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1226

THE GREAT ADVENT.

A

S E R M O N

PREACHED IN THE

PARISH CHURCH OF ST. MARY WOOL-
NOTH, LOMBARD-STREET.

On APRIL 23, 1789.

THE DAY OF GENERAL THANKSGIVING FOR THE
KING'S HAPPY RECOVERY.

By JOHN NEWTON, RECTOR.

PSALM xci. 15, 16.

*He shall call upon me; and I will answer him: I will be with
him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him. With long
life will I satisfy him; and shew him my salvation.*

temporis illius

Me confolor imagine:

Festis quum populus me reducem choris

Fauftisque excipiet vocibus, et Dei,

Pompa cum celebri, me comitabitur

Augusta ad penetralia.

BUCHANAN, Pf. xlii.

L O N D O N

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T O T H E
R E A D E R.

TH E manifest interposition of Almighty God in favour of these kingdoms, has seldom, if ever, been more signally displayed, or more generally acknowledged, by persons of every rank, party, or description, than in the late memorable and important event, of the King's happy recovery. If so interesting a subject, should give occasion to the publication of more Thanksgiving Sermons, than usual, it will likewise suggest a sufficient apology for them. Considered as testimonies of loyalty to the King, and of gratitude to him by whom Kings reign, they can, scarcely, be too numerous.

T H E
G R E A T A D V E N T.

I THESS. iv. 16, 17.

For the Lord himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we, which are alive, and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

OUR beloved King is now on his way, amidst the acclamations of an affectionate people, to St. Paul's Cathedral; there he will, this day, make his public acknowledgment to God, who heard his prayer in the time of his trouble. It will be a joyful sight to thousands; and, perhaps, there is not a person in this assembly, who has not felt a desire to be one of the spectators. But I am glad to meet you here. Many of you, I doubt not, earnestly and

B repeatedly

repeatedly prayed for the recovery of our gracious Sovereign; and you judge, with me, that the most proper expression of our gratitude and joy, is to unite in rendering praise to God, upon the very spot, where we have often presented our united prayers. And I infer, from the largeness of the congregation, that few, who stately worship with us, are now absent; those excepted, who, residing in or near the line of procession, could not attend, with propriety, nor, perhaps, with safety.

If He, in whose name we are met, shall be pleased (as his word encourages us to hope) to favour us with the influence of his Holy Spirit, and to enable us, in the exercise of that faith, which gives subsistence and evidence to things, as yet, future and unseen, to realize the subject of my text to our minds; we shall have no reason to regret our coming together upon this occasion.

The immediate design of the Apostle, in these words, is to comfort believers under a trial, which some of you, perhaps, feel at this hour, and to which any of us may be called,
sooner

sooner than we are aware ; the removal of our Christian friends or relatives, with whom we have often taken sweet council, to a better world. Such a stroke, whenever it takes place, will awaken painful sensations, which he, who knows our frame, does not condemn. The tendency of the Gospel is to moderate and regulate, but not to stifle or eradicate, the feelings of humanity. We may sorrow, but provision is made, that we should not sorrow like those who have no hope. “ Blessed * are the dead who die in the Lord.” It is but a temporary separation ; we shall see them again to unspeakable advantage. “ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so they that sleep in Jesus, shall God bring with him.” The change of expression here is observable, *Jesus died*. Death, to him, was death indeed. Death in all its horrors ; but he died for his people, to disarm death of its sting, to throw a light upon the dark passage to the grave, and to open the kingdom of Heaven to all believers. For now, they “ that believe in him shall never † die.” He so dispels their fears,

* Rev. xiv. 13.

† John xi. 26.

and enlivens their hopes, that, to them, death is no more than a sleep; they sleep in Jesus, and are blessed. And when He, “who is their life, shall appear,” as he certainly will, and every eye shall see him, “they also * shall appear with him in glory.” For the Lord himself shall descend from Heaven, with the voice of the Archangel, and the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first.

But I think I am warranted to consider the text in a more general view, and to accommodate it to the happy event, which demands our especial thankfulness and praise on this day. Let our thoughts rise from the King’s splendid, though solemn, procession to St. Paul’s, to contemplate that great advent of the King of Kings, the idea of which filled and fired the Apostle’s thoughts †. Behold! he cometh in the clouds! “‡ He cometh in his own glory, in the glory of his Father, with all his angels, and with all his saints!”

