *out of our nostrils* as it did out of theirs. What they desired in their *lust*, they enjoyed with

with a plague, for ere it was chewed, while it was yet between their teeth, the wrath of God fell upon them.

But I would recommend the great things that he hath done for us to your value and care; and this can be expressed in no better way, than by *walking in the light, while we have the light; a conversation that becomes the Gospel; an abhorrence of any thing that would mingle with your Religion, or defile your Practice; a pity to the poor Protestants in France, upon whom the clouds have returned after the rain; a having no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.* And whoever they are that have no compassion for blood, no reverence for leagues, *O my sou!! come not thou into their secret, unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united! for in their anger they slew a man, and in their self-will they digged down a wall: let such counsel of the wicked be far from me. I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord!*







S E R M O N XIV.



P R E F A C E.

THE last year I published a fifth of *November*
T Sermon, under this name, *The asp, or the*
serpent; or a comparison between the tribes
of Issachar and Dan, in their regard for
civil liberty. Though this title is founded on the
very words of my text, yet I believe the oddness of it
has made some people uneasy. The *Examiner*, who
is hired to abuse those that are singled out for him,
and the *Post-Boy*, who is commanded to do it, have
each of them, in their different ways, treated me as
they have done the best men in the nation; and I
think it so far from a dishonour to have my name
thrown into those papers, which are but the common-
shore of scandal, that it gives me a satisfaction to be
numbered with persons whose works praise them in the
gates. And it is a pleasure that I have not done any
thing vile enough against the Protestant Religion,
and the Liberties of my country, to be commended
by those two authors. Let them write and rail on,
they are just in that very way with me that I wish
for.

Another gentleman, who has a mind to be as ob-
scure as his works are, has writ a pamphlet, which
he calls (as he truly may) *Some short Reflections upon*

Mr Bradbury's late libel, &c. The sum of this book, is to make a rumbling with *rabbies, fathers*, and modern furies; then to represent me as dangerous to the government, that it is time our Toleration was taken away; and to support these ill-natured whims, he has given such passages as quotations out of my Sermon, which every reader knows were never in it. This could only be possible to one who has taken care not to be known, that he may be in no danger of blushing. We are now pestered in all our assemblies, both religious and civil, with a sort of officers, called *Lions*; to those political brutes I would recommend my friend, and those of his reach, as a good sett of *Jackalls*. If it is the person I take it for, he has writ a great many little books, and to so little purpose, that as he never was answered, so I dare engage he never will be; for it will be always impossible to confute a way of arguing, which it is scandalous to imitate.

Besides these, I have a whole preface flung at me by a clergyman of *yearly fame*, Mr *Luke Milbourne*, who at certain times does duly tell us, that he is *Presbyter of the church of England*. From him, I must confess, I expected to have at least good words. A man that has writ a translation of the *Psalms* and *Thomas a Kempis*, and was so conscious to his sufficiency in poetry, as to give us notes upon *Dryden's Virgil*; from such an one, who would not promise himself an easier temper and much politer language than a poor *muddy curate* can come up to? But, alas! how dangerous is it for a fine pen to write *thirtieth of January Sermons*, or any thing in defence of an *ass*, or a *tory*? you shall see how soft and clean his stile is: he tells us, that “*he read the ass in every*
 “ *page; that the preacher of this discourse is II. Pe-*
 “ *ters junior, alias Thomas Bradbury, a predicant of*
 “ *D. W. mission,*” (that phrase wants a note more than *Dryden* did) “*and blessed almost with a double portion*
 “ *of*

“ of his ordinary fiery spirit, and ungrateful insolence.” After this, he gives me a name that may run very easy off his tongue, but I dare hardly venture it upon mine, a *theological boutefeu*. He has pronounced this sentence upon that small work, that “ it is the most consummate piece of ignorance and impudence that ever was vented since the days of his ancestor Hugh of infamous memory :” and he is so pleased with making himself my godfather by this title, that young Hugh and second Peters come over and over again. I can away with his calling me a “ presumptuous son of ignorance, and outrageous incendiary,” when he has thrown off the command of modesty, justice and reason so far, as to comprehend the whole body of Dissenters in this character, “ They are a tribe of strong asses, couching down between two burdens, atheism and phanaticism.”

I must confess, I have no inclination to venture myself into a quarrel with one who is troubled with a *chronical fury*, and especially so near the return of his *fit* ; but the deference I owe to that *good cause*, which to me appears both true and glorious, has so much command over me, that I will give my free thoughts upon every thing that bears the face of an argument against it in his Preface and Sermon. I find he lays a great deal of weight upon any good that is said of an *ass*, or of *Issachar* in scripture, or any thing ill that we read of in the *serpent*, or the tribe of *Dan*. Nay, he pretends to hook me upon “ valuing those, who like the adder stop their ears to the voice of the charmer, though he charm never so wisely.” But, if this must go for reasoning, I do not see how any one comparison in the Bible can give us the least idea of ~~our~~ right or wrong. There are few allusions that may not be turned several ways, and the same metaphor does equally serve a commendation, and a reproach. Will any one say that when a wicked ruler over a poor people is called a *roaring lion*, that it is

with a reputation to him, (*Prov. xxv. 15.*) because GOD himself has expressed his own providence by that similitude, (*Isa. xxxi. 4.*)? or can there be a person so weak and wicked as to think better of a *thief in the night*, from our LORD's resembling his own coming by it? It is no fault in the serpent (if she has that faculty) to *stop her ear against the charmers*; if nature has given her that defence against an enemy, it is to be used; and yet this thing that is innocent enough in that creature, may be a proper allusion to the vileness of those great ones that *will not speak righteously, nor judge uprightly, but weigh the violence of their hands in the earth*, *Psal. lviii. 1, 2, 4, 5.*

He insinuates, that this could not be understood in a contempt of *Jissachar*; "first, *because it is called Jacob's blessing his sons*; and secondly, *Moses speaks well of that tribe.*" But how little sway these things ought to have, will soon appear; it is said that *he blessed every one of them according to his blessing*; but it is impossible to understand all that he says of them in that sense. Was it blessing *Reuben*, when he called him *unstable as water*, and foretold he *should not excel*? I am afraid, by the spirit that foams in some late sermons, that we have preachers who would like the temper of *Simeon and Levi*, in being *brethren* and having *instruments of cruelty in their habitations: in their anger they will slay a man, and in their self-will dig down a wall*; but certainly they are not so mad as to call the lot of these two tribes a blessing; when their pious father (who might foresee that the priesthood would spring from one of them) said, *Curst be their anger, for it was fierce, and their wrath, for it was cruel; I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.* I do not suppose that *Moses's* blessing was inconsistent with *Jacob's*; and yet the one may admire the very tribe that the other condemns, because all that descended from it were neither

involved

involved in one guilt, nor sharers in the same glory. *Jacob* calls *Simeon* and *Levi* murderers, and truce-breakers; *Moses* saith nothing at all of the former, but the latter he admires for what they did in the great revolt at *Massab* and *Meribab*, and recommends him to the blessing of God as *his holy one*.

The little stings that he has at those of a former generation, calling them “*rebellious saints, execrable regicides, whom God permitted to go out of the world with a lie in their mouths;*” are so profane and unbecoming one who knows that *vengeance belongs to God*, and so needless fifty years after their deaths, and is such a railing accusation as *Michael the arch-angel durst not use to the devil himself*, that I will not retort it. Though what does this gentleman think of *Fenwick, Friend, Parkins, Charnock, Rookwood, Ashton*, and others who were executed for a design of murdering King *William*, fairly proved upon them; and yet avowed it, had absolution given them, and declared it *agreeable to the doctrine of the church of England*? His flirts at *the original contract*, and telling us, that “*all these civil liberties are but the chimeras of our own brain,*” shews that the Revolution is a mystery to him, if it be not a burden. In that great and noble vote that *loosed the bands from our necks*, the Lords and Commons declared, that King *James* had broke the *original contract*: and how well it becomes a man who is so afraid to *speak evil of dignities*, to be merry with the solemnity of these terms, is what the world will judge of. Would he persuade us that there is no such thing as Liberty? or does he think that a few noisy unconnected sentences, which may do well enough for a rattle, must ever pass for an argument? He covers his reflections by saying, that “*what the ten tribes got by their revolt was what we would now be at, viz. A toleration of any religion but the true;*” which is false both in us and them. Till he could prove it against me, either as

my declared opinion, or a natural consequence from my principles, he should not condemn me as guilty of that which I reckon the vilest slander in the world, *viz.* the hindring any from the worship of God, according to the best light they have. The ten tribes did not bring idolatry into their *claim of right*, they complained of a *heavy yoke upon them*, which the King, upon the advice of his *new Ministry* threatened to make worse; for this they *rebelled*, and did well in it: there was a divine prophecy and approbation upon that great act; and it is a thing not blamed in Scripture, that when *Rehoboam* sent *Adoram*, who was *over the tribute*, and therefore it is likely had multiplied their taxes, that *they stoned him, and he died*. *Jeroboam* was not guilty in having another throne, but in filling the worship of God with human inventions. It was by this, and not his rebellion, that *he made Israel to sin*.

His violence to expressions that are easy enough, is below a man of such learning as I know he has, and the temper that I hear runs through his conversation. Thus, because I had said that the *fearful and unbelieving* stand in the front of sinners, (*Rev. xxi*) he saith, "I pretend to fill hell with those that *fear God and the King*, and am against *working out my salvation with fear and trembling*, and am for *feeding myself without fear*, and am like the *Leviathan, made without fear*." Certainly this man's concordance is to him only a heap of stones, that he may pelt as long as a word lasts.

He surprises me with saying, that "he never writ for passive obedience;" and if so, Why is he thus angry that I have writ against it? The examples that he produces out of Scripture, I shall consider; but his *Tiebean Legion* he may take back again if he pleases. What does he mean by '*Moses's* not opposing *Pharaoh*, and saying, that *he was then at the head of the greater army*?' Were not *Israel* apprehensive of

of their danger? Whatever they might be in numbers, they were unarmed against *all the glory of Egypt*. *Pharaoh* thought himself secure of them, and made no doubt of it when he said, *I will pursue, I will overtake, I will destroy, &c.* And could *Moses* tie his hands with any sense of allegiance? Was *Pharaoh* then their Sovereign? *David's* carriage to *Saul*, I have considered in the following Sermon: but I wonder he should bring *Abab's* surviving the murder of *Naboth*, as an instance that Kings are to do what mischief they will, and none is to withstand them. Did not the Prophet tell him upon that wickedness, *that he sold himself to do evil, and that where the dogs had licked Naboth's blood, they should lick his?* And was not *Jehu* anointed to cut off the house of *Abab* his master? And to inspire him in that act of national justice, the night before he did it, God brought fresh upon his mind *the blood of Naboth*. I know that *Jezebel* talked very much the language of our author; she that made God her jest, and the King her tool, proclaimed a fast, and had a man condemned for blaspheming God and the King: she was full of history and zeal against Regicides, and could clamour as loud from a window, as some do from a pulpit, *Had Zimri peace that slew his master?* Though her whoredoms and witchcrafts are so many, yet she gets into all the cant of loyalty; but as *God is not to be mocked*, so her name is branded, her end is dreadful, they hurled her down in a moment, for the horses to trample, and the dogs to eat.

He has drawn up one charge against me, which if true, it is pity I should ever enter the pulpit; and if false, it is as great a shame that he should: 'I cannot find, says he, one single text quoted, but which he has blasphemed, profaned and ridiculed to the utmost of his power.' This is a great deal more than *mistaking a Scripture*; that is what I am as liable to as another, and I thank this author for giving me one instance of it. I had said that *Abraham led five*

Kings captive, which I own was a wrong both to the story, and to my argument; for it is plain, he *killed* them, which I might have remembered from the *New Testament*, as well as the *Old*. The Apostle thought it an action so glorious, that he gives us the time of *Melchizedek's* meeting him, it was *as he returned from the slaughter of the Kings*; and if this Gentleman or any one else will shew me that I have mistaken a text, I shall freely own myself his profelyte; but for blaspheming, profaning and ridiculing that Word which I take for my *only rule* of faith, worship and practice, and by which I know *the secrets of all hearts will be judged*, it is what I have always abhorred, and, thro' the grace of God, shall never allow myself in.

He is so afraid of coming into temper, that when he owns I have said well, and cannot find in his heart to rail at *me*, he turns his fury upon the *good old cause*, and tells us that 'the friends of that carry on all their ' designs by fraud and lying.' What is that to me if they do? I will own that a blessing will not go along with such measures as destroy the justice and equity that should keep the world together; and whoever they are that break solemn leagues, that take oaths to one Prince and think of another, that abjure the same creature as an imposture whom they wish for as a Sovereign, that endeavour to fill one House of Parliament with a gush of new members, and the other by mobbing and bribing, who can advise the polling of men in their graves, the *Indies*, or such as have no right; let their party be what it will, I am so far from approving of such ways, that though they be sprung from the good old cause itself, *may their end be according to their works*. However I cannot but let the author know, he is either unacquainted with that story, or has a mind that others should be so; had he read my Lord *Clarendon's* account, and resolved to be honest, he would fill his pages with something more to the purpose than *noisy exclamations*, that convince
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the world of nothing but the writer's emptiness. I have read many a Thirtieth of *January* Sermon, and they are so much the same that I can observe very little new in them but a transposition of terms: let but any one take a few rattling words for his materials, such as Schismatics, Atheists, Rebels, Traitors, Miscreants, Monsters, Enthusiasts, Hypocrites, LORD'S Anointed, Sacred Majesty, GOD'S Vicegerent, Impious, Blaspheme, Damnation; stir these together in a warm head, and after a very little shaking, bring them out, scum and all, distribute them into several periods, and your work is half done: if such expressions as Religion, Conscience, Justice, Privilege of Parliament, Innocent Blood, Liberty and Property come in your way, take off the crudities from some of them by softning epithets, call it mock Parliament, false Religion, pretended Conscience, and tell the world roundly, that their privileges, trade, civil-rights and liberties are chimeras; that such talk smells rank of Forty-one, and is a certain mark of a villain, and an enemy to the government.

But shall filling an hour with such stuff as this go for a *fast*, and an *acceptable day to the LORD*? Is this being *humbled* for our sins? When *Ezra blushed* and was ashamed to lift up his head, does he mean no more than a *fluttered face* and glowing cheeks, that take all their heat from an inward passion? How have the swearers and drunkards been hardened by hearing godliness itself so ill matched to the epithets that such as Mr *Milbourne* have given it? He that allows himself such aukward words as *hypocritical and rebellious Saints*, has reason to fear that some will so confound these ideas, as to think that to be a Saint is to be a Rebel. And how many are there that after such discourses *bless themselves in their own hearts, though they commit uncleanness with greediness*? And besides, I must tell him, though such Preaching has been very agreeable

agreeable to the lust of Princes, yet it has often proved fatal to their thrones. I have thought that the Thirtieth of *January* Sermons cost King *James* his three crowns. *Men of corrupt minds* were still addressing themselves to his humour, till they pushed him on to the fate that became public enough. And when they had cried up his power as sacred, and told him all his actions were uncontroled, he no sooner took them at their word, but they left him in the lurch: and he judged extremely right in his troubles, when he cried out, with a concern that I should have pitied, upon seeing a Clergyman, *Ab; Sir, it is the men of your cloth that have brought me to this.* It was the unhappines of that Prince to believe those in their Sermons and Addresses who never believed themselves. They may talk of Passive Obedience, Resignation, Meekness and Patience; but the general filthiness of their lives, and their hastiness to anger with all the world, make them a wretched party for any King to trust in. The *Memorial of the Church of England* tells us indeed, that *Non-Resistance* has been always their principle; but they confess, *nature* is apt to rebel against principle; and we believe them when they say, that in those cases *the odds are on Nature's side.* Such a nice distinction as this do we find in the *Address* presented to the Queen some time ago by *the Clergy of London*: they call her Majesty's authority *irresistible*, and yet the next breath sucks that in, for they say, 'as they have withstood, so they will withstand again;' nay, Mr *Milbourne* himself has his thoughts lying so loose as to say, *page 2.* 'That if the *Jews* could have proved their charge (against our SAVIOUR) or our Infidels (against King *Charles* the First) the Cross and the Scaffold would have been deserved.' So that he does not by this seem to be angry at their accusing and trying him, but their not proving any thing; I am sorry this should fall under the eye of
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any *Republican*, who I fear will be apt to say, they were not like to *prove* when he would not *plead*. I dare say the good *Presbyter of the Church of England* had no design to betray the royal cause into so much contempt: my charity for him makes me think, that sometimes he writes he knows not what. There is another passage so unguarded, which had it come from an antimonarchical writer in this government and ministry, wo be to him, *page 14*. ‘ Where wo-
 ‘ men are concerned in robberies, those robberies are
 ‘ attended with murder, that *timorous sex* concluding,
 ‘ that themselves and their companions can never be
 ‘ safe, so long as there are any left alive who may
 ‘ discover them.’

He is angry that I say, There is nothing in any one doctrine of Christianity that will tie up the hands of an injured people. This he calls ‘ a discovery reserved
 ‘ for long-headed Popes, and says it is fit to be re-
 ‘ vived by the *Sidneys, Lockes, Hoadleys, Burnets,*
 ‘ *Bradburys, &c.*’ I heartily thank him for putting me into such company; and if he likes to herd with the *Sibiborps, Manwarings, Hlickes’s, Sacheverells, Wel—ns, Lesleys* and *Ropers*, both sides are pleased: the great *Algernon Sidney* writ with a spirit that none of his adversaries could *gainsay* or *resist*, and therefore they cut off his head: but no person will much value the poor fling of our author who reads the book of that truly noble person, *by it he being dead yet speaketh*. And I cannot but think there is a great deal of difference between a man’s sealing the cause of Liberty and that of Tyranny with his blood: indeed we seldom hear of any volunteers for the latter, who make a King a present of their heads by way of sample to their doctrine; but would not such an one *die as a fool dies*? How intrepid have those of the other sort come to the block? And, for my part, I have that veneration for what a serious man says in so full a prospect

prospect of eternity, that I should not much heed the whole volley of the Clergy against a certain Gentleman on the scaffold, who told the Executioner, ‘ Before thou canst say, Here is the head of a Traitor; the angels will have cried to heaven, We come with the soul of a Saint.’ As much above the ill manners of this author is that learned Bishop whom he joins with *Hobbes*. His *History of the Reformation*, and his late *Introduction* to the third volume; his many discourses from the press and pulpit, the fervour and argument of those warnings he has given the nation, will convince any one, that a person who can charge him with *reviving Popish doctrines*, is resolved to live within no rules, either of truth or decency.

The texts that he throws together, of “ turning the other cheek, doing good to such as hate us, recompensing to no man evil for evil, not avenging ourselves, being obedient to masters, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward,” do no more regard our behaviour to a Prince than to any other enemy; and if he takes them in an absolute sense, they as much oblige his non-resistance to a coxcomb that shall huff him in the streets, or a litigious neighbour, as to his Sovereign. But how little are Kings obliged to such arguments, as call for the subjects duty to them, on the supposition of their being the greatest villains and plagues on the earth? Though I have run this length, I cannot forbear giving the Reader a specimen of this author’s exposition on those words, “ Rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil.” Would not any one have understood this to be a description of good Magistrates, such as are called *the ordinance of God*; and from whom, if we *do good*, we may expect *praise of the same*? Such are *God’s Ministers attending continually upon this very thing*. Now all this our author
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can take in such a sense, that it shall be true of *Nero*, *Caligula*, or any Tyrant, nay of a fool or a sot, who *attends to nothing*. He makes those characters not refer to the Sovereign but the people, and his three propositions from the text are these.

“ That he, who exercises himself in good works,
 “ never entertains any fears or jealousies of the su-
 “ preme Magistrate, or his lawful Governors : And,
 “ That he, who exercises himself in that which is
 “ evil, is always under violent suspicions of his law-
 “ ful Governors : And,
 “ That he, who is full of guilt and suspicion, will
 “ always study to revenge himself on that power
 “ which he stands in fear of.”

You see he is resolved to bring the *mountain to Mabomet* : but is not making the Scriptures to mean *any thing*, the way to have them mean *nothing* ? Is it not insolent to the last degree that a man will rather shock the sense and solemnity of God’s word, than be patient of any danger to his own scheme ? At this rate of turning things, *David*’s sending out spies to know whether *Saul* was coming after him, his communing with *Jonatban*, and saying, “ There is but a
 “ step between me and death,” are so many marks of an *evil doer*. The poor *French* Protestants, who fled from a fine country, could not entertain suspicions of their lawful Governor, unless they were *villains*. No wonder that a great part of the Sermon is a panegyric on *persecution*, which I only say this in answer to ; that it is pity but he was in *France*, where he might soon have as much of that blessing as would make his heart ache. But, as Mr *Johnson* observes, when those men admire sufferings for Religion, they never mean their own. Upon the whole, what can any person think of a writer, who is so free in charg-
 ing

ing others with a profanation of Scripture? Can any one read this performance without thinking either the Text or the Preacher ridiculous? And is this the man who was to defend our Religion against the Deists? Will they ever think the better of revealed books, by his comments on them? When he writ in that controversy, he either did it with such a clamour and bitterness as he now uses, or he did not: if he did, he spoiled a good cause with a foul spirit: if he did not, he has more *zeal* for the lust of his Prince, than the divinity of our SAVIOUR: but is it not time to *renounce those hidden things of dishonesty*? This is too gross to have it called *walking in craftiness*, but it is *handling the Word of the LORD deceitfully*.

He concludes his Sermon with an account that
 ‘ London has a club of those GOD-mocking wretches,
 ‘ who profane this day with impious feasting.’ As
 I never was present at such an assembly, so it is but
 lately that I was well assured any persons of note
 could be guilty of a thing so ludicrous; but I am
 satisfied, it has been done within these few years;
 though I can tell him, (that excepting one) all the
 persons who met there, are such as our author and
 his party do *now* admire for stanch Churchmen, and
 lovers of Monarchy; and much joy may he have of
 a flying squadron, who can step so fast from pro-
 faning a day to adore it. But if there is any thing
 of this kind, I know none so much to blame for it
 as those high-flying Preachers that give the irritation.
 From this sort of Sermons many, I should fear,
 would come with either anger or mirth enough for
 such a design. For, after they have attended on a
Parson, and find he has not the *law of truth in his*
mouth (either truth of argument or facts) but instead
 of that, *iniquity fires in his lips*, they go away to be
 at once revenged on his malice, and diverted with his
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his nonsense. I should not have followed this author such a length as I have done, if it had not kept me still in view of that *principle*, upon which I submit the Revolution and this Government as lawful, *viz.* *That if a Prince breaks the Fundamental Laws that secure the Rights and Liberties of his People, it is just for them to take their remedy.* If I had not believed this to be true, I must either have been a *Nonjuror* or a *Knave*. And that such a turn as this is what the people of *Israel* were contending for, will, I hope, be evident from the story on which I have founded the following Sermon.





SERMON THE FOURTEENTH.

The Lawfulness of resisting Tyrants, argued from the History of *David*, and in Defence of the Revolution.

Preached NOVEMBER 5, 1713.

I CHRON. XII. 16, 17, 18.

And there came of the children of Benjamin and Judah to the hold unto David. And David went out to meet them, and answered and said unto them, If ye be come peaceably unto me to help me, mine heart shall be knit unto you ; but if ye be come to betray me to mine enemies, seeing there is no wrong in my hands, the God of our Fathers look thereon, and rebuke it. Then the spirit came upon Amasai, who was chief of the captains, and he said, Thine are we, David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse. Peace, peace be unto thee, and peace be unto thine helpers, for thy God helpeth thee.



Have chosen this text to serve your meditations on the wonders of this day, that at one view you may take in the case of two ages ; and see that it always was, and always will be, both the duty and glory of a people to break any yoke that is hung upon their liberty : nor have I the least fear to do this, at a time

when the cause itself is run down by *men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness (a)*, whose only religion lies in their great places: this, I say, makes the design as dear to me as ever; because these thoughts return on a day that is *much to be observed to the Lord in all our generations (b)*: and, I hope, *the wrath of man shall be of little value with my soul, whilst I am tracing the glories of such a Providence, and calling over the wonders of old*: it is, I confess, like *singing the songs of Zion on the banks of Babylon*; but though it be so, *rather than forget thee, O Jerusalem! may my right hand forget her cunning (c)*.

