

A  
SERMON  
PREACH'D  
The 7th of September, 1704.  
BEING THE  
Solemn Thanksgiving-Day  
FOR THE

Late Glorious Victory obtain'd over the *French* and *Bavarians* at *Bleinheim* near *Hochstet*, on Wednesday the second of *August*,<sup>1</sup> by the Forces of Her Majesty<sup>2</sup> and Her Allies, under the Command of his Grace the Duke of MARLBOROUGH.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> On August 13, 1704, Marlborough engaged the main enemy force of Louis XIV and allies at Blenheim on the Danube River, 16 km southwest of Donauwörth in Bavaria. It was a decisive battle in the War of the Spanish Succession. The first major defeat that the French army suffered in over 50 years, it saved Vienna from a threatening Franco-Bavarian army, preserved the alliance of England, Austria, and the United Provinces against France, and knocked Bavaria out of the war. *Encyclopedia Britannica* online [EBO].

<sup>2</sup> Anne Stuart, (1665-1714), queen of Great Britain and Ireland from 1702 to 1714 who was the last Stuart monarch. Anne was the second daughter of James, duke of York (King James II, 1685–88), and Anne Hyde. Although her father was a Roman Catholic, she was reared a Protestant at the insistence of her uncle, King Charles II. Anne sided with the Protestant ruler William III of Orange, stadtholder of the Netherlands, when William overthrew James II in 1688. Anne became queen upon William's death in March 1702. Her last act was to secure the Protestant succession by placing the lord treasurer's staff in the hands of a capable moderate, Charles Talbot, duke of Shrewsbury, who presided over the peaceful accession of the Hanoverian prince George Louis (King George I, 1714–27). From *EBO*.

<sup>3</sup> John Churchill, 1st duke of Marlborough, marquess of Blandford, earl of Marlborough, Baron Churchill of Sandridge, Lord Churchill of Eyemouth, Reichsfürst (imperial prince)[1650-1722]. One of England's greatest generals, who led British and allied armies to important victories over Louis XIV of France, notably at Blenheim (1704), Ramillies (1706), and Oudenaarde (1708). *EBO*.

PSALM CL. 2.<sup>4</sup>  
*Praise him for his Mighty Acts.*

THE admirable Traces of an Infinite Wisdom and Power, which we discern in the Formation of various Creatures that inhabit this Earth, are such a Proof of a Deity, that a Man may as reasonably doubt whether he exists himself, as call in question the Being of a God. Now next to the Acknowledgment of a Deity, is the owning that the same excellent Being governs the World; for there is a necessary Connection betwixt the Belief of a God and a Providence. 'Tis as unreasonable to think that all things in this World happen by Chance, as to affirm that a fortuitous Concourse of Atoms stretch'd forth the Heavens, and laid the Foundations of the Earth. As the Power and Wisdom of an invisible Deity are manifested by the things that are made, so are the same Perfections wonderfully display'd in the Government of the same things: one Branch of which Divine Administration consists in preserving the Creatures that are form'd; it being impossible they should have any Principle of Self-subsistence independent on their first Cause: for 'tis incompatible with the nature of a Creature, to be independent. Now as the unlimited Power of God is necessary to *uphold all things*, so is his infinite Wisdom to direct and guide them. 'Tis not sullen Fate nor giddy Chance, but a wise and a powerful Deity that holds the Reins of Government; all the Creatures and all their Actions are under the wise and righteous Management of Heaven.

No Success can attend the Affairs of a private Person, or the Arms<sup>5</sup> of a publick Community, but 'tis owing to the Influence of Providence: So that the Victories some People attribute to the Favours of Fortune, Reason it self directs us to ascribe to the Hand of God, and to number them among *those Mighty Acts* the Royal Psalmist speaks of in the Text, and for which he exhorts us to *praise God*.

For tho God's raising the beautiful Frame of the World, and furnishing it with noble and excellent Creatures, may very well be accounted amongst his *Mighty Acts*; yet I apprehend that the *Mighty Acts* mention'd in the Text, do principally refer to those surprizing Occurrences in the Divine Oeconomy, wherein the Wisdom, Power and Goodness of God have been most eminently display'd in behalf of the Church. For the Psalmist had in the Verse before the Text signify'd that we should praise God in the Firmament of his Power, *i.e.* for the Works of Creation, whereof Heaven is chief: he then immediately subjoins, *Praise him for his Mighty Acts; i.e.* his Providential Acts: in which sense the most learned and judicious Inerpreters<sup>6</sup> agree.