* Col. iii. 4. † Rev. i. 7. ‡ Matt. xxv. 31.
 1 Thess. iii. 13.

If I attempt to illustrate the proceſſion (ſo to ſpeak) of that Great Day, for which all other days were made, by the moſt ſtriking circumſtances of the preſent day, it will, indeed, be comparing great things with ſmall. In ſome reſpects compariſon will utterly fail, and I muſt have recourſe to contraſt. For what proportion can there be between finite and infinite, between the moſt important concerns of time, and thoſe of eternity ?

Let us, however, aim to fix our feeble conceptions upon the Perſonage whoſe approach is here announced ; upon the manner of his coming ; upon his train of attendants ; and upon the final event of his appearance, with which the ſcene will cloſe.

The *Lord Himſelf* ſhall deſcend. At another time, if both houſes of Parliament, the judges, the foreign miniſters, the principal part of the nobility, and perſons of diſtinction in the nation, were to aſſemble in St. Paul's, their preſence would form a grand and affecting ſpectacle. But upon this occaſion, though they ſhould be all there, if the King was not

seen among them, it is probable, they would be all, in a manner, overlooked; and disappointment and anxiety would mark the countenance of every beholder. But it is *more than probable*, it is absolutely *certain*, that if all the glories of the invifible world were to open upon the view, of those, who feel their obligations to the Great Redeemer, they could not be completely happy, unless they were permitted to behold *his* glory. He has stipulated on their behalf, Father, “ I will that they * whom thou hast given me, should be with me where I am,” and by his grace, he qualifies them for their high privilege; so that, even now, they can say, “ Whom have I in Heaven but † Thee? and there is none on earth that I desire beside thee.” Jesus is the light, the life, the sun, of the soul that knows him, according to the revelation given in the scriptures, of his person, offices, and grace. And, as the most magnificent palace would be but a dungeon, if it had no apertures to admit the light; so the whole creation would be dark and dreary to his people, were it possible that they could be excluded from his presence.

* John xvii. 24.

† Ps. lxxiii. 25.

In this life, they can know but little of the particulars of that happiness which God has prepared for them that love him ; but in general they know, and this suffices them, that “ they shall see him as * he is, and shall be like him,” and with him. They love him unseen ; and, while he is yet absent from them, the expectation, founded upon his own gracious promise, that he will shortly descend *Himself*, to receive them, and to avow them for his own, before the assembled world, is the food and joy of their hearts, which sooths their sorrows, and animates them under every difficulty they are exposed to, at present, for his sake.

Oh! the solemnity, the terrors, and the glories of that approaching day! Then, they who have slighted his mercy, and abused his patience and forbearance, will tremble. Then, many whom the world has admired or envied; many “ of the Kings of the earth, and the great men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, shall call (alas, in vain †) to the rocks and mountains to fall on them, and hide them from his pre-

* 1 John iii. 2.

† Rev. vi., 15, 16.

fence." But they who love him, and long for his appearance, will say, "Lo, this * is our God, we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation." May we, my brethren, have grace "to use all diligence, that we may be found † of him, in peace, without spot, and blameless."

Should we be asked, Why does every face express an air of satisfaction to day? Why is the feeling of our own personal trials, in a degree, suspended? Why does the public appearance of the King diffuse so general a joy among his loyal subjects? We can give a ready answer; We love our King. Few of us, indeed, are personally known to him. The blessing of being under a good King, can only be known to the bulk of a nation, by the influence of his administration upon the public welfare. This influence we have felt. It is true, we were too little sensible of it, too little thankful for it, until an alarming dispensation awakened our fears, lest we should lose the privileges we had not sufficiently prized; but

* Isa. xxv. 9.