The words I have now read give us a revolution, a turn of government very like our own; and it shall always make such a dispensation the more sacred to me, when I see it is *according to the pattern in the sanctuary*. I shall take the service of this text to the cause of liberty, two ways:

First, As a vindication.

Secondly, As an account how such a design is brought about. It is both an argument of its being lawful, and explains the way how it comes to be glorious; and the case of *Israel* at their revolution, is so very like *ours*, that I need give you no other application than what is mingled in the particulars as we go along.

First, I take this text to be a plain and notorious argument that people have a right in themselves to dethrone a tyrant; one that is in jest with their laws, and in earnest with their lives, even though the man hath been called *the Lord's anointed*. This, every one knows, was the case of *Israel*, who had a King given them by God himself: they a long while groaned under the weight of his cruelty, and made good what *Samuel* foretold, *They cried to the Lord in that day, because*

(a) 1 Tim. vi. 5.
(b) Exod. xii. 24.

(c) Psalm cxxxvii.

because of the King they had chosen (d); and now, at last, they resolve to put life and liberty upon the same foot, that if both cannot be had, both shall be lost: and unless you will suppose that these men stand in this chapter as rebels, without the fear of God before their eyes; if you believe, as any one must do, that the whole action appears in this story as a thing right and good, all the parts of the text may be brought into the argument. If you look to the first verse, you are told of some that *came to David to Ziklag, whilst he kept himself close because of Saul the son of Kish, and they were among the mighty men, helpers of the war*; you have their names in the following verses, they are written among the living in Jerusalem, that the ages to come may rise up and call them blessed; and in these words you meet with another number that are joined in the same cause.

That I may lead you into the argument, I will put my thoughts under these three heads:

- I. Examine what opinion *David* himself had of the cause that these men of *Judah* and *Benjamin* came to help him in.
- II. Shall answer an objection or two, and reconcile what *David* did now, to the scruples he had formerly. And,
- III. Consider what the army themselves think of the design, who came to him, and the rather because what they say is ascribed to *the Spirit's falling upon Amasai*.

I. I begin with *David's* own opinion of the cause he was now engaged in; and I hope there is no need to answer any insinuations, that what he said was from a private view for himself and his own interest: we will not be amused by trifles of that nature, when God hath called him *a man after his own heart (e)*,

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and

(d) 1 Sam. viii. 18.

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(e) 1 Sam. xiii. 14.

and called him so at the time that he was about to turn off *Saul*, and transfer the kingdom to him. He had now been several years in a kind of exile, *driven out from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord (f)*; and we read so much in the book of *Psalms* of what passed between God and his soul in the wilderness, and all the places of his retreat, that it must be a maxim with us that he was then in the way of his duty; so that what he saith now to the men that joined him, could be no less than the solemn result of conscience. It behoved him then, more than ever, to know that what he did was pleasing in the sight of God; and if he did not think it lawful to head an army against his King, he would never have been so profane as to use the sacred name in the way that he doth; *If ye be come to help me, my heart shall be knit unto you; but if ye be come to betray me to mine enemies, seeing there is no wrong in my hands, the God of our fathers look on it, and rebuke it.*

These are his words to the children of *Benjamin* and *Judah*, that came to him in the hold. This hold might be the *cave of Adullam*, or some other place of defence, as we find it is called, 1 *Sam.* xxii. 4. where you read that *David's father and mother abode with the king of Moab, all the while that he was in the hold*: and so in the next verse, the prophet *Gad* saith to *David*, *Abide not in the hold*: but it is more probably the town of *Ziklag*, that had been given him by the king of the *Philistines*; there he dwelt a full year and four months, at which time, they that favoured his righteous cause had more opportunity of assembling to him, than they could have whilst he was strolling in the desert of *Judah*; hither, among the rest, the children of *Judah* and *Benjamin* repair, upon the same design that others did, to break off the yoke of *Saul*, and provide themselves of a better king. He hath a little suspicion of those that came to him from *Benjamin*, they

(f) 1 *Sam.* xxvi. 19.

they were of *Saul's* tribe, and retained by blood and other obligations to his service; so that we read of them, that they were *armed with bow, and could use both their right hand and left in hurling stones and shooting arrows out of a bow, even Saul's brethren of Benjamin* (g); he had preferred them *of the children of Benjamin, the kindred of Saul three thousand, for hitherto the greatest part of them had kept the ward of the house of Saul* (h). He thought to have them sure by places, and argueth to those principles in them that were the dearest to himself; for some there are who have no influence upon any thing but the vices and corruption of those they deal with; they do not pretend to convince your reason, but only *make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof*: thus did the King to his own family, *Hear me now, ye Benjamites, Will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards, and make you all captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds* (i)? and yet he was suspicious of them then. Nothing is more dreadful to a tyrant, than men that will not be awed by the court where they live, but dare to be good in great places: thus were they at least, in his opinion, *All of you have conspired against me, and there is none that sheweth me that my son hath made a league with the son of Jesse; and there is none of you is sorry for me, or sheweth unto me that my son hath stirred up my servants against me to lie in wait, as at this day* (k). No, they were above taking honours to tell lies; though they were born of his family, and had offices in his palace, yet not a soul of them will compliment the King with truth or conscience; these are dearer to them than any royal commands, and the only man he could find to his purpose, was *Doeg the Edomite*: he indeed accuseth *David* and the high priest, and afterwards dips his hand in the blood of *four score and five persons that*

(g) 1 Chron. xii. 2.

(h) 1 Chron. xii. 27.

(i) 1 Sam. xxii. 7.

(k) 1 Sam. xxii. 8.

wore a linen ephod; and, like a true zealot for his prince, sacks the city of the priests, *kills man, and woman, and child, and suckling*: he was before but *the chief of the herdsmen*, and for some notorious immorality, *detained before the Lord*; but after this consummate wickedness, he is preferred, and *set over the servants of Saul*; that is, from a ranger of the forest, he is made steward of the household. These *Benjamites* abhorred a proposal so base and vile as the king made to them, and take the first opportunity to desert their master.

But *David*, who knew their obligations to *Saul*, could not meet them without a little mixture of suspicion, in which he lays down several things that are arguments for the cause of liberty; *If you be come peaceably to me to help me, my heart shall be knit unto you; but if you be come to betray me to mine enemies, seeing there is no wrong in mine hands, the God of our fathers look thereon, and rebuke it.* Where you may observe,

1. He declares himself in a state of war; he desires their help; he tells them of his enemies, and who could these be but the men that followed him *as a partridge upon the mountains?* he singles out *Saul* from all the world, *lest he tear my soul like a lion, rending it in pieces, while there is none to deliver (l)*; him he describeth, *behold he travaileth with iniquity, and hath conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood (m)*; and the vengeance of God upon this person he waits to see, and promised to adore; *his mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate (n)*; he doth not consider that head as under a crown, but as covered with guilt; and then, saith he, *I will praise the Lord according to his righteousness; I will sing praise unto the name of the Lord most high (o)*. It could not be understood of the

(l) Psalm vii. 2.

(m) Psalm vii. 14.

(n) Psalm vii. 16.

(o) Psalm vii. 17.

the *Philistines*, for there he was received with the utmost assurance, when *Achish* gave him a city, and said of him, *He hath made his people Israel utterly to abhor him, therefore he shall be my servant for ever* (p). They all knew whom he meant by his enemies; tho' he very often gives *Saul* his titles, *My Lord the King*, and *the Lord's Anointed*, yet there are times of speaking out, and he now represents him as a person lost to all impressions of shame, or pity, or justice. And such language as this is what other good people use: thus, when *Abigail* meets *David*, she is guilty of what some now have the profaneness to call *speaking evil of dignities*; she doth not lay a hard case under a parcel of soft and easy words, and tell him that it is an unhappiness to be out of the royal favour, but still there was no remedy for him beside prayers and tears. No, that would have been *speaking as one of the foolish women speaketh*; but she lays down a venerable and commanding truth, *The Lord will certainly make my Lord a sure house, because my Lord fights the battles of the Lord, and evil hath not been found in thee all thy days, yet a man is risen to pursue thee, and to seek thy soul; but the soul of my Lord shall be bound up in the bundle of life with the Lord thy God, and the soul of thine enemies shall be sling as out of the middle of a sling* (q).

There is a decency that ought to be in our carriage, when we speak to those whom providence hath set over us. Thus doth *Paul* use the phrase of *Most Noble Festus*, to one that had told him he was *mad*; but yet these civilities are never to raze out a principle that God hath put into every good man, that *in his eyes a vile person is contemned* (r). I believe the prophet *Elisha* understood as much *non-resistance* as ever was his duty; and yet you see how he both speaks and does when an officer of the King was coming against

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him;

(p) 1 Sam. xx. 12.
(q) 1 Sam. x. 28, 29.

(r) Psalm xv. 4.

him; says he to the *Elders*, *See you how this son of a murderer hath sent to take away my head? look, when the messenger comes, shut the door, and hold him fast at the door; is not the sound of his master's feet behind him (s)?* Thus *David* calls *Saul* his enemy, and placeth him in no other view; and I can scarce think that any one then would have the confidence to have said that such a man disclaimed all imputation of *resistance*. No, *they came to him to the hold*; they saw him at the head of an armed force; he makes no secret of the design, which he certainly would have done, if he thought it had been disobedient to *God*, and scandalous to his people; he would never have spoke thus, *had it offended the generation of his children*.

2. He represents the justice of his cause; it was such a one that he claims their concurrence to it; *If you be come peaceably to help me, my heart shall be knit unto you*. He doth not only desire it as a favour to him, but what he might with reason expect from every *Israelite*, who understood the danger of his country, and the way to get out of it. It is a very small matter *who* wears a crown; the world are but little concerned in the person; but it is the most extensive case, that *he that rules over men be just, ruling in the fear of the Lord (t)*; such a one is as *the light of the morning, as a morning without clouds, as the tender grass springing out of the earth by a clear shining after rain*; it is a blessing to live under them. But people ought to be guarded against a tyrant, *the sons of Belial should be all of them as thorns thrust away, because they cannot be taken with hands; but the man that shall touch them must be fenced with iron, and the staff of a spear, and they shall be utterly burnt with fire in the same place (u)*; to change the latter of these for the former, was the case of their revolution.

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(s) 2 Kings vi. 32.
(t) 2 Sam. xxiii. 4, 5.

(u) 2 Sam. xxiii. 6, 7.

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It is this both *David* and they had in view ; it run through all his projects, *When I shall receive the congregation, I will judge uprightly ; the earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved, I bear up the pillars of it. I said to the fools, deal not foolishly, and to the wicked, lift not up the horn (x) : All the horns of the wicked I will cut off, but the horns of the righteous shall be exalted (y) : Thus did he swear to the Lord, and vow to the God of Jacob.* You have his model of government, which must keep a court clean, and a kingdom easy, *I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way ; O when wilt thou come to me ; I will walk within my house with a perfect heart : I will set no wicked thing before my eyes : I hate the work of them that turn aside, it shall not cleave unto me ; a froward heart shall depart from me, I will not know a wicked person ; whoso privily slanders his neighbour, him will I cut off ; him that hath a high look and a proud heart, will I not suffer ; mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me ; he that walks in a perfect way, he shall serve me ; he that works deceit, shall not dwell within my house ; he that telleth lies, shall not tarry in my sight ; I will early destroy the wicked of the land, that I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the Lord (z).* How quiet would nations be, if princes acted according to these rules ?

Saul's administration was the reverse to this ; he had no opinion of any for their duty to God, or their faithfulness to the public ; he loved a man that would humour his revenge rather than one that could enlarge his empire. Thus when the *Ziphites* came to him at *Gibeab*, and told him, *Doth not David hide himself with us in the strong-holds ? Thou therefore, O King, come down according to all the desire of thy soul to come down, and our part shall be to deliver him into the King's bands (a) ;* he is more ferious to their treachery than he

(x) Psalm lxxv. 2, 3, 4, 5. |
(y) Psalm lxxv. 10. |

(z) Psalm ci.

(a) 1 Sam. xxiii. 19, 20.

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 he was to all *David's* victories. You see by his answer what it is that gives a tyrant the chief raptures, and soonest leads him into his *te deums*: *Blessed be you of the Lord, for you have compassion on me; go, I pray you, prepare yet, and know and see his place where his haunt is, and who hath seen him, for it is told me he deals very subtilly; see therefore and take knowledge of all the lurking places where he bides himself, and come ye again to me with certainty, and I will go with you; and it shall come to pass, that if he be in the land, I will search him out through all the thousands of Judah* (b). This was the way to preferment then, to rail at the man whom God had honoured in so many battles: thus sweet and dear was revenge to the King, that he neglects all intelligence about the *Philistines*, if he can but get it about *David*; for as soon as he went upon this scandalous expedition, a messenger comes in all haste to tell him that the *Philistines* had invaded the land (c). It was time for the people to grow weary of such a one, and turn their thoughts another way; and from the bondage they were in, and the prospect they had of changing for the better, does *David* expect that though they were *Saul's* kindred, they would be his friends, and *come peaceably to help him, that his heart might be knit unto them.*

3. He supposeth a case that he hopes they could not be guilty of, and that was, *betraying him into the bands of his enemies.* You know it was this suspicion among the *Philistine* lords, that made them insist upon it, that the king should send him away from their army; *for wherewith shall he reconcile himself to his master? Shall it not be with the heads of these men?* And how uneasy must he be in this struggle between his belief, that these were men that knew and pursued the public interest, and his fears that having been in a vile court, they might come upon ill designs? And therefore,

4. He

(b) 1 Sam. xxiii. 21, 22, 23. | (c) 1 Sam. xxiii. 27.

4. He asserts the innocence of his person, as well as the goodness of his design; *There is no wrong in my hand.* He could say that when he had a sword in his hand drawn to give his sovereign battle: he speaks with a security in the cause itself, and could despise all those that would call him rebel or traitor; though I do not know any so likely to do it as *Doeg the Edomite*, whose loyalty I have already given you an account of. This justice the Scripture hath done to the priesthood of that age, to tell us that they were not tools of the court, or *rulers to the darkness* of the people; no, they have both the sense to understand the welfare of *Israel*, and the bravery to push it. *Of the children of Levi four thousand and six hundred, and Jehoiada was the leader of the Aaronites, and with him three thousand and seven hundred; and Zadok a young man mighty of valour, and of his fathers house twenty-two captains (d).* It signifies very little what names those people give to a cause, who never understood it: that need not break in upon the easiness that a good man hath in himself; though *they that sit in the gate should speak against him, and he become the song of the drunkards (e).* The two tribes and a half on the other side *Jordan* had the comfort of an appeal to heaven, at a time when they were misunderstood by their brethren; *The Lord God of gods, the Lord God of gods he knows, and Israel he shall know, that what we do is not in rebellion and transgression against the Lord (f).*

David was so far from a feared conscience that is past feeling, that his heart smote him when he cut off the skirt of *Saul's garment*; and yet now he hath no scruple to go out in battle, to resist unto blood, striving against sin. These men of *Judah* and *Benjamin* find him in arms, surrounded with his valiant *Gadites* who separated themselves to him, men of might and men of war,

(d) 1 Sam. xxiii. 26, 27, 28. |
 (e) Psalm lxi. 12.

(f) Joshua xxii. 22.

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war, fit for the battle, that could handle shield and buckler, whose faces were like the faces of lions, and were swifter than roes upon the mountains. One of the least captains of the host was over a hundred, and the greatest over a thousand (g); they had already put to flight them of the valleys to the east and to the west (h); and yet though he was going out against his King at the head of so great a force, he could say, *there is no wrong in my hands.*

5. If they were come to spoil so good a cause, he appeals to the vengeance of heaven, *The Lord God of our fathers look on it, and rebuke it*: observe, he doth not say the LORD, whose vicegerent Saul is, who anointed him, who gave you him for a King. These were low considerations of Providence; for that is what he did *in his anger*; but he puts them in mind of that common interest that God had joined them all in, and how many ages this had continued by his care: he was *the God of their fathers*. He could see through all their disguise; if they were only pretended friends, he would *look on it*; and though they might think it out of David's power to prevent the treachery, yet he puts it into the hands of one who could *rebuke them*; and do you think that he had any scruple about the lawfulness of resisting Saul, when he calls down the great God to avenge him on those that hinder it? Durst he speak in this manner of such a crime as would *purchase to himself damnation*? And whose opinion ought to be of value with us, whether his, who makes the greatest figure in the Old Testament, or some who are plainly enough described in the New? That they are *raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandring stars, who count it pleasure to riot in the day-time; spots and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings (i), who are gone astray after the error of Balaam for reward,*

(g) Joshua xxii. 8.

(h) Joshua xxii. 14, 15.

(i) 2 Pet. ii. 13, 14.

reward, loving the ways of unrighteousness, beguiling unstable souls, speaking great swelling words of vanity, who have mens persons in admiration because of advantage (k). In this you may sum up the argument, that David now declareth himself in a state of war with Saul. He invites these *Benjamites* into his cause; and, though he is in open arms against the LORD's anointed, yet he saith *there is no wrong in his hands*: nay, he represents their betraying him as a crime against heaven, and tells them *the God of their fathers would look on it, and rebuke it*.

II. After I have laid out *David's* opinion of the cause he was in, I will not be very long upon those Objections that we often hear of, though they each of them refer to what he said on a sudden, and ought not to be of the same value with this deliberate solemn action that we have in the text.

Object. 1. One is taken from his refusal to let *Abishai* cut off *Saul's* head; and his own heart smiting him when he took away but a part of his garment; and giving this as the reason, that none could stretch out his hand against the Lord's anointed, and be guiltless: but this doth not reach the case before us, upon several accounts.

1. All that was offered to him then was only the gratifying a personal revenge. *Behold the day is come which the Lord said unto thee, I will deliver THINE ENEMY into thine hand, that thou mayst do to him as it shall seem good to thee (l)*. And thus it was the second time, when a deep sleep fell upon them from the Lord, *God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day, let me smite him with the spear*. This *David* refused, he was of another opinion, and *Abishai* perhaps was a better foldier than a judge of prophecies; for the day was not come, in which *David* should be delivered from his

(k) Jude 13—15.

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(l) 1 Sam. xxiv. 4.

his enemy, he refers himself to a farther decision ; *The Lord judge between me and thee, and the Lord avenge me of thee, but mine hand shall not be upon thee.* And thus he tells them, *The Lord shall smite him, or his day shall come to die, or he shall descend into the battle, and perish* ; as if he had made no scruple of doing it there.

2. It must have thrown the whole kingdom into the greatest confusion to have killed him at that time, because the people were not come to understand their interest in *David*, as they did afterwards. *Saul* was then only chargeable with a private course of envy ; the Scripture has left this credit upon his name, that though he was an ill man, yet for some years he had not the marks of a bad King : he was never guilty of betraying them to the enemy, under no influence from *Philistine* counsels, but kept up the bravery of his people ; *He bad them teach the children of Judah the use of the bow. He clothed the daughters of Israel with scarlet and other delights, and put ornaments of gold upon their necks. From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, his sword returned not empty* (m). But after his temper was soured, he run loose into that which *destroys Kings*, and therefore there might be more reason for *David* to attack him now than there had been before.

3. He had particular obligations to wait till the promises of God to him should take effect. At the time of his going down to *Saul* there were two things extraordinary ; *First*, The King and his armies being in a deep sleep ; and, *Secondly*, *David's* knowing it at that distance : now, when he went to see a miracle, he would not allow himself in any common act of justice ; he could easily argue, that the God who had closed the senses, could extinguish the life of his enemy, and therefore leaves him in his hands.

4. In

4. In his speeches to *Saul*, he intimates that his sparing him is more than could have been expected, which he would not have done had he thought it so bad as some do. Is it any wonder that *David* should not purchase to himself damnation? Nay *Saul* puts it upon no maxim of loyalty, does not tell him that he had done no more than what every subject was obliged to, but is rather surpris'd at it: *Thou art more righteous than I, for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil: Thou hast shewn this day, how thou hast dealt well with me, forasmuch as when the Lord delivered me into thine hand, thou killedst me not; if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away (n)?*

5. The most that can ever be argued from this is, that *David* was of a different spirit from those Monarchs, who encourage and hire assassinations. He hated to murder a man by proxy, whom he durst not fight in person: he never strove to be great by a wickedness in the cave, but by an appearance in the field.

6. It is plain he had all his thoughts turned upon a reconciliation to *Saul*, and therefore ventured to stay and talk with him; *It is my voice, my Father, my Lord and King. Wherefore hearest thou mens words against thy servant, saying, David seeks thine hurt? See, for that I cut off the skirt of thy robe, and killed thee not, there is neither evil nor transgression in my hand, and I have not sinned against thee (o);* and again, *Wherefore does my Lord pursue after his servant, for what have I done, or what evil is in my hands (p)?* But now at last, *Saul* had almost filled up the measure of his iniquity; the people grew weary of his oppressions, and *David* could have no hopes of living easy with one who had hardned again after so many humiliations: and therefore he never scruples to receive those that came

(n) 1 Sam. xxiv. 17—19.

(o) 1 Sam. xxiv. 9—11.

(p) 1 Sam. xxvi. 18.

came to him, as there did a *great company day by day, till it was an host like the host of God* (q).

Object. 2. Another objection is grounded on his lamentation over *Saul's* death; it is not likely he would have *acted* what he so greatly *bewailed*. And he ordered the *Amalekite* to be slain for stretching out his hand against the LORD's anointed. And how was this consistent with his own being in arms? I answer,

1. The fall of the army on mount *Gilboa*, and the triumph of the *Philistines* over *Saul's* body, was a *reproach laid upon Israel*, and it was this he lamented: besides he had there lost his friend *Jonathan*, *whose love to him was greater than the love of women* (r); and the fact that he and his army kept was upon a very public account; *They mourned and wept until even for Saul and for Jonathan his son, and for the people of the Lord, and for the house of Israel, because they were fallen by the sword* (s).

2. It is certain he pressed with some vehemence to go out against *Saul* to battle, in the rear of *Achish's* army; he assured him, *Thou shalt see this day what thy servant can do* (t): nay he took more troops under his command at that very time: *There fell some of Manasseh to David, when he went with the Philistines against Saul to battle* (u).

3. As for his ordering the *Amalekite* to be slain, it it does not in the least affect this cause; he was one of that race whom God had commanded *Saul* to destroy; and it is likely there was some revenge in what the man did; it is certain he did it on purpose to make his court to *David*: *I have taken off the crown and the bracelets, and have brought them to my Lord* (x). He therefore considers him as an enemy to *Israel*, and not as a rebel against *Saul*; for in that sense, the
argument

(q) 1 Chron. xii. 22.

(r) 2 Sam. i. 26.

(s) 2 Sam. i. 12.

(t) 1 Sam. xxviii. 2.

(u) 1 Chron. xii. 19.

(x) 2 Sam. i. 10.

argument did not belong to him: *How wast thou not afraid to stretch out thine hand against the Lord's anointed?* God had not anointed *Saul* for his Ruler; this *Amalekite* was not subject to him, and therefore *David* in condemning him, does but punish one of an accursed nation, a known adversary to his people, a thief and a murderer: and he shewed a true greatness of spirit, not to owe his throne to Heathens and Russians.

III. Having gone through *David's* opinion of his cause, and taken off the force of those objections that are raised against it, I go on to the answer that was made him by those brave souls who came to join him. *Then the Spirit came upon Amasai, who was the chief of the captains, and he said, Thine are we, David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse. Peace, peace be unto thee, and peace be to thine helpers; for thy God helpeth thee.* That the cause was as clear to them, as it had been to him, appears in every particular of this sentence.

I. The man that speaks for them is *Amasai, the chief of the Captains.* There was no need to call it, as some have done a design of the like nature, an advancing the power of the mob: here is a man of the first rank, that takes upon him to deliver the public sense of those that were under his command; and do you think that he who lived in a court could be ignorant of loyalty? Doubtless there was no man in *Israel* that better understood how much obedience was owing to *Saul*, and what conscience had to do with an unrighteous command.

