

4^t THE
Being and Benefits
 OF
Divine Providence,
 Vindicated and Asserted,
 IN A
SERMON

Preached on *Septemb. 7.* being the Day
 OF

Publick Thanksgiving :
 FOR

The Glorious Victory over the *French*
 and *Bavarians*, obtain'd at *Bleinheim* in
Germany; on *Wednesday, Aug. 2.* by the
 Forces of Her M A J E S T Y, and Her
 Allies; under the Command of the
 Duke of *Marlborough*.

By **JOHN EVANS,**
 Minister of *Ewell, Surrey.*

L O N D O N,

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T H E

Being and Benefits

O F

Divine Providence,

Vindicated and Asserted

I N A

Thanksgiving Sermon, &c.

Psalm XCVII. i.

*The Lord is King, the Earth may be
glad thereof, -----*

TH E Belief of a Providence pre-
siding over the World, is as
Essential to Religion, as the
Acknowledgment of G O D's Being: For,
by Denying the Providence of G O D,
Men remove all Communication be-
tween

tween Heaven and Earth ; G O D is then to us, as if he were not ; and we can have no Motive inducing us to serve him ; the Reason of all Religious Worship ceases, and with it the main Support and Comfort of our Lives.

For, If G O D did not concern himself with Human Affairs ; to what purpose wou'd it be for us, to address our selves unto Him, for His Blessing on them ? And what Consolation cou'd we find in a World of Troubles and Vexation ? So great a Weight depends on this Principle, the Belief of G O D's Government of the World, that we had need to be very well perswaded about it.

Let us therefore Enquire,

- I. *What Grounds we have for the Belief of GOD's Sovereignty and Government of the World ; That the Lord is really King.*
- II. *What Matter of Joy and Consolation 'tis to Mankind, and to us in particular, that he governs the World ; That the Earth may be glad of it.*

I. The

I.

The First Enquiry is, *What Reason we have for the Belief of GOD's Sovereignty and Government of the World; That the Lord is King.* We see such Footsteps of Power, Wisdom, and Goodness, in the Frame of the World; and manifest Instances of Design and Contrivance in the Order of Things, as makes it impossible for the World to have made it self; and therefore, it must have been produced by a Being, who hath all these Perfections of Power, Wisdom, and Goodness.

Now, If that Being (which we call GOD) who has these Perfections in himself, made the World; 'tis rational to believe, that he still governs it. For, the same Ends and Motives (whatever they were) that inclined Him to make the World at first, will engage Him for ever after to take Care of it, and over-rule all Affairs and Events in it.

For, we can't reasonably suppose, that He, who employ'd so much Pow-

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er, and Wisdom, in the Raising of this
Great and Magnificent Building, and
Furnishing it with such Variety of
Creatures, should, so soon as he had
perfected it, forsake His own Work-
manship, and not look any further af-
ter it; especially, considering, that 'tis
no Trouble, and Disquiet to Him,
either to take Notice of what is done
here below, or to interpose for the
Regulating of any Disorder, that may
happen: For Infinite Knowledge, and
Wisdom, and Power can do this with
all imaginable Ease; He knows, and
sees all Things at one View, and can
do all Things, without any Distur-
bance of His own Happiness.

This hath been the common Appre-
hension of Mankind, in all Ages and
Nations of the World, concerning this
Matter: And this is [the Foundation
of Religion] the universal Reason, why,
the Heathens, as well as Christians, put
up Prayers and Oblations to G O D for
the Things they need, or for Averting
those Evils they fear; because they be-
lieve, that G O D concerns Himself in
the Affairs of Mankind, and does di-
tribute

tribute Good or Evil to 'em, according as they behave themselves towards Him.

For the further Proof of this Doctrine, that there is a Divine, Overruling Providence: All Prophecies, that have been fulfilled; all Miracles wrought by any Person for the Confirmation of Religion; all Apparitions of Spirits, and the Powers of Magic; all Appearances in the Air, fore-telling future Calamities, that have happen'd; all Storms and Tempests at Sea or Land, beyond the Power of Second Causes to produce; all extraordinary Deliverances vouchsafed to Kingdoms, Cities, or particular Persons; and all remarkable Judgments inflicted on any of them, (whereof History, both Sacred and Civil, abounds with Instances; many of which have fallen within the Compass of our own Experience;) all these are so many convincing Evidences, that there is a Power, which over-ruleth the Affairs of the World, superior both to that of Nature, and that of Mankind; and does
order

Such as that
of 26, and 27.
of November
last.