† 2 Pct. iii. 14.

then, each man would remind himself, how highly favoured we had been, as a people, for many years, under his government; then, we understood our great obligations to the King, as the minister of God to us for good. We were sitting peaceably under our own vines and fig-trees, highly distinguished among the nations, by our civil and religious liberty, our prosperity at home, and our reputation abroad. The news of the King's illness, therefore, not only awakened our apprehensions, but revived our gratitude; and, from the same principle, we now rejoice in his recovery,

Again, because we loved him, we sympathized with him. We were afflicted by his affliction. We not only considered him as a King, but we felt for him as a Man, a Husband, a Father. Such an instance of the dependant, precarious state of human life; such a proof, that no rank, or situation, is exempted from a share in the calamities which sin has brought into the world, impressed us with compassion, blended with awe. And not our compassion only, but our prayers were engaged for the King, the Queen, and Royal Family.

I am

I am persuaded many persons could scarcely have prayed more earnestly, had it been their own private and domestic concern. Our prayers have been heard, and signally answered, therefore we rejoice and give thanks to day. We wish not to detract from the skill of physicians, they have been employed and owned, as instruments of the merciful will of God; but we ascribe the praise for a recovery, so little hoped for, and so critically seasonable, to Him who raiseth the dead, who speaks and it is done.

And we rejoice in expectation. Indeed in this view we may, and should, “rejoice with * trembling.” How much may depend upon this single, this precious life, we know not; neither do we know what might have been the consequences, if the rumour, at which we once shuddered, and which, for some hours, was generally believed, that God had taken him from us, had proved true.

Let us praise God, who has preserved us from knowing them. But the manner, in

* Ps. ii. 11.

which

which we have been relieved, encourages us both to pray, and to hope, that our King is an object of God's especial care, and that he will live (long may he live!) to communicate still greater benefits to the nation, as the patron of true religion, the guardian of our constitution, and an exemplar of piety and virtue to his subjects. That God may give him to reign in the hearts of an enlightened, free, and affectionate people, and not permit any device or weapon, formed against him, to prosper.

For similar reasons, but vastly superior in importance, even as the heavens are higher than the earth, we rejoice in the assurance and prospect, that the LORD HIMSELF will descend. He is "the good shepherd, who laid down his life * for the sheep;" and, therefore, they who know his name, and trust in him for salvation, are bound to him by the strongest ties of attachment and gratitude. They admire his condescension and his love. To his mediation, and care, they are indebted for their life and hopes. They remember what they were doing,

* John x. 11.

and

and how carelessly they were sporting in the path that leadeth to destruction, when he first stopped them, turned them, and led them into his fold. He is, even now, their sun and shield, their wisdom and strength ; on him they cast their cares, from him they receive their supplies : therefore they love him, though unseen* ; and rejoice in the hope of his appearance.

They know that He who will descend to receive them, was, once, a man of sorrows, and a companion of grief. And though this too little affected them in the time of their ignorance ; it has been otherwise since they have derived life from his death, and healing from his wounds. They have sympathized with him in the agonies which he endured, in Gethsemane, and upon Mount Golgotha. They remember that his face was defiled with spitting, his head crowned with thorns, his back torn by scourges, his hands and feet pierced with spikes ; that he made his soul an offering for their sins, and was crucified for their sakes. Thus. “ he loved them, and † gave himself

* 1 Pet. i. 8.

† Gal. ii. 20.

for them.” Thus he delivered them from approaching wrath ; and this love has won their hearts. And they are waiting * for his return from Heaven ; that when they shall see him *as he is*, with all his angels, and with all his saints, they may join in nobler strains than they can at present reach, in songs of praise to Him who redeemed them to God, by his own blood.

But though they have much to praise him for, in this life, they have much more to expect, when He shall descend. Their privileges are great while here. They are already delivered from guilt and condemnation, they have access by him to a throne of grace, they have fellowship with him by faith, and joys which a stranger intermeddles not with—“ but it does not yet appear † what they shall be”— They are still in a state of warfare and trial ; they are exposed to many troubles, to reproach, opposition, and temptation ; they are still straitened and hindered, in their best attempts and desires, by an in-dwelling principle of evil.

* 1 Thess. i. 8.

† 1 John iii. 2.

They are sowing in tears *, but when their Lord shall descend, they expect to reap with joy: He is coming to wipe away all their tears, and then they are assured they shall weep no more. The days of their mourning shall cease for ever. He has prepared for them a kingdom, “ incorruptible †, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.” In that kingdom they shall shine forth, each like the sun ‡ in the firmament, An immense constellation of suns !