I could not forbear this note, it hits so exactly to a circumstance of our Revolution. Though we have a late spawn of writers, who represent that great work as only the rolling of a multitude; yet it is well known that persons of the first quality invited the Prince of *Orange* over. The Paper called, *The Address of the*
 VOL. I. Y *English*

English Protestants, was signed by Dr *Sancroft*, Archbishop of *Canterbury*, and the greatest part of that Order, which shewed *what spirit they were of* in the time of their danger; and it is of little value with me, that they who made no scruple to *pray* to a Prince, should make any to *swear* to him. Our nobility and gentry all over the nation declared the right that was in them not to be undone, and flocked in to their Deliverer, in the manner that those forces did to *David*. Nay that which gave the greatest figure to the design was, that the present Queen and her late Consort Prince *George of Denmark*, loved their Religion and Country above any ties of blood; her Majesty began to be glorious at *Nottingham*, (as an earnest what her name should be in *Germany* and *Flanders*) by leading those people as a General, which she should afterwards command as a Sovereign: she then appeared in the best character of *Levi*, who said to his father and to his mother, *I have not seen him, neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children* (z). And though there are some who please themselves with a phrase of thanking God that they had no hand in it, yet we are met *this day* to thank our God that others had. *Our hearts are towards the Governors of Israel, who willingly offered themselves among the people: praise ye the Lord* (a). And it is pity that they who hate the principles of this cause, should roll in the profits. But there is something greater may be said of *Amasai* than that he was *the chief of the Captains*; for,

2. *The Spirit came upon him*. I own, that a remarkable share of wisdom and courage shall go by this name in Scripture; and this is what we are to understand by God's *giving Saul another heart*: but there seems to be more designed by it here, because he speaks of *God's helping David*, and that *peace would be*

be to the men who did so too. So that we are to take it for an uncommon impulse, that should both tell him what would be, and warm him to pursue it. It was a *Spirit of wisdom and understanding, of counsel and might; and this comes from the Lord, who is excellent in counsel, and wonderful in working.* Now can we think that his Spirit would stamp a rebellion, or set his seal to that which is a damning sin? Indeed a man that can call the operations of the Spirit *mechanical*, may call duty and sin so too, and thus add nonsense to his blasphemy; but they that know with what a reverence these things are spoke of in Scripture, will never doubt the lawfulness of a cause that is thus recommended; they will *consider the work of God, that none can make that crooked that he has made straight* (b).

3. He assures him of their union to him, in such words as are laid down with the greatest evidence and beauty: *Thine are we, David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse*; which he would never have said, if he thought there was any *wrong in his hands*. These people do not only approve of his designs, but venture themselves upon that bottom; though you know the hazard was no less than of their lives. He speaks of *his heart being knit to them*; and they, in return, mingle thus with him; they profess themselves to be his, with his person, and in his cause; his and theirs was to be a common danger.

4. He pronounces a blessing upon the design, and those that were engaged in it: *Peace, peace be unto thee*, as the chief leader in this noble cause, *and peace be unto thine helpers*. This may be considered as a *wish*; they desired he might have success, which they durst not have done under any scruple of its being lawful. Bidding *a man God-speed* (c) that is procuring to himself damnation, is being *partaker of his evil deeds*. But besides, this may be taken for a *prophecy*; they carried an assurance in them, that the design

Y 2

would

(b) Eccles. vii. 13.

(c) 2 John 10.

would do, and make its way through the fences of tyranny; and the reason they give for it comes in the last place,

5. *For thy God helpeth thee*: and how profane would it be to lay such an assertion as this upon an unrighteous act? Would they dare to say that GOD *has jealousy with iniquity*? That he is confederate with rebels against his own anointed? No, but they knew, and so may every one else that reads the Bible with any care, that all government is for the good of those that are under it; and not merely for the glitter and vanity of them that are in it: and therefore, when the greatness of single persons is founded on the ruin of communities, the primitive institution is defeated; it is no longer of GOD, and ceases to have any business with conscience. *David* and *Amasai*, and all this *revolution-army*, knew well enough that a great deal of duty was owing to *Saul*, as the LORD's anointed; that whilst he ruled according to law, the person that disobeyed him, incurred a penalty; but they could distinguish, as we in the gospel may better do, between *living to the lusts of men, and to the will of God* (d).

There were several of GOD's own institutions that *David* broke in upon without being guilty; as, *his eating the shew-bread*; of which our SAVIOUR says *it was not lawful for him to eat it, nor those that were with him, but only for the priests*: and yet he could tell *Abimelech*, that *the bread was in a manner common, though it had been sanctified that day in the vessel* (e), which CHRIST puts upon nothing else, but *his being hungry*. So again, he took away the weapon that had been laid up before the LORD, behind the ephod, *the sword of Goliath the Philistine* (f), which some would have the ignorance to call sacrilege. But the reason was, he wanted these things; and mere ceremonial

(d) 1 Pet. iv. 1, 2.

(e) 1 Sam. xxi. 5.

(f) 1 Sam. xxi. 9.

monial laws, though they were of God's own making, give way to necessity. Thus, they knew that Kings were called *gods*, as well as we; and yet they could complain, *How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked (g)?* Nay, perhaps they do not think them above the great execution of justice. *I have said (that is, the Psalmist said) ye are gods, but ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes (b).* The title of *god*, as applied to a creature, is far from making it irresistible; because the devil is called the *god of this world*, and we are to *resist him, being stedfast in our faith (i).*

(2.) There is another use of these words, and that is, not only to prove the cause of liberty, but explain the way, how it becomes glorious; and this may be for the encouragement of those who are *waiting for the consolation of Israel*. I would from the text observe to you,

1. That the interest of liberty may run very low for a long time, and have all its course under ground. The persons that resolve to offer it up in sacrifice, may have *more than heart can wish; set their mouths against the heavens, and let their tongues go through the earth (k)*: and such as favour that righteous cause, of whom the world is not worthy, be treated as the *off-scouring of all things*. Thus it was with *David*; *Saul* fixed him in his envy, which put on all the forms of injustice; removing him from his command in the army, where his name was much set by, attempting to stab him, persuading his wife to murder him, chasing him at the head of great numbers; and this, after he had deserved so well of the crown, *when he put his life in his hand, and slew the Philistine (l).*

It is a true observation, that *if a ruler hearken to lies,*

Y 3

(g) Psalm lxxx. 1, 2.
 (b) Psalm lxxx. 6, 7.
 (i) 1 Pet. v. 9.

(k) Psalm lxxiii. 7, 9.
 (l) 1 Sam. xix. 5.

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lies, all his servants are wicked (m). Such a King
 would soon find men to his purpose. The *Ziphites*
 betray the poor exile that *hid himself in their woods.*
Nabal denies him bread, though he had for some time
 guarded his flocks: but the most ungrateful part of
 all was, what the men of *Keilab* acted when he had
 saved them from the *Philistines*, who came to *rob their*
threshing-floors; yet GOD tells him those sordid crea-
 tures would *give him up to Saul.*

There is a great deal of reason why there should
 be a seeming death upon the cause of GOD; it is to
 engage the more prayer and holiness; to make peo-
 ple understand the common interest better than they
 would do, and to set off the deliverance, when it
 comes, that, as it is *the doing of the Lord, it may be*
marvellous in our eyes; it is also to distinguish between
 those whose zeal for the public is only to be private
 gainers by it, and such as *prefer Jerusalem above their*
chiefest joy; and it may be to give sinners room for
filling up the measure of their iniquities, that the wick-
edness of the wicked may come to an end, and Provi-
dence establish the just (n): for these and several other
 reasons, may the cause of GOD and the liberties of
 his people be a long while embarrassed: but,

2. You may farther observe *that the counsel of the*
Lord shall stand, and the purpose of his heart be esta-
blished. David had some private encouragements which
 he lived upon, when it was dangerous for any to own
 him. *Abigail* tells him, *that God would build him a*
sure house, because he fought the battles of the Lord (o).
Nay, Jonathan went into the wood, and strengthens
his hands in God; Thou, says he, shalt be King over
Israel, and that Saul my father knows: which was
 true enough; for he himself confesseth it: it is ex-
 torted from him, when he says, *Thou art righteous,*
my son David, for I have played the fool and erred ex-
ceedingly,

(m) Prov. xxix. 12.

(n) Psalm vii. 9.

(o) 1 Sam. xxiii. 16, 17.

ceedingly, and now I know that thou shalt be King, and the kingdom of Israel established in thine hand (p). Saul's design was to set aside the succession that God appointed; he had forfeited for himself and all his posterity: *The kingdom was rent from him, and given to a neighbour who was better than he.* And yet he has the vanity to tell his son of an hereditary right, though at the same time he calls him the *Son of a perverse rebellious woman.* *Hast not thou, says he, chosen the son of Jesse to thine own confusion? For so long as he lives upon the ground, thou shalt not be established in thy kingdom (q).*

Indeed we may think, there was so little appearance of having things turn well, that it is a wonder David would ever attempt it. His army at first were as mean for quality as for number. *Every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him, and he became a captain over them, and there were with him about four hundred men (r):* and yet with this unlikely handful does he put himself into the way of the promise; for then he does not despair, but went to the King of Moab with this petition, *Let, I pray thee, my father and my mother be with you, till I know what God will do for me (s).* Thus he was kept in heart, till the set time for God to favour him came; and those persons are in the way of their duty, who do not give up a cause for all the bad symptoms that are upon it. *They know that judgment will return unto righteousness, and all the upright in heart will follow after it (t).*

3. That which looks so mean is to be glorious. Indeed David had the promise of a kingdom; we have nothing so very particular in our case: but, remember the covenant that is made with him, who

Y 4

is

(p) 1 Sam. xxiv. 20.

(q) 1 Sam. xx. 30.

(r) 1 Sam. xxii. 2.

(s) 1 Sam. xxii. 5.

(t) Psalm xciv. 15.

is called the *root and offspring of David* (u): it is, that he shall be *head over all things unto his church* (x); that *his enemies are to bow before him, and lick the dust; that none of them shall be able to keep alive his own soul, but a seed shall serve him, and such as are accounted to the Lord for a generation* (y). In order to this, when he takes to himself his great power and reigns, he will *destroy them that destroy the earth* (z). These are things we are sure of; *the Lord has sworn to him, and will not repent it, thou art a priest for ever* (a).

The great enemy of his interest is not an Heathen power, but something that goes by his name, and is called Christian. *Babylon, the mother of witchcrafts and abominations in the midst of the earth* (b). And this is to come tumbling down from the last degrees of pride and stupidity. *How much she has glorified herself and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her, for she has said in her heart, I sit a Queen and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow; therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death and mourning and famine; she shall utterly be burnt with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her* (c). It is not for us to know *when the end of these things will be*; but happy is the person that *comes out of her, who is not partaker of her sins*, and does not help her to be great, but rather *testifies against her*; such an one shall *rest in his lot at the end of the day* (d).

4. You may observe, in the last place, that when the Spirit of the LORD comes upon a people, it will give a glorious revival to the cause that seems to be lost. By this I mean not only a religious temper, a holiness of heart and life, but a wisdom that will form designs, and a courage that will dare to follow them.

(u) Rev. xxii. 16.

(x) Eph. i. 22.

(y) Psalm xxii. 29, 30.

(z) Rev. xi. 18.

(a) Psalm cx. 4.

(b) Rev. xvii. 5.

(c) Rev. xvii. 7, 8.

(d) Dan. xii. 23.

them. This will at any time be able to retrieve what seems impossible in a common way. For,

1. It establishes a union among the people who engage for this cause. Till men have their hearts extended beyond a private interest, they will not be honoured with *repairing our breaches and restoring paths to dwell in (e)*. David had the happiness of *Israel* in his view, which the army that joined him were conscious to. It was this that *knit his heart* to them, and embodied them with him. *Thine are we, David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse*. But how different is the language of the ten tribes to his grandson? When his notions of empire are only to make himself great, and his people little; he loses their hearts, as they had lost his: *What portion have we in David, and what inheritance in the son of Jesse? Every man to his tents, O Israel. Now David, see to thine own house (f)*.

The good of an uniting spirit is what they found at their *revolution*. It is said of *Zebulun* that they were *not of a double heart (g)*; and of the whole army, that these were *men of war, and could keep rank, and came with a perfect heart to Hebron to make David King over all Israel; and all the rest of Israel were of one heart to make David King (b)*. It has always been the artifice of enemies to work up private views and passions as high as they could, and dash one good man against another. Thus they endeavour to weaken an interest, which when it is established will crush them to powder. But when the spirit comes upon a people, they will see both the folly of their own animosities, and the villainy of those that prompted them. *Judab will no longer vex Ephraim, nor Ephraim envy Judab, but they shall have the same zeal to unite, that they once had to differ*.

2. Another

(e) Isa. lviii. 12,
(f) 1 Kings xii. 16.

[(g) 1 Chron. xii. 33.
(b) 1 Chron. xii. 38.

2. Another glory of this cause is, that it is carried on with a mighty sense of God upon the hearts of men; of him as a Sovereign, and of him as a Friend. It is to this that *Amasai* refers all his good wishes to *David's* friends, and all his hopes in the design itself; *Peace, peace be unto thee, and peace be to thy helpers, for thy God helpeth thee.* Nor is there any thing that inspires more courage into the hearts of people, than this belief that they are fighting the LORD's battles; and therefore he, for whose sake they came into danger, is able to lead them through. All the other principles of war are of a lower sort; the justice of a cause, the gains of a conquest, may have a great influence upon those that look no farther than themselves; but to think of an Omnipotence that is confederate with you, leads up the meditation to something above. There is no person so equal to the hazards of a battle, as one that has *good hope through grace* that all is secure for his soul on the other side; that to fall is to die but once, and then to live for ever. And besides, such people are acted by a faith that *out of weakness can make strong, and has turned to flight the armies of the Aliens (i)*: and no wonder when they correspond with *the God of the spirits of all flesh*, with him who has the stores of nature as well as grace; it makes them go into the field with a divinity in their resolutions; they *bathe their swords in heaven (k)*, as God himself says he would do; it takes a celestial edge: they are *helping the Lord against the mighty (l)*; one who has claimed such a concern in the war, as to call himself the God of the armies of *Israel*.

And it is this that we now want; we have too long trusted in an arm of flesh, and had our reliance upon nothing greater than the courage and wisdom of men. God has shewn us the vanity of all this, by denying his

(i) Heb. xi. 34.
 (k) Isa. xxxiv. 5.

(l) Jud. v. 23.

his blessing to the best counsels, and noblest attempts; and by suffering little dirty factions to confound the most honourable schemes that ever were laid: he has let us see that all our designs can only succeed by his Providence; and when it pleases him, who *has the residue of the Spirit*, to give it such a diffusion amongst us, that people shall flow to their duty, be tender of his honour, not dare to profane his name, or neglect his worship; when he shews them the way to their senses, and the value of their souls, it will soon give such a turn, that *the righteous shall see it, and rejoice, and iniquity for ever stop her mouth* (m). The Jews complained, that their preparations, nay, their very successes came to nothing. *We have been with child, we have been in pain, we have as it were brought forth wind, we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth, neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen* (n). But this cause was to be fetched out of its grave, and therefore he speaks of it in the terms of a resurrection: *Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise; awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out her dead* (o).

If you ask what we can pretend to, as a parallel to this that *Amasai* said, *Thy God helps thee?* Upon what cause and people can we lay so great a promise? I must only answer in the general, and leave you to fit the descriptions.

The interest that he maintains, always takes into it a political equity; *He sits in the throne judging right* (p). He will avenge any want of integrity in any public leagues and covenants. *David* was so sensible of this, that had he been guilty, it would have made him despair of mercy. *If I have rewarded evil to him that was at peace with me, let the enemy persecute my soul and take it; let him tread down my life upon the earth,*

(m) Psalm cvii. 43.

(n) Isai. xxvi. 18.

(o) Isa. xxvi. 19.

(p) Psalm ix. 9.

earth, and lay mine honour in the dust (q). A national truth is so great a duty in the sight of GOD, that you see how he deals with the King of Judah for his violation of it, though it was to one that had conquered him. *He sent his ambassadors to Egypt, that he might give him horses and much people; shall he prosper, shall he escape that does such things? Or shall he break the covenant, and be delivered? Seeing he has despised the oath, by breaking the covenant, when lo he had given his hand, and had done all these things, he shall not escape (r).* It fell heavy upon Jehoshaphat, that he had helped the ungodly, and joined with them that hated the Lord (s).

Again, the cause of GOD must be that of Religion; by which I mean, not what man would make it, but what CHRIST has left it, *The faith that was once deliverèd to the saints (t)*: and therefore, any agreements that give power to the beast and the false prophet, and make it harder with distressed Protestants, cannot be his. He blames those in Israel who daub with untempered mortar; to wit, the prophets, that saw visions of peace for Jerusalem, and there was no peace (u); with their lies they had made the heart of the righteous sad, whom he would not have made sad, and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life (x). But when there are any who seek the peace of Jerusalem, for their brethren and companions sake, and for the house of the Lord our God (y); when their prayers, their wishes, their zeal include the rights of nations, and the quiet of conscience, the liberty we have as men, and the religion we should have as Christians; Peace be to such helpers, for our God will help them.

3. You

(q) Psalm vii. 4, 5.

(r) Ezek. xvii. 15.

(s) 2 Chron. xix. 2.

(t) Jude 3.

(u) Ezek. xiii. 15, 16.

(x) Ezek. xiii. 22.

(y) Psalm cxxii. 8, 9.

3. You observe these men were immediately advanced; *Then David received them, and made them captains of the band.* He wanted no other recommendation of them, than what appeared in this noble answer, that they were firm to *the God of their fathers*, and to the cause he now espoused: and that nation, one would think, was in love with shackles, that will deny itself the help of those that are every way capable, or throw any test or bar upon the public safety.

4. When the cause is so filled with zeal, and spirited from above, it will make its way through all *the wrath of man.* I do not question but *Doeg the Edomite* was in full favour after so much falsehood and blood. Though every one believed him a sinner, yet few would have the courage to tell him so. But what would become of him, in the grand revolt of the tribes? History indeed is silent upon this head, but prophecy is not; and we may suppose what *David* foresaw came all true: he writ the lii^d Psalm, when *Doeg* came to *Saul*, and there he scores out his fate; *God shall destroy thee for ever; he shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of thy dwelling-place, and root thee out of the land of the living. The righteous shall see and fear, and shall laugh at him; lo, this is the man that made not God his strength, but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness* (z). *Amasai* and the rest of these mighty men promised themselves a peace by helping *David* against the persons who had entangled the public affairs. And a neglect of those executions that were owing to an injured people, entailed a famine upon the kingdom three years: this was *for Saul and his bloody house, because he had slain the Gibeonites* (a); nor was the anger of the LORD to be turned away, till *seven of his sons were hanged up in Gibeab* (b).

The

(z) Psalm lii. 5, 6, 7.

(a) 2 Sam. xxi. 1.

(b) 2 Sam. xxi. 6.

The schemes of wickedness are unraveled at once when this spirit comes upon a people; and such an overthrow of tyranny do we commemorate this day. Some of you can remember the popular fears that ran through the nation in a late reign; and there was ground enough for them, when a lewd priest sat in the council; when judges told you from the bench, that your laws were their King's, and preachers from the pulpit, that our lives were his; and *Irish* dragoons were ready to make application of that doctrine. But GOD, in mercy to *Great-Britain*, suffered the King to perish by his own devices, who had got nothing but the fumes of Popery in his head, and the spirit of it in his heart: in a little time he brought himself to the case of that prince of whom we read: *The women of the house shall say, Thy friends have set thee on, and prevailed against thee; thy feet are sunk in the mire, and they are turned away back* (c). It pleased a wise and gracious Providence to raise us up a deliverer, and a great one, whom the people met with *Hofanna's*, blessing him that came to save them in the name of the Lord. To this happy turn we owe the present government, and the succession of a family to these crowns, which gives us hopes for the ages that come after us. Let a cause so good keep us zealous and steady to it in all its branches. *Peace, peace* be to the design, and *Peace* be to its helpers, for our God will help them.

(c) Jer. xxxviii. 22.





S E R M O N XV.

The true Happiness of a good Government.

Preached NOVEMBER 5, 1714.

P S A L M LXIII. II.

The King shall rejoice in God, every one that sweareth by him shall glory; but the mouth of them that speak lies, shall be stopped.

YOU will learn by the title of this Psalm that *David* wrote it *when he was in the wilderness of Judah*; a place of continual danger and sorrow to him: there did *Saul* hunt him as a *partridge upon the mountains*: there did the *Ziphites* discover his abode, and, from a villainous principle that some call *Loyalty*, would have betrayed him to the ravage of a greedy court: there did *Nabal* deny him bread, when his army was just a starving, and all the while he continued in that *barren and dry land* he wanted the *sanctuary* of *God*, which lay heavier upon him than all his other afflictions: and yet, though he seems to be laid aside from devotion and property too, *driven out from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord*, and at the same time exposed in his person; yet in this Psalm he opens such a confidence, as if his life had been secure, and his Religion unmolested: which lets us see how well it is with

with that soul, who hath faith in a promise; such a one cannot only hope for a turn that his affairs will take, but the Word of God hath with him both the sweetness and the credit of the thing that he is waiting for. He goes faster than Providence leads him, and can taste the mercy before it comes. He takes it for granted that it will be, and he behaves himself with that presence of joy as if he really had it. Of this advantage is the grace of God; it doth not only prepare us for a blessing, but brightens all the darkness we are under till it comes. Though *David* was driven out both from the sanctuary and court, yet he speaks as if he wanted none of the true benefits that might have been had in either. For,

First, The work of Religion in his soul went on. He gives out a large experience both of his desires towards God, and the returns that were made from him. Though he could not see the divine *power and glory* as he had done, yet his meditation run out upon a *loving-kindness that was better than life*. *His soul was satisfied as with marrow and fatness*. *His mouth could then praise God with joyful lips*. *He remembered him in the night*. *He followed hard after him, and was upheld by his right hand (a)*; so that whatever enemies were able to do, as heaven itself was sure, the passage to it was open.

Secondly, He speaks with the same persuasion of his temporal concerns; not only what related to him as a Saint, but what he must come to as a Sovereign. He knew that the malice of men could neither cheat him of a treasure in heaven, nor of a crown in *Israel*; and therefore, at a time when they seemed to have their full scope against him, he could look to the end of that noise and rage. *They that seek my soul to destroy it, shall go into the lower parts of the earth; they shall fall by the sword, and be a portion for foxes: but the King shall rejoice in God, every one that sweareth by him*

him shall glory; but the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped (b). He is very particular you see in describing the various methods of vengeance that the justice of God and man shall follow them with: which I will not consider now, but place them under that part of my text where they will best come in.

These words give us the true glories of a right Government in all its branches.

I. Here is a clear and easy happiness to the Ruler :
The King shall rejoice in God.

II. Here is security and honour to the best of subjects, *Every one that swears by him shall glory.*
And,

III. Here is that which is of absolute necessity to the other two: a righteous justice upon all those that are enemies to the Constitution; *The mouth of them that speak lies, shall be stopped.*

These are the parts of the text, and these the heads of that method that I shall observe in a discourse upon it. I cannot promise myself time enough to make a distinct application of what you may hear, or to shew you what a resemblance there is betwixt our concerns and *David's*; but shall endeavour to lead you into those reflections as I go along, weaving our story into his.

I. I begin with that happiness and glory of a right Government which relates to the person of the Ruler: *The King shall rejoice in God.* You will here consider,

1st, Who it is that he means by *the King*; and,
2^d, What is signified by his *rejoicing in God.*

1. Though he hath given us only the office and not the name of the person he spoke of, yet it is easy enough to suppose who it is that he calls the King. Not *Saul* or any of his royal line, but *David* himself.

That which makes the expression a little difficult is, why he should take the *title* before he got the *throne*. If this Psalm was given out in the days when he penned it; if he suffered it to go abroad for the comfort and establishment of those who had *set their hope in God*, and *favoured his righteous cause*, it would lay him open to more danger. They that were against the succession would inflame the difference betwixt the court and him. If it raised the envy of *Saul* to hear him commended as a General, it must push him a great deal farther into the quarrel, to read a Psalm where he calls himself a King. There is no doubt of it, but this divine composure would at that time be represented as a *seditious paper*, and it is not the only instance where the Spirit of GOD hath been thought to speak treason.

But these are poor and little things with a soul that lives in heaven. *David*, whose mind had locked itself in the promise and power of GOD, was not to have his joys intangled by forms of speech. He that had told him of a throne, taught him how to speak of it beforehand: he had the phrase where he had the title. GOD had *rejected Saul from being King over Israel*, and had given the Government to *David*; and though this happened several years before the change was brought about; yet it is a glory belonging to the divine nature, to *call things which are not as though they were* (c): and it is an argument of this good man's faith that he hath no diffidence of the great event, though his case was so unhappy now; when he is hiding or flying from the force of an army; when he is begging for bread whilst he lived in that loose and dangerous way, the promise could lead his eyes through all the gloom of life to an escape, to a throne, to an empire. *I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living* (d).