The Observation I design to speak to from the Words, is this, *viz.*

That the Mighty Acts God hath wrought in the Course of his Providence on the behalf of his People, lay them under very great Obligations to praise him.

In speaking to this Argument it will be necessary,

*First*, To lay down some preliminary Propositions by way of Distinction<sup>7</sup> and Explication,<sup>8</sup> with respect to the Mighty Acts of Divine Providence.

*Secondly*, To shew you what is comprehended<sup>9</sup> in our praising of God.

*Thirdly*, To discourse of the great Obligations we are under to praise God for the Mighty Acts of his Providence.

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<sup>4</sup> Psalm 150:2 (*Ed.*)

<sup>5</sup> Military forces. Any of the major divisions of the army, as the infantry, cavalry, artillery, engineers, etc. *Oxford English Dictionary* online [OEDO].

<sup>6</sup> Should be "Interpreters" (*Ed.*)

<sup>7</sup> The action of dividing or fact of being divided; division, partition; separation. (In quot. 1520, division of opinion, dissension.) Obsolete. The action or process of stating or describing in detail; a detailed statement or description. *OEDO*.

<sup>8</sup> The action or process of stating or describing in detail; a detailed statement or description. The action or process of stating or describing in detail; a detailed statement or description. *OEDO*.

<sup>9</sup> To include in scope, application, or meaning. *OEDO*.

*Fourthly*, To improve<sup>10</sup> the Whole, suitable to the solemn and joyful Occasion of our present Meeting.

*First*, I am to lay down some preliminary Propositions by way of Distinction and Explication, with respect to the Mighty Acts of Divine Providence; which may be consider'd as *Common*; *Miraculous*, and *Special*.

1. There are the Common Acts of Divine Providence, which we ought not to pass over without strict Observation. I mean those that have occur'd in every Age since the Creation of the World, and do every day afford matter for Inquiry and Notice: Such as the regular Motion of the Heavenly Bodies in a due Distance, so as not to depopulate the Earth, and render it unfruitful; the orderly Succession of *Seed-time and Harvest, of Cold and Heat, of Summer and Winter, of Day and Night*.<sup>11</sup> These all proclaim the Perfections of the Godhead, and are a Demonstration of a Divine Superintendency. And I observe, the Royal Psalmist recites the like Instances as Proofs of a Providence.<sup>12</sup> How soon would the Harmony of the Creation be broken, and this beautiful World turn'd into a deform'd Chaos, did not God by his irresistible Power and infinite Wisdom animate, influence, guide, and on fit occasions restrain the vast number of distinct Beings that are in the upper and lower World?

The *Epicureans* imagin'd that God did not govern the World, because the difficulty of such an Administration would lessen his Greatness, and interrupt his Felicity. These People had very mean and low Thoughts of the Majesty of Heaven, who concluded that because human Constitutions are not manag'd without great trouble and fatigue, therefore God himself cannot govern the Universe without labour and toil. An Inference very absurd; for there's no comparison betwixt an ignorant and feeble Creature, and an Omniscient and Almighty Creator; who as he sees all things past, present, and to come, at one view, so he can accomplish any thing by one Act of his Will, without the least Interruption of his Happiness. *The Eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole Earth*.<sup>13</sup> *He looketh from Heaven, and beholdeth all the Sons of Men. He fashioneth their Hearts alike, and considereth all their Works*.<sup>14</sup> There is no Event so great, but 'tis under the Divine Government; no Creature so mean, but it comes within the compass of the Divine Care: for the Providence of God reaches from the highest Angel to the meanest Insect. 'Twas an absurd Conclusion of the *Syrians*, *That the Lord was a God of the Hills, but not of the Valleys*;<sup>15</sup> tho 'twas not unlike the Notion of some of the antient Philosophers and Poets, about the Limitation of Providence to the great Affairs of the World, and that God is an unconcern'd Spectator in lesser things. *The Gods*, says one of 'em, *overlook smaller matters, and do not mind every man's little Field and Vine*.