The *manner* in which the Lord will descend can be but faintly illustrated, by any circumstances borrowed from the pomp of this day. When the King enters St. Paul’s, his arrival will be announced, by the voice of the multitude, the discharge of cannon, and the deep-mouthed organ. But what are these, when compared with the voice of the Archangel, the shout of all who love his appearance, and that trump of God, which will shake the creation and raise the dead ? Perhaps by the word *Archangel*, in this connection, we may understand, the Lord of Angels, the

* Ps. cxxvi. 5. † 1 Pet. i. 4. ‡ Matt. xiii. 43.

King himself. “ He shall call to the Heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge * his people.” “ The hour cometh, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son † of God.”—The *shout* seems a military term. By a shout, soldiers encourage each other in the onset to battle ; and there is a triumphant shout of victory, when the enemy is utterly defeated. Such will be the shout when the Lord shall descend.—His soldiers, who, fighting in his cause, have often endured hardship, and have sometimes lost a skirmish ; shall, on the great day of decision, in the final event of the war, stand forth, “ More than conquerors, through Him that loved them ‡.” Their shouts shall proclaim his praise : “ For they got not the victory by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them.” The Lord leads them on, teaches them to fight, clothes them with complete armour, and supplies them with strength : He himself subdues their foes—and when he shall descend with glory, he will terminate the contest. His

* Ps. l. 4.

† John v. 25.

‡ Rom. viii. 37.

§ Ps. xliv. 3.

people will then utter a universal shout, and shall hear the noise of war no more.

When the Lord descended upon Mount Sinai, the trumpet of God was heard exceeding loud *, it waxed louder and louder, the people trembled, and Moses spoke. The Apostle records his words. Even Moses, the favoured servant of God; said, “I exceedingly fear † and quake.” But the sound of the last trump, when the Lord shall descend again; will be much louder, and the effects much more important and extensive. It will be heard not only in the neighbourhood of one mountain, but from east to west, from pole to pole; not only by the living, but by the dead; by all who ever lived.

Then, at his great command, they that dwell ‡ in the dust shall awake. The earth and the sea shall deliver up their dead. There will be a resurrection both of the just and the unjust. Some shall arise “to everlasting life,

* Exod. xix. 16—19.

† Heb. ii. 2.

‡ Isa. xxvi. 19.

and

and some to shame * and everlasting contempt.”

The joy, this day, for the recovery and appearance of our King, is general, I hope, universal. I hope there are few persons in the kingdom who do not cordially share in it. However, if contrary sensations do exist, they are suppressed and concealed. But the Great King has borne with many avowed enemies, and with many traitors disguised under the profession of his name, from age to age. He will not bear with them always. He knows them all, and not one of them can escape his notice. To them the language of the trump will be, Arise and come to judgment! My heart is pained to think, that, possibly, some of this description may be now present in our assembly. Yet I am glad you are here, that I may warn you to flee from the wrath to come. What a dreadful day will it be, when you, if unhumbled, unpardoned, un sanctified, as you now are, shall be compelled to stand before his tribunal! For we are assured, that when

* Dan. xii. 2.

he returns to bless his willing people, he will summon his enemies, who would not that he should reign * over them. He will place them at his left hand, and denounce that awful sentence upon them, “Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire †.” As yet He is upon a mercy-seat. Oh! “seek him, while he may ‡ be found; call upon him, while he is near!” There is forgiveness with him. Humble yourselves before him, and intreat for mercy. Intreat him to shew you who he is, and what he has done for sinners; that you may believe and be saved. Otherwise you must stand before his judgment-seat. Then his wrath will burn like fire.

But it is of the dead in Christ I am chiefly to speak. These shall rise first, and, together with those of his servants who shall be living at his coming, shall be caught up, to meet him in the air. There are expressions in Scripture, which intimate, that the servants of the Lord Christ shall have the honour of being, in some manner beyond our feeble apprehension, assessor

* Luke xix. 27.

† Matt. xxv. 41.