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(c) Rom. iv. 17.

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(d) Psal. xxvii. 13.

He could not mean *Saul*, when he said, *The King shall rejoice in the Lord*; that was far from being true of him; a man hurried and plagued with *an evil spirit*, whose envy eat out his peace, and destroyed the very form of Religion; who lived in an open neglect of worship, in a plain defiance of God, and a professed cruelty to his people; such a one must be incapable of the joy here spoken of. Nor had he any prospects of happiness for *Saul*: he rather expected his ruin, as he saith, at the time that he spared him, *The Lord avenge me of thee*; and, *the day shall come when he shall go down to the battle and die*. He knew that *God had rent the kingdom from him*; and as *the strength of Israel could not repent (e)*, so he would not be baffled. The same perfections that made it impossible that a change should come from himself, were an assurance that it should never be brought on by the power of another. He saw that God only held off his vengeance from that wretched Monarch, till he had *filled up his iniquity*; but as to *joy in the Lord*, he had *no lot or portion in that matter*, being plainly in *the gall of bitterness, and the bond of iniquity*.

You may judge by this, how widely those people talk from the language of Scripture, who tell us of sacred *persons* and *titles*; as if the one might not be *touched*, nor the other *assumed*. It is true, *Saul* is spared, because *he was the Lord's anointed*; but you must not suppose that this signifies no more than the vial of oil poured upon his head, and that this makes his dignity indefeasible, because at that time *David* was as much anointed as he; and therefore it is plain, either that this ceremony of itself did not give the claim; or if it did, that there might be a forfeiture. Or thirdly, that it was possible two persons might have it at the same time. Now the last opinion is what all sides reckon foolish, and therefore the former must be true. If the oil made the King, *David*

was so a long while before he wore the crown; but it is plain from his case, that it did not make the claim immediate, as it is evident from *Saul's*, that it did not make it unalienable. It will farther appear who is the King that he here speaks of, from the second thing to be observed: And that is,

2. The happy state of mind he should be in: *The King shall rejoice in the Lord.* Where you have,

First, The affection that he would use, and that is joy.

Secondly, The object upon which it must be employed, and that is the LORD.

1. As to the temper or passion of the soul by which he is distinguished, it is the noblest that our nature can feel. Every one carries along with him in his notions of a King, an opinion that he is great to others, but it does not always happen that he is easy to himself. Empire and joy may lie far asunder. The cares that hang about a throne leave very little room for this affection. Rejoicing in the LORD includes a great deal more than a success in what he was aiming at. It is possible he might be a King to his people, and a slave to himself: but the blessing designed in my text takes into it an easiness in the manner of his coming to the Government, and a chearful spirit that run through all the administration. That GOD would bow the hearts of the people to him, and make him their darling before he was their Sovereign. That there should be a general submission either to the clemency of his sceptre, or to the reach of his sword. This affluence of the tribes; this thorough dispersion of those that set up for him who was the Pretender then, is what *David* admires in the xviiith Psalm. That was written, as he telleth us in the title to it, *When the Lord had delivered him from the band of all his enemies, and from the band of Saul:* and the way how he came by this, was pushing home in several battles. *I pursued mine enemies and overtook them: neither did I turn again till*

till they were consumed. I have wounded them that they were not able to rise. They are fallen under my feet, for thou hast girded me with strength to the battle, thou hast subdued those under me that rose up against me (f). He understood no compositions with them. They acted then upon the principle of hereditary right, to support the pretensions of the late King's son, but as he knew that foolish notion was like to embroil the public, so he improved the blessing that followed his arms. *Thou hast given me the necks of mine enemies, that I might destroy them that hate me; then did I beat them as small as dust before the wind, I did cast them out as dirt in the streets: Thou hast delivered me from the strivings of the people* (g). You see by this the method in which he proceeded; but it will lead you farther into the nature and dignity of this joy, if you consider,

2dly, The object upon whom he placed it, *The King shall rejoice in the Lord*. There are many things that might be comprehended here, but I will keep myself within these four; that when *David's* joy was fixed upon GOD he must have,

1. Hopes of his own eternal salvation.
2. A sense of that divine hand that raised him to the throne.
3. A knowledge of those rules that he was to govern by, and,
4. A regard to that end that he ought to aim at.

1. *He that rejoiceth in the Lord* must have his hopes extended to the salvation of another world. The glories of an empire are but short and low for an immortal soul to take up with: no portion is great enough that comes within *this life*. Though what he supposeth in the case of the wicked was desirable, *That God had filled their belly with hid treasures: they were full of children, and the rest of their substance they left to their babes*; yet as for himself he was looking a

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great deal higher. *I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness (b).* How soon is a King to be tumbled from his throne, and sent without any guards or greatness to the bar of a righteous God? And what a poor satisfaction does that man give himself who is pleased with a crown here, though he hath no hopes of one that *fades not away*? What was there in all the pomp of a court to balance the distress of mind that *Saul* fell under, when he begged a favour of a *witch*, and trembled before a *spectre*, and gave this as the sad reason of his doing so, *The Philistines are upon me; and God is departed from me (i)*? What a wretched state must a dying Monarch be in, who is hurried away from the glory of a palace and the flattery of servants, and in a few moments hears no voice, but that of an angry God and howling Devils? But he that *rejoiceth in the Lord*, in the way that *David* did, leaves a throne to an advantage: he dies to be still greater. Though it is like to be no better with him than other believers, yet his remove is into a brighter mansion, and into purer company, where they are all *Kings and Priests unto God and our Father (k).*

2. I own that *David* in his joy came down into a lower occasion. He did it not only as a Saint, but as a King. He rejoiced in the LORD, as the author of his advancement; thus he saith in another Psalm, *The King shall joy in thy strength, O Lord, and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice? For thou hast made him most blessed for ever. Thou hast made him exceeding glad with thy countenance, for the King trusteth in the Lord, and through the mercy of the most High he shall never be moved (l).* He had the first promise from God, who took him from following the *sheep great with young*, that he might feed *Israel* his people (m).

There

(b) Pſal. xvii. 14, 15.

(i) 1 Sam. xxii. 15.

(k) Rev. i. 6.

(l) Pſal. xxi. 1, 6, 7.

(m) Pſal. xxviii. 71, 72.

There was a divine circle around him in all his dangers, between pouring the oil on his head and putting the sceptre into his hand. *His wandrings* were numbered and guarded from above. He had great examples of a Providence within that time, and *could remember God from the land of Jordan, and from the Hermonites, and from the hill Misar(n)*. The narrow escapes he had from his enemy are what he puts into the songs of praise, and after the tiresome years that he spent this way, *the Lord bowed the heavens and came down. He sent from above and took him. Thou hast given me the shield of thy salvation, thy right hand hath holden me up, thy gentleness hath made me great; the Lord liveth, and blessed be my rock, and let the God of my salvation be exalted(o)*. *It is God that avengeth me, and subdueth the people under me: Great deliverance giveth he to the King, and sheweth mercy to his anointed, to David, and to his seed for evermore(p)*.

It is true in that Psalm he speaks of *GOD's sending out his arrows to scatter them, and his lightnings to discomfit them*; but you are not to understand it as if the Revolution was produced only in a miraculous way: as if there was no consent of the tribes, and no resistance to the enemy: so far from that, that his army had a daily increase till it became *like the host of God(q)*: but however he owns that it was a divine blessing that gave the people, first, an inclination to choose him, and secondly, a courage to defend him. They wished for a fair opportunity in *Saul's* time to change their King, and some designs were laid to bring it about then, as *Abner* reminds them. *He had communication with the Elders of Israel, saying, Ye sought for David in time past to be King over you, now then do it(r)*. But as it is *the hand of the Lord that turns the hearts of men like*

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(n) Pfal. xlii. 6.

(o) Pfal. xviii. 1, 9. 6.

(p) Pfal. xviii. 46, 47, 50.

(q) 1 Chron. xii. 22.

(r) 2 Sam. iii. 17.

the rivers of water, so the King rejoiceth in him as the author of this mercy.

3. This joy in the LORD must comprehend in it both a knowledge and approbation of those directions that God had given him to govern by. *He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of the Lord (s)*. Greatness is nothing else but a capacity of doing good, and therefore when this does not meet with a right inclination; it makes a man more like the Devil, who is *the god of this world*, not to save it, or to do any divine offices of love and bounty, but to fill it with sin and misery. And so he is *the prince of the power of the air*; not to clear the sky, or fan the earth, but for a profusion of thunder and vengeance. His empire is for nothing else but ruin to those that are under it. And can a greatness like his produce any joy in the LORD? No, it is with a hatred of him, and an enmity to the justice and goodness of his nature that these people live. Can a man delight in blood, drive his subjects into corners, break them upon the wheel, let them groan in galleys, and rot in dungeons, and yet *rejoice in the Lord*?

Indeed how far the conscience of a persecutor may be at the command of his lust, I cannot tell: especially since I have read of one King in *Spain* who in his last will recommends himself to the *Virgin Mary* from his zeal to promote the Inquisition. But certainly the Holy Spirit never meant that she should be the Patroness of cruelty, when we read that *all generations shall call her Blessed*: no, such a doctrine as that had better be traced from its parent *Cain*, who was of that *evil one and slew his brother*, than the mother of *JESUS*, who came *not to destroy mens lives, but to save them (t)*.

4. This *rejoicing in the Lord* takes into it a regard to the divine glory as the end of all his Government.

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(s) 2 Sam. xxiii. 2, 3.

(t) 1 John iii. 12.

It is the way to debase our thoughts both of God himself and the King that he sets up, if we suppose that he does it only to distinguish one man from another. Does he take delight in the vanities of a court? Is it so worthy of him to make one person great, and a whole community miserable? *Hath he eyes of flesh, or seeth he as man seeth?* When he *pulls down one and sets up another*, is that all that he means by it, that Providence shall pay its compliment to this as a King, and pour thunder upon a whole nation that are to be his subjects? No, *that be far from him.* He loved *David* and gave him a throne, but the reason why he *established it, was for his people Israel's sake* (u). It is but a very little thing with him who *accepts not the persons of Princes* (x), how great they are, but how good they will be, and therefore he that *rejoiceth in the Lord* must have an honest view to the divine glory.

And how can this be, when the worship of God is polluted, and his people oppressed? He supposeth such usage of them to be a slur upon himself. *They that take them captive make them bowel, and my name continually every day is blasphemed* (y). It is but a wretched use of Government, if a man can only say that he hath made great additions to it, and perhaps done it by fraud, cruelty and force. Is this acting to the glory of God? Nay, is it not rather an avowance of Atheism, that such a one lives as *without God in the world?* And what joy can those Monarchs have in the LORD, who will soon fetch them to his bar, that have advanced themselves with a ruin to his interest, and have made tenderness for his worship high-treason against their crowns? It is easy turning the argument as a wicked heart would have it, when they have Divinity and Law of their own choosing; but shall these authorities be of any weight with Him, *Who frustrateth the tokens of liars, and makes diviners mad;*
who

(u) 2 Sam. v. 12.

(x) Job xxxiv. 19.

(y) Ifai. lii. 5.

who turneth wise men backwards, and maketh their counsel foolish (z)? Whatever maxims they are guided by I know not, but I will refer you to one that they must be judged by. *To crush under his feet all the prisoners of the earth, to turn aside the right of a man before the face of the most High, to subvert a man in his cause, the Lord approveth not* (a). He that indeed *rejoiceth in the Lord*, puts his whole affairs into better measures, as you will see from the other parts of my text, to which I proceed.

II. You find there is not only a true happiness for the Prince, but security and honour to the best of his subjects; *every one that sweareth by him*, that is, by the same God in whom the King rejoices, every such person *shall glory*. I shall here consider,

1st, The description we have of this people; *they swear by the Lord*.

2^d, The benefit designed for them; *they shall glory*. And,

3^d, The extent of this favour: it reaches as far as the character, to the whole body of those that swear by the LORD, *every one of them shall glory*.

1. The people who may have hopes of this blessing, are described by one solemn part of their Religion, that *they swear by the Lord*. Surely none can be so gross as to think these words are capable of an application either to false or profane swearing. They that make use of this dreadful name in opposition to truth, have no share in this *glory*, but must look for their dividend in the latter part of my text, *The mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped*. Nor can that person think himself within the design of this promise, who *takes the name of the Lord his God in vain*. That sort of swearing is upon some accounts viler than downright Atheism; for I could rather deny a GOD than

(z) Isai. xlv. 25.

| (a) Lam. iii. 34—36.

than ridicule him. If there is such a Being, if he is my Creator and my Judge, he will never be my jest. He has not given me his awful name to lard a common sentence, or heighten it with a little more sound. This is a practice so vile and daring, that whilst it continues a national sin, it both sinks the glory of a people, and puts an ill presage upon the face of public mercies.

Is it likely that those persons should be either the patrons or the professors of Liberty, who suffer their tongues, upon all occasions, to be tipped with hell and blasphemy? They may glory indeed, but it is *in their shame*. God sometimes uses them to serve an interest which they can never honour; but it leaves a worse countenance upon our national blessings; it does not make them look so well and lively as we would have them, when they are in the hands of those who live with an open contempt of the God that gives them. So that this cannot be the meaning of the words. But I take their swearing by the LORD to signify three things. It may be understood of,

1. Their Allegiance.
2. Their Religion. Or,
3. Their Troubles.

1. Perhaps their swearing by the LORD may include that allegiance they paid to the King. The assurance they gave him of homage and duty, was laid upon a divine ground. They did it in a sacred name;

1. With an appeal to God as the witness of their integrity.
2. With a regard to his interest, as the rule of their subjection.

1st, Swearing by the LORD, as it comes into the case of a peoples homage, is an appeal to him for the truth of what they pretend to. And this is so great a solemnity, that it is pity there should be any thing to take off from the minds of men the reverence with
which

which they ought to do it. For, it is as far as we can go in assuring one another of our integrity. *An oath among men is for confirmation, and an end of all strife (b)*: and therefore those people must have sunk their apprehensions of a divine Majesty, and a future reckoning, who will dare to swear falsely. It is a great deal more than deceiving man; it is a challenge given to the perfections of GOD; a telling him that either he does not see the fraud, or that he cannot avenge it.

There is in every oath a double solemnity; *First*, it is laying one truth in *pawn* for another; we give in something that is undoubted in testimony of something that is now in dispute. That as surely as I believe a GOD, and take his word to be true, so what I now say is agreeable to it. That I would no more be a deceiver in this affair, than I would be an infidel. But besides this, there is another part in an oath; and that is, *Secondly*, an *imprecation*; that upon the falsehood of what I am now professing, I disclaim all the mercies promised in the book of GOD, and challenge upon my soul and body every curse that is recorded there. If what I say be not true and just, I quit heaven for hell; give up all my hopes of the former, and avow my right to the latter.

There is no less than this in the homage of a subject to his prince. He has called in GOD as a witness, he stands open to him as a judge. And would any person dare to do this with *lying lips*, who knows the solemnity of *Swearing by the Lord? Keep the King's commandment, and that with regard to the oath of God (c)*. What must that man have been, who, for any secular advantage would have given his oath to *David*, and, at the same time, believed an hereditary right in *Isbabbeth*? Is it not dreadful to think that people should not only cheat one another, but that the name of GOD shall be used to sanctify the lie?

Can

(b) Heb. vi. 16.

|

(c) Eccl. viii. 2.

Can any interest of a family, any zeal for a person, be an atonement for the vilest mixture of falshood and blasphemy? *God will not hold him guiltless who taketh his name in vain (d).*

Now, this is what *David* promises, that they who swear by the Lord, whose integrity he was fully assured of, should glory under his government. No doubt of it, there were many crowding to his court at *Hebron*, whose loyalty rose when *Saul* fell: they took their convictions from *Mount Gilboa*, as some in *England* did theirs from the battle at the *Boync*. But these were his contempt. *Ishbosheth*, *Saul's* son, had two servants, *Baanab* and *Rechab (e)*, who were employed in his house, which they could not have been, without giving him an assurance how hearty a zeal they had for the royal family. And, yet you see what a vain principle loyalty is when moral truth is wanting. They continue in that interest till *Abner* leaves it; but when they saw there was nothing to be got by their King, they not only drop him but murder him. And, though they had often called *David* an usurper, yet now they bring him the head of the *right heir*.

What a sad dependence must a prince have upon such zealots as these? They will tell him of *obedience without reserve*, that their lives and estates are at his command, that he has an authority to use them as he would do his cattle; and, which is the worst of all, they clothe these lying words with the name of God. And, yet you see, when things come to the pinch, their sovereign is their property, and instead of having the service of *their* lives, he hath no security of his own. For if they cannot make a tool of his crown, they will make a sale of his head. But, are such swearers as these designed for the glory that *David* mentions? Are these the strength of any government? Or should their weight be allowed to cast the scale,
who

(d) Exod. xx. 7.

(e) 2 Sam. iv. 2.

who would come in on either side? No, the Psalmist meant a more upright sort of people in the description that he gives us.

2dly, In swearing by the LORD, they make the divine Glory the rule of their subjection. Can an oath in the name of GOD oblige me to dishonour *him*? When I call a person my sovereign, is my reason and my conscience, from that time, his property? No, these I have received from the *King of Kings*; nor can I dispose of them to any power upon earth, without being guilty of high-treason against heaven. But, this is what I have so often enlarged upon in other Sermons, that I shall dismiss it here.

2. This swearing by the LORD, may be understood of their *pure religion before God and our father*. The whole of his worship, and of our concern with him, is often expressed in this as the most important article, and there are several things that we must comprehend in such a notion of a good man. If he is one that swears by the LORD,

It signifies an engagement that he has laid himself under to serve him. It is a making over all the right that he has either in soul or body; that they shall be the LORD'S in a *perpetual covenant, that is never to be forgotten* (f). *Yield yourselves to him, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members instruments of righteousness unto holiness* (g). And this cannot be unless we take him to be the guide as well as the object of our duty. To act upon any other rules than he has given us, is a breach of our oath; it is *Swearing by the Lord, and swearing by Malcham* (h). This expression in my text signifies that we are given up to him, and can, upon no account, depart from the commands that he has published, we avow his authority over us, and disown every other pretension.

And

(f) Jer. i. 5.
(g) Rom. vi. 13.

(h) Zeph. i. 5.

And then, their swearing by him must have an influence upon their whole conversation. He that deals faithfully with God, will do so with men. For, by that oath, he has obliged himself to a *Conscience void of offence towards both* (i). And certainly these ought to glory in a government which they do not only *serve*, but *adorn*; *Mine eyes*, says David, *shall be upon the faithful of the land, that he may ever dwell with me* (k): and that resolution would come with him to the throne, which you find, *Psal. xvi. 2. My goodness extends not unto thee, but unto the saints and to the excellent of the earth, in whom is all my delight.* Men who are afraid of displeasing God, and full of an awe to his jealousy, who dare not believe by proxy, or take their opinions upon trust, do in those very scruples, (whether they are right or wrong) give a public honour to conscience. They let the world see, that there is something that they cannot be hired to do. The Scripture has distinguished them from others, who stick at nothing. There is a mighty difference between him *that swears*, and him *that fears and oath* (l), who knows how great a solemnity it is.

These may be despised, as they always are, by men that make religion only an engine of state; they venture at all, and run through any form of worship, that has preferment on the other side, *supposing that gain is godliness.* And it is scarce to be imagined that they will object against a *posture* in the church, who put themselves into any in a court. But what assurance can these give to men, who are so loose to those concerns they have with God? They that swear to the LORD in truth, dare not take things for granted; they know he *has no pleasure in fools* (m). It is of very little value with them what men say is lawful,
if

(i) Acts xxiv. 16.

(k) Psalm ci. 6.

(l) Eccl. ix. 2.

(m) Eccl. v. 4.

if there is but an appearance that GOD has told them otherwise. They do not work up a rule out of Scripture and councils, the voice of heaven, and the traditions of men; for, *what communion can light have with darknes?* Now these deserve to *glory in a righteous cause*; they that are most faithful in the service of GOD, are likely to be so in their allegiance to the King.

3. This swearing by the LORD, may refer to the *troubles* they had been in. The phrase is taken in this sense. *Lord, remember David and all his afflictions, how he swore to the Lord, and vowed to the mighty God of Jacob (n).* It has been the practice of good people, when their fears were gathering within, or danger lowring over their heads, not only to spread their case before GOD, but to lay themselves under new engagements when the mercy came. So did *Jacob*, when he run from his father's house, *If the Lord will be with me in the way that I go, and give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, then shall the Lord be my God (o).* And thus do the children of *Israel*, when King *Arad the Canaanite* took some of them prisoners, they vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said, *If thou wilt indeed deliver this people into my hands, then will I destroy their cities (p).* And this they might do in the time of *David's* banishment from the court. As his title to the crown had spread itself among the people, so the wishes of all good men were on his side. *Abigail* told him, that *God would build him a sure house*: and it could not but raise in every thinking person a dread of what was coming upon them, when they saw King *Saul* indulge his envy at the expence of all public justice. Tho' *David* was the only man that he now pursued, yet what could a nation expect from one, who fought the

(n) Psalm cxxxiii. 1, 2.

(o) Gen. xxviii. 20, 21.

(p) Num. xxi. 2.

the life of his son, his best commander and truest friend? A prince that will sacrifice all these engagements to a private passion, leaves no room for any confidence in his word. Who knows where the royal fury will fall next?

Upon this, the good people could not but desire that they might be put into better hands; and perhaps, on that occasion, they would make vows to the LORD, that if he would but unload them of a Tyrant, and set over them *a man after his own heart*, the easiness of their state should promote the ardour of their duty. These ought to glory in David's government, it is what they had longed and prayed for. The mercy brings a claim with it upon *them*. God has their vows upon record, *what manner of persons* they would be. They always attended the right interest as far as ever they could; and when their hands were tied, their mouths were open, in recommending it to *the Lord God of Sabaoth*.

2. The blessing designed for these is, that they *shall glory*. It is a sense too low for these words, and does not express enough of the mercy to think that it means no more than *the laughter of fools*: or that in this joy they arrogate any thing to themselves; if they would say, at a distance from the blessing, *I will not trust in my bow, neither shall my sword save me* (q), they will take care to leave the praise where it ought to be, after the deliverance is come. It is not merely insulting those whose guilt and folly hath brought them low, that gives us either the temper or the happiness that is here designed: but their glorying takes into it the following particulars.

1. Disappointment of enemies.
2. An easiness in their own property, and
3. A sense of the divine hand in both.

1. It supposeth a defeat to the enemy. *When the*

VOL. I.

A a

wicked

wicked walk on every side, and the vilest of men are exalted (r), though a believer hath his inward joys which the world can neither steal nor feel, yet nothing of this appears. *When righteous men do rejoice, there is a great glory; but when the wicked rise, a man is bidden (s).* Therefore when the enemies of the LORD consume like the fat of lambs, it is no more than a tribute to the Providence for others to be glad: and the greater compass they took in their design, the more assurance they used to talk with, the brighter strokes of a Deity may be seen in their fall. Thus did David inlarge his thoughts upon the misery of Doeg the Edomite. That wretch wrought himself into Saul's esteem by falshood and malice: the King's envy, and the informer's ambition were here making their courtship to one another, the favourite thought nothing too vile that would please the King; and the King thought nothing too great to reward the favourite. But God would destroy him for ever, pluck him out of his place, and root him out of the land of the living (t). *The righteous were to see this and laugh at him; not barely in a disdain of his misery, but with a return of thanks to the justice of Providence: Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength, but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness.*

Besides, there is a public advantage in this, for *when it goes well with the righteous the city rejoiceth, but when the wicked perish there is shouting.* This distinction doth human nature make between those villainies that are of a private sort, and such as are done against a community. *Men do not despise a thief if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry (u).* There is a pity follows such a one to his execution; but when there are sinners of a greater extent, the resentment is of the same compass with the wickedness.

2. This

(r) Psalm xii. 8.
(s) Proverbs xxviii. 12.

(t) Psalm lii. 5, 6, 7.
(u) Proverbs vi. 30.