But we have a very different account of the Extent of God's Providence from Divine Revelation, which assures us that it reaches even to the *Grass of the Field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the Oven; yea, to the very Hairs of our Head, which are all number'd*; tho they are inconsiderable, even to a Proverb. Now if it was not inconsistent with the Wisdom and other Perfections of the Divine Nature to form all Creatures, I cannot see how it should reflect the least Dishonour on God's Attributes to govern what he has made. So that the *Mighty Acts* of common Providence in God's governing the World and its various Inhabitants, whether in Heaven or Earth, in the Air or in the Sea, deserve serious Reflection and constant Notice. And I confess, I cannot see upon what reason a man should so much as desire to continue in this World, who does not believe it to be under the Government of a wise and powerful Being: for if there is no Providence, and all

<sup>10</sup> To make use of for moral or spiritual betterment; esp. to interpret (scripture, or a situation, event, etc.), in order to impart or obtain religious instruction or moral guidance. Obsolete. *OEDO*.

<sup>11</sup> Gen. 8. 22

<sup>12</sup> Psal. 74.

<sup>13</sup> 2 Chron. 16. 9.

<sup>14</sup> Psal. 33. 13, 15.

<sup>15</sup> 1 Kings 20. 28.

things come by Chance, we cannot be secure for a moment. Which brings to my thoughts an Expression of *Marcus Antoninus*<sup>16</sup> the Philosopher, *Who, says he, would live in a World uninhabited by the Gods and Providence?*

2. Some of the *Mighty Acts* of God's Providence are strictly miraculous; I mean such as are produc'd by a supernatural Power, and are evident to Sense. And under this Head I rank such *Mighty Acts* as these, *viz.*

The Deliverance of the Children of *Israel* at the Red Sea, at which time the Waters did not only divide, but stood on a heap, and were as a Wall on the Right Hand and on the Left, so that they walked thro the Sea upon dry ground. This Event can surely be resolved into nothing short of a supernatural Power, if we consider what an infinite number of fluid Particles were pil'd up and restrain'd, till the People God design'd to save had pass'd over the Sea. Under this Head I might also recite the miraculous Plagues that were brought on the *Egyptians*; such as the turning Rivers into Blood, and the Dust of the Ground into Lice; the gross and palpable Darkness that continu'd for three days over the Land of *Egypt*, when at the same time the Children of *Israel* had Light in their Dwellings.

Again, I might mention that Series of Miracles with which the *Israelites* were attended in the Wilderness. How amazing was, it that *Moses* should split a Rock by the gentle stroke of a Wand, and that there should immediately gush out Water enough to quench the Thirst of five or six hundred thousand men; and that this agreeable Stream should continue to follow 'em thro the Wilderness! Not to mention the Showers of Quails, the raining of Manna, and the miraculous Preservation of the latter by the side of the Ark from Age to Age: together with what *Moses* remarks, That in the space of forty Years, in the Wilderness, neither their Clothes nor Shoes were decay'd.<sup>17</sup>

Again, the going back of the Sun in *Hezekiah's* time, was a miraculous Operation of the Divine Power; as was also the Sun's standing still upon *Gibeon*, and the Moon in the Valley of *Ajalon*, in the time of *Joshua*, until the People had aveng'd themselves upon their Enemies. The instance of *Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego*, is to be refer'd to this Head. These three *Jews* refus'd to pay Divine Honour to an Idol, which so incens'd a proud and arbitrary Monarch, that he doom'd 'em to be burn'd alive; and in order to make the quicker dispatch of them, commands that the Furnace into which they were to be cast, should be heated seven times hotter than it ordinarily was; and these men were to be bound hand and foot, with their usual Habit about 'em, and thrown into the midst of the fiery Furnace, the Heat of which was so violent (as the Sacred Text informs us) that it slew their design'd Executioners; but the Force of it was so abated to them, by a miraculous display of Goodness and Power, that it only loos'd their Bonds, and set 'em at liberty to walk in the fiery Oven. The Miracle having convinc'd that idolatrous Prince of the Being of the True God, and of the Doctrine of the Divine Providence, he calls 'em forth; *And the Princes, Governours, and Captains, and the King's Counsellors being gathered together, saw these Men, upon whose Bodies the Fire had no power, nor was a Hair of their Head sing'd, neither were their Coats changed, nor the Smell of Fire had passed on them.* The amazing Deliverance of *Daniel*, when thrown into a Den of fierce and hungry Lions, ought to be number'd among those *Mighty Acts* of Providence that are strictly miraculous.