6 *The Being and Benefits of*
order all Things suitable to His own
Will.

But, we shall find this Matter put out
of all Doubt, if we carry our Thoughts
to Divine Revelation. The Holy Scrip-
tures assure us, that G O D rules in the
Kingdom of Men, and disposes of all

Affairs. So we are told,
Psalm 33. 14,
16. *that the Lord from his Ha-
bitation looks down upon all,
that dwell on the Earth: No*

*King is sav'd by the Multitude of his
Armies, nor any Man deliver'd by his
own Strength; but Salvation is from
the Lord. And tho' Many*

Prov. 19. 21. *are the Devices in the Hearts
of Men, yet the Counsel of the*

Amos 3. 6. *Lord only shall stand. And no
Evil (of Punishment) hap-
peneth in a City, but the Lord doth
it.*

Our Saviour tells us, That G O D's
Providence extends to the least and
most inconsiderable Crea-

Mat. 6. 26,
31. *tures, to the Grass of the
Field, and the Fowls of the
Air; much more to Men,*

which

which are Creatures far more considerable, and to the very least Thing that belongs to us; to the very Hairs of our Head, Mat. 10. 30. which are all numbered; a very low Instance of Divine Providence: And the Apostle tells us, That *GOD worketh in us*, and that, *according to the Counsel of His own Will.* Eph. 1. 11. So that nothing comes by Chance, the most fortuitous Events GOD has a Hand in, to bring them about. He takes Care of single Persons, much more of Publick Societies, and Kingdoms, wherein the Fortunes of so many single Persons are comprehended.

Praised be GOD for his Love and Favour to Mankind; for ever ador'd be his Holy Name, for thus humbling Himself to take Notice of us, and our Affairs; and likewise for giving us so much Assurance that he does so!

Since then, we have such strong Evidences of all Sorts, *That the Lord is King;*

Let

Let us in the next Place, Consider

II.

What Matter of Joy and Consolation 'tis to Mankind in General, and to us in Particular, that GOD governs the World; That the Earth may be glad of it. GOD's Providence, and Government of the World is the main Support, and Comfort of Human Life; and the only Security of Peace and Tranquility to us.

1. The Providence of GOD, and His Government of the World, is the main Support, and Comfort of Human Life: While we are in this World, our best and securest Condition is expos'd to a World of sad and uncomfortable Accidents; to Evils and Dangers; which we have neither the Wisdom to foresee, nor the Power to prevent; and under which we have no Support, if there be no GOD to govern the World. If we are in bad Circumstances, we can have none to
 apply

apply to, for Remedy; but are left to our selves, to aggravate our present Miseries by Impatience, and Despair; and grow more miserable by the Prospect of sadder Futurity.

If we are in good Circumstances, we may, without Remedy, be stript of 'em in a Moment. For, while we depend on Chance, and the Wheel of Fate, we can be secure of nothing we possess, or desire, or hope for: So dismal and disconsolate are both Conditions, without a GOD to rely on! But upon admitting, (as we have all imaginable Reason to do) that He is, and that He governs the World, we can easily relieve our selves under the most dismal Prospect: We can fairly Conclude, and safely Depend on it, that, if we take Care, by our Submission to GOD's Will, and Application to His Grace, to make Him our Friend; He will either prevent the Evils we dread, or support us under them, or convert them to our Good; and in a short Time, deliver us out of them: Either of
C which

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which is sufficient to set our Hearts
at Ease.

Nay, There are such vast and innumerable Comforts flowing down on us from the Consideration of GOD's Nature, and Providence, as are sufficient, not only to allay our Sorrows, but to convert them into Joys and Triumphs. While He is at the Helm of the World, the Affairs of it are in a safe Hand, which always knows what is best for us, and has Goodness and Power enough to do it. And whilst we live under the Influence and Apprehension of this, there is nothing in the World, can happen amiss to us. Welcome Pain, or Pleasure; Welcome Loss, or Gain. For, if we have but GOD, our Friend, we may securely depend upon it, that whatever befalls us, is best for us. Greater Matter of Joy and Comfort can't be than this.

2. GOD's Providence, and Government of the World is the best, and only Security of Peace and Tranquility to us.

Had

Had G O D, after he had once put Things into this Frame and Motion, left them entirely to shift for themselves, and follow the Swing of their own Powers, and Propensions; had he left Natural Events to fall out from necessary Causes, and Civil Affairs to the Arbitrary Management of Mankind; had he left Men to shuffle, and divide the World among themselves, without troubling himself about it. This wou'd have made the World so dark and miserable a Place, that it had been much better for us to be brute Beasts, than rational Creatures.

For, such a System of the World had put upon us another Yoke, besides that of Fatal Necessity; namely, the Arbitrary Pleasures of those of our own Kind, which if they were not under an overruling Power, would be ten Times more unsupportable than the Iron Bands of Fate.

What Peace, or Tranquility could we have enjoy'd, had we been left to bear the Indignities, and Insolencies, the Ravages, and Cruelty of every
C 2 one,

one, that was stronger than our selves, and had the Will to oppress us? For, notwithstanding the World now is under the Government of G O D, how restless and mischievous are some of the mighty Powers of the World, even when G O D has an Hook in their Nose? How savage, and inhuman are their Tempers, and Passions? How boundless and outrageous their Ambition? What unconceivable Confusion, and Subversion would they create; if they were suffer'd to have their full Range? When G O D permits but one ambitious and turbulent Spirit in an Age, as the Instrument of his Wrath, what Havock and Devastation does it oftentimes make? How does it cause the whole Earth to tremble, and shake Kingdoms, as was once said of *Nebuchadnezzar*, Isa. 14. 16. And may be as truly said of the *French King*? Who has involv'd *Europe* in Blood and Ruin, carrying Fire and Desolation, wherever his Fatal Arms have been display'd.

Had

Had not the Almighty Powers above interpos'd, stopt this Mighty *Nimrod*, and Oppressor of the Age, and struck off the Wheels of his Chariots in their full Career; what cou'd have hinder'd him from being shortly at our Gates, and reducing us to a yet more miserable Condition, than even those Countries are in, which he has laid waste with Fire and Sword. Doubtless this was in view, and had his Numerous Forces marched on Victoriously as they begun, we should too soon (to our Sorrow,) have felt the Smart of what he questioned not the Accomplishment of. But, Behold! What a Terrible Rebuke, the Providence of G O D hath given to this Insulting Prince, in the full Height of his Fortune and Fury; and when he seemed in a Manner, to want but one Day's Success, one Victory more, for making himself Universal Monarch, and Enslaving this Part of the World to his Empire and Domination.

This

This Terrible and most Surprizing Rebuke, which he has now receiv'd at *Schellenberg*, and on the 'Banks of the *Danube*, near *Hochstet* in *Germany*; must in all Reason and Justice be ascribed to the Power of G O D, which so visibly appear'd in the Day of Battle; that Great and Glorious Day, wherein the Fate of the *German Empire*, and indeed of all *Protestant Princes*, seem'd to come to a Final Termination.

For, the United Strength and Glory of *France* and *Bavaria*; Arms flush'd with Victories, and Successes; that never knew, what it was to be beaten; being by many Thousands superior to their Enemies, and so advantageously post-on a rising Ground, almost inaccessible; having an unpassable River on their Right, a Mountain and a thick Wood on their Left, and their Front covered by their Cannon, with a Brook and Morass,

very

Superior 4220 Men, or, as some report 10000.

The Danube.

See the D. of *Marlborough's* Letters, and others to the QUEEN, &c.

very difficult to pass, had there been no Enemy to guard them; I say, having such mighty Advantages on their Side, well might they bid Defiance to the bold and resolute Attempts of any Approaching Enemy? So confident was their General, *M. de Tallard*, of the Invincibility of his Troops, and the Inaccessibility of his Camp, that when he saw our Forces advancing, and laying Pontons over those Passes; like *Rabsheka* of Old, he sends them these Defying and Insolent Expressions; *If they have not Bridges enough, I will send you some: Let them alone, the more come over, the more we shall kill of 'em.* Bold and Presumptuous Words! And yet what cou'd have hinder'd him, from making them good, but the Providence of GOD? For, the Enemy might with Ease have either secured all those Passes and Avenues, or fell on our Troops in the Passage, and oppressed them there, before they cou'd have rallied into a Posture of Defence.

There

There is another very Remarkable Blunder and Infatuation, which the Elector of *Bavaria* was guilty of, when he abandon'd the strong Citadel of *Augsburg*, which is situated upon a considerable River, covering all the Countrey of *Bavaria*, and which (according to the best Account we have) the Elector was in a Condition to maintain without *M. de Tallard's* Reinforcement.

See Gen. Hompesch's Letter to the States of Holland.

But the true Reason of these remediless Mistakes, and Confusions, lies plainly in the secret Operations of *G O D's* Providence, Who by an over-ruling Power infatuated the Counsels, and frustrated the Bloody Designs of these Mighty Men of Wisdom and Valour; and by that Means lets 'em see, *The Race is not always to the swift, nor the Battle to the strong, nor Favour to the Men of Skill.*

Let Men design Things never so politically, and make them never so sure, even

even

even to the *Popish* and *French* Degree of Infallibility ; Let them reckon upon it as a Blow, that cannot fail : As the *French* Court did the Success of their Affairs in *Germany*, and in all other Parts ; as appears by the Extraordinary Ornaments, and Inscriptions of the Fire-Works, which were prepared on that Occasion, at the Birth of the *French* King's Great Grand-Son, the Duke of *Brittany*, at *Paris* ; wherein the *Seine* and *Tajo*, Rivers of *France* and *Spain*, were represented as forcing the *Po*, *Danube*, *Mæze*, and *Thames*, the Chief Rivers in *Savoy*, *Germany*, *Holland* and *England*, to pay them Homage.

See the
Monthly Mercury of Aug.
last.

The *Po* is a River in Italy, but runs thro' the Territories of the Duke of Savoy, and therefore Savoy is here intended by it.

Yet; after all, *the Counsel of the Lord shall stand* ; and he will do all His Pleasure ; for there is no Wisdom, nor Understanding, nor Counsel against the Lord. And He loves to resist the Self-confident, and Presumptuous, and to scatter the Proud, that delight in War.

The Justice of the Cause we are engag'd in, is another Argument, that the Hand of GOD was immediately concerned in this Great Action; and therefore the Glory of the Day must be given unto Him.

For, tho' meer Success be no Argument of the Justice or Injustice of any Cause, or of GOD's Favouring and Approving of it. For, Success has often attended the Arms of Tyrants and Oppressors, when they were made the Ministers of GOD to execute Vengeance on a sinful People, that yet had a good Cause to maintain, how much soever it may have suffer'd thro' the Wickedness of their Lives.

Yet The Righteous Lord loveth Righteousness, his Counsel will

Psal. 11. *behold the Thing that is just :*
ult.

And He wou'd always crown His People with Success, in a Righteous Cause; if their Sins did not turn away His Face, and provoke Him to make Use of their Enemies, as His Rod, to scourge them into Amendment.

Now,

Now, If the Defence of Men's undoubted Rights, and Properties, and the Common Liberties of *Europe* against Tyranny and Oppression, be a just Cause; then Ours is evidently so: And when we see this Cause most surprizingly Successful, and wonderfully Victorious, in a most Critical Conjunction; we have Reason to ascribe it to the just Judge of the World, and say with the Psalmist, That *Verily, there is a Reward for the Righteous*, doubtless there is a *G O D, that judgeth in the Earth.* Psalm 58. 11.

'Tis likewise worth Observing, that before this Battle begun, the Whole Army commended themselves, and their Cause to *G O D*, which was heard Above, and in few Hours after was answered in a Compleat and Signal Victory. Was not this the Lord's Doing? And ought it not to be marvellous in our Eyes, and fill our Hearts and Mouths, with Devout Praises and

D 2

Thankf-

20 *The Being and Benefits of*
Thanksgiving to G O D, our Defender
and Mighty Deliverer ?

We particularly are concern'd to praise and adore the Majesty of Heaven, for Placing so Excellent and Wise a Princess upon the Throne of these Three Kingdoms ; Who extends Her Royal Care, and Assistance to all that need them every where ; to the Protection of Her Allies, and the Terror of Her Enemies ; and that under the Conduct of the Bravest General. A General, who by his Matchless Courage and Fidelity, and by the Intrepidity of the Officers and Troops under him, has made *France* see, that her Strength is not invincible ; and given such a Blow , as that Haughty Monarch never felt in the whole Course of his Reign. A General, and Troops, who have bravely retriev'd the Ancient Glory of the *English* Name, and whose Glorious Atchievements might have been envied by the Greatest Heroes of past Ages, and whose Memory will shine in the Annals of Fame to all Ages to come.

May

May an *English* Prince never want such Unparallel Commanders and Invincible Troops; and may Victory and Success constantly attend their Arms; and may the Glory of all be most thankfully ascribed to the GOD of Battle, the Sovereign Lord of Heaven and Earth.

'Tis well, and happy for us, that the *Lord is King*: All the *Nations and People of the Earth*, except the *French King* himself, may be glad thereof. His over-ruling Providence, is the best Support of our Lives in all Conditions; and the main Security of our Peace and Welfare. And therefore, we have very great Reason to rejoyce, and be glad.

This is King *David's* Inference from this Doctrine; and this is the present Business of this Day. And therefore, let us all most devoutly and thankfully acknowledge the great Goodness, and Mercy of Almighty G O D, who has so signally afforded us his Protection

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ction and Assistance, in our greatest
Streights and Necessity. This is the
Application I have to make of what
hath been said.

There are Two Ways proper to ex-
press our Rejoycings :

I. *In a Thankful Acknowledgment of*
all GOD's past and present Mercies
to us.

II. *In a Chearful Reliance on his Pro-*
vidence, to go on in Blessing all our
Counsels and Enterprizes, for the
Honour of His Name, and the Good
of Mankind.

I. *Let us devoutly and thankfully ac-*
knowledge all GOD's Mercies and Loving
Kindnesses to us, both past and present.
The Mercies and Blessings of GOD,
both Spiritual and Temporal, which
in great Abundance he hath pour'd
down upon us of this Island, ever since
we have been a Nation, are number-
less, and beyond Expression.

Chri-

Christianity, which was the greatest Blessing Heaven cou'd bestow, was here planted very early: And when Superstition and Idolatry had crept into the Christian Church, and mixt themselves with our Religion, GOD was pleas'd to purge them out again, by bringing the Reformation into this Kingdom with the first that was reform'd.

Many indeed have been the Oppositions and Disturbances, that have been given us since, by our Adversaries, both Abroad and at Home; but as manifold likewise have been our Deliverances; and that in a most wonderful Manner.

I need not mention them, for they can't but be known to most of us.

And notwithstanding our great Unworthiness and manifold Provocations, He has still kept War at a Distance from us, who live free from all Disturbance at Home; every Man enjoying

joying his Religion and Rights in perfect Peace and Tranquility; and with a bountiful Provision likewise from G O D's Hand, of all the good Things that are either needful or convenient, to render our Lives easie and comfortable. And as to our Success Abroad, we have greater Occasion given us to praise Almighty G O D for, than we have ever had since our Deliverance from the *French* Intended Invasion, in the Year, 1692. When, by the Blessing of G O D on our Fleet, the Royal Navy of *France* was utterly defeated, and burnt at *La-Hogue*. As that Overthrow prov'd so Ominous, and Fatal to the Power of *France*, that the *French* King has not been able hitherto, to put out a Fleet of Force enough, to pretend the Facing us at Sea. Our Hopes and Prayer is, that the late Blow, which his Arms receiv'd at Land, may reduce him to a Condition to Face us no more in the Field; that his Neighbours may live quietly by him, without the Danger of being invaded by *France*; that War and Destruction may have an End; and that the Pride
of

of those may be effectually brought down, who set themselves against G O D, and His Religion, threat'ning to root it out, whereſoever G O D's Hand hath planted it.

This we may have Reason to hope for, if we glorifie G O D for His Goodness, by offering Praise and Thankgivings; for His Mercies already received; and by Ordering our Conversation aright, that He may still delight to shew us His Salvation.

We have seen and heard, how mightily G O D hath wrought with us: How should our Hearts be affected with a due Sense of it! and express our Thankfulness in the Words of the Psalmist, *Psal. 28. 8, &c. Blessed be the Lord, because he hath heard the Voice of my Supplications. The Lord is my Strength, and my Shield, my Heart trusted in him; and I am helped: Therefore, my Heart greatly rejoiceth, and with my Song will I praise him. The Lord is their Strength, and he is the Saving Strength of His Anointed. Save thy People, and Bless thine*

E

26 *The Being and Benefits of
thine Inheritance : Feed them also, and
lift them up for ever.*

2. *Let us all Chearfully rely on GOD's
Providence, and trust in his Goodness, to
go on in Blessing all our Counsels, and En-
terprizes; for the Honour of his Name, and
the Good of Mankind. For this we have
certainly very great Reason, when we
consider, who it is that orders our Af-
fairs, and is the Sovereign Disposer of
all Events that happen in the World :
One, in respect of whom nothing is
contingent, nothing falleth out with-
out his Knowledge, Command, or Per-
mission; One, whose Love we have
no Reason to doubt of, having ex-
perienc'd so many Instances of it, e-
ven beyond our Hopes and Expectati-
ons : And One likewise, upon whose
Power, Wisdom, and Goodness, we
may safely depend ; since
Plalm 144. 'tis his Arm brings Salvati-
on, and giveth Victory unto
Princes.*

GOD

G O D Almighty is our King, and He both certainly knows, and will certainly do, that which is best for us, provided we take Care to do that which becomes us.

Let us but do our Parts in Qualifying our selves for the Continuance of his Blessings and Favours; and that is to be done by contributing our best Endeavours, every Man in his Place and Station, to the Service of Religion, and the Public; and to adorn our most Holy Profession with Practice suitable to the Purity and Excellency of it: And then we may safely cast all our Care upon him, who careth for us; and loves to shew himself strong in the behalf of them that serve him; and we may have Grounds to promise our selves Success in all our Affairs.

When a Man, indeed, reflects on our Ingratitude to **G O D**, for his former Mercies; and on the Spirit of Atheism and Prophaneness, of Immorality and

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Division, that still reigns among us, to
the Scandal of Religion, and the plain
Prejudice of our Common Interest.

I say, when a Man reflects on these
Things, there is but little Reason, that
G O D should long continue his loving
Kindness and Blessings to us; especi-
ally considering, that he always deals
with Nations according as they behave
themselves towards Him.

One main Reason we have to hope
well of our selves is; that (notwithstand-
ing the General Corruption of the Age)
we have some good People among us still,
zealous of Good Works; and we hope,
that G O D will raise the Spirits of
these Men, to shew their Zeal yet more
publickly, for the Honour of G O D
and Religion, and to carry on more
vigorously the Reformation of our Lives,
in Obedience and Imitation of that in-
comparable Example the best of Queens
has set us; to Whose distinguishing
Piety, and Care of the Church of
Christ in general, and unparallel Be-
neficence, and Bounty to the most in-
digent

igent Part, the poorer Clergy of the Church of *England*, the signal Blessing, (which we Congratulate this Day) seems a Gracious Return from Heaven. Which I am particularly determined to believe; because G O D in all Ages has often distinguish'd his Blessings, to Kingdoms and Nations, for the Piety and Charity of those that governed them.

G O D knows, we are a sinful and unworthy People, but our Comfort is, we have a Christian Queen, Who, I hope, is reserv'd by G O D, to compleat those Glorious Works, both at Home and Abroad, which Her Royal Predecessors either desired, or begun.

Let us then, as becomes all Honest and Loyal Hearts, Humbly and Devoutly beseech Almighty G O D, by *Whom Princes reign*, Long to preserve, and continue Her M A J E S T Y, a Powerful Protector, and Ornament to the whole Christian Church, and an
Inva-

30 *The Being and Benefits, &c.*
Invaluable Blessing to us : And that,
after He has made Her a Successful
Instrument of His Glory on Earth, He
would make Her a Happy Partaker
of it with Himself in Heaven :

For His Mercies sake in Jesus Christ, &c.

12 MR 38

FINIS.