2. This glorying supposeth an easiness in their property, that it is either regained from the plunder, or secured from the designs of sinners. *They intended evil against thee, they imagined a mischievous device that they were not able to perform (x).* One would wonder that ever creatures should delight in the ruin of their own kind; but so it is, an envious man shall have more regard for his lust than he hath for his nature. He is of that value to himself; as to think his own greatness well raised, though the foundation of it be laid in the tears or blood of thousands. But they will find that *the getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death (y).* What a reach had *Haman* in his pride? For the neglect of a little civility, he doth not only lay out the death of *Mordecai*, but of a whole nation, who were no sharers in the rudeness that he supposed was offered to him: and who could think that *Esther* should have had any occasion to pray in the manner as she did, not for her own and her people's liberty, for *had they been captives she would have held her peace*; but for their lives? Now when people of these projects are defeated, *The upright have all good things in possession.*

And of this kind, are several of our public mercies; we may take the great deliverance that began on *this day* in such a view; we had lost the Laws, *the best traditions of the fathers*, and the Gospel was a going too. That there was a design to share all that pertained to life and godliness between *France* and *Rome*, is as plain as that we had a King who was a *tool* to the one, and a *bigot* to the other: whenever any opposition was given to these encroachments, it could not be without hazard of life to him that made it: and indeed, the measures of cruelty became so very familiar with them, as if they despaired of making con-

verts with reason, and resolved to do it with blood. It was not merely a persecution against the Dissenters, though if you consider who have been most active in that work, you will usually find them to be either *French Apes* or *Irish Wolves*: but besides the banishing of your ministers, the fining, goaling, and starving of your people, they struck at all professions, every quality, both sexes; as if there was no way to prove the Pope the vicar of CHRIST, but by declaring him the enemy of mankind: and when things were run thus far, GOD was pleased to put *a new song into your mouths*, by making the party your jest, which had been your terror, and driving that Monarch to *France*, in the quality of a *prisoner*, who had too long served them in that of a *pupil*. It is not only a change in the throne that we take notice of, that for a meer creature of Priests and Tyrants you had it filled with *a man of understanding*: but the difference extended itself to every corner. You were then restored to your freedom; your religion was *in yourselves and not in another*; you were not to be attempted by a spawn of friars, who had no other arguments but only to juggle for a miracle, and threaten with martyrdom, that if their folly could not prevail, their faggots might. You have then done with the fear of *dragons*, who had a plain lesson set before them in *France*, and were ready to copy it out here. GOD had pity on you, and sent you one who was formed with those noble passions of courage and tenderness, that made him a scourge to *evil-doers*, and a *praise to them that do well*.

And I the rather call you to a fresh remembrance of this now, because it is just revived: we have lately received the last and noblest consequence of it, *the family of Hanover upon the throne of Great-Britain*. By this, the hand of Providence hath touched the *Revolution* over again, and given the lines a new
 strength

strength and force. I need not tell you, that they who are enemies to the memory of King *William*, are so to the person of King *George*; it was not too gross to call him an usurper, and load his name for the *Act of Settlement*, which they represented as a *curst legacy*. The work was running back again in such a way, as if they thought no method too scandalous to promote their cause. Your *Meeting-houses* were pulled down out of a zeal for the Church, and this by a rabble who never used the name of God but in an oath. There were famous processions thro' several parts of the kingdom, in defiance of law and justice: so that if the question was now to be put, which the *chief Captain* gave to *Paul*, we should know where to look for an answer, *Art not thou that Egyptian, who before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers* (z)? The Parliament, who had done justice to the *Revolution* was dissolved with shame, and exposed in the *songs of drunkards*. The alliance on which we had our human security, treated at first with coldness, and then with abhorrence; our persons threatened upon all occasions: *They hunted our steps, that we could not go in our streets* (a). The party that thought of returning to their old bondage, did it with such views as *Esau* had upon his father's death, *The days of mourning are at hand, and then surely will I kill my brother Jacob*: but, *Blessed be God, who hath not given us a prey to their teeth; the net is broken and we are escaped* (b). We may look upon our property in its whole compass to be now secured: there are more of our hopes called into *this government*, than there was into that of the late King; because he had none to bear his name, and fill the throne when he *slept with his fathers*; but God hath been more liberal

A a 3

in

(z) Acts xxi. 38.
(a) Lam. iv. 18.

(b) Psalm cxxiv. 6, 7.

in this last bounty. We have the protection which the wise man so much commended, that *if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him, and a threefold cord is not easily broken (c)*.

3. Another thing included in this glory, is a sense of God's hand in the whole mercy. Whatever means are made use of to deliver them who are *appointed to die*, yet their *salvation is of the Lord (d)*. But sometimes he doth it in such a way that it shall be *all his own*. *They got not the land by their sword, neither did their own arm save them, but thy right hand and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favour to them (e)*. And the more divinity appears in any blessing the greater joy doth it raise in a good man. *Glory ye in his holy name, let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord (f)*.

3. I shall consider the extent of this blessing: *Every one that sweareth by him shall glory*: none were to be excluded, who had any share either of good wishes or diligence in favouring his righteous cause.

1. It should reach to high and low: and,
2. Not be limited to any sect or party.

1. Persons of all ranks were to have the benefit of it. *The righteous considers the cause of the poor, but the wicked regards not to know it (g)*. These changes in *Israel* would have been no great blessing, if they had only consisted in *another court*, that *Joab* should be General instead of *Abner*. Do we think that Providence throws all the gains of such a Revolution into a few hands? If that is all, with us it is a small matter who wears a crown: but *David* speaks as if the whole nation was to be the better for his government; *The land and all the inhabitants of it are dissolved, I bear up the pillars of it (h)*. The glory of *Solomon's* reign

(c) Eccles. iii. 12.

(d) Psal. cxxiv. 8.

(e) Psal. xlv. 3.

(f) Psal. cv. 3.

(g) Prov. xxix. 7.

(h) Psal. lxxv. 1.

reign was not to be a splendid house, or fine gardens, or a noble attendance; but this, that *all Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, sat every man under his vine, and under his fig-tree* (i).

2. This mercy is not limited to a party. People in all ages have had different apprehensions about the worship of God. And we need not doubt but, as the minds of men were of the same cast in *David's* time as they are now, that there were some varieties among them. But in the distribution of his favours, he hath no regard to that: the great questions upon this head were determined by Justice and Prudence. *Justice* will give the distinction of reward to those that have had that of danger; and *Prudence* will consider no other qualification in a man, than what maketh him equal to his trust. Besides it is an unwarrantable jumbling of things that are no way related, that a civil list should be moulded in a religious creed; and none to be servants of the Prince, but they who have got the stamp of the Clergy. *David* would not be thus confined in his dependence upon the people, or his regards to them. It was the glory of his reign to be served by all: *Gilead is mine, Manasseh is mine, Ephraim is the strength of my hand, and Judah is my law-giver* (k). *In the multitude of people is the King's safety, but in the want of people is the destruction of the Prince* (l): and therefore, to cool the affections of the subjects, or make them incapable of serving him, is to weaken the crown.

III. The last thing in my text, that makes up the glory of a good reign, is, Justice upon Offenders; *the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped*. I must here consider;

1. The Crime of these people: and,
2. Their Punishment.

A a 4

I. Their

(i) 1 Kings iv. 25.

(k) Psal. cviii. 8.

(l) Prov. xiv. 28.

1. Their sin is of that nature as makes them both abominable to God and inconsistent with society; for *a poor man is better than a liar*. If you compare the phrase here with the other places where you often find it, you will see that *David* understands it of those lies that were contrived against himself, and had a public influence among the people. And *if that which is now, is that which hath been* (l); if we may guess at his times by our own, the deccits that lay heaviest upon him, and what he desired might be followed with a full and free justice, were of three sorts.

1. False Stories by some about the court,
2. False Promises by *Saul* himself. And,
3. False Doctrines by those who endeavour to make slavery pass upon the conscience.

1st, He often complains of a wretched crew, that got the King's ear, and carried on the prejudice against him: and no wonder there were so many of them when they were paid for every story. But upon this head doth *David* expostulate with him, *Wherefore bearest thou mens words, saying, David seeketh thy hurt* (m)? And he supposeth an influence of this kind, the next time that he gave *Saul* his life. *If they be the children of men that have stirred thee up against me, cursed be they before the Lord* (n). He knew there was a party that had nothing to distinguish themselves by, nor any other subsistence than upon the folly and passion of the King: and therefore to please him, and to save themselves, they talk without any guard either of truth or modesty. He argues with them, *How long, ye sons of men, will ye turn my glory into shame? How long will you love vanity, and speak after leasing* (o)? These were enemies to the succession, though sometimes they carried on their designs with a shew of zeal the other way. *How long will ye imagine mischief against a man? Ye shall be slain all of you; as*
a bowing.

(l) Eccles. i. 9.

(m) 1 Sam. xxiv. 9.

(n) 1 Sam. xxvi. 19.

(o) Psal. iv. 2.

a bowing wall shall ye be, and as a tottering fence. They only consult to cast him down from his excellency. They delight in lies, they bless with their mouth, but curse inwardly (p). And he found this corruption then so general, that he complains, Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree a lie; to be laid in the balance they are altogether lighter than vanity (q). But there were some so notorious in treachery, that their characters went along with their names; and therefore it made Saul's administration to be scandalous when he committed the chief employment to a known prostitute. Doeg the Edomite, was over the servants; and before he accused and murdered the Priests of the Lord, it is what any one would have thought him capable of, I knew in that day, saith David, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul (r).

2dly, He might carry the charge a great deal higher, to the false promises that were made by the King himself; for first, he gave his royal word and oath to Jonathán, that David should not be slain (s); and yet the next opportunity he would have been the assassin with his own hands. His pride and fury seemed to be thawed down by the generous pity that David had for him in the cave. Thou art more righteous than I, for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded the evil. Nay he goes farther, and delivers an opinion that he had taken so much pains to hide, I know that thou shalt be King, and the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hands (t). So that in that sense, the succession was nearest his heart, though it was the farthest from his inclination: and yet as if he was in pain to sink his reputation, and to defile the throne he sat on, he is soon after this at the head of an army again. The next time David spares him, he

(p) Psal. lxii. 3, 4.
 (q) Psal. lxii. 9.
 (r) 1 Sam. xx. 22.

(s) 1 Sam. xix. 6,
 (t) 1 Sam. xxiv. 17, 19.

he dissolves into the old confession, and promiseth fair, *I have sinned: return my son David, I will no more do thee harm, because my soul was precious in thy sight this day: behold I have played the fool, I have erred exceedingly* (u). Such an opinion as this would have been assurance enough from any other man; but *David* who knew that there is always something greater with a Tyrant than his conscience, his honour, or his salvation, cannot depend upon one word that he saith, but will rather venture himself among the *Philistines*, to whom he had been a glorious enemy, than trust to the declarations of a shuffling Prince. How mean and low had he brought himself by this unsteadiness? Who can more expose the honour of Sovereigns than they that put them upon a violation of their word, which is so far from advancing the dignity of their thrones, that it makes them a scandal to their nature. *Excellent speech does not become a fool, much less do lying lips a Prince* (x).

3dly, I may say with the Apostle in another case, that there might be *false Prophets among the people, as there are false Teachers among you* (y). *Unruly, vain deceivers, whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not for filthy lucre sake: always liars, evil beasts, and slow bellies* (z). The mind of GOD had been declared in *Israel* about the succession. *David* was anointed by *Samuel*; and the Spirit of the LORD was daily forming his soul to the great and awful trust. It was he that led out and brought in the army of *Israel* as a commander, and every one knew that he was to be their King; but they had some among them who could talk of hereditary and indefeasible right; for upon this ground did a poor shiftless Prince encourage a faction to proclaim him, and make a mighty stir for him. There were no pretensions that *Ishboseth* was likely

(u) 1 Sam xxvi. 21.

(x) Prov. xii. 7.

(y) 2 Pet. ii. 1.

(z) Tit. i. 10—12.

likely to be a better ruler than *David*, or that God had not fixed the succession, but they must go upon principles that some in our day are governed by, that Kings cannot forfeit either for themselves or their posterity; that a crown must be taken in no other notion than as an inheritance; that though a Prince *does* no justice, yet still he shall *feel* none. These must be the arguments that the friends of the Pretender in *David's* time would justify themselves with; and the notions you know are advanced by some among us, we hope with the same success that attended the others; for the follies of *these men shall be made manifest as theirs also was* (a): *Should not the multitude of words be answered? Shall a man full of talk be justified? Shall their lies make men hold their peace? And when they are mockers, shall no man make them ashamed* (b)?

Shall we be told that CHRIST, who came to give *peace on earth* and shew a *good-will towards men*, hath made us slaves? Or that they whom he *bought with a price*, are sold again to a Tyrant? Are we to have no other notion of the *sheep of his pasture* than as *sheep for the slaughter*? Are these words by which we must be saved? Are these the *glad tidings of great joy that should be to all people*? Is this *doing the work of an Evangelist*, and making full proof of their Ministry, to tell a monster, that he hath a *divine right* to be wicked, and that no Christians have a *human right* to resist him? This is speaking lies in the name of the LORD: and yet it is hard to find an interest of cruelty carrying on, but some of this tribe are tools to promote it. It is a method very ancient in the world, for a Statesman to be the leader, and a Priest the sag-end of a party. I think the Scripture itself hath given it no softer a name. *The ancient and honourable he is the head, and the Prophet that teacheth lies, he is the tail* (c).

And

(a) 2 Tim. iii. 9.

(b) Job xi. 2, 3.

(c) Isai. ix. 15.

And how well may these accounts be transferred to our day? O what a guilt of treachery does there lie somewhere? What a vile surrender of our safety, trade and honour, only to keep one Monarch on a throne, and a few of his creatures out of a jail! I will not descend to particulars, which are open enough to every one's observation; but you may comprehend the management of the last four years, in those sad words of the Prophet: *Ephraim feeds on wind, and followeth after the east-wind, he daily increaseth lies and desolations, and they make a covenant with the Assyrians, and oil is carried into Egypt (d)*. Were it not that the late turn of Providence hath begun to roll away our reproach, *English* credit would have been very much the same with what the *Romans* used to call the *Punic faith*. How vile must a people be under the weight of that charge? *Thou wentest to the King with ointments, and didst increase thy perfumes; and didst send thy messengers afar off, and didst debase thyself even to hell (e)*. But whether or no this work is agreeable to the LORD of hosts, I will leave you to judge by the aim that he hath given to his vengeance. These are among the things that *he bates*, and that *are an abomination to him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood (f)*. But that leads me to the second thing.

2. The punishment of this people, which you find in this and the two former verses; where there are several things that express both a divine and human justice.

They that seek my soul to destroy it, shall go down to the lower parts of the earth. The least and weakest sense of these words is, that they are to be degraded from their honours. Instead of swelling with titles, and basking themselves in warm employments, they shall be reduced to a station where popular scorn may reach

(d) Hof. xii. 1.

(e) Isai. lvii. 4.

(f) Prov. vi. 17.

reach them. *Men shall clap their hands at him, and shall hiss him out of his place (g). A righteous man bates lying; but a wicked man is lothesome, and comes to shame (b).* He goes on,

They shall be a portion for foxes. If you take this in a metaphorical sense, you will see their sin enstamped upon their punishment: that the sly and tricking persons who led them into a snare will leave them there; and as they had the guilt to make them *knaves*, will have the triumph in shewing them *fools*. That is one way of becoming a portion for foxes. But certainly it here signifies that capital justice shall be done upon them; *They shall fall by the sword*, and their carcasses be left unburied, as not worthy to be received into that earth which had groaned under their oppression.

And then, in my text you find, *their mouths are to be stopped.* No farther encouragement shall be given to them, their schemes are unraveled; they will either be totally silent, or talk with a confusion that will but expose them. *A sword is upon the liars, and they shall dote (i).* Judgment will return unto righteousness, and all the upright in heart shall follow it (k). And what a sweep would the hand of justice take, if the mouths of those liars were to be stopped who have deceived and bullied so many nations at once? Oh! remember, remember the promises made to the *Catalonians*, and see them all foked in the blood of those brave people who *waited for a vain help*.

Justice upon offenders, is so far from fullying the work of God in the rescue of a people, that it is no small part of their future security. Nor can the privileges of a nation be better cemented than in the blood of those that betrayed them. The Prophet tells us, that there are lenities which cannot be used but at the public expence. *Let favour be shewed to the wicked,*

(g) Job xxvii. 23.

(b) Prov. xiii. 5.

(i) Jer. l. 36.

(k) Psal. xciv. 15.

wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord (k). And it is a maxim too divine and glorious to be dropped, *he shall have judgment without mercy, who has shewed no mercy.* David was instructed to this in a very awful way. At the beginning of his reign there was a famine for three years, and the LORD told him, *It was for Saul, and for his bloody house, because in his zeal to the children of Israel, he had slain the Gibeonites (l).* These people were taken into league in *Joshua's* days; and though they are condemned to perpetual service, to be *hewers of wood and drawers of water*; yet GOD will have alliances to be so sacred, that an injury to *them* shall keep his wrath lowring over the country till seven men of the blood-royal werehanged before the palace-gates in *Gibeah of Saul whom the Lord did choose.*

And we find the last words of *David* uniform to this, which were a direction to *Solomon*, *He that rules over men must be just, ruling in the fear of the Lord. And he shall be like the light of the morning when the sun rises; even a morning without clouds, as the tender grass springing out of the earth by a clear shining after rain (m).* These metaphors describe the royal equity that shall make proper distributions of punishment and favour; to scatter them whose works are in the dark, and to refresh the souls of the poor and needy. In the next verse he laments, that *his house is not so with God*, and that he would *not make it grow*; but he intimates, from what sort of people this danger would come upon the royal family, as in fact it did. Men of bloody and oppressive tempers insinuated themselves into *Rehoboam's* favour, by giving such advice as cost him ten tribes at once. *David* seems to know beforehand what such barbarous counsels would bring his grandson to; *Ths sons of Belial shall be all of them thrust away because they*

(k) Isai. xxvi. 9.
(l) 2 Sam. xxi. 1.

(m) 2 Sam xxiii. 2, 3.

they cannot be taken with hands ; but the man that shall touch them must be fenced with iron, and the staff of a spear, and they shall be consumed with fire in the same place.

This is what he left with *Solomon* upon his death-bed to regard those who had owned him in the time of his adversity. *Shew kindness to the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite, and let them be of those that eat bread at thy table ; for so came they to me when I fled because of Absalom thy brother (n).* But he warned him against the errors of clemency, as that which himself had suffered by. *Shimei the son of Gera had cursed David as he went along weeping, and arraigned the Revolution that GOD had wrought in Israel. Come out thou bloody man, and thou man of Belial : the Lord has returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned (o).* And yet, such is the force of impudence and fawning, that this man, by pretensions to an early loyalty, obtains his pardon. *Let not my Lord impute iniquity unto me, neither do thou remember that which thy servant did perversly in the day that my Lord the King went out of Jerusalem, that the King should take it to his heart, for thy servant does know that I have sinned ; therefore, behold I am come this day the first of all the house of Joseph, to meet my Lord the King (p).* It is true *David* was then so pleased with his Restoration, that he neglects the demands of public justice, and what he had vowed to do. *I will early destroy all the wicked of the land, that I may cut off all evil-doers from the house of the Lord (q).* But now he is going out of the world, he owns the deficiencies of his Government. We must not think that he said this from a private revenge, or that he was then deserted by the Spirit of GOD. We are told the reverse of that, and must rather suppose it was the LORD that spake by him ; that *a divine sentence was then*

(n) 1 Kings ii. 7:

(o) 2 Sam. xvi. 8.



(p) 2 Sam. xix. 19.

(q) Psal. ci. 8.

then in the mouth of the King, and his lips did not transgress in judgment (r). Thou hast with thee there Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite of Baburim, who cursed me with a grievous curse, in the day when I went to Mahanaim; but he came down to meet me at Jordan, and I swore to him by the Lord, saying, I will not put thee to death by the sword. Now therefore hold him not guiltless; for thou art a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do to him; but his hoary head bring thou down to the grave with blood (s). And after Solomon had gone through these executions, i. e. turned out Abiathar from being Priest of the Lord; slain Adonijah, who said the kingdom was his by right, and by the death of Joab had put away innocent blood from the house of his father, and now had dispatched Shimei, it gave him a prospect of an easy reign, he returns thus upon himself; King Solomon shall be blest, and the throne of David be established for ever (t).

And that the mouth of liars should thus be stopped, agrees with those maxims that were impressed upon himself, and which stand in such a light, that they must convince whenever they are known. *If a Ruler hearken to lies, all his servants are wicked (u)*. They see either his weakness or his corruption; they will no longer regard him as a Sovereign, but either as a child or a fury. On the other hand, when the King sits on the throne of judgment, he scatters away all evil with his eyes. *A wise King scatters the wicked, and brings the wheel over them (x)*. Nor can there be a rejoicing in the Lord for the Prince, or a glory for those who swear by him, if he is not the minister of God for good, but bears the sword in vain (y). *The law is made for liars and perjured persons (z)*.

These

(r) Prov. xvi. 10.
 (s) 1 Kings ii. 8, 9.
 (t) 1 Kings iii. 45.
 (u) Prov. xxix. 12.

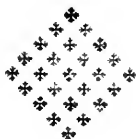
(x) Prov. xx. 8, 26.
 (y) Rom. xiii. 4.
 (z) 1 Tim. i. 10.

These were the views that *David* had upon his accession to the throne; thus he designed to live and rule. That it was not in the power of his hand to go thorough with these noble resolutions, you may learn from an early complaint: *I am this day weak, though anointed King, and these men, the sons of Zeruiab, are too hard for me (a)*; but under this impotence of Government, he refers the case to the Judge of all the earth, who will do right; *The Lord shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness*. Such a Government as I have here described, looks like that of a Redeemer, who, as *the King of Saints, rejoices in God*; he is *anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows*: he has provided *glory, honour and immortality* for them that love him; but *silence, confusion and torment* to all deceivers. For into the place where he lives shall *nothing enter that defiles, or works an abomination, or loves and makes a lie (b)*: *But the throne of God, and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him; and they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads (c)*.

(a) 1 Sam. iii. 39.

(b) Rev. xxi. 27.

(c) Rev. xxii. 3, 4.







S E R M O N XVI.

Justice and Property the Glory of a Deliverance.



In Two SERMONS Preached JANUARY 20, (being a Day of Public Thanksgiving for his Majesty's safe Arrival) and JANUARY 23, 1715.



NEHEMIAH V. 13.

Also I shook my Lap, and said, So God shake out every Man from his House, and from his Labour, that performeth not his Promise, even thus be he shaken out and emptied. And all the Congregation said, Amen, and praised the Lord.

HERE is scarce a verse in this chapter, but what suits the great occasion upon which I have chosen my text: and indeed, the whole story of *Nehemiah*, and his conduct in public affairs, is so much like the times we are fallen into, that some reflections upon the state of things in their day, may lead us to make the best use of what Providence hath done in ours.

There are three particulars to be observed in the case of that people.

1. That God had given them a very great deliverance, which no human reason could ever have

hoped for: it was not the manner of those nations that had taken them captive, to make any restitution, and it is a thing so ungrateful to human nature, that we must always reckon it a divine work when Tyrants are brought to refund: it is true, they had the prophecies of *Jeremiah*, and other good men, all along to soften their bondage, and by those *Books they might know the number of years in which the Lord would accomplish the desolations of Jerusalem* (a). But still it was so amazing in itself, that what they had often fought with prayer, they cannot but receive with wonder; for *when the Lord turned again the captivity of Sion, we were like them that dreamed, then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing. The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad* (b). And if you consider but this salvation in the two main branches of it, you will still go deeper into the surprize that ever any thing of that nature should happen. They are restored to the *religion*, as well as the *liberties* of their fathers: the same decree that allowed them to repair the city, commands them to build the temple. This order came at first from *Cyrus*, whose character in other histories is vile enough; and when we read of him in the book of *God*, it makes him no better than a gross idolater: *For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name; I have surnamed thee though thou hast not known me* (c). We there read with what a greatness he spread his arms over the earth. *Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, his right hand have I holden to subdue nations before him, and I will loose the loins of Kings, to open before him the two-leaved gates, and the gates shall not be shut* (d). And so in another place, *I have called up one from the north, and he shall come; from the rising of the sun, shall he call upon my name? He shall come*

(a) Dan. ix. 2.

(b) Psalm cxxvi. 1, 2, 3.

(c) Isa. lxxv. 4.