To these might be added the numerous Miracles of our Blessed Saviour and his Apostles, for the Establishment and Confirmation of the Christian Religion.

<sup>16</sup> Most likely, Marcus Aurelius Antoninus Augustus (121 – 180AD). His original name (until 161 AD) Marcus Annius Verus. Roman emperor (161–180AD), best known for his Meditations on Stoic philosophy. Marcus Aurelius has symbolised for many generations in the West the Golden Age of the Roman Empire. *EBO*.

<sup>17</sup> Deut. 29. 5.

3. There are some *Mighty Acts* of Providence that are special and extraordinary, but yet are not strictly miraculous; nor are they to be number'd amongst those Works of Providence that are common. And what Age or Place has not been favour'd with many of these? And were the Case to be put to particular Persons, I doubt not but that several in this Assembly would acknowledg they have been often deliver'd by *Mighty Acts* of special Providence. And if private Persons could be prevail'd with to record the signal Favours which they and their Friends have receiv'd from the Hand of God, I question not but the frequent Reviews of such a Memorial would furnish them with abundance of Pleasure, as well as administer Support under new and unexpected Troubles. The Psalmist, tho in such deep Sorrow that he refus'd to be comforted, and under such Agonies of Conscience that he could neither sleep nor speak, and began to question whether the Mercy and Faithfulness of God would not fail for ever; yet in all this distress betakes himself to the Practice I have just now recommended: *I will remember the Years of the Right Hand of the Most High. I will remember, or record, as the word signifies, the Works of the Lord: Surely I will remember thy Wonders of old. I will meditate also of all thy Works, and talk of thy Doings.*<sup>18</sup> And this was not without good Success: for in the very next Verse he cries out, *Who is so great a God as our God!*<sup>19</sup> He can now put in his Claim, who but just before was doubting and despairing of the Favour and Faithfulness of God. But the special Providences I shall principally recite, are of a more extensive and publick Concern; and under this Head I rank such *Mighty Acts* as these, *viz.*

The Deliverance of the *Jewish Nation* from the Massacre design'd by *Haman*, which had such a Chain of surprizing Circumstances, as plainly enough show that it was brought about by a special Direction of God. The like may be said concerning the Advancement of *Joseph*, who notwithstanding the Envy of his Brethren, the Malice of his Mistress, and the Difficulties and Disgrace that attended his unjust Imprisonment, was rais'd to the highest Dignity of a Subject, being second in the Kingdom to *Pharaoh*.

Again, That *David* should be taken from the Sheepfolds, and rais'd to a Throne: That *from following the Ewes great with Young, God should bring him to feed Jacob his People, and Israel his Inheritance:*<sup>20</sup> That a Man of so obscure a Character, and of so mean an Employ, should marry a Princess of the Blood, and over-come the most amazing Difficulties, and consequently escape the hands of his Father-in-Law, who design'd he should fall a Victim to his Rage; can surely he ascrib'd to nothing but the special Favour of Heaven. And as remarkable were the Providences that attended this Prince after his Accession to the Throne; he became as famous in the Field as he was in the Temple: All which he ascribes to the special Kindness of Heaven, for says he, *God teacheth my Hands to war, so that a Bow of Steel is broken by my Arms. Thou hast also given me the shield of thy Salvation; and thy right Hand hath holden me up, and thy Gentleness hath made me great; thou hast enlarged my steps under me, that my Feet did not slip. I have pursu'd mine Enemies, and overtaken them: neither did I turn again till they were consum'd.*<sup>21</sup>

I might also instance in God's raising up of *Cyrus*, whose Preservation, if circumstanc'd as *\*Justin* reports, was as extraordinary as his Atchievements: For tho he was expos'd as soon as born to the Mercy of wild Beasts, the Providence of God so order'd it, that a brute Animal gave Nourishment to the helpless Infant, and defended him from the Beasts and Birds. The poor Shepherd, who had been employ'd in this barbarous Work of exposing the Infant, had his Pity excited by the Tenderness of a Brute, and immediately takes up the Child and carries it to his Cottage, where it was bred up; Divine Providence guarding him, till from a poor Shepherd's Boy, he became the Prince of a mighty

<sup>18</sup> Psal. 77. 10, 11, 12.

