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Lunæ 31 Die Maii 1725.

ORdered that the Thanks of this House be given to the Rev. Doctor *Knight*, for the Sermon by him preached, before this House, on *Saturday* last, at *St. Margaret's Westminster*. And that he be desired to print the same. And that Mr. *Clayton*, Sir *Charles Wager*, and Mr. *Lehewp*, do acquaint him therewith.

PAUL JODRELL,

Cl. Dom. Com.

The great Happiness of a lawful
GOVERNMENT.

A
S E R M O N

Preached before the HONOURABLE
H O U S E of C O M M O N S,

A T
St. Margaret's Westminster,
On SATURDAY, May 29, 1725.

Being the Anniversary of the
Restauration of the Royal Family.

By *SAMUEL KNIGHT*, D. D.



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1171





A

S E R M O N

Preached before the HONOURABLE

House of Commons,

M A Y 29, &c.

2 KINGS xi. *part of the 19th and 20th ver.*

- - - *And he sat on the throne of
the kings, and all the people of
the land rejoyced, and the city
was in quiet. - - -*



WE have in this chapter a relation of a bloody murder committed upon some of the royal family of *Judah*, by *Athaliah*, an usurping tyrant. She ventured on this unnatural wickedness, that she might make way for her self

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self to sit on the throne ; and when by these wicked means she had attained her end, got possession of the *Judean* scepter, she wickedly exercised that power which she had so cruelly obtained. But in six years the just vengeance of God overtook her, and the right heir of the crown, a son of the last king, who had been secretly and strangely preserved from her bloody hands, was put into possession of his just inheritance, with the chearful consent, the joy and transport of all his subjects. This was *Jehoash* the son of *Abaziah*, concerning whom it is said in my text, that *he sat on the throne of the kings, and all the people of the land rejoyced, and the city was in quiet.*

In these words there are three parts, which require a distinct consideration.

- I. The restauration of the king of *Judah* to the seat and power of his ancestors : *He*, that is, *Jehoash*, *sat on the throne of the kings.*
- II. The affection with which the people looked upon this at that time : *All the people of the land rejoyced.*
- III. The happy effect which they found afterwards of their rightful prince's sitting on the throne of his ancestors, in these words ; *The city was in quiet.*

These

These three particulars may find us proper matter of discourse this day, which is set apart as a day of joy and thanksgiving, for the return of our then sovereign Lord King *Charles II.* to his crown, after he had been miraculously preserved from those many snares that were laid for his destruction, by the unjust usurpers of his throne and government.

I begin with the first of these ; the restoration of the king of *Judah*. In treating of which I shall observe

1st. How he was preserved to this return of his dignity.

2^{ly}. That he had a just title to it, to sit upon the throne of the kings. And,

3^{ly}. The benefit of being under a prince that has a right to the crown he wears.

1st. *Jehoash*, the son of *Ahaziah*, sat on the throne of the *kings*, after his life had been sought for by the industrious malice of *Athaliah*. His father *Ahaziah* had been slain by the furious *Jehu*. and *Jehoash*, and the rest of his brethren were left young and helpless to injury and violence. And, what is the too frequent consequence of this, obnoxious *Athaliah*, ambitious to rule, sought by all means to remove out of her way, all that might afterwards make any pretence to the crown ; and she made as thorough work as she could, destroying all the *royal family* before her, that she could get into her hands,

Jehoash,

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Jehoash, the youngest of them all, a tender infant, was secretly conveyed away, and hidden, till the impetuous *tyranny was overpast*, by the care and piety of his aunt *Jehosheba*. - - She, by the providence of that God (who considers all the right and wrong that is done in the earth) was made use of as an instrument to bring his ends about ; to preserve this branch of the royal family, from the destruction of an ambitious, unjust, and bloody woman, who, insensible of pity, of every natural and humane consideration, had cruelly lopped off all the rest. And here we may observe, that it is not in the power of wicked persons, though they may seem to go on never so prosperously for a time, to secure their own designs and projects, and establish their desired greatness.

'Tis probable, *Athaliah* thought herself sufficiently settled in the government, when having found instruments ready to execute her bloody commands in the massacre of the seed royal, she had taken possession of the diadem. Perhaps she thought *Jehoash* was destroyed among the rest : for it is not unlikely, the wicked executioners of her cruelty would conceal his escape from her, lest they should incur her displeasure, for want of care and industry in doing this bloody work compleatly. They might be afraid, she would suspect them, as not true to her designs and interest, and that this one royal infant's escape was with their allowance or connivance.

The

The heads of a people so monstiously wicked are usually full of jealousies and suspicions. And therefore least they should lose her favour, and the expected reward for so much villany as they had committed, they might very well be unwilling to let her know they had not entirely finished all which she had given them in command.

But however, this young prince was preserved *in the house of the Lord*, under the wings of his providence, by the piety and loyalty of his priests; and afterwards when he appeared to the people was owned by them, with great and universal joy; and his appearing put an end at the same time to the tyrannical usurpation, and to the life of *Athaliah*.

And here we are reminded to consider our own case in respect to the miraculous preservation of the late King *Charles II.* in all the time of his trouble, particularly in his escape from *Worcester*. When he was pursued and beset round about with most industrious and malicious enemies, God took him under the wings of his providence, and conveyed him away thro' whole bands of those who thirsted for his destruction; in a manner, so seemingly impossible, that all men stood amazed at it with passion and wonder. There was something more amazing in this, than in the preservation of King *Jeboash*; for possibly his aunt and the high priest only were privy to it: nor

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do we find that he was so diligently sought after, or any such large reward promised to him that should bring him to light, should deliver him either alive or dead, as there *was in this other case.*

And as his preservation, from the unwearied malice of his enemies, was very wonderful, his coming again to sit upon the throne of the kings his forefathers, was more so. For none of the people of *Judah*, or at most very few of them, knew whether their prince was alive or dead. The generality thought him lopped off with the rest of the royal branches, 'till at last he was discovered to them ; and then it was the interest of very few to keep him from his right, and therefore with one consent they submitted themselves to him, being glad of an opportunity to free their necks from the hard and heavy yoke of tyranny and usurpation.

But in our case, the people had been taught for twenty years together to hate their prince, and been persuaded, by the most subtle insinuations, to look upon him as a common enemy of their peace and welfare : they were urged to the belief of this by men who professed religion, with the greatest pretence of sanctity and zeal for God : and great numbers of men who had power in their hands, were so rivetted into the prevailing and adverse party, by their worldly interest, which they knew must needs suffer if he returned, that to human judgment

it seemed unlikely, almost impossible, that he should ever recover his, however undoubted, right.

Some few there might be, who, through a strong persuasion, that right and justice must needs prevail in the end, did hope (and they could only hope) in time to see it. Yet that pious persuasion was mix'd and clouded with trouble, and sad apprehensions of the blood and slaughter, which they thought must needs happen at the same time. But God, who can dispose of all things above and beyond human expectation, who orders all things in a better manner than frail men can apprehend, did bring our king to his throne in peace, which was as great a miracle as that of his preservation; and both together looked as if God had designed particularly to convince the world of his all-ruling providence, by his wonderful and gracious dispensations, and his care and loving kindness both towards our king and us. This astonished and amazed the whole world about us; and what was especially *remarkable* at that time, a *Jew* (who, according to the opinion of their *Rabbins*, believed that there is no special providence towards any people but themselves) was so awakened by the wonders of his then majesty's restoration, that he made this a reason, and published it as such, for changing his religion, and becoming a professed christian. And as for our selves, *when the Lord turned a-*

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gain the captivity of our Zion, we were like them that dream, could hardly believe it, tho' we saw it with our eyes.

So much for this first particular ; *Jehoash* was strangely preserved from usurping power and malice, to enjoy his crown and dignity. But,

2^{ly}. He *sat upon the throne of the kings*, as having a right to it, as being descended from those kings that had sat upon it before him. God has sometimes permitted men to sit upon the throne of kings, that have had no right to it. But we say, *that is* God's doing which he chooses and approves of as right. He only permits for a time, that which is contrary to right, for the punishment of men, or the bringing about some great end of his high and adorable providence.

If a man, contrary to all justice, usurps a throne, God only permits the wickedness in respect of the man who acts it ; and yet God may make use of that wicked person, as an instrument to punish the sins of that people whom he is pleased, in his own justice, to cast under the yoke of that unrighteous man's tyranny : thus *for the transgressions of a land many may be the princes thereof*. But here, in the present case, we may suppose it to be properly God's act, to place *Jehoash* in the throne of the kings, because, according to the laws and customs of the nation, he had a right to it which God did

did approve of ; and in this ours was the same case.

Our king was born unquestionably heir apparent to the crown of his father, and this day he took actual possession of that throne, which was the throne of the *kings* of this nation for many generations before ; from whom he descended by an undoubted succession, and therefore we have reason to believe, it was with God's approbation.

Though, indeed, otherwise we are not to judge of God's mind by the event of things. A wicked man may aim at a throne, and proceed in his daring design with strange success, and at last compass his ends. But we are not to conclude from thence that he is a favourite of God ; if it be against right, we may certainly conclude the contrary. There is a rule of right and wrong, by which we are to judge, and we have no other measure to take of God's pleasure, or displeasure, in any thing. If we should conclude every one good, and in God's favour, that prospers in the world, we must look upon every one as evil and hated by God that is unprosperous and afflicted. Whereas he himself has taught us, that sometimes, and to some persons, he gives prosperity in anger ; and sometimes, and to some persons, he sends *adversity and affliction in love*.

We are therefore, I say, not to infer, that because a man has success in what he undertakes,

takes, therefore he has a right to what he aimed at, and that God approves of his title to it. So if a man have a right to the crown, or any thing else he possesses, then we may certainly conclude, he enjoys it with God's approbation. And therefore whosoever endeavours to disturb his possession, is by the same rule a sinner against God, as well as against him whose right he invades.

3^{ly}. We may consider the benefit of living under a prince, that has a right to the crown he wears. He is generally less subject to be envied by his peers, or any other of his subjects; men are generally better content to yield submission where of right it is due, than to one whom they have as much right to rule, as to be ruled by him; and so there is less danger of rebellion, and those great and various troubles that accompany it: whereas when the supream power is in the hands of a man, or any number of men, that have no title to it, there can never be any assurance, or well grounded hope of lasting quiet. This was the case in the grand rebellion preceding this day, it was carried on by men of unruly and tumultuous spirits, and the people soon felt the sad effects of it all over the kingdom. For, as before those unhappy troubles, we had enjoyed peace for many years, so afterwards we could never live without distractions, jealousies and tumults. Now one company got the power into their hands,
and

and then another ; afterwards a single person for a little while, and then another company snatched it from his, almost momentary, successor. Thus we were in continual doubts and perplexities, fearing every change would be for the worse, as we had reason,² till he, in whom the unquestionable right was, took possession of the government. And under him we might have enjoyed peace, plenty, and security, had we been truly thankful for these mercies, and not *turned God's grace into wantonness* ; but, alas ! we soon rioted upon his blessings, as if we had been delivered to *commit all manner of wickedness with greediness*.

Again, A man that has a right title to govern, that comes in the *right way, by the door into the sheepfold*, is naturally more apt to have a tender kindness for his flock, than an usurper, who *climbs up some other way*. Such an one comes but to make a prey of the sheep, to steal, and kill, and to destroy², (as our Saviour says.) Such an one seldom cares what havock he makes among the sheep, so he can tie his yoke fast upon them, while the right owner has a tender care for his flock, and will rather lose his own life than see them destroy'd by wolves.

It cannot be denied, but that some governors in the world, who have had a right to

² John x. 10.

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rule, have been cruel to their subjects; it cannot be denied, neither, that in general *usurpers* have been much more so, and much more *frequently*: which is evident to them that have leisure to read the histories of the several ages, and the many nations of the world.

But, however, what our Saviour represented as true in general, is eminently and undeniably so (blessed be God!) in our particular case at present; we live under a prince who is merciful beyond example, and uses all imaginable endeavours to preserve his people in peace and safety, from broils at home, and invasions from abroad; under a prince that could never willingly let any of his subjects suffer, tho' their demerit was never so great; but when he has been constrained to it, for the example and benefit of the rest of his subjects. And if any man be weary of such a government, and so gracious a *prince*, 'tis pity but he should feel the contrary, if he could suffer alone.

Which brings me to the second part of my text, *and all the people of the land rejoiced*. And here we may take notice, first, Of the joy with which the people were affected, which being a brisk and lively passion exerted it self in all proper demonstrations.

2^{ly}. The extent of it; it *ran* through all the land; *all the people of the land rejoiced*.

I. The

i. The Lord's people of *Judah* rejoyced in the great benefit he had bestowed upon them, in giving them a lawful prince to govern them: and the good fruits that were like to ensue upon such a government, in freeing them thereby from the fears, troubles, and mischiefs of an unjust and tyrannical usurpation.

And sure if ever there be proper matter of rejoycing, it must needs be for such inestimable blessings: and that we may and ought to rejoyce under such circumstances, this example of God's own people is a sufficient warrant to us, while at the same time it shews us that religion is not a sour melancholy thing, and inconsistent with joy and rejoycing. Hence so many examples and precepts relating to this duty are to be found in ^a Holy Scripture. St. *Paul* more especially presses it upon all christians as becoming their profession, and *a doctrine according to godliness* ^b: and it is reckoned by him among the *fruits of God's spirit*, he bids us, therefore, rejoyce evermore, *i.e.* upon all fit occasions; and in another place he urges it by a repeated precept, *Rejoyce in the Lord always, and again, I say rejoyce* ^c. And that we might not be too selfish and narrow spirited, in confining this duty to our selves, he would have *us rejoyce with them that do*

^a Ps. xlii. 6. Isaiah xxv. 9.
Ez. 4.

^b Gal. v. 22.

^c Phil.

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rejoyce^a; as being charitable partakers with them in their happiness or good success.

How much more should we then all rejoyce, when, in common, we partake of national blessings, such as peace and liberty, and the happy fruits of them? But upon such occasions, lest we should exceed the bounds of decency, the wise man's advice to the young man is very pertinent as to our selves, that while we are expressing our joy by all innocent shewes of it, we *remember that for all these things God will bring us to judgment*^b. And therefore our joy should not so far transport us, as to make us do any wicked thing in our rejoycing, through intemperance or any other vice. I mention this the rather, since even to this day we feel some of the ill effects of that extravagant joy which ushered in the then king: it occasioned a deluge of vice and open prophane-ness; and instead of a sober use of the mercies we then received, we did all that was possible to provoke God to withdraw them; and after such a deliverance to make us a dire example of his vengeance.

2. We have the extent of the people of *Ju- dah's* rejoycing; *All the people of the land rejoyced*. A pleasant and goodly joy indeed! The praises of God must sound loud, when all

^a Rom. xii. 15.

^b Eccles. xi. 9.

the people of the land joyned with one voice to celebrate them. But by all the people of the land we can scarcely mean every one without exception ; even under the administration of God himself, we find that there were some complainers and murmurers.

It is very like, *Athaliah* had some dependants who had felt the present sweet of *the wages of unrighteousness*, by being instruments of her tyranny ; and therefore we must conceive by this general expression, what is meant by it in other places of Scripture (*viz.*) the greatest, and the best part of them.

It shews, indeed, that the cause of joy was universal, that all had reason and cause to rejoice ; but if any envious or self-interested persons were disturbed and uneasy at it, as preferring their own gain before right, some private advantage before the general peace, safety, and publick good of the whole nation ; they are left out as not worthy of notice, to be punished by their own malice, and scourged by their own guilt. The major and the honestest part of the people rejoiced, in God's having preserved their lawful prince by his gracious providence, and restoring him at last to the throne of the kings of *Judah*, his rightful inheritance, and in him the hopes of enjoying all that could be expected from such a prince and governour,

Thus it may be said of our own nation, when our king was restored, by a strange miracle of his providence, to his crown and scepter. *All the people of the land rejoyced*; all, who desired to possess nothing but their just properties in quiet, and had not defiled their hands with *unrighteous mammon*, seized by violence out of the revenues of the king and church. Some few others looked, no doubt, with envy and regret upon the publick joy, and perhaps may still, every time we renew it.

But who else ever did, or can? Some such perhaps may object against the present solemnity, that we read indeed that the people of *Judah* made great expressions of their joy at the restoration of their King, at the time he was first restored, but we do not read that they continued to do it every year: to which, I answer, we do not read the contrary, and perhaps they might; though it be not recorded.

However, it is a thing in itself justifiable enough sure, to give God publick thanks every year, for the benefits of the last year, and to rejoyce in the peace, and happiness, which he has continued to us one year longer: which, if we do not provoke him by our ingratitude to turn our joy into sorrow, we have fair hopes, of enjoying yet longer still. In this view we render this day of good use to us, as it respects our happiness in our present *sovereign*, and
as

as it laid the foundation of all we now enjoy under him, and continue still to hope for. And though, indeed, we have had many strange and surprizing events, time after time since : yet we have continued to us the same form of government both in church and state, as was restored, as on this day. And therefore to this day, as remote as it is from us, do we owe our present settlement, that our *king reigns, and our princes decree justice*, that our *parliaments* meet and consult for our welfare ; that our *laws* live, and our legal immunities abide with us ; that we are in peace, and enjoy the rights of our forefathers, and, which crowns all, that we can worship God in *a pure and undefiled manner*, avoiding the extreams of both superstition and enthusiasm. Which mercies, as they are very valuable in themselves, are rendred much more so, by having the throne so well guarded, by the many illustrious branches of the royal family ; which gives us very comfortable hopes, that not only *peace and truth will be the stability of our times* ; but that they will be also handed down to our posterity, 'till time shall be no more.

This then is the day the Lord hath made, we will rejoyce and be glad therein. But if any one shall abuse this or any other day, set apart for the acknowledgment of God's mercies, or for deprecating his judgments, by making

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king them days of *strife and enmity*; and shall *beat his fellow-servants*, or *sow discord among brethren*, Shall not we account him an enemy that doth this? Such deeds, making it manifest, they are not wrought in God, but tend to confusion and every evil work. From this root of bitterness, proceeds that audacious practice of idolizing a dead prince, in order to vilify and abuse a living one; which is flying in the face of a government, and has no other meaning than this, that they *will not have this man to reign over them*. Is not this an iniquity to be punished by the judge? Since it is very very plain, that this pretended respect to former reigns aims at nothing less, than to bring an odium upon the present. For by such men the blemishes of former reigns shall be looked upon as beauties; and at the same time the much greater good of a present one overlooked, or depreciated.

But such *troublers* of our *Israel* would do well to consider that excellent advice of the wiseman to this purpose; *Say not thou what is the cause that the former days were better than these, for thou dost not wisely enquire concerning this* ^a.

It is most certain that the preceeding times, as well as the present, have not been without

^a Eccles. vii. 10.

such querulous tempers ; and this humour of finding fault, and *speaking* against their rulers is common to all times alike ; but *this their way is their folly*, and they only *discover the pride and haughtiness of their hearts*, by such a kind of procedure. But I hasten to the last part of my text, (*viz.*)

III. *The city was in quiet, i. e.* The nation, for that is the sense of the word. *Every man sat quietly under his own vine, and his own fig-tree*, and possessed his property in his lands and goods, without disturbance from unjust, violent, or armed invaders. And this was the happiness of the people of *Judah*, under their lawful king. And such a happiness we of this nation have long enjoyed. We have abounded in every thing that has been desirable for our souls and bodies, and have wanted nothing, unless we have been wanting to our selves, and have not answered the expectation of our great benefactor in bringing forth *fruits meet for repentance*. And sure since we have so much smarted by our unnatural feuds, and animosities, in times past, and thereby provoked God to give us up into the hands of our own counsels, we should now think it our interest for the time to come to avoid every thing that has the least tendency towards bringing us under the same sad circumstances again. And as
by

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by woful experience we have often, to our cost, found that groundless jealousies, and suspicions of one another, especially of our rulers, have led the way towards the many and great evils we have already suffered; that for the future we indulge not our selves in them, or any thing else, that may disturb the publick peace; but do what in us lies to adorn our holy religion, by the practice of those virtues, which cannot fail of rendring us still a happy people. To this end, let us turn our thoughts from more distant times, to what is nearer us. And here we have a large field of praise and thanksgiving; that after *the time that God hath plagued us*, for our many, great, and crying sins, for which we very justly have suffered his indignation and wrath; yet *in judgment hath he remembered mercy*: and vouchsafed unto us, since the restoration of the royal family, many great and surprizing deliverances. I might recount, if time allowed, a long series of his favours to this church and nation, before this happy period: how God hath regarded us in our *low estate*, and *brought us out of darkness into light*; out of the worst into the best of circumstances. What now doth *the Lord our God require of us*, but that *his goodness should lead us to repentance*, and our thankfulness rise in some proportion to his mercies? Not *only those things which our fathers have told us*,
but

but what is most apt to affect us, and what is fresh in our minds, and our eyes have seen, are proofs convincing enough that we have been the care of heaven, and a favourite people. Could we add, we have been an obedient people, it might give us great hopes of the *lengthening of our tranquillity*.

God has now given us peace on all sides, there is none to make us afraid, no *leading into captivity*, and no *complaining in our streets*.

We enjoy our religion, and our liberties, under the most excellent laws adapted to a free people; and which none need fear but the lawless and disobedient, the meanest subject is not below their notice, nor the greatest above them.

And what opens to us a very pleasing prospect, that these blessings are like to be continued to us, and our posterity, is, that we seem every day more and more sensible of them: it being very evident, even to a careless observer, that there are but few, comparatively speaking, that do not think themselves easy under the present administration; few that shoot out *their arrows, even bitter words*, against such a government, which even makes them happy against their wills. I wish, I could say, there were none insensible of the mercies they enjoy, but how unreasonable and groundless the prejudices and jealousies of such men are against

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our

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our king, he hath reigned long enough after such a manner (as one would think) should abundantly convince them. But, however, let it be always a mortification to those who still remain our enemies, to see us at peace and unity amongst our selves. This will make them ever despair of hurting us; when they see us engaged in one common interest against popish and arbitrary principles, which are so destructive to the interest of a protestant kingdom. We have seen many (blessed be God) unsuccessful efforts of that *spirit which still worketh in these children of disobedience*; but have escaped the sad effects, which must have ensued upon their success in them. So that either now they are convinced, that *no weapon formed against our Sion* shall prosper, or (what we would rather wish) they are returning to a right mind, those, especially, who have been deceived by our more artful and cunning enemies. As to those who *offend of malicious wickedness*, those who are the sworn enemies of our king and government, and are for another restoration (as they call it) though it would bring in with it a worse than *Egyptian* bondage (the very distant thought of which is enough to make us tremble) may they be for ever *cloathed with shame*, and since their pride is not *abated*, or their malice *asswaged*, may their devices be ever confounded! Methinks! it should content

tent such men, to feel every day the good effects of the government they live under ; and induce them by *leading peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty*, to make suitable returns of loyalty and obedience, which is all that our governours demand from us, for their incessant cares for the good of those committed to their charge ; the result of which should be accounted as much our own, as the publick, interest. And how much better would this be than at every turn to arraign the wisdom of their governours, by *speaking evil of things they understand not* ? Whereas were they not *so wise* in their *own conceits*, they could not but own their ignorance in the secret springs of publick counsels, or their incapacity to judge of them, if they could be supposed to know them. How unbecoming then is their traducing, and vilifying their governours, and adding to the weight and burden of a crown, by any such perverseness ?