(d) Isa. lxxv. 1.

come upon princes as upon mortar, and as the potter treads the clay (e). And yet the person who had such an appetite for conquest, gives up a former captivity, as if he alone was to have an universal monarchy, without the temper that always attends it, which is an universal cruelty, *Thus saith Cyrus King of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the Lord God of heaven given me, and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah; who is there among you of all his people, the Lord his God be with him, let him go up (f).*

And though this work was hindered by those who hired counsellors against the Jews in that reign, and was totally at an end in the days of Artaxerxes, yet GOD revived it again in the government of Darius: all the deceitful arguments, that it was a rebellious and a bad city, and had been hurtful to Kings, that it would lessen the revenue, and cut off a branch of the empire, these were controled by a divine impression upon the royal conscience. Darius acted like one who hated those maxims of cruelty, that make brutes both of princes and people, the former in ravage, the latter in slavery; *Let them, saith he, offer sacrifices of sweet savour to the God of heaven, and pray for the life of the King, and of his son; and I have made a decree, that whoever shall alter this work, let timber be pulled down from his house, and being set up, let him be hanged thereon, and let his house be made a dunghil for this; and the God that caused his name to dwell there, destroy all Kings and people that shall put to their hands to alter and destroy the house of God which is at Jerusalem (g).* What a Deliverance was this! *They said among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them: but*

II. The work met with a great deal of opposition several ways.

B b 3

1. There

(e) Isa. lx. 25.

(f) Ezra i. 2.



(g) Ezra vi. 10, 11, 12.

1. There were public enemies to the design. In the first expedition we read of, *Talnai, governor on this side the river Shethar-boznai (b)*, that offered to build with the Jews, and because they were refused, made all the false representations of them to the court that they were able to form. In *Nehemiah's* time, we meet with the same spirit in other persons, there was *Sanballat the Hæronite, and Tobiab the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian (i)*; these opposed the good design with all the variety that malice could furnish: sometimes they called it sedition; *What is this thing that ye will do? Will ye rebel against the King (k)?* Though *Nehemiah* could have answered that insinuation by the letters, or orders of council that he brought along with him; yet he takes no notice of that, but replies to them in the utmost contempt, both of their persons and argument: *The God of heaven, he will prosper us, therefore we his servants will arise and build, but you have no portion, nor right, nor memorial in Jerusalem (l).*

2. The work was incumbered another way, and that was by those who had a share in promoting it. The very *Jews* themselves, the parties in this good design, run into those vile and wretched methods that shocked the whole cause at once: it had like to have perished in their own hands; and this not by mistake, or a few slips of policy, but by downright wickedness; things that were inconsistent both with the honour of God, and the security of their brethren. These may be reduced to two heads, which I will only just mention now, and enlarge upon them as I get farther into the discourse.

First, One of the crimes that was foolish, and had like to have proved fatal, was a clemency to the public and notorious enemies of the cause. Such as were for keeping the people in bondage, had wove themselves

(b) Ezra iii. 2.

(i) Neh. ii. 10.

(k) Neh. ii. 19.

(l) Neh. ii. 20.

themselves into the families of others, who pretended a zeal to bring them out of it: we find an unhappy acquaintance between plunderers and patriots; men who had built the wall, and those who had laughed at it. The two opposite causes of bondage and liberty, of hell and heaven are forgot, and people are so loose from their own pretensions, that what they adorned in words, they sunk in things. The concord that seems impossible in nature becomes easy to corruption: there is a friendship between light and darkness, between *Christ* and *Belial* (*m*), and,

Secondly, At the same time that these persons were so complaisant to enemies, they are in the other extreme to their own brethren. When clemency is directed by a *wisdom that is from above* (*n*), it is uniform and glorious like the rule under which it moves; it will be *first pure and then peaceable*, and though it is *gentle and easy to be intreated*, yet it is *without partiality and without hypocrisy*: but when it is only prompted by the lust of man, when we enter into it upon nothing higher than private interest and personal views, it is the most unshapely and disfigured thing in the world: in some cases it gives what the law forbids, in others it denies what the law commands. When people are so very gentle to public enemies, they will be as severe to public friends: their passions are in disorder and tumult from first to last. Thus it is in all qualities. The Prophets that *strengthened the bands of the wicked in his wickedness, by promising him life* (*o*), at the same time, *made the hearts of the righteous sad*. *Saul*, who was so very tender of *Amalek* against the law of God, in his pursuit of *David*, runs away from the common justice of man. *Abab*, who had so little regard to his own subjects, as to murder all that he could find of the true Religion among them, hath such an extreme lenity in another case, that he

B b 4

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(*m*) 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15.(*n*) Jam. iii. 17.(*o*) Ezek. xiii. 22.

lets go a man out of his hand whom God had appointed to utter destruction (p): and thus it was in the history before us; these very persons who were open to the acquaintance of such as they ought to have abhorred, are quite closed up to the danger and interest of those that were in the same cause with themselves. *There was a great cry of the people against their brethren the Jews (q)*; and the complaint runs upon two heads. *First*, that they were little better than *slaves* to their own countrymen: and *secondly*, that by the same inequality of management, they were become *beggars* at home: they had lost their estates for the cause, and were now giving up their persons, and under no more prospect of being relieved by the common Deliverance, than they were without it. You have them all throwing in their grievances, *There were some that said, We our sons and our daughters are many, therefore we take up corn for them that they may eat and live: there were also that said, We have mortgaged our lands, and vineyards, and houses, that we might buy corn because of the dearth. There were also that said, We have borrowed money for the King's tribute, and that upon our lands and vineyards, yet now our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren, our children as their children; and we bring into bondage our sons and our daughters to be servants, and some of our daughters are brought into bondage already, neither is it in our power to redeem them, for other men have our lands and vineyards (r)*. These were vices that incumbered the work of GOD, and made it go on heavily among them. But,

III. Another thing that you observe from the story, is, that *Nebemiah* sets himself to immediate justice upon those that were guilty, and a relief to them that gave in their complaints. He calls them together, shews the vileness of the practice, and though he could

(p) 1 Kings xx. 42.

(q) 1 Kings xx. 1.

(r) 1 Kings xx. 2, 3, 4, 5.

could have little hopes of fixing his arguments upon any principles of truth and honour, yet he does what he can with the grosser passions of fear and shame. The several methods that he took with them, and the promise that he extorted from them, I shall open afterwards, and will now only take notice, that he closed his endeavours with a solemn curse upon those that proved deceitful; *Also I shook my lap, and said, So God shake out every man from his house and from his labour, that performs not his promise, even thus be he shaken out and emptied:* and this was so good a day's work, that *all the congregation said Amen, and praised the Lord.*

By these reflections upon the history, you will be able to see your own concern in it, that here was a glorious cause, divine and heavenly in all its parts; Religion secured, and liberty restored, and yet it had like to have been sapped and undone by the very people who were sharers in it, and professed themselves to be friends to it. That the danger they brought upon it was an indulgence to enemies by private usuries, and coldness to their hearty friends, and that such a wicked and foolish conduct would certainly have defeated the great salvation, had not God raised them up a *man* of such a spirit as made him every way qualified to *seek the welfare of Israel*: things were become so desperate, that *Nebemiah* seems to be the only person who was able to give a remedy. I shall reduce the whole state of their case to these six heads, which are all of them so many doctrines or maxims upon the history before you; and as I despair of having time enough for a distinct application at the end, I will comprehend it in the several particulars as we go along.

1. It is an abuse of the divine Goodness in the deliverance of a people, when the blessing is not made extensive to all who are concerned in it.

2. It is an aggravation of this injury, when it is done

done by those who are engaged in the same cause with the very people that suffer. This was the case of the *Jews*, the cry of the men and their wives was against their brethren.

3. These disorders must be redressed, if we expect a return of the divine Mercy. You see it was the first thing that *Nebemiah* did, and that such a case is not desperate, I will shew you both from the fitness and the success of the methods that he took.

4. It is a mighty instance of God's favour to a people thus abused, when he sets over them a Governor who is touched with a sense of their miseries.

5. The vengeance of heaven will come down upon those who do not fall in with the noble measures that such a prince recommends; for I take *Nebemiah's* curse, as it was founded upon justice, to have in it the value of a prophecy. *I shook my lap, and said, So God shake out every man from his house and from his labour that performs not this promise, even so be he shaken out and emptied.*

6. Whenever things are thus managed, it diffuses through the people both the argument and the spirit of a *thanksgiving-day*; as these proposals arose from God's grace in *Nebemiah's* heart, so they took them to be the presages of God's favour to his government, this made all the congregation say, *Amen*, and praise the LORD.

1. One doctrine that you may collect from this remarkable story, is, that people abuse the divine Goodness in their Deliverance, when the blessing is not made extensive to all that are concerned in it. This observation is placed in such universal evidence, that all men admit it into their opinion, though they seldom heed it in their practice. In a time of danger we understand a general interest. Every one is called in to take a part in the struggles that we make for liberty. *Cyrus* united all the *Jews* in his proclamation, he gave them equal leave to do their utmost in
so

so good a design; and they were also united in the zeal that came from above. *Every one whose spirit God raised to go up (s)*, entered into the work without making any private articles; and yet when the toil was a little over, some of them acted as if they thought that Providence was not a public friend, but only a sort of a factor to a few private families. Now this is abominable: because,

1. They were all equal in GOD's regard, being *the work of his hands*.

2. They were so to one another as brethren.

3. They had been so to the cause, as fellow-labourers.

1. It is a misrepresentation of him who gives us the mercy, if we do not make it extensive. *He accepts not the persons of princes, nor regards the rich more than the poor, for they are all the work of his hands (t)*. Though he hath given some a situation above their brethren, yet we cannot imagine that it is purely for their own sakes. You must not think he is so lavish of his bounty to the great men of the earth, meerly that they may glitter upon a throne, but be *his ministers for good*; and this they cannot be, if they resolve to confine their influence. Princes love to be called GOD's Representatives, but they usually understand it in no other attribute than his power, whereas that is incommunicable; it is a *glory* that he never *gives to another*. The chief titles in which he would be represented by them, are those of justice and mercy: the power of doing harm never belongs to his vicegerent, because it never was in himself. He is absolute, but he is so upon the foundations of equity, as well as greatness. He can no more defile his throne, than he can lose it. It is as impossible for his administration to be condemned, as it is to be resisted: he does according to his will; but that will is always holy, just, and good; and, when he *pulls down*

(s) Ezra i. 5.

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(t) Job xxxiv. 19.

down one and sets up another, if they are to represent him, this is the perfection that they ought to copy: but one would think by the inequality of human conduct, that some people will scarce allow others to be creatures; as if they thought Providence does its wonders merely to raise a family, or maintain the humour of a party: against this we may argue as the Apostle does, “Is he the God of the *Jews* only, and not of the *Gentiles*? Yes, of the *Gentiles* also.” The bounties of nature are unconfined; *their line is gone throughout the earth (u)*: the sun takes his circuit through the whole heavens, and *there is nothing hid from the heat thereof*: and are the blessings that he gives out of the common way to be more a property than the other? It is no wonder that he ruins a mercy in the hands of those that only use it as a monopoly.

2. The unfairness of this management in the *Jews*, does farther appear in that they were all brethren. To have talked of any qualifications that arise from different opinions, would have been entertained at first as a reproach both upon the work and the people: it was enough if they could but *prove their genealogy that they were of Israel*. If they had no varieties among them about the worship of God, it must arise from one of these things; either that they had a more perfect rule to go by than we have, which is making *Christ* less faithful in his house than *Moses* was (x): or that if men would add to the rule that God had framed, all the people would run in with it, which is as unaccountable to reason, as the former is to Scripture. In the following ages we know with how much value they received *the traditions of the fathers*, so as to make the command of God of no effect (y): now if any of them went this length in *Nebemiah's* time, we may suppose there were some who would keep to the law and to the testimony: but they are equally included

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(u) Psalm xix. 4, 6.

(x) Heb. xxi.

(y) Matt. xv. 6.

in this great salvation. The general mercy that God had bestowed, was not given to feed a distinction among themselves: the blessing that regarded them as *Jews*, must not be made a perquisite to a sect or faction. Are people delivered from a common ruin that they may still indulge the folly of a lower quarrel? Does God tear you from a bondage to a foreign enemy, on purpose to encourage a domestic persecution? Will you make terms for his Providence, as you do for his Grace? If *your* hands are closed to your brethren, shall *his* be so too? Are they to have no share in what he does? Allow him to dispose of his bounty as he pleaseth, and to do according to what he saith in the parable; *I do thee no wrong, take that which is thine and go thy way; I will give unto this last, even as unto thee; Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil because that I am good (z)?*

You will easily see by all this, how ill they are dealt with who are cast out from the privileges of a nation where they live, and neither used as *Britons*, nor as *Protestants*. When they hear songs from the uttermost parts of the earth, saying, *Glory to the righteous, they may cry out, My leanness, my leanness, the treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously (a)*. Till the foundation is made wider, and men regarded rather for the merit of their actions than for the cant and cringe of a party, we are both fulying God's work, and abusing his people. Nor is this out of the case of our present thanksgiving: we do not come to rejoice that God hath brought one amongst us who bears *the name of a King*. It is a poor charm that goes along with the sound of that title. It does not always signify either wisdom or goodness. But the mercy is this, that he hath given us one who is touched with a sense of our danger, and full of that principle which alone can secure our happiness: and of this we have an early proof in the noble declaration that he made in council:

‘ that

(z) Matt. xx. 13, 14.

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(a) Isa. xxiv. 16.

‘ that it was his purpose to do all that is in his power
 ‘ for the supporting and maintaining the churches of
 ‘ *England* and *Scotland*, as they are severally by law
 ‘ established, and that his opinion was, this might
 ‘ be effectually done without the least impairing the
 ‘ Toleration allowed by law to Protestant Dissenters,
 ‘ so agreeable to Christian charity, and so necessary
 ‘ to the trade and riches of this kingdom: and, as
 ‘ the good effects of making property secure, are no
 ‘ where so clearly seen, and to so great a degree as in
 ‘ this happy kingdom, so he assures us, there is not
 ‘ any that shall more earnestly endeavour the prefer-
 ‘ vation of it than himself *.’ You have the more
 reason to observe this, when you remember how lately
 some were pulling all sorts of misery upon you; tho’
 they could not go through their design to beggar you
 by *the Bill of Commerce*, yet they have laid the scheme
 of another plunder, by denying you the education of
 your children: as if great ignorance was the best way
 to *prevent schism*. The Papists tell us, that it is the
 mother of devotion, and others would make it the
 bond of uniformity: so that you see one door of ruin
 is still open, for we learn by the Prophet, that peo-
 ple are not only *destroyed* for lack of *trade*, but for
lack of knowledge.

But behold the goodness of GOD! it is observed
 by the sacred historians, that the happiness of *Israel*
 bore date with an edict of this nature: *There arose a*
King that knew not Joseph, the same did evil intreat
our fathers, and cast out their young children, to the in-
tent that they might not live, at which time Moses was
born (b): and by the same rule, I cannot but observe
 to you, that his present Majesty began his *life* one
 day before that reign in which your fathers were made
Dissenters †; and he began his *government* the same
 day that your children were to be made *Ideots* ||: *may*
the

* Sept. 22, 1714.

(b) Acts vii. 18, 19, 20.

† May 28, 1660.

|| August 1, 1714.

the blessing of those that were ready to perish come upon him: may he have the glory as he hath the inclination to be a healer of our breaches, and a restorer of paths to dwell in: that as God hath given him the hearts, he may in his Providence give him the service of those who want more room to be useful; that in his days there may be an end of all such establishments as pinch the throne and grieve the conscience; plunder the prince of the help that he may have, and prevent the subjects of a duty that they would pay: that the chains of incapacity may be taken off from yourselves, and those of ignorance from your posterity: thus his name will be dear to the present age, and the children yet unborn will rise up and call him blessed.

3. There is another reason why the mercies of a Deliverance should be thus extended, because the people had been equal in their concern for a general interest. It is not fair that sweat and blood should pass for nothing. *Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her (c).* It was so in the story of *Nehemiah*; the poorer sort, who were brought so low, had taken as much pains in building the temple and the city, as their brethren, who run away with the main shares of the blessing. It is true, God condemned the *Gibeonites* to be *hewers of wood and drawers of water*; but he never suffered one party of *Israel* to use another at that rate. A little before this complaint, there was work enough for all hands, when they were ready to sink under the noise of enemies, and the weight of service: *Judab* said, *The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and there is much rubbish, so that we are not able to build the wall (d):* and when the adversary threatened to pour in forces upon them from every quarter, *Nehemiah* set the people after their families, with their swords, their spears,

and

(c) Isa. lxvi. 10.

|

(d) Neh. iv. 10.

and their bows (e). Where would have been the policy of disqualifying any number of these, when they were all little enough? No, *Zion* then was not built with blood, nor *Jerusalem* with iniquity. He engageth them all, without any distinction, and argues upon the common topics of Religion and Liberty: *I said to the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, Be ye not afraid of them; remember the Lord, who is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, and your wives, and your houses* (f). It would have given them but a dull prospect had they known beforehand what they felt afterwards, that all their hazards was but to make others rich, and keep themselves poor. But they had no such view; they knew it to be a principle of universal nature, that every thing shall subsist upon his own service: the creature that works must feed. *Who goes a warfare at any time at his own charges? Who plants a vineyard, and eats not of the fruit thereof? Or who feeds a flock, and eats not of the milk of the flock? Say I these things, or saith the law the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn* (g). *Does God take care for oxen? Is that all his design to establish a privilege for cattle? Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written, That he that plows should plow in hope, and he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope; that another may not run away with all he hath been taking pains for.*

Not but that every good man acts upon higher ends than an advantage in this life. He hath the comfort *Nehemiah* so often rolled himself in, of commending his soul to that God whose cause had inflamed his zeal, and led on his dangers. *Remember me, O Lord, according to the multitude of thy mercies: and*

(e) Neh. iv. 13.

(f) Neh. iv. 14.

(g) 1 Cor. ix. 7, 8, 9, 10.

and certainly, we ought to imploy a severe suspicion upon a temper that makes us uneasy at any good we have done : it is apt to rise in an honest heart, and therefore we are warned against it : *Do you think that the Scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy (b)?* No, it is not in vain, we all of us need that caution, and the more we have an eye to *the recompence of reward*, the greater serenity will it draw down upon the mind : as the cause is good, so is the master who hath instamped his name upon it. It is an honour that he will help us to *do* any thing for his people ; it is a greater if we are called to *suffer* : however, it is to be wished, that human affairs were conducted with more equity ; that men who are indifferent to *any* party, may not be gainers by *all* ; and that those persons whose lives were *not dear to themselves*, may find they are dear to their friends ; for it will ever have an unkindly aspect, that such people should not be owned as *servants* to an interest, who were sure of being *martyrs* for it.

II. Another maxim that you may collect from the story of the *Jews* in this book, is, that it is an aggravation of the injury done to those who are no better for the public mercy, when the guilt of using them thus, lies upon some who are engaged in the same cause with them. This was indeed a pungent article in the case that my text refers to ; the people who in the former chapter had no imaginations of danger, but what came from the enemy, turned the next cry against *their brethren the Jews*. Some of these had made an advantage of the common hardships that the rest lay under ; they lent them money upon extravagant usury, taking *the hundredth part of it from them*, which is what we call twelve *per cent.* and they had so little mercy for those that were thus straitened, that some of these borrowers were forced to *mortgage their lands*, and others of them to sell, or

at least, to pawn their children. Now the vileness of such usage appears in three things.

1. It shewed a gross want of all Religion.
2. It drew down a reproach upon the cause itself.
3. This severity to their brethren was attended with a scandalous clemency to the enemy.

1. Such a way of dealing with God's people after the common Deliverance he had given them, was a notorious argument how little Religion had to do in their mens hearts. Though they were but lately in bondage, and *by the rivers of Babylon* dropping a tear upon every thought of *Sion* (i), yet from that softness they became insensible to the groans of misery. These very persons had but newly caught at an opportunity that the proclamation gave them to build the city and the temple, and the thick cloud that hung over them all the while they were doing it, one would have thought should have kept them serious; and yet you see that *Nehemiah* argues upon the infidelity and atheism of such a practice. *It is not good that ye do; ought ye not to walk in the fear of the Lord our God* (k)? In which reproof, he shews them that the fear of God extends itself farther than meer devotion. It was not rearing the temple; it is not building of churches that will protect a people in the neglect of their brethren; for *by mercy and truth iniquity is purged, and by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil* (l). It is not belonging to a good society or running out in a zeal for it, that will answer the end of Religion. *The wisdom that descends from above is full of mercy and good fruits* (m). The people guilty of these abominations, were of the purest church then in the world, and had lately shewn a regard to their peculiar; and yet they are doing that which is scandalous to all the professions of piety.

2. This course was enough to draw in a disgrace upon

(i) Psalm cxxxvii. 1, 2.

(k) Neh. v. 9.

(l) Prov. xvi. 6.

(m) James iii. 17.

upon the cause itself, as *Nebemiab* tells them, we ought to *walk in the fear of the Lord our God, because of the reproach of the Heathen our enemies* (n). He was always afraid of any thing that might give the *Persians* a handle to think with a contempt of their Religion. *Ezra* had rather run the hazard of his life, than of the reputation that ought to be maintained upon the interest of God: *I was ashamed to require of the King a band of soldiers, and of horsemen, to help us against the enemy in the way, because we had spoken to the King, saying, The band of our God is upon all them for good that seek him, but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him* (o). He durst not beg for a common protection, lest it had looked like a diffidence of the promises; but if want of faith is a scandal to any cause, I am sure want of charity will be more so. What a jest would the enemy make of all the pretences the *Jews* had, either upon the head of Religion or Liberty? These men that would not take a devotion of our forming, will have a morality of their own: they hate one sort of *idolatry*, but they love *covetousness*, which is really another: and with what pretence can they talk of freedom to us, when they deny it to their brethren? When the *Jews* went into captivity, they were received with a general scorn, they had not the usual pity that is given to prisoners of war, but were by every one looked upon as a vile and wretched nation, *When they entered unto the Heathen, whither they went, they profaned my holy name, when they said unto them, These are the people of the Lord, and are gone forth out of his land; but I had pity for my holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned whither they went* (p); and now they are doing the same thing in their return from captivity, which was enough to make the people that conversed with them think that Religion, the

(n) Neh. v. 9.
(o) Ezra viii. 22.

(p) Ezek. xxxvi. 20, 21.

rights of mankind, liberty and property, were only musical sounds to leave a delightful touch upon the ear, and then be gone for ever. *Nebemiah* knew that their constitution was but young and tender, and there were enemies on every side to make an advantage of the least error; and could a story of this nature be carried to King *Darius*, that the rulers and nobles among the *Jews* were insatiable in their avarice, and the common people more slaves to them than they had been to him, he would have recalled his decree: or, if by the laws of the country he could not do that, he might let loose those ravening enemies upon them, who wanted no more than leave to swallow them up; and indeed, if this was the case, the poor people had better have gone back again, they had a severer bondage in *Canaan* than they had in *Babylon*.

And so it is in our day, equal justice, public rights, freedom of conscience, and secure property, are what all mankind both understand and admire; nor would ever any claims for these have been called treason, if the people that used the words had been true to the thing: but when persons begin to plunder those whom they once protected, whatever *they* say upon the head of liberty and privilege passeth for nothing: the cause looks scandalous as it comes out of their lips. *The kingdom of God*, take it both in a divine and a political sense, does not consist in trifling distinctions and badges of a party, but in *righteousness, peace and joy; and he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and will be approved of man* (q): such a generous and unbiassed engagement in the cause of a nation will make its way to every one's conscience; but it is at the breach of this integrity that those profane noises come in which our ears have heard. Persons would lay the title of GOD upon the lusts of men, and call those the LORD's anointed who were his greatest enemies, making our Religion
the

the property of an Atheist, and our liberties the morsel of a Tyrant.