<sup>19</sup> Ver. 13.

<sup>20</sup> Psal. 78. 70, 71.

<sup>21</sup> Psal. 18 [actually Psalm 77:10-12, *Ed.*]

\* *Vid. Justin. lib.1. p. 5, 6, 7.*

Empire: and after several Victories, and the dethroning of his Grandfather *Astyages*, who order'd him to be sent out of the World as soon as he came into it, lest he should rival him in his Throne: I say, after all this (as was foretold by a Spirit of Prophecy above 200 years before before his Birth) he deliver'd the *Jews* from their seventy years Captivity in *Babylon*, and caus'd the Temple to be rebuilt at *Jerusalem*, and its Worship to be restor'd.<sup>22</sup> Now what can such a Series of Wonders be ascrib'd to, but the Divine Providence? Many more of the like kind might be recited from sacred Story; *But the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephtha, — of Samuel, and of the Prophets; who thro Faith subdued Kingdoms, wrought Righteousness, obtain'd Promises, — escap'd the edge of the Sword, out of weakness were made strong, wax'd valiant in fight, and turn'd to flight the Armies of the Aliens.*<sup>23</sup> Yet it may not be unsuitable briefly to recite some *Mighty Acts* of special Providence which God has wrought for this Nation; not to look so far back as the Defeat of the *Spanish Armada*,<sup>24</sup> that was boasted of as invincible, and the amazing Discovery of the Powder Plot:<sup>25</sup> but to instance in some things within the memory of most of us, as the Happy Revolution by the illustrious Prince of *Orange*, who was afterwards deservedly advanc'd to the Throne of these Realms; who enterpriz'd our Deliverance at a desperate Juncture, and accomplish'd it in so short a time, that we were *like those that dream*. The good News of our Happiness was so sudden and surprizing, that we believ'd not for Joy; as 'twas said of the Disciples of our Lord, when they were told that he was risen from the dead. Matters had been brought to that extremity, that we had nothing in view, humanly speaking, from which we could expect any Relief: Our Lives were in imminent danger, and our Liberties actually invaded: Our Schools of Learning likely to be turn'd into Popish Seminaries, and our Places of publick Worship into Idolatrous Temples: In a word, all that was dear to us lay at the mercy of Arbitrary Power. At which difficult Crisis it pleas'd God to prosper the Undertakings of that excellent Prince, but just now nam'd, and to give us by him an astonishing Deliverance, an amazing Salvation; which was not bought with a mighty effusion of Blood, but came to us so cheap, that 'twas never put to the hazard of a Battel. And can any *English-Man* and Protestant look back upon this, without the highest Gratitude and most exalted Praise?

Again, we may very well esteem the Reduction of *Ireland* as one of the *Mighty Acts* of God's special Providence; and particularly the Success of our Arms at the *Boyn*,<sup>26</sup> at a juncture the most seasonable. Seasonable I say, in regard it was necessary to give new Spirit at home, and to abate the Triumphs of our Enemies abroad, who had just then gain'd some advantage over our Navy: Seasonable, because the Fate of the whole Protestant Interest seem'd to depend on that hazardous Battel; a Battel that will be famous in History, in regard of the Difficulties that our Hero surmounted, and the Glory that he won.

Again, how signal was the Hand of Divine Providence in the glorious Victory which the *English* obtain'd over the *French* Navy at *La Hogue*;<sup>27</sup> when God, who holds the Winds in his hand, and causes them to blow from what Corner of the Heavens he pleaseth, made use of 'em to chain up the *French* Fleet till ours we e prepar'd to attack them; which was follow'd with such Success, that the *French* were utterly defeated, and the greatest part of their Capital<sup>28</sup> Ships destroy'd!

<sup>22</sup> Isa. 44. 28.

<sup>23</sup> Heb. 11. 32, 33, 34.

<sup>24</sup> The great fleet sent by King Philip II of Spain in 1588 to invade England in conjunction with a Spanish army from Flanders. England's attempts to repel this fleet involved the first naval battles to be fought entirely with heavy guns, and the failure of Spain's enterprise saved England and the Netherlands from possible absorption into the Spanish empire. *EBO*.