‡ Isa. lv. 6.

with

with their Lord in the day * of judgment. They will witness and approve his proceedings. In this state of infirmity, it becomes them, and is their duty, to pity and pray for the wicked; and to use all their influence to persuade them to pity themselves, to forsake their evil ways, that they may live. But in the great and terrible day, when the wicked shall be turned into Hell, the righteous will be so perfectly impressed with the justice and holiness of the sentence of condemnation, that they will not hesitate to say, Amen. “ So let all thine enemies perish †, O Lord !”

But the Apostle, using the language of prophecy, which speaks of the future, as though it were actually present, says farther, “ Then we that are alive, and remain, shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air.” Not, as I apprehend, that he expected to be living when the Lord shall descend; by the word *we*, he expresses his joint relation with the many members, which constitute the one body, of which the Lord Christ is the head. Of these,

* Luke xxii. 30. 1 Cor. vi. 3. † Judges v. 31.

there will be some living when he shall appear. And of these, he says elsewhere, " We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed ; in a * moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump."—They will not suffer that separation of soul and body, which we call *death*. But as mortal flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, He will change their vile bodies, † according to the pattern of his glorious body, and they, like Enoch and Elijah of old, shall ascend, together with those who are raised from the dead, to meet him in the air.

These will constitute his Train. The Redeemed from the earth ; they who lived and died in the faith of his name, through a course of successive generations ; and they who shall be alive at his coming, shall be all collected together, and prepared to welcome Him.

Of the numbers who will rejoice to see the King to day, many, though loyal subjects, will only behold him at a distance ; and the

* 1 Cor. xv. 52.

† Phil. iii. 21.

far greater part of his people will not behold him at all. Few but the nobility and principal persons, can gain admission into the church; though the crowds in the street will participate in the general satisfaction. Could we suppose, that instead of the common people, the streets were filled, and the windows lined by the *Great*; that all the sovereigns, potentates, and illustrious personages in Europe, were assembled to be spectators of the joyful event which now calls for our thanksgivings; splendid as the concourse might appear, in the eyes of men, they would be unspeakably inferior, in rank and dignity, to those who shall meet the Lord. Not one of his people will be absent; and however poor and unnoticed many of them once were, they will then, every one, be greater than the kings of the earth. They will all claim the title, and the claim will be allowed, of “sons and daughters * of the Lord Almighty.” They will all possess “that honour, which cometh of God only †.” The glorious company of Apostles, the goodly fellowship of Prophets,

* 2 Cor. vi. 18.

† John v. 44.

the noble army of Martyrs will march in the procession; and besides these, an exceeding great multitude, which no man can number, whose exaltation and happiness are but imperfectly represented to us, by images borrowed from the things which are deemed most valuable and honourable amongst men. They are said to be clothed with white robes*, to have crowns upon their heads, to be furnished with harps, and to bear palms (the emblem of victory) in their hands †.

“ Fear not little flock, it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom ‡.” May Grace preserve you from being ashamed of your Lord now, and you will not be ashamed of Him, nor will he be ashamed of you, when he shall come to judge the world.

When all mankind shall be ranged before this Great Judge, he will own and vindicate his people, in the presence of assembled worlds, and pass an irrevocable sentence of exclusion

* Rev. iv. 10, and vii. 9.

† Luke xii. 32.

‡ Matt. x. 32. Mark viii. 38.

and condemnation upon his enemies; and then, He will say to those on his right hand, “Come, ye blessed of my Father *, inherit the kingdom prepared for you: “ then, he will present them before † the presence, of his glory, with exceeding joy,” then ‡ time shall be no more; they will no longer measure their existence by the revolutions of the sun and the moon; they will enter upon an eternal state. With this *event* the Apostle closes the description in my text. Here he stops—the rest is too great for language to express, or thought to conceive. He can only say, “and so we shall for ever be with the Lord.” Who can expound this sentence? We must leave this world, and be admitted to the inheritance of the Saints in light, before we can fully understand the import of these few words.

We shall be with the Lord. There is no doubt, that if the power of our King was equal to the benevolence of his heart, he would willingly make all who shall see him

* Matt. xxv. 34.

† Jude xxiv.

‡ Rev. x. 6.

to day, yea, all his subjects, in every part of his dominions, completely happy. But can he take them all with him to Court? Can he treat them all as his own children? Can he invest them all with dignities and possessions equal to the largest desires of their hearts? Could we, for a moment, conceive it possible for an earthly King to do thus, still it would afford but a very faint illustration of our subject. The highest effects of his favour, would be precarious and transient, confined to the term of a short life, and, in their nature, incapable of answering the instinctive appetite of the soul of man, formed for immortality, and endued with a capacity for good, which nothing less than being with the Lord can satisfy.

When Peter saw his Saviour transfigured upon the mount, a glance of his glory, instantly, fixed and filled his mind. He forgot all inferior attachments, and said, "It is good * to be here." He would have been glad to build tabernacles upon the mount, and to

* Matt. xvii. 4.

return to the world no more. He knew not, indeed, *what he said*; there was much for him yet to do, and to suffer for his Master; but he well knew *why he said it*; and all who are partakers of the grace of God, are like minded with Peter. And though, at present, they walk by faith*, and not by sight, they are sometimes favoured with seasons of refreshment, with golden hours, when, according to his gracious promise, he manifests himself † unto them, as he does not unto the world, and causes his goodness to pass before them: then, for the time, they are raised above, both the cares and the comforts of this world, and could be glad to remain with him. But, like Peter, they must return to fill up the duties of their situation in life, till his appointed hour of dismissal. However, these foretastes convince them, that they cannot be properly happy till they are with him in his kingdom, where nothing will conceal him, for a moment, from their view.

Their nearest approaches to him now, are, likewise, subject to abatements. Something

* 2 Cor. v. 7.

† John xiv. 22.

from within, or from without, still occurs to interrupt, and too often to suspend their joys. Their communion with him, is indistinct, through the medium of ordinances, and a veil of flesh and blood. This veil hinders them, not only as it is polluted, but as it is weak, and subject to many infirmities. We cannot see him *, as yet, and live. If he did not accommodate the discoveries of himself, to the frailty of our nature, we should be overpowered. The beloved disciple had often conversed familiarly with his Lord, and reclined on his bosom, during his state of humiliation: but, when he appeared in the isle of Patmos, though his Majesty was attempered with mildness and love, and his design was to honour and comfort him, he says, “When I saw him, I fell at his feet as if dead †.”

Further, pain, indisposition, and trouble, often distract their attention, or detain them from the opportunities, in which he has promised to meet his people ‡. They are glad when it is said unto them, “Let us go up to

* Exod. xxxiii. 20.

† Rev. i. 17.

‡ Ps. cxxii. 1.

the House of the Lord * ;” but they are frequently shut up, and cannot come forth ; and though he supports them under all their afflictions, yet it is no small trial to be confined from his ordinances. But when they shall meet their Lord in the air, they will be freed from every defect, defilement and impediment. They will see him *as He is*, without any interposing veil or cloud. They will be out of the reach of sin, temptation, pain, and grief. They are blessed now, though often called to mourn †, because they will then be comforted.

Again, we shall be *for ever* with the Lord. Oh ! that word *for ever* ! Even to be with the Lord, and to possess a happiness commensurate to the utmost grasp of our capacity ; if it were only for a month, or a year, or an age, or a thousand ages—the thought that this happiness must, at length, have an end, however distant the termination might be, would cast a damp upon the whole enjoyment. But to know that the happiness is eternal, that

* Ps. lxxxviii. 8.

† Matt. v. 8.

they

they who are *once* with the Lord, shall be with him *for ever* : this is, if I may so speak, the Heaven of Heaven itself. Such honour awaits all the saints : for thus hath the Amen, the faithful and true witness already declared. “ Him that overcometh, will I make * a pillar in the house of my God, and he shall go no more out. Thy sun shall no more go down *, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself, for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended †.

I hope I have not digressed from the design of *this* day, by attempting to lead your thoughts to *the day of the Lord*. I have availed myself of every occasion, which my views of the text have suggested, to impress upon your hearts and my own, a sense of the very great mercy, which God, in answer to prayer, has bestowed upon us, by restoring health to the King, and enabling him to pay his public acknowledgment to the Most High, and to revisit his affectionate people. But

* Rev. iii. 12.

† Isa. lx. 20.

never are our temporal mercies so sweet, so valuable, nor so likely to be permanent, as when they are thankfully contemplated, in immediate connection with the hand of him, by whom Kings reign, and “who doth what pleaseth Him, in the armies of Heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth*.” Nay, to us, who are soon to pass into an eternal state, the most important concerns of nations and kingdoms, are, in reality, trivial as the sports of children, unless we can acknowledge, trace, approve, and admire, the great and ultimate designs of God, to which all the revolutions that take place in human affairs, are subordinate and subservient. His wise and Holy Providence ruleth over all; and every movement has either a more remote, or a more direct tendency, to bring forward the glories of that day, when the Lord himself shall descend to receive his own people, and to execute vengeance upon his adversaries.

Knowing to whom I am preaching, I have not thought it necessary to offer proof, that

* Dan. iv. 35.

the God who has restored health to the King, and happiness to the kingdom, is He to whom my text refers : He of whom we say, in our Public Liturgy, “ We believe that *Thou* shalt come to be our Judge.” It is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Eternal Word, the Son of God, the Saviour of Sinners. We rest in his own declaration, unmoved by all the cavils of those who, alas, know him not, that all things “ are delivered unto him *, all power committed to him, in Heaven and in earth.” How else could we trust to him for the expiation of our sins, and the salvation of our souls ; guilty and helpless as we are in ourselves, and conscious of the snares, difficulties, dangers, and enemies to which we are exposed ? The Lord reigneth †. “ He is King of Saints, King of the nations, King and Lord of the universe. “ The government is upon his shoulders ‡.” This God is the God we adore, and we now aim to imitate the songs of those with whom we shortly hope to join ; “ Worthy || is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and

* Matt. xi. 27, and xxviii. 18.

† Ps. cix. 1.

‡ Isa. ix. 6.

|| Rev. v. 12.

riches,

riches, and wisdom, and strength *, and honour, and glory, and blessing.”

While I exhort you to rejoice, and join with you in rejoicing, for the late instance of his goodness to the King, to the nation, and to ourselves ; I feel the highest pleasure in the thought, that I see many around me, (Oh ! that I could hope the same of you all) to whom I may warrantably say, Rejoice on these accounts, but rather, especially and above all †, “ Rejoice that your names are written ‡ in Heaven, and that the Lord, whom you love, who now guides you by his counsel, will, shortly, descend to receive you to his glory.

* Rev. v. 12. † Luke x. 20. ‡ Ps. lxxiii. 24.

A HYMN

A
H Y M N
O F
T H A N K S G I V I N G
F O R T H E
K I N G ' S H A P P Y R E C O V E R Y .

I.

MAN can seldom prize the blessings
Which our gracious God bestows,
In the moment of possessing ;
Or return the praise he owes.
But, with other eyes, he views them
In afflictions threat'ning days ;
When he fears, lest he should lose them,
Then he trembles, weeps, and prays.

II.

Comets, or eclipses wake him,
For a moment fix his eye,
Hurricanes, or earthquakes shake him,
And extort an anxious cry,

D

While

While the Sun, with gentle motion,
 Spreading blessings through the year,
 Causes no devout emotion,
 Neither gratitude, nor fear.

III.

God, in mercy to this nation,
 Has afforded us a King,
 Whose benign administration
 Cheer'd us, like the sun in Spring.
 Truth and Liberty were nourish'd
 By his mild auspicious rays ;
 Thus, in peace, the kingdom flourish'd,
 But our hearts forgot to praise.

IV.

When a dark eclipse succeeded,
 Fear, a thousand ills, surmis'd ;
 Then we felt how much we needed
 What, we had too little priz'd :
 Then we pray'd, and since have proved,
 Fervent pray'r is not in vain ;
 Pray'r the dark eclipse removed,
 And our Sun shines bright again.

V.

V.

Lord ! to thee, the Great Physician,
We our hearts and voices raise !
Thou didst answer our petition,
Now accept our humble praise !
Bless our King, Almighty Saviour !
May he long, the scepter wield
For our good, and with thy favour,
Thou his Wisdom, Strength and Shield !

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