3. These *Jews* that were so very severe to their brethren run into another practice equally scandalous, and that is an unrighteous clemency to their enemies. One would think the best passion left in human nature since the fall, is that of pity; and yet even this makes sad work in the conduct of a covetous man, he denies it where it is due, and he throws it away in the most lavish manner where it will pervert public justice: now this unevenness of temper, that a man shall be all mildness to some, and cruel to others, flows from a vicious love of himself; he considers no equity, but only *what he can get* from his friends by squeezing them, and from his enemies by sparing them: and this crime had stole into the hearts of those who once *strengthened their hands for the good work* that *Nehemiah* came about. The first man that we meet with in the list of builders, was *Eliashib the high-priest* (r): he is placed there either for the dignity of his office, or the earliness of his zeal, and yet he *having oversight over the chambers of the house of God, was allied unto Tobiah* (s), either by a marriage, which was so often forbid in their law, or by some uncommon degree of friendship. Now there was not a viler enemy that the *Jews* had; he was originally an *Ammonite*, one of the cursed race, concerning whom God had given orders that they *should not come into the congregation of the Lord for ever* (t). And besides, the first time we read of him he is called a *servant* (u), as if he was of a mean and despicable family; and owed his rise to some gross and lowly drudgery to the lust of his master. This wretch had made a *jest* of their cause, and when he could not oppose them by open violence, did it by *sneering*. It is he that said those cutting words, *Even that which they build, is a fox*

(r) Neh. iii. 1.

(s) Neh. xiii. 4.

(t) Neh. xiii. 1.

(u) Neh. ii. 10.

go up he shall break down their stone walls (x): and yet to that excess did the high-priest carry his regard for this man, that he prepared for him the *treasure-chamber in the temple, where they used to lay the meat-offering and the frankincense, and the vessels, and the tubes of the corn, the new wine, and the oil, (which was commanded to be given to the Levites, and the singers, and the porters) and the offerings of the priests (y)*. So that here is the house of God polluted, and his servants starved, merely to gratify one who had no other merit than being the high-priest's relation.

Such things as these will always entangle the public cause. This *Eliashib* acted far beneath the spirit of his ancestors, of whom it is remembered, in their zeal for God, that *he said unto his father and his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children (z)*; but this man *defiled the priesthood, and had corrupted the covenant of Levi (a)*. *Nehemiah* found it very hard to push on his designs through the snares that *Tobiah* laid for him: the opposition that he made to their work was public enough; he would needs have come at the head of an army to *fight against Jerusalem, and hinder it (b)*; and yet though the people had been watching, and working, and praying, in a great deal of fear, because of this man; no sooner was their danger over, but he who had been their terror, becomes their darling; he forms a numerous party against *Nehemiah* himself: one would think it impossible, that a man who had so often deceived, should still have it in his power to persuade; and yet you see he hath ways to get *a prophet of the Lord (c)* on his side; who under a pretence of friendship would have had the governor done a thing cowardly and profane. It is strange, that bribery should have such a force, that

(x) Neh. iv. 3.
 (y) Neh. xiii. 5.
 (z) Deut. xxxiii. 9.

(a) Neh. xiii. 29.
 (b) Neh. iv. 8.
 (c) Neh. vi. 10.

that a man of a holy character shall be prevailed upon to delude a person that had ventured his life for them, and put him upon doing a thing which would have ruined their whole national cause; nay, and more than that, for a sum of money he will both betray his Prince, and belie his God; for this was the case: *Lo, I perceived God had not sent him, but that he pronounced this prophecy against me; for Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him, therefore was he hired, that I should be afraid, and do so, and sin, and that they might have matter for an evil report, that they might reproach me (d).* And what a cabal there was to form this plot, you see in his prayer; *O my God, think thou upon Tobiah and Sanballat, according to their works; and on the prophetess Noadiah, and the rest of the prophets, that would have put me in fear (e).* Nor did this public enemy stick at corrupting the *Levites*, but he wrought himself into the good esteem of the quality, they held a traiterous correspondence with him, and both by his own and his son's marriage into their families, they set him up for a man of merit. Strange infatuation! they do this on purpose to shake the present government, betraying *Nebemiah's* counsels, and weakning his hands. *In those days the nobles of Judah sent letters to Tobiah, and the letters of Tobiah came unto them, for there were many in Judah sworn unto him; because he was the son-in-law of Shecaniah, the son of Arah, and his son Johanan had taken the daughter of Meshullam, the son of Berechiah: also they reported his good deeds before me, and uttered my words to him, and Tobiah sent letters to put me in fear (f).* What a wonder is it that a cause so intangled, should ever prosper! but nothing is too hard for God; he that *forms the spirit of man within him (g)*, can give his servants a soul equal to the burden and

C c 4

heat

(d) Neh. vi. 12, 13.

(e) Ver. 14.

(f) Neh vi 17, 18, 19.

(g) Zech. xii. 1.

heat of the day. *Nebemiah* often puts up that prayer, *O God, strengthen my bands.*

When any devote themselves to the interest of a people, they must look for such difficulties as these are; when men shew no mercy to their brethren, that passion is like the tide which runs with an inequality, in some cases flows as much too high, as in others it is too low: as soon as ever you find that they *mind their own things*, you may expect they will break all the rules both of distributive and penal justice: and of this his Majesty hath expressed a royal sense in his last proclamation for calling a new Parliament: I cannot forbear reading you some passages out of it, that as you must have observed he hath very much of *Nebemiah's troubles*, you may with pleasure see he is acted by *his spirit*. He owns those 'remarkable steps of Providence that brought him in safety to the crown of these kingdoms, notwithstanding the designs of evil men, who shewed themselves disaffected to the succession.' He takes notice, that 'they have since with the utmost degree of malice misrepresented him, and attempted by many false suggestions to render him suspected to his people:' he is aware of the danger these measures must involve us in, and for this reason, 'that the miscarriages of others may not be imputed to him, he signifies to the whole kingdom the concern he had on his accession to the crown to find the public affairs under the greatest difficulties: and that he was surprized to observe, that the debts of the nation were very much increased since the conclusion of the last war.' And truly this is a matter so obvious and easy to be known, that we must think *the hearts of people are very gross*, who either have not discovered it, or would not resent it. There was one year's tax to pay an army for not fighting: you had less charge to maintain the generals who were *a terror to evil doers*, than some *negative heroes* that *bore the sword in vain*: and even since those sham campaigns

campaigns are at an end, any one who reads over the public accounts will find, that there hath been more gold laid out in laccaring the peace, than was needful to have fed the war.

And shall our eyes turn again to such as made themselves rich with the sale and spoils of their country? If you were to be *their* victims, they should be *yours*; shall any so far impose upon you as to say of meer golden calves, *These are thy gods, O Israel, that brought thee out of Egypt?* This you know proved the blast of the *Revolution*: it gave life to the faction that was stunned before, and made the same people a second time dare to undo you: It is seldom that you find any such thing as political reformation, as if men that have entered into the designs of selling their country, were given up to *a heart that cannot repent*: mercy to such, is a contempt of the groans you hear at present, and a preparation for more to come. We found it so in King *William's* reign: the Act of Indemnity unchained the beasts of prey, and let them do their old mischief over again: men came into places with the blood of your *murdered patriots* upon them; and what did they do there, but continually clog the wheel that ought to have crushed them? They forced the King into a peace, and then quarreled with him for making it. Though the hand of God is eminently seen in these things; for if either princes or people will *trust in vanity, vanity shall be their recompence* (b). An enmity to your constitution is still the same, tho' it appears in different forms: the Partition-Treaty, you know, was arraigned, and the arguments against it taken from the danger, that giving so much power to *France*, would bring upon our Religion and Liberties; and yet the same hand that carried up an impeachment for their having part of *Spain*, hath signed the instrument that gives them the whole. These are things so dangerous, that his Majesty in the proclamation

(b) Job xv. 31.

clamation I have already quoted, recommends to you the choice of such persons for the next Parliament, as will ‘redress the present disorders, and provide for the peace and happiness of these kingdoms.’ We must look for the spring of these noble resolutions where *Ezra* did: *Blessed be the Lord God of our fathers, who hath put such a thing as this into the King’s heart (i).*

(i) *Ezra* vii. 27.





S E R M O N XVII.



THE third observation from the history before you, that these disorders must be redressed, if we expect a return of the divine mercy. I have hinted already at the necessity of this, that it was *rolling away their reproach*, a keeping up a sacred unity to their own profession; turning their words into life and realities, and so *cutting off occasion from them that desired occasion* (a). The argument that the Apostle useth to a Church will have the same weight in the State: *Ye do wrong and defraud, and that your brethren; know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God* (b)? These things are both a scandal to any interest, and like a moth they eat into it. *Mercy and truth preserve the King, and his throne is upheld by mercy* (c): but it never either can or will be so in the reverse to this; GOD is offended, his people are insecure: the very *Gibeonites* themselves, though they were condemned to a perpetual bondage, yet having been injured, are desired to *bless the inheritance of the Lord*, which they could not do till Justice was done upon *the man that consumed them, and who had devised against them, that they should be destroyed from remaining in any of the courts of Israel* (d). This is both a divine and human article in our Deliverance: GOD requires it, that *judgment should return unto righteousness*; and men expect it,

(a) 2 Cor. xi. 12.

(b) 1 Cor. vi. 8, 9.

(c) Prov. xx. 28.

(d) 2 Sam. xxi. 5.

it, that *all the upright in heart may follow after (e)*. He mentions that as a thing by which he will complete the happiness of his people. *They shall dwell in their land, and build houses, and plant vineyards; yea, they shall dwell with confidence, when I have executed judgment upon all that despise them round about, and they shall know that I am the Lord their God (f)*. But I need carry this argument no farther in shewing that a redress is needful; I will rather give my thoughts another turn, in letting you see that it is possible: the case is very dangerous, but it is not desperate: there is a gracious God, who takes part with them that own his interest. *Nebemiah* puts all the success of his government upon this; when he discovered a plot, or when he did any thing great and noble, it was still *according to the good hand of his God upon him*; you see he does not give over, though new troubles sprung up so fast. His administration was a chain of toils, scarce any part of it could be called easy, but as GOD had sent him to the work, he furnished him with a greatness of soul for it. You see the methods that he took, and they will seldom fail of an equal success.

1. He set an assembly against them to put them in fear.

2. He argued with them to put them to shame.

3. He took a promise and an oath of them to keep them steady.

1. He entered into the most proper methods to put them into fear: this is the first passion you can work upon in a wicked man, because as for shame, in many cases they are past it; and therefore *Nebemiah* begun at the right end of the cure, engaging a popular disdain of those who had done so many public injuries. *They that sin are to be rebuked before all, that others also may fear (g)*. Not in those gentle and softer ways that will make impression enough upon modesty; but
according

(e) Psal. xciv. 15.
(f) Ezek. xxviii. 26.

(g) 1 Tim. v. 20.

according to the degree of their guilt and the brawniness of the sinner ; for *a reproof will enter more into a wise man, than an hundred stripes into a fool* (b). I am not certain that by this great assembly which *Nebemiah* set against them, may not be meant their grand council that is usually called the Sanhedrim, which answers to our Parliament ; though there are so many disputes about the first Institution of that Court. Whether it was as old as *Moses*, or bears a later date, that I will not deliver it as an opinion : however his setting this assembly against them, must be either understood of such a representative body, or of the whole people in general ; and in either of these cases, there was a certain view of Justice : not but that the grand council of a nation may be corrupted, and screen the villain that they ought to pursue. It is against these that the Psalmist argues. *God stands in the congregation of the mighty, he judgeth among the gods: How long will you judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked? Deliver the poor and needy; rid them out of the hand of the wicked: They know not, neither will they understand: All the foundations of the earth are out of course* (i). And it is an observation that *Solomon* made, *I saw under the sun the place of judgment, that wickedness was there; and the place of righteousness, that iniquity was there* (k). The wicked in a body, as well as in a single person, *blesse the covetous whom the Lord abhors* (l) : but when it is so, if GOD hath any mercy in store for a land, *he weighs a path for his anger; though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not go unpunished, that the seed of the righteous may be delivered* (m) : *If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and the violent perverting of judgment and justice in a province, marvel not at the matter, for he that is higher than the highest regards it, and there be higher than they* (n).

It

(b) Prov. xvii. 10.

(i) Psal. lxxxii. 1, 2, 4, 5.

(k) Eccles. iii. 16.

(l) Psal. x. 3.

(m) Prov. xi 21.

(n) Eccles. v. 8.

It is no such rarity for a great man to be sure of carrying his point against the cry of innocence: *Job* speaks of this, though he durst not use it: *If I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless, when I saw my help in the gate, then let mine arm fall from my shoulder-blade, and be broken from the bone (o)*: this is what he blamed in others; *He will surely reprove you, if you do secretly accept persons (p)*.

But when GOD stirreth up in a people the same tendernefs for the public that they have for their own concerns, then shall judgment run down our streets like a river, and equity as a mighty stream: for in that case it will be found that jealousy is the rage of a man, therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance: he will not regard any ransom, neither will he rest contented, though thou givest many gifts (q). It is such a spirit as this, that GOD will pour out upon his servants when great Babylon comes in remembrance before him: reward her as she hath rewarded you: double unto her double, in the cup which she hath filled, fill to her double (r): such a Justice as this will be an emblem of those glorious distributions that are given in an higher way. When an angel comes down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless-pit, and a great chain in his hand; and lays hold on the Dragon, that old Serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, and shuts him up, and sets a seal upon him, that he shall deceive the nations no more (s). The Prince who hath set his heart to the Law, and to the House of GOD, need not despair even in a time of great corruption. *Nehemiah* had as much reason for diffidence as the Psalmist, when he said, *Who will rise up for me against the evil-doers, who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity (t)*? For if the rich men were all in the crime, and the poor all in the danger, the one would not vouchsafe to hear, as the other

(o) Job xxxi. 20, 22.

(p) Job xliii. 10.

(q) Prov. vi. 34, 35.

(r) Rev. xviii. 6.

(s) Rev. xx. 1, 2, 3.

(t) Psal. xciv. 16.

other would not dare to speak : but he ventures that, and finds a *great assembly* that will join with him in wiping off the public scandal.

2. Having made himself sure of a good number on his side, he puts them to shame ; and there is all the force that argument can have, as he reasons with them : he sheweth them, *First*, That it is expressly against a divine command : *I consulted with myself, and I rebuked the Nobles and the Rulers, and said unto them, Ye exact usury every one of his brother (u)* ; the very thing that GOD had forbid. And, *Secondly*, That it is running back from the zeal that they had already shewn, and the success that GOD had honoured them with. *We, after our ability, have redeemed our brethren the Jews, that were sold unto the Heathen, and will ye even sell your brethren (x)* ? Nay, *Thirdly*, That it puts themselves into the character and crime of tyrants ; *Shall they be sold unto us* ? Shall we bring the spirit of *Babylon* into the land of *Canaan*, and be as vile to one another as the Heathen were to us all ? *Fourthly*, He insinuates that others, besides them, could have made the same advantage. *I likewise with my brethren and my servants, might exact of them money and corn (y)* : And, *Fifthly*, He joins the sweetness of an importunity with the gravity of a command. *I pray you let us leave off this usury ; restore, I pray you, unto them, even this day, their lands, their vineyards, and their olive-yards, and their houses, and the hundredth part of their money, of the corn, of the wine, and of the oil that ye exact of them (z)*. Now I know you will expect to hear the success of these honest endeavours ; and it was as much as he could wish, and a great deal more than he could hope for : his argument confounds them, *They held their peace, and find nothing to answer (a)*, his directions move them ; then said

(u) Neh. v. 7.

(x) Neh. v. 8.

(y) Neh. v. 10.

(z) Neh. v. 11.

(a) Neh. v. 8.

said they, *We will restore them, and require nothing of them; so will we do as thou sayest (b): The hearts of men, you see, are in the hands of the Lord, and he turns them as the rivers of water (c).*

Such a blessing as this upon the attempts we make, is worth all our pains and toil: any one would have thought that it was not safe for *Nebemiah* to run the hazard that he did, that it would but exasperate, because, it is plain, the *landed interest* was against him, and if he miscarried in this affair, it would expose his government, be a handle to the public enemy, and make the burden heavier upon the poor people. These are the arguments of fear and laziness; for cowardice generally passeth for prudence, as a very nice observer hath told us: *The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit, than seven men that can render a reason (d).* But *Nebemiah* had put his hand to the plough, and had he looked back, he could not have been fit for that kingdom of God (e), where he did these eminent services. He knew this was as much God's cause that he pleaded against the *Jews*, as they were his battles that he fought against the *Ammonites*; and that he who had strengthened his hands for the war, would be with his mouth and his lips, that they should not transgress in judgment.

3. He took a promise from them, and had it confirmed with all the solemnity that was possible: *I called the Priests, and took an oath of them that they should do according to this promise (f).* Perhaps he called these Priests as the chief of the criminals; for we find all along that they were a dead weight upon the good cause. In *Ezra's* time, when the hand of God was heavy upon them for taking of strange wives, the reformation began among the Princes, and in their complaint, they tell who had most of the guilt; *The Priests and the Levites have not separated themselves from*

(b) Neh. v. 12.

(c) Psal. xxi. 1.

(d) Prov. xxvi. 16.

(e) Luke ix. 62.

(f) Neh. v. 12.

from the People of the land; though at the same time they are so ingenuous as to confess that *the hand of the Princes and the Rulers had been chief in this trespass* (g): and this intangled them too in *Nebemiah's* days: he mentions a notorious case, that one of the sons of *Joiada*, the son of *Eliashib* the High Priest, was son-in-law to *Sanballat* the *Heronite*, therefore I chased him from me.

Or it may be, all that is here meant by his calling *the Priests* was, that they might be witnesses to the oath, that he took from the Rulers. The making of oaths common, is making them cheap, and in a little while will bring a deadness upon the conscience: but in the history before us, there were several great turns which led them into these solemnities. In *Ezra's* time one of the people proposed, *Let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the strange wives, and those that are born of them, according to the counsel of my Lord, and of those that trembled at the commandment of our God, and let it be done according to the law* (h): and it is observed of the *Levites* that *they gave their hands that they would do so* (i). And in *Nebemiah's* administration, after a long confession and prayer, they close it in that manner: *Because of all this we make a sure covenant, and write it, and our Princes, Levites and Priests seal to it* (k). You have the names of those that sealed it in the tenth chapter; and it is said of the rest, that *they clave to their brethren, their nobles, and entered into a curse, and into an oath, to walk in God's law, which was given by Moses* (l). This was laying it as fast upon every man's conscience as *Nebemiah* could do. And when he hath gone thus far, he only foretels and represents to them the danger of being unfaithful; *Also I shook my lip, and said, So God shake out every man from his house, and from his*

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labour,

(g) Ezra ix. 1, 2, 3.

(h) Ezra x. 3.

(i) Ezra x. 19.

(k) Neh. ix. 38.

(l) Neh. x. 29.

labour, who performs not this promise, even thus be he shaken out and emptied.

IV. It is an eminent instance of GOD's favour to a people thus abused, when he sets over them a Governor who is touched with a sense of their miseries. These changes are of so much weight to the interest of his glory, that the conduct of them is committed to a Redeemer. He that comes to *save his people from their sins* has taken into his own hands both the funds of grace, and the reins of Providence. It is to the power and the goodness of a MESSIAH, that the Church ascribes all their Deliverance from public enemies; *Thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian; for every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood, but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire (m).* These words are an account of those great ways that GOD will take to rescue his people from the claws of tyranny. Now *the reason of the hope that was in them*, you find in the next verse; it is brought in as the grand security of what they were waiting for, *For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the Government shall be upon his shoulders (n).* Though his incarnation is to fetch us out of a greater danger; he was *made of a woman, and made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law (o)*, yet it comprehends all the lower salvations that we have from the wrath of man, that *being delivered from our enemies, we might serve him without fear in holiness all our days (p).* For if his blood could redeem us from the law, certainly it will not leave us in a bondage that is against law.

And laying out the nature of this privilege, is *preaching Christ*. These are the *works that praise him*; and by discoursing upon them, *his Saints shall bless*

(m) Isai. ix. 4, 5.

(n) Isai. ix. 6.

(o) Gal. iv. 4, 5.

(p) Luke vii. 74.

bles him. *They shall speak of the glory of his kingdom, and talk of his power, to make known unto the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom. For his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion endures to all generations (q).* In the eighth chapter of the Proverbs, when he speaks of himself under the name of Wisdom, he does not only tell us of those things that enter into the mystery of our redemption, but of the ways that he takes to poise the world, and keep up an order and harmony in it. It is true we are chiefly concerned in what he says of his *rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth, and having his delight among the sons of men (r)*: but besides that, it is from him that we have the bounties of nature, and from him the concord of Providence. It is he that *set a compass upon the face of the deep, and gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment (s)*: and he that has guarded us from that element, has the same care that we shall not be over-run with a deluge of power and cruelty; for *by him Kings reign, and Princes decree justice (t)*; i. e. by his grace in themselves, or by his love to the people that are under them. When they are qualified to the honours they wear, and the charge that is upon them, it is he that *works them for the self-same thing*. They are not by him in any other sense; he does not in these words set up a court of equity to try their titles, being *not made a Judge, or a Divider over them (u)*. He has nothing to do in raising up of Tyrants: Oppressors are *men of the earth (x)*, and he disclaims a share in them. *They set up Kings, but not by me; and Princes, but I knew it not*: this was when *Israel had cast off the thing that is good (y)*. It is by his influence that the great men of the world shall be filled with a zeal for

D d 2

the

(q) Psal. cxlv. 10—13.

(r) Prov. viii. 31.

(s) Prov. viii. 27, 29.

(t) Prov. viii. 15.

(u) Luke xii. 14.

(x) Psal. x. 18.

(y) Hof. viii. 3, 4.

the Reformation, and throw off their dependence upon *the city that reigns over the Kings of the earth: They shall bate the whore, and make her desolate and naked, and eat her flesh, and burn her with fire; for God hath put it into their hearts to fulfil his will* (z).

He has a political as well as a spiritual empire among the children of men. It was he that ordered those transitions of the monarchy from the *Affyrians* to the *Medes* and *Persians*, and then to the *Greeks*, dashing one mighty kingdom against another for the sake of his own people; or, as it is called, *sifting the nations with a sieve of vanity* (a), that he might gather his own wheat into the garner. Thus the angel tells *Daniel*, *I will return to fight with the Prince of Persia; and when I am gone forth, lo, the Prince of Grecia shall come, and there is none that holds with me in these things, but Michael your Prince* (b). Nor would he be equal to the dangers of his own people, without a greatness of this kind. He must have *power over all flesh*, that he may be able to *give eternal life to as many as God has given him* (c). He has his Majesty on purpose to *save the poor and needy, and redeem their souls from deceit and violence* (d). At that time, saith the angel, *shall Michael stand up, the great Prince that stands for the children of thy people, and then shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even unto the same time, and at that time shall thy people be delivered, every one that is found written in the book* (e). I mention these things to shew you, that the power of a Redeemer over a Tyrant is a doctrine of the Gospel; an article of his glory, to whom your souls are committed for everlasting life. You read of *a woman clothed with the sun, and having the moon under her feet, and she brought forth a man-child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron*.

(z) Rev. xvii. 16—18.

(a) Isai. xxx. 28.

(b) Dan. x. 20, 21.

(c) John xvii. 2.

(d) Psal. lxxii. 13, 14.

(e) Dan. xii. 1.

iron (f). Indeed we are there told, that *her child was caught up to God and to his throne*, yet he has a right of government over the world: and this he uses not so much in person, by any visible acts of dominion, such as thunder, earthquakes and miracles; but he has committed it to his people, *He that overcomes, and keeps my words unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers, even as I have received of my father (g)*. Thus you see under what view we have our account of political mercies, that useful Governors are so many blessings from him, who is *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords (b)*. You find how divine a taste the *Jews* had of such a favour; *by the good hand of our God upon us, they brought us a man of understanding (i)*. And that he gave them an eminent instance of his love in setting *Nehemiah* over them, is what you will consider with an advantage under these three heads:

1. The wickedness of those that had gone before him in the office.
2. The principle of Religion that carried him thro' all his administration: and,
3. His frequent recourse to the mercy of God for acceptance. One of these characters shews that his rule was the Law, and the other, that his confidence was the Gospel.

1. The rarity of such an instance, proves it to be more eminently the work of God. If he would have indulged himself in a grasp at all that could have been got by his place, he had examples enough. What he says of others betrays the gross corruption of human nature, that when all the people were in bondage, some of them would make it heavier to the rest, though themselves were but a more exalted sort of

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slaves.

(f) Rev. xii. 1, 5.
(g) Rev. ii. 26, 27.

(b) Rev. xvii. 14.
(i) Ezra viii. 18.

slaves. *The former Governors that were before me, were chargeable to the people, and had taken of them bread and wine, these were perquisites, besides forty shekels of silver, as a fine or bribe; yea, even their servants bare rule over the people (k), they used them with furliness and cruelty. There cannot be a viler disposition than this, that a man shall despise and aggravate the miseries of others, though he has no way of doing it but by forgetting his own. It was with this spirit that one of the thieves upon the Cross reviled our LORD: If thou be Christ, save thyself and us (l). It is not a petition for mercy, but a scorn made up of despair and hatred. The other took it in that sense, and shews him how unsuitable such a carriage was to their own condition; Dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? This was a thing that grieved Moses to the heart, when he saw one Israelite abusing another in Egypt; and yet he that did his neighbour wrong, is so much in love with his own little tyranny, that rather than lose his revenge, he will refuse his Deliverer, Who made thee a Judge and a Prince over us (m)?*

What an heavy yoke must there be upon the Jews before Nebemab's time? They might well say, *The yoke of my transgressions is bound by his hand, they are wreathed and come upon my neck (n).* Here is a three-fold cord to make them unhappy: *First, The power of the Babylonians; Secondly, The pride of their own Governors; and, Thirdly, The sawciness of servants. How was the beauty of Israel fallen! It had been their cry against the enemy, Servants rule over us, and there is none to deliver out of their hand; Princes are banged up by the hand, and the faces of the Elders are not honoured (o).* But there is something more grating in what the Prophet mentions, *The people shall be oppressed*

(k) Neh. v. 15.

(l) Luke xxiii. 39, 40.

(m) Exod. ii. 11—14.

(n) Lam. i. 14.

(o) Lam. v. 8, 12.

oppressed every one by another, and every one by his neighbour; the child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honourable (p). Thus indecent will covetousness be; but *Nebemiah* gives it as one reason why *for twelve years* he required not the bread of the Governor, because the bondage was heavy upon the people (q). The argument that *Elisha* used with *Gebazi* might have been brought with more weight into the case before us; *Is this a time to receive money and garments, and olive-yards, and vineyards, and sheep and oxen (r)?* Such a selfishness looks very ill in a day of general sorrow. *Nebemiah* had a more noble tenderness. We may suppose him to be of a cheerful temper, because he had *never before been sad in the King's presence*: he then lived in the fulness of a mighty court, and had almost as great a distinction as honour could give him, being the Cup-bearer, so that he wanted nothing for himself; and yet he *remembers*, he feels, *Jerusalem afar off*: Though he might apprehend some danger in looking melancholy, which makes him *very sore afraid* when the King observed it, yet he both owns the thing, and tells the cause; *Why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my father's sepulchre lies waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire (s)?* This made but little impression upon those that were before him. But,

You see the good of a public spirit; it is a thing mightily talked of, but the Apostle himself complains that the examples were very rare: he says of *Timothy*, *I have no man like-minded, who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's (t).* It was an old charge, that *the shepherds fed themselves, and not their flocks (u)*; and that *the Princes of Israel were like wolves ravening the prey,*

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to

(p) Isai. iii. 5.

(q) Neh. v. 18.

(r) 2 Kings v. 26.

(s) Neh. ii. 1, 2, 3.

(t) Phil. ii. 20, 21.

(u) Ezek. xxxiv. 2.

to shed blood, and to destroy souls, and to get dishonest gain (x). Now it is a mercy if this temper is ever divided from the title; and especially since it is so notorious, that if great men will indulge their wickedness, they seldom want persons who will make both Law and Gospel a prostitute. *They say still unto them that despise me, Ye shall have peace, and they say to every one that walks after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you (y).* The hand of God is eminently seen in fitting persons to a public service, when their zeal, their contrivance, their carriage, nay their very pleasures, are all so many lines drawn to this as the centre. There is no great happiness in having ignorance or luxury made royal, that folly or pride should be set in dignity. *Wo unto thee, O land, when thy King is a child, and thy Princes eat in the morning: Blessed art thou, O land, when thy King is the son of nobles, and thy Princes eat in due season for strength, and not for drunkenness (z).* And whenever the Providence of God has plainly distinguished the two characters that are here mentioned, it is ungrateful to his love and provoking to his jealousy, it argues both a wicked and a mean frame of spirit, not to admire what he has done. And I am sure to such a case as that, you may bring over Solomon's observation for the confusion of all murmurers, *Say not thou, what is the cause that former days were better than these, for thou dost not wisely enquire concerning this (a).*

2. Another thing that shews how great an instance of God's favour it was to set such a person as *Nehemiah* over the *Jews*, is the principle of Religion that carried him through all his administration. You must understand it of something higher than human pity, though there was abundance of that in it. And lest any should think that he managed in a sneaking way, you find he keeps up the port of a Governor with all

(x) Ezek. xx. 27.

(y) Jer. xxiii. 17.

(z) Eccles. x. 16, 17.

(a) Eccles. vii. 10.

all the frugality of a Patriot, and the temperance of a Saint. *I continued in the work of this wall, neither thought we any land : Moreover there were at my table one hundred and fifty Jews and Rulers, besides those that came unto us from among the Heathen that are about us : Now that which was prepared for me daily was one ox, and six choice sheep, also fowls were prepared for me, and once in ten days store of all sorts of wine (b) ; so that you see he understood a magnificence that would set him above the contempt of any, and yet for all this, required he not the bread of the Governor, because the bondage was heavy upon the people. Now this is more than could be expected from common nature ; for, as we are in ourselves, we live in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another (c). But this good man does with Justice put it upon a greater principle ; the reason why he would not run into the avarice and haughtiness of those that went before him, was taken from another world, *So did not I, because of the fear of God.**

You see how a vein of piety spreads through all this story, when he first heard the news, that *the remnant of the captivity were in affliction and reproach, the wall of Jerusalem broke down, and the gates thereof burnt with fire ; he sat down and wept, and mourned certain days and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven (d).* When he was to appear before the King with an unusual sadness, which for any thing I know, might be as much against law as coming in sackcloth within the palace-gates (e). He is at prayer again, *Prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man.* When the King asked him, what he would have, he dare not answer the question, till he has wasted a desire ; *I prayed unto*
the

(b) Neh. v. 16—18.

(c) Tit. iii. 3.

(d) Neh. i. 3, 4.

(e) Esth. iv. 2.

the God of heaven (g); and when he got his request, he looks at the divinity that shone through it; *The King granted me according to the good band of my God upon me (b)*. This is what he runs to in all his dangers; *They made us afraid, saying, Their bands shall be weakened from the work that it be not done; now therefore, O God, strengthen my bands (i)*. And what an happy Reformation shall a person thus qualified carry on for the public service? If it is covetousness that brings him to the government, he will be a perpetual drain to his people: if it is ambition, though that may give him a disdain that his country shall be sold to foreign tyrants, yet it is always in danger from himself. But if it is the fear of God that supplies him with rules, and a love to Religion that fills his spirit, he will think no toil too much. Other principles will grow tired, but these make us never weary of well-doing. You have in the last chapter of this Book such a roll of services, as nothing but the mighty grace of God could have carried him through.

He fetches back the *Levites*, who had *left their work, and fled every one to his field, because their portions were not given them. He contended with the Rulers and said, Why is the house of God forsaken (k)?* He took care to keep *the Sabbath as the holy of the Lord and honourable*: and in restoring of GOD's worship, he did what was most significant to it, and that was reforming the Ministers; *I commanded the Levites that they should cleanse themselves, and that they should come and keep the gates to sanctify the Sabbath-day.* Nor can I look upon it to be any thing below Religion that would first make him enter into this design. As I have before observed, he wanted no personal honour, being a man of figure at court. There he lived at ease, for it is plain that *Babylon* was not then

(g) Neh. ii. 4.
(b) Neh. ii. 8.

(i) Neh. vi. 9.
(k) Neh. xiii. 10, 11.

then so vile, as to have a *religious test*, but the *Jews* were admitted to places of trust and profit. Here he might have *died in his nest, and multiplied his days as the sand (l)*. What was it that could draw him away from a quiet and splendid life, to the danger, fatigue and reproach that he had in his undertaking? You must account for this, as the Scripture does for the behaviour of *Moses*, that *by faith he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; and chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he had respect to the recompence of reward (m)*. And yet,

3. *Nebemiab* gives a farther evidence of his Religion, and that he understood *the truth as it is in Jesus*, because he recommends himself to the mercy of God for acceptance. There are some passages that seem to look another way, as that, *Think upon me, O my God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people (n)*: and when he had put the public funds into a better way, and *made Treasurers over the treasuries who were counted faithful, and whose office was to distribute among their brethren*; he says, *Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God, and for the offices thereof (o)*. But there is one place that shews how little confidence he had in any righteousness of his own; *Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me, according to the greatness of thy mercy (p)*. Mercy supposes both necessity and unworthiness. When we apply to that perfection of the divine nature, it is an argument that we have no merit upon which any thing is owing to us. And what

(l) Job xxix. 18.
 (m) Heb. iv. 24—26.
 (n) Neh. v. 19.

(o) Neh. xiii. 14.
 (p) Neh. xiii. 22.

what is it that he means by being *spared*? delivered from enemies? not *made the reproach of the foolish*; that he might live in the quiet possession of all his toil? I do not deny that this is included: but he now speaks of a future indulgence; that GOD would *spare him in the day when he makes up his jewels* (q). That he might *find mercy at the hand of the Lord in that day* (r); And how comes the mercy then? In what regard does the justice or the goodness of GOD consider us, but only as we are found in CHRIST JESUS?

You must not think that the *Jews* did not support themselves with a view of this; for though in several of their histories which are taken up with political affairs, there is little or no mention of a MESSIAH, yet the reference they bore to him was understood; upon which the Apostle says, that *all the Prophets from Samuel, and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days* (s). And indeed, among them, there never was any notion of happiness without a pardon, and no hope of pardon but upon a satisfaction, *for without shedding of blood, there is no remission*, and no satisfaction but in *the blood of sprinkling, that speaks better things than the blood of Abel* (t). What we have done for GOD, does yield a comfort, as it is an evidence of what he has done in us; and so flows from that, which is the *first-fruits of the spirit, the earnest of our inheritance*. Hezekiah, when he *turned his face to the wall and wept sore*, had the pleasure to reflect upon this, that he had *walked before God in truth, and with a perfect heart* (u). And it is no more than what the Apostle had in *his rejoicing in the testimony of his conscience, that in simplicity, and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, he had his conversation in the world*,
and

(q) Mal. iii. 16.

(r) 2 Tim. i. 16.

(s) Acts iii. 24.

(t) Heb. ix. 22—xii. 24.

(u) Isai. xxxviii. 2, 3.

and especially in public affairs, *more abundantly to you-wards* (x).

From these passages you may observe, that no sort of evidence fits easier upon the conscience, or looks brighter to faith, than that which arises from a public spirit. For this reason the Martyrs always have it; not that because their external troubles are greater than others, for I believe the torture of some distempers is more acute than any violence that men can use against us; and upon my own account, I shall have as much work for faith and patience on a sick-bed, as at a stake. But GOD does not usually give his comforts with that profusion in the one case as he does in the other; and the reason is plain, because in these diseases we suffer in a private capacity, and therefore *we alone must bear it*. But in the other case, we are the servants of CHRIST, and a sort of partners with him. This made the Apostle *rejoice in his sufferings*, because they were *for the people*; and so he *filled up that which was behind of the afflictions of Christ in his flesh for his body's sake, which is the Church* (y). Private sorrows are the fruit of sin, but public trials are the result of grace, they flow from Religion, and therefore have a nearer claim to be maintained by it. The believing *Hebrews* are exhorted to look to this as their main evidence. *Call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions, partly, whilst ye became a gazing-stock by reproaches, and partly whilst ye were companions of them that were so used; for ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves, that ye had in heaven a better and an enduring substance. Cast not away therefore your confidence, the persecution that arose at that time, which has great recompence of reward* (z).

But

(x) 2 Cor. i. 12.

(y) Colof. i. 24.

(z) Heb. x. 32—35.

But yet, this is not our justifying righteousness. The Apostle *Paul* had the most of a public spirit of any man; he scarce understood any interest of his own. *Besides those things that are without, that which came upon him daily, was the care of all the churches. Who was weak, and he was not weak? Who was offended, and he burnt not? He laboured more abundantly than them all (a). He had fought a good fight, and finished his course, and kept the faith (b);* but still he desires to be found in CHRIST, not having his own righteousness (c). How happy is it for a people, when the person set over them shews with *Nebemiab* such a regard to his duty, to make him diligent; and such a sense of his imperfection, as to keep him humble? By the fear of the Lord he magnifies God's law, and by pleading for mercy he advances his grace. Long trains of blessings will follow such an one, for those that honour God, he will honour (d).

V. You farther observe, that the vengeance of heaven will come down upon those who do not fall in with the noble measures that are recommended by so good a Prince: you see by this, that I take *Nebemiab's* words to be more than a curse, or laying out the sentence which they deserve: they are also a prophecy to tell them what would happen. The ceremony that he useth of shaking his lap, was agreeable to those zealous ways that the eastern countries had of expressing themselves upon any great occasion. Our SAVIOUR ordered his Disciples when they went into a city that would not receive them, or hear their words, to shake off the dust of their feet, which (he saith) would be a testimony against that place (e). We find the Apostle *Paul* using the same method that *Nebemiab* did at Corinth, when

(a) 2 Cor. xi. 28, 29.

(b) 2 Tim. iv. 6.

(c) Phil. iii. 9.

(d) 1 Sam. ii. 30.

(e) Matt. x. 14.

when the Jews opposed themselves and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, *Your blood be henceforth upon your own heads (f)*, and it was very significant in the garb of those countries, for there they wore long garments; and as shaking the corner of these would throw off any thing that stuck to them, so the good man in my text both wisheth and threatens that God would deal thus with every one that performs not the promise.

1. He was to lose his inheritance: and,
2. His acquired estate: and,
3. If human justice could not reach him in either of these, *the Judge of all the earth would do right.*

1. One of the things that he either desires or pronounceth upon those that were deceitful in their oath, was, that they might be turned out of *the inheritance of their fathers*; so *God shake him out of his house, even so be he shaken out and emptied.* And the equity of such a blow is very plain, because they had taken houses and lands, and vineyards in mortgage, and therefore it is a *righteous thing with God*, that they who are for ingrossing the share of others, should lose their own. *They shall have judgment without mercy, that shewed no mercy (g).* This, among the Jews, was the heavier curse; because their possessions could not be forfeited or sold any longer than to the year of *Jubile*: but such men as these were not to have the common clemency of the constitution. They did these things to the raising of a family, but all the success of their care and lust, was only a rot to what they had from their fathers, and a curse to what they leave for their sons. *God lays up his iniquity for his children, he rewards him, and he shall know it (h).* And it is threatened against a person who had been haughty
enough,

(f) Acts xviii. 6.

(g) James ii. 13.

(h) Job xxi. 19.

enough, that his posterity shall be brought into that servile and sneaking way, *his children will seek to please the poor, and his hand shall restore their goods (i).*

2. Besides, they were to lose what they had raked together; and as *the curse causeless shall not come*, so what *Nebemiah* observes of being shook out of their labour, is according to all the rules of Providence that we have in Scripture. *An inheritance may be gotten hastily at the beginning; but the end thereof shall not be blessed (k)*; and agreeable to this, are those two observations that come very soon after: *The getting of treasures by a lying tongue, is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death; and the robbery of the wicked shall destroy them, because they refuse to do judgment (l).* Such an execution as this, was sometimes within the reach of human justice; you have a law to that purpose, *They made a proclamation throughout all Judah and Jerusalem, unto all the children of the captivity, that they should gather together, and whoever did not come within three days, according to the counsel of the Princes and Elders, all his substance should be forfeited, and he himself separated from the congregation of those that had been carried away captive (m).* *Job* is positive that such a mixture of vainglory and fraud falls within the stroke of human equity: *If I had said, that gold is mine hope; and to the fine gold, thou art my confidence; if I rejoiced, because my wealth was great, and my hand had gotten much; if my heart had been secretly inticed, this was an iniquity to be punished by the judge, because I had denied the God that is above (n)*; but if it fails there,

3. He intimates, that *the Judge of all the earth will do right.* God will shake them out, if men do not, for *the Lord will not hold him guiltless that takes his*

(i) Job xx. 10.

(k) Prov. xx. 21.

(l) Prov. xxi. 6, 7.

(m) Ezra x. 7, 8.

(n) Job xxxi. 25, 27, 28.

his name in vain. He had made it a law among the *Jews*, that if any one gave of his seed to *Molech*, he should surely be put to death; the people of the land were to stone him with stones (o). This is the fate that he had devoted them to; but it is not unusual for communities to be corrupted, and therefore supposing a relaxation of justice, God takes the matter into his own hand; *If the people of the land do any way hide their eyes from the man and kill him not; then will I set my face against that man, and against his family, and will cut him off, and all that go a whoring after him among the people* (p). Thus he is known by his judgments that he executes, when the wicked are snared in the work of their own hands (q). It is giving his empire over the world such a diffusion, that every one shall own it: *So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous, and verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth* (r). This is what *Moses* pronounced upon the two tribes and a half, that if they shuffled in the public cause, perhaps they might think themselves secure from the rage of men; but they might be sure their sin would find them out (s).

VI. The last observation I shall give you from the words, is this, that such a behaviour as *Nehemiah's* was, leads on so many public blessings, that it supplies the people both with the arguments, and the spirit of a thanksgiving-day, *All the congregation said, Amen; and praised the Lord.* Misery had taught them to value those liberties which had been the plunder of their brethren, and were now the care of their Governor; they look upon it as a token for good, and as it was said in another case, *From this day God would bless them* (t). You may here observe their joy.

VOL. I.

E e

1. That

(o) Lev. xx. 2.

(p) Lev. xx. 4, 5.

(q) Psalm vii. 16.

(r) Psalm lviii. 11.

(s) Num. xxii. 23.

(t) Hag. ii. 19.

1. That it was universal ; it went through *all the congregation*. And,
2. It was hearty ; they said, *Amen*. And,
3. Religious, *They praised the Lord*.

1. It was an universal joy : we read, that *all the congregation* came into it. If you comprehend those in this account, who had been guilty of crushing their brethren, it shews what a turn the grace of God had given to them ; for we are told in the last part of the verse, that *the people did according to the promise*. And if these were among the persons *that praised the Lord*, it is apparent, that he had given *them repentance from dead works*. But if you think that it is carrying the matter too far, to have so much charity for them, you may still look upon it as a mighty change in the congregation ; that a numerous assembly, who a little before gave in a heavy cry, are now employing their voices in shouts of praise ; they had another opinion of their state, and what Providence had done for them : they were lately ready to say, Wherefore hath GOD wrought so much *in vain* ? Why are our liberties rescued from *Babylon*, and thrown away in *Canaan* ? We had better return, and be slaves to the Heathen, than to our brethren ; for in that case tho' we be vile, yet the *cause* remains glorious ; but here we lose the *very things that we had wrought*. The vexation of such an argument was now over : *Righteousness and peace had kissed each other* (u) : justice had reached a blow to the offenders, and mercy had shone out upon the innocent : they could now say, that the LORD was *a rock, and his work was perfect* (v), that he would not suffer men to spoil what he had done.

And thus it will be when people are no longer con-
founded

(u) Psalm lxxxv. 10.

(v) Deut. xxii 4.

founded with impudent names: *The vile person shall no more be called liberal, nor the churl be said to be bountiful (y)*: the stupidity will go off, as the wise man observes, *The hypocrite with his mouth destroys his neighbour, but through knowledge shall the just be delivered*: God will let him see into the disguise, and then, *when it goes well with the righteous, the city rejoiceth*; and *when the wicked perish, there is shouting (z)*: a fawning servile carriage to the lusts of men, and an insolence to their liberties, will some time or other grow scandalous: *He that saith to the wicked, Thou art righteous, him shall the people curse, nations shall abhor him*; but *to them that rebuke him shall be a delight, and a good blessing shall come upon him (a)*.

2. This expression of joy comes easily from them, and yet very full of solemnity: they said *Amen*, i. e. they both approved the sentence, as it was *just*, and gave in their wishes that it might be sure. Religion, I know, hath taught us to *forgive our enemies*; but this is to be understood with a twofold limitation; *first*, it is supposed that we act in a private capacity: and, *secondly*, that these men have given sufficient tokens of their sorrow; *If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him*; and *if he repent, forgive him*; and *if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day say I repent, thou shalt forgive him (b)*. Now this is quite out of the case where public injuries are done. No man can stop the courses of justice, without giving up the rights of a community. You will see the reason of this, and take the matter in a proper light, by considering the history of *Achan*. Had he stole from some of his brethren, his punishment would have been no more than *restitution four-fold*: but as he made himself rich by the spoils that ought to have been utterly destroyed,

(y) Isa.. xxxii. 5.

(z) Prov. xi. 9, 10.

(a) Prov. xxiv. 24, 25.

(b) Luke xvii. 3, 4.

so he was *taking of the accursed thing*; and in what manner is the process of human Justice against him? *Joshua* useth him with all the tenderness that could arise from pity to a soul: *My son, give, I pray thee, glory unto the Lord God of Israel, and make confession to him, and tell me what thou hast done, hide it not from me* (c). But this was not to break the fall of vengeance; as the man had brought mischief upon the whole army, so there is a general approbation of the sentence given against him; for *Joshua* said unto him, *Why hast thou troubled us? The Lord shall trouble thee this day: and all Israel stoned him with stones* (d). With such a temper shall *the whole family both in heaven and earth* behold the desolations of a persecuting Church; for when *Kings, and Merchants, and Priests, who traded in the souls of men, shall stand afar off for fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, and saying, Alas, alas, that great city* (e); when they *cast dust upon their heads* there are more chearful sounds that come from another quarter. *Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye Apostles and Prophets, for God hath avenged you on her* (f): and the reason is, because *her Merchants were the great men of the earth, and by her sorceries were all nations deceived, and in her was found the blood of Prophets and of Saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth* (g).

3. There is a Religion in their joy, *they praised the Lord*. This they did partly in gratitude for what was past, and partly from a faith in his justice and mercy for the time to come. It was matter of praise to him that he had raised them a man who did *naturally care for their State*; and had both the softness to feel their miseries, and the resolution to cure them. They looked upon it as all divine that *Nebemiah* did not run
into

(c) *Joshua* vii. 19.(d) *Joshua* vii. 25.(e) *Rev.* xviii. 16.(f) *Rev.* xviii. 19, 20.(g) *Rev.* xviii. 23, 24.

into the voracious ways of former Governors, draining them with heavy taxes, and abusing them with faucy fervants: and as he kept out of the guilt of oppression himself; so he had the courage to reform it in others: how much grace must there go to the working up of such a Saint, such a Patriot! What a contempt of this world? What thorough views of another? To the cries of sorrow he hath a pity that setteth him beneath a child; to the terrors of wickedness, he hath a courage above a man: quickly touched by the former, and totally impenetrable to the latter. We may think that the prophecy which came a little before this time had collected its main sense and glory into him. *He that is feeble among them shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them (b).* This is the way for great men to answer their characters, and fill their thrones as God hath promised they shall do: *In that day I will make the Governors of Judah as a hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; i. e. able to destroy the powers that design to smother them, they shall devour all the people round about (i).*

Any appearance or dawn of this will call us to our hosanna's: *we may bless those that come to save us in the name of the Lord, and sing hosanna in the highest.* This shaking out of those men from their houses and labours, who have been guilty of making so many exiles, is a thing worthy of our God: as he threatens; *All the sinners of thy people shall die by the sword, which say, The sword shall not overtake nor prevent us (k).* I will conclude with an awful sentence very agreeable to that in my text, and founded upon the crimes of ambition and greediness. *Wo unto him that covets an evil covetousness to his house, that he may set his nest on high,*
that

(b) Zech. xii. 8.

(i) Zech. xii. 5.

(k) Amos ix. 10.

that he may be delivered from the power of evil : Thou hast consulted shame to thy house, by cutting off many people ; and hast sinned against thy soul. Wo unto him that buildeth a town with blood, and stablisheth a city by iniquity : Behold, it is not of the Lord of Hosts that the people shall labour in the very fire, and the people shall weary themselves for very vanity (1) ? This he hath threatned against the public enemies of Religion and Liberty. *Let all the congregation say Amen, and praise the Lord.*

(1) Hab. ii. 9—13.

The End of the FIRST VOLUME.