<sup>25</sup> Gunpowder Plot, the conspiracy of English Roman Catholics to blow up Parliament and King James I, his queen, and his eldest son on November 5, 1605. *EBO*.

<sup>26</sup> Battle of the Boyne (July 1, 1690). A major conflict fought along the Boyne River in Ireland between King William III (William of Orange) and the exiled king James II. James II sought to retake his throne through an alliance with Ireland and France, having been deposed and exiled after William's landing at Brixham and subsequent English desertions. A string of Irish Jacobite victories in the northern country were followed by a swift but indecisive loss on the Boyne River. Although James's escape dragged the First Jacobite Rising into 1691, the Battle of the Boyne reassured William's allies of his commitment to defeating all French-aligned forces. *EBO*.

<sup>27</sup> The English fleet under Admiral Edward Russell, 1st Earl of Orford (1652-1727) destroyed the French fleet in the Battle of La Hogue (May 1692) that took place in the English Channel. From various sources (*Ed*).

<sup>28</sup> A worship of the largest class (*Ed*).

And what shall we say of King *William's* taking of *Namur*,<sup>29</sup> in the view of a great and numerous Army? Was it not an argument that God fought for us, and had girded our Prince with Strength unto Battel?

Moreover, the constant Preservation of the late King *William* of glorious Memory, ought to be reckon'd among the *Mighty Acts* of God's special Providence to these Kingdoms. How eminently did the Lord of Hosts cover the Head of that Great Prince in the Day of Battel abroad, and guard his Life from the murdering Hands of bloody Assassines at home!<sup>30</sup> That Prince seem'd to be born for the common Benefit of Mankind, as he was most remarkably the Darling of Divine Providence. A Prince that might justly be call'd the Father of his People: for he had nothing more at heart than their Welfare, of which the words he utter'd with his dying Breath are a proof: *Is there, said he, any more that I can do for my People?* Understanding, by the return that was made him, there was not; he, like David, *after he had serv'd his own Generation by the will of God, fell asleep.* Serv'd his Generation, I say, by frequently hazarding his invaluable Life, and at the expence of a vast Sum out of his own Estate. Yet such is the Ingratitude of some who enjoy'd the Benefits of his mild Reign, that they treat his Memory with an intolerable degree of Rudeness: But he is ascended above the blasts of Envy; and the Name of *WILLIAM* the Third shall shine in the Records of Fame, when theirs who have endeavour'd to stain it shall rot in eternal Oblivion.

Again, the Preservation of her present Majesty, thro so many Difficulties and Temptations, to the peaceable Possession of the Crown of these Realms, well deserves to be number'd among the *Mighty Acts* of Divine Providence: Not all the Insinuations of the Romish Clergy, nor the Authority of the King her Father, having been able to byass her (when she mov'd in a lower Sphere) to act contrary to the Dictates of her Conscience. And since Her Majesty's happy Accession to the Throne, Divine Providence has guarded Her Royal Person, and caus'd a Current of Success to attend Her Arms. 'Tis under Her wise Administration that we enjoy our Civil and Religious Liberties, Peace, Plenty, and Prosperity at home, while other Countries are involv'd in the Miseries of War. Now to what, but the special Indulgence of Heaven, can we ascribe these Favours; together with that glorious Victory for which we praise God this Day, and concerning which, I shall have occasion to speak more in the close of my Sermon? I proceed now to the second Head.

*Secondly*, I am to tell you what is. comprehended in our praising of God for the *Mighty Acts* of his Providence.

1. It supposes that we strictly observe in what Instances the Divine Attributes are display'd in favour of our selves or others. Many among us are so unobservant, that the most remarkable Occurrences in the Divine Government escape their notice: and if at any time the strangeness of an Event invites their Curiosity to look into it, they seldom have regard to the first, but wholly account for it from second Causes, forgetting that God keeps the Direction and Government of all Causes in his own hand, and that all the Springs of Nature are turn'd by him as he pleaseth. And whatever some may say to excuse this Neglect and Stupidity, 'tis too evident to be deny'd, that it springs from Infidelity and Irreligion. For those that are regardless of the Divine Attributes, when display'd in favour of the Righteous, and in terror to the Wicked, do by their Contempt and Carelessness render

<sup>29</sup> The city of Namur was strategically located at the juncture of the Sambre and Meuse (Maas) rivers, 55 km (35 miles) southeast of Brussels. It underwent two sieges in 1692 and 1695 during the War of the Grand Alliance (1689–97). This was also called the War of the League of Augsburg, and was the third major war of Louis XIV of France, in which his expansionist plans were blocked by an alliance led by England (William III), the United Provinces of the Netherlands, and the Austrian Habsburgs. *EBO*.

<sup>30</sup> See A True History Of the Several Designs and Conspiracies, Against His Majesties Sacred Person and Government; As they were continually Carry'd on From 1688 till 1697. Containing Matters Extracted from Original Papers, Depositions of the Witnesses, and Authentick Records, as appears by the References to the Appendix, wherein they are Digested. Publish'd With no other Design then to acquaint the English Nation, that notwithstanding the Present Posture of Affairs, our ENEMIES are still so Many, Restless and Designing, that all imaginable Care ought to be taken for the Defence and Safety of His Majesty and his Three Kingdoms. By R. K. [Richard Kingston] printed for the author and sold by Abel Roper at the Black Boy against St. Dunstan's Church in Fleet Street. London, 1698. Source *Early English Books Online* [EEBO] accessed through NSW State Library. The Jacobites (predominantly Roman Catholics who wanted to see James II or his heirs restored to the throne of England) were constantly agitating throughout William III reign, and beyond. Many Protestants believe the Jacobites were behind several plots to assassinate King William (*Ed.*)

themselves very criminal. And I find that the Royal Psalmist pronounces the terrible doom of such: *Because, says he, they regard not the Works of the Lord, nor the Operation of his Hands, he shall destroy them, and not build them up.*

2. The Praising of God for the *Mighty Acts* of his Providence, supposes that we have a due value for the Benefits we receive, and a high esteem of the Benefactor that bestows them. While any thro ignorance, or by the influence of Atheism, are unacquainted with the special Favours of Providence, no wonder if they continue under the guilt of an ungrateful Silence. For as Love supposes the Knowledg of the Object, so does Thankfulness the Sense of an Obligation. And where there is a just Reflection on the Worth of our Mercies, it will effectually engage our Hearts and move our Tongues in the work of Praise. Now in order to value aright the Favours of Providence, we must affect our Minds with a lively Sense of our provoking Sins; and the clearer view we have of the latter, the higher esteem we shall have of the former. And as a Reflection on our Sins, with their various Aggravations, will increase our Regard to the Blessings of Providence; so the Consideration of the excellent Nature and indearing Circumstances of the Divine Favours confer'd upon us, would wonderfully excite our Gratitude. Who that reflects on the infinite Extent of the Divine Indulgence, the multitude of God's tender Mercies, the happy Season that his unerring Wisdom has fix'd for the bellowing them, their Agreeableness to our Necessities, together with the disinterested Bounty and generous Freedom with which they are dispens'd, but must set an extraordinary Value on the Favours of God; and the rather, when they consider how much they ought to esteem their great Benefactor for the Perfections of his Nature? Amongst Men, we value a Gift as we love the Giver; so according to the strength and fervour of our Love to God, shall we rate those *Mighty Acts* of special Providence wrought in our favour. When the Psalmist had taken a view of God's marvellous Works, he cries out in extasy and rapture, *How precious also are thy Thoughts unto me, O God! and how great is the Sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the Sand.*<sup>31</sup> And elsewhere in the Book of Psalms we may observe, that the Gratitude of the Psalmist did arise in proportion to the vigorous flame of his Love to God. *I will love thee, O Lord my Strength. — I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be prais'd — The Lord liveth, and blessed be my Rock; and let the God of my Salvation be exalted. It is God that avengeth me, and subdueth the People under me. He delivereth me from mine Enemies: Yea, thou liftest me up above those that rise up against me: Thou hast deliver'd me from the man of Violence. Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the Heathen; and sing Praises unto thy Name.*<sup>32</sup>

3. The praising of God for the *Mighty Acts* of his Providence, supposes that we have them impress'd on our Minds and lodg'd in our Memories; without which we shall be but faint in our Acknowledgments, and cool in our offering the Sacrifice of Praise. And 'tis remarkable, that the Psalmist, who was one of the brightest Examples of Gratitