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T H U R S D A Y, A P R I L 23d, 1789;

T H E D A Y A P P O I N T E D F O R A

G E N E R A L T H A N K S G I V I N G

O N A C C O U N T O F

H I S M A J E S T Y ' S H A P P Y R E C O V E R Y ;

A N D

Printed at the general Desire of the PARISHIONERS.

BY THE REV. ANDREW BURNABY, D.D.

ARCHDEACON OF LEICESTER, and VICAR OF GREENWICH.

L O N D O N :

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M, DCC, LXXXIX.

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TO

THE VERY WORTHY AND RESPECTABLE
INHABITANTS OF GREENWICH,

THIS SERMON,

PRINTED AT THEIR DESIRE,

IS WITH DUE AND SINCERE REGARD INSCRIBED,

BY THEIR VERY FAITHFUL

AND AFFECTIONATE SERVANT,

GREENWICH,
APRIL 28, 1789.

A. BURNABY.

I COR. III. 7.

NEITHER IS HE THAT PLANTETH ANY THING, NEI-
THER HE THAT WATERETH ; BUT GOD THAT
GIVETH THE INCREASE.

AMONGST the infinite and ineffable advantages de-
rived to mankind from divine revelation, may be
reckoned the elucidation of several truths highly important
to human happiness ; which, without some supernatural
light or illustration, would probably, by reason of their
dark and recondite nature, have been for ever, if not in-
tirely unknown, yet at least very imperfectly comprehend-
ed or understood.

Amongst others may be enumerated the great and im-
portant article of a particular providence.—This interesting
truth seems to be almost beyond the reach of human in-
B telled

telleſt to diſcover.—Proofs of a general providence may be collected from the order and economy of nature ; and metaphyſical reaſoning may infer, that a particular providence is neceſſarily implied or included therein. But infinite and inſuperable difficulties attend the one, which do not ſo apparently apply to the other.—That God, who made the world, ſhould govern it by general laws, ſeems obvious to, and conſonant with, reaſon : but that he ſhould ſuperintend every minute occurrence ; that he ſhould direct the moſt inconſiderable event that can happen to the moſt inconſiderable being ; that not a ſparrow ſhould fall to the ground without his knowledge and permiſſion ; and that the very hairs of our head ſhould be all numbered by him ; (and that theſe things are ſo, however incomprehenſible it may appear to us, the divine truth hath declared ;) this is a myſtery ſo intricate and involved in difficulty, that without revelation it never could, I think, have been rightly or fully aſcertained.

Innumerable incidents indeed, after the knowledge of this truth hath been once imparted to the mind, will ſerve to confirm and improve it. Men will obſerve, both in regard to themſelves and others, many circumſtances

and occurrences, wherein marks of a particular providence will visibly appear to them. They will recognise the hand and interposition of God, frequently exerted in their favour, in unexpected deliverances from dangers, from sicknesses, from misfortunes, from, in short, innumerable evils and calamities: and the conviction they will derive from hence of the truth pointed out to them, will exceed any that the most conclusive reasoning or logical deduction could have produced. But observations of this kind, though they may corroborate and give force to the knowledge of a particular providence when communicated to the mind, could never of themselves have discovered or have ascertained it. For how could reason—by their means alone,—have inferred such particular providence, when it observed the good and virtuous suffering all the anguish and poignancy of distress,—the righteous as it were forsaken and begging their bread, while the ungodly and wicked were rising to the summit of prosperity, to the pinnacle of human happiness?—How could reason, by their means alone, have inferred a particular providence; when, notwithstanding the general order observable in the universe, it considered the mysterious, the inexplicable dispensation awaiting the whole animal creation; when it

regarded the various convulsions and anomalies that so frequently disturb and disfigure the most beautiful parts of nature ; introducing horror, devastation, and sterility, in the room of plenty, fertility, and beauty ?—How could reason alone have inferred a particular providence, when it daily perceived pain, and sickness, and sorrow, and disgrace, and penury, and misfortune, and even death itself, dealing their blows indiscriminately ; and shooting their shafts at random, without either aim or selection ?—Reason, if it had attended to these things, would have stood aghast and appalled, its foot would have well-nigh slipped ; nor could it have understood them without going into the sanctuary of God, the enlightened pale of revelation. Mankind, in all ages and nations of the world, indeed, have had a notion or idea of a particular providence ; and their religious rites and observances have originated in this notion. Prayers, oblations, votive offerings, lustrations, and sacrifices, can rest or be built upon no other foundation.—But this notion was derived primarily from divine revelation ; and was communicated or transmitted down from generation to generation by tradition. In proof and confirmation of which assertion, it may be observed, that the knowledge and belief of this truth

truth in the heathen world grew faint and imperfect, in proportion as men were removed farther from the source or fountain, that is, from revelation, whence it originally emanated. Thus what was believed generally, and without hesitation, in the age of Homer, was admitted with exception and doubt in after-ages ;—and in that of Epicurus was almost universally rejected or disbelieved.—Scarcely a trace of revelation now remained : its lamp was in a manner extinguished ; and all that light, which had been diffused by it, had gradually died away and expired.

This truth was first made known to mankind, soon after the creation of the world, by that immediate part or concern, which, according to the Mosaic account, God visibly took in the direction and regulation of human affairs.—After the flood, the impresson of it was confirmed, or rather revived (for it was beginning to wear away) by God's covenant with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob ; and by that revelation, which he made of himself to Moses and the Prophets.—The Gospel gave completion to it ; for this, by declaring, in the most explicit and unequivocal terms, the superintendency, or over-ruling providence, of God throughout the universe, not only placed this mystery beyond the reach
of

of doubt ; but by laying open at the same time a future state to correct and rectify the inequalities of the present one, removed many of the difficulties, with which it was before clouded and obscured. Now it was expressly revealed, that “ neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase :”—that “ God clotheth the grafs of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven :”—that “ he feedeth the fowls of the air, which neither sow, nor reap, nor gather into barns :”—and, “ that he knoweth all things whereof we have need ; and that if we seek his kingdom, and his righteousness, they shall be all added, or given, unto us.”

Many difficulties undoubtedly still remain and attend upon this article ; difficulties perhaps impossible to be solved by the limited and confined powers of our weak understandings. But the article itself is ascertained ; and rests upon the divine authority of the Gospel. It cannot therefore be called into question by Christians. We are to recollect, that “ we now only see through a glass darkly ; that we know only in part. When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

“ away. Then we shall know, even as we are known ;
 “ we shall see face to face.” 1 Cor. xiii. 10.

What is revealed, though not sufficient perhaps to satisfy a restless and boundless curiosity, will be enough, if properly applied and attended to, not only to answer the purposes of our present existence, but to make us wise unto salvation. It will suffice to render us virtuous and happy here ; and will conduce to our everlasting happiness hereafter.

1st. It will be a source of inexpressible comfort and satisfaction to those who meet with trouble, misfortune, or disappointment. —To know, that nothing happens by chance ; and that whatever comes to pass, comes to pass with the knowledge, and by the permission of that most merciful and gracious Being, who, in all his dispensations, has some wise and great end in view, must necessarily be replete with consolation to those, who may at any time fall into adversity or affliction. They will not at once sink under the pressure of it, or abandon themselves to despair ; but will support themselves with faith in the over-ruling providence of God ; with trust and reliance upon his protection ;

tection ; and with hope that he will in due time deliver them ; and that “ all things will in the end work together for good.”—They will turn to him in their trouble with weeping and supplication ; and will pray unto him, and say, “ O Lord, spare us ; save and deliver us from the evil which troubles us ; and be not angry with us for ever.”—They will form their minds to habits of patience, humility, and resignation : and, by virtue of these graces, and a sincere and unshaken piety, will reconcile themselves in some sort to their lot and situation ; will find the burthen and sorrows of it lightened ; and will feel a ray of consolation beaming upon their minds, almost sufficient to disperse and chase away the clouds that hang over and darken them.

2dly. When these clouds are removed, and the sun breaks forth again with bright and effulgent lustre ;—when affliction and misfortunes cease to trouble, and their sadness is converted into joy ;—when prosperity gladdens their hearts, and every scene around them wears a cheerful and smiling countenance ;—then “ will they give God the praise ;” and “ ascribe unto him the honour due unto his name.”—They will prostrate themselves before
him

him with praises and thanksgivings ; knowing that in him are the issues of life and death ; and that “ neither is he “ that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth, but † God that giveth the increase.”—They will acknowledge, that the happy change which they have experienced, has not been owing to any thought, or contrivance, or power, or skill, or wisdom of their own ; but to the tender mercies and loving-kindness of God :—their hearts will overflow with gratitude in consequence of such knowledge ; and in a transport of joy they will say with the Psalmist ; “ Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.” Pf. ciii.—“ While I live, will I praise the “ Lord ; yea, as long as I have any being, I will sing “ praises unto my God.” Pf. cxlvi.

Lastly, What is revealed of this truth, will also suffice to render men at all times obedient to God, and observant of his laws ; to “ keep them from presumptuous sins,” and to guard and secure them in the ways of righteousness. No one, under the persuasion and belief, that an omniscient and omnipotent Being superintends and over-rules the universe, will ever dare to transgress his laws or violate his commandments. Anxious for the favour and pro-

tection of this great and tremendous Being, he will in all things study and endeavour to please, to serve, and to obey him. He will reverence his authority,—will adore his majesty,—will supplicate his mercy,—and “ will commit “ the keeping of his soul to him in well-doing, as unto a “ faithful Creator.” 1 Pet. iv. 19.

Such will be the natural and happy effects of that light and information, which hath been communicated to us by revelation, concerning a particular providence: effects of so much consequence, and so conducive both to virtue and happiness, that their importance can hardly be adequately or properly described.

The joyful and auspicious event, which has given occasion to the present solemnity, is a clear and illustrative proof of the truths here advanced; for if ever a particular providence was visibly exerted on any emergency, it appears to have been so on the one which has now called us together.

The sudden and unexpected calamity, which deprived an affectionate and loyal people of the presence of their
beloved

beloved Sovereign ;—which forced from the most amiable of queens, and her lovely progeny, the kindest and best of husbands and fathers ;—which withheld from the cabinets of Europe, in the most important and critical juncture, the aid and advice of that Potentate ; who, from his knowledge and experience, and the confidence universally placed in him, was best able to regulate the movements, and preserve the tranquillity of it ;—this so sudden and unexpected calamity, like an explosion or thunderbolt, struck every one with dismay, with terror, and consternation. The whole kingdom was instantly plunged by it into despair ; and all Europe stood astonished, and lost as it were in suspense.

Myriads of petitions were, in this moment of distress, addressed to Heaven for the King's recovery ;—and if ever prayers came from the heart, I sincerely believe that those offered on this occasion unfeignedly did so. The highest and the lowest, the old and the young, the bondman and the free, the citizen and the alien, the denizen and the natural-born subject, were alike earnest in preferring their supplications to Heaven for so great a deliverance. Prayers offered up with so much fervency and devotion, were not of-

ferred up in vain : they winged their way to heaven ; and the Father of Mercies most graciously accepted them.—The King's recovery was as instantaneous as was his illness. In a moment the cloud passed away : the sun re-appeared in its splendor ; and the world felt the vivifying heat of it.—The interposition of a particular providence was universally felt and adored.

A transition from despair to hope instantly took place : congratulations were mutually interchanged by every one who met : and an effusion of joy burst forth, never known on any former occasion. It now appeared how deeply and unrivalled the King reigned in the hearts and affections of his subjects ; and how transcendently his virtues had endeared him to all orders and descriptions of men. A phenomenon as wonderful, as unparalleled in the annals of history, displayed itself on this occasion ;—that of a King the most beloved and most popular character in his kingdom.—Every subject of the realm was transported with loyalty, and all Europe rejoiced at the event.

The influence which this merciful act of Providence ought to have upon our minds, is the subject we are now
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to attend to.—And if the sorrow and dismay, which we felt during the calamitous situation of our Sovereign, instinctively impelled us, in the grief and affliction of our hearts, to offer up our most fervent supplications to Heaven for the removal of so great an evil;—we ought, in this hour of universal joy, to express our sincere and unfeigned gratitude and thankfulness, for the mercy we have now received. The bitter cup is passed away: it hath graciously pleased a kind and relenting Providence to remove it from us. Let us consider this great mercy as we ought. Let us humbly present ourselves before the Throne of Grace, and offer up our united praises and thanksgivings, for this wonderful instance of divine love. “ Let us praise
 “ God in his sanctuary; praise him for his mighty acts;
 “ praise him according to his excellent greatness.” P^{sal.} cl.
 “ For he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of
 “ great kindness, and hath repented him of the evil.”
 Jonah iv. 2. “ Let us therefore praise him with all
 “ our hearts, and glorify his name for evermore.” P^{sal.}
 lxxxvi. 12.

Having discharged this first and primary duty, incumbent upon us on the present joyful occasion, let it be our
 next

next care to substantiate and give proof of that zeal and loyalty, which we have expressed for our Sovereign during his illness, by showing a correspondent obedience to his legal and constitutional authority, now he is well. The act of governing would be easy, and free from many of those difficulties, which too frequently embarrass it, were men more generally observant of their duty; their duty to God, their king, and their country. In such case, the office of government would be changed from the painful, though necessary task of punishing evil-doers, to the pleasing and delightful one of rewarding those that do well. The station of royalty would be of all others the most desirable, as being most capable of conferring and diffusing happiness. The prince and the people would, as now, always seem to form one family; cemented by paternal benignity, filial respect, and mutual love and affection.

Lastly, The joyful event which has taken place, should also be a motive for concord and unanimity amongst ourselves. A sense of danger should at all times, were men to be guided by reason, be a bond of union: but, alas! it frequently, too frequently, happens otherwise. During
the

the King's illness, a variety of opinions were agitated respecting the propriety of measures to be pursued under so disastrous a situation. The circumstance was new; and a difference of sentiment took place. Thanks be to Almighty God, the ground of this difference is now removed! The King is restored to the wishes and ardent prayers of his people; and one common sentiment, I am persuaded, pervades the whole realm. Whatever heat or dissension therefore might prevail during the awful moment of our trouble, it now ought all to subside in the general joy that has taken place. God grant that it may; and that no future occasion may ever happen to revive the remembrance of it!

I conclude with humbly and devoutly offering up my prayers to the Almighty, that he will perfect to us this great work of mercy, by confirming the recovery of our most gracious Sovereign, protecting him from all evil, and endowing him with every temporal and spiritual blessing:—that he will extend his divine grace and protection to the Queen, the Prince of Wales, and the Royal Family:—and that he will bless and keep us, and all other our fellow-subjects, in wealth, peace, and godliness; disposing

disposing our hearts to live in the fear of his holy name, in dutiful obedience to the King, and in Christian love and charity with each other : or, to sum up the whole in the concise, but emphatical words of scripture ; that he will incline our hearts “ to love the brotherhood :—to “ fear God :—and to honour,—and with one voice to say, “ God save—The King.”

F I N I S.