The inexpressible miseries of our intestine divisions in former times, should have enough of terror in them, to make us shun every thing that would lead us to the same ruine and desolation. *The beginning of strife*, saith the wise man, *is as the letting out of water* ^a. We may soon find it difficult to put a stop to it ;

^a Prov. xvii. 14,

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when once it gets head, it carries all before it, and it is only that God that can say to the *proud waves, hitherto shall ye come and no farther*, that can restrain the *madness of the people*. *He, therefore, that resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God*^a, which ordinance is for our good and advantage, *God being not the author of confusion, but of peace*. Since then God was pleased to restore us peace and quietness after dismal scenes of war and bloodshed, we must not forget these, and the long train of mercies which have followed us ever since, and for which we cannot be enough thankful. Add to this, our having at the same time a government re-established over us, by his wonderful providence, without the turning our land into an *Aceldama*, or field of blood, *is evidently the Lord's doing, and should be for ever marvellous in our eyes*. And O how heartily should we pray ! how seriously and diligently endeavour, so to render our selves worthy of future favours, that we may not lose the benefit of those we have already received !

Bless we then, from the bottom of our hearts, that God, who has so loaded us with his benefits ; that God, who has so often wonderfully appeared for us ; so often *broken the snares*

^a Rom. xiii. 2.

of the ungodly in pieces, and who by his wisdom has so ordered things, and by his power so managed them, *that into the pit that was digged for us*, our enemies themselves have always fallen.

What remains for us to do, but to turn our mercies into thanksgivings; and our deliverances into duties, and *live like a people redeemed of the Lord*, and by *our ordering our conversations aright*, *hope still to see the salvation of our God*.

These are such thoughts as the subject of this day's solemnity ought to suggest to us, and what our God expects from us, that we *praise him not only with our lips but in our lives, by giving up our selves to his service*, and by the practice of meekness, humility, charity, and sobriety, *adorn the doctrine of our Lord and Saviour*, as well as consult the peace and welfare of our church, and nation. Nothing is more certain than that maxim of the wise man ^a, that *righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people*: it does it in a great measure naturally, and of it self, and it does it still more effectually by engaging the providence of God for it.

^a Prov. xiv. 34.

In a word, do we value God's favour and the light of his countenance, have we any regard for the success of publick affairs, of the nation, and therein our own private concernments too (for he is a miserable man that divides his own from the common concernments) what remains, but that we break off our sins by repentance, that our iniquities may not (after the great things God hath done for us) prove our ruine? Let the remembrance of this day be a constant warning to us not to tread in any of the steps of our forefathers which gave occasion for this deliverance. Let the sense we have of our present happiness make us jealous and concerned for its preservation, using all lawful means for the securing of those rights and privileges which we now stand possessed of, and transmit them entirely and safely to our posterity: so that neither we nor our children to all generations, may know any other religion, or any other form of government, than what are now established among us. And sure, what we have formerly suffered by anarchy and confusion, and what since by popery and arbitrary government, should make us all highly prize the happy state we are now praising God for. We must, if we are wise, think it a very dangerous thing to try new experiments, it being altogether impossible for us to mend our selves, or to change for the better. If we can believe oppression to be ease,
thralldom

thralldom, and vassalage to be freedom, and liberty ; then, and not 'till then, should we barter away a present good for a certain future evil. For the lawful government we now live under, gives a poignant taste to all the other blessings we enjoy, and is as necessary to our comfort and well being, as our daily sustenance ; it is our peace and quiet in the day, the protector of our sleep, and security in the night : for if once such a government is abandoned, the laws, our only security, become ineffectual, our religion, and civil rights, become precarious, we can call nothing our own, but both our selves and our substance, must be subject to all the insults of malicious and wicked men.

To conclude, let us set a just value upon these inestimable privileges of our birth-right, the very envy of our neighbouring nations ; and if there be any spark of gratitude in us, let it warm our hearts with the highest and most suitable resentments, towards that God, who hath singled us out as a people on whom he hath displayed so many distinguishing favours ; favours, which should by no means fail to work in us the love of God ; and that love, so wrought in us, must effectually produce every duty the Gospel requires from us ; particularly such duties as are owing to God and
the

32 *A SERMON preached before the*
the king, according to the import of those
words, *Fear God, honour the king* ; which
comprize all that is required from us, either
as good christians, or good subjects. *Which*
God grant us conscientiously to perform, for
the sake of Christ our Lord. Amen.

F I N I S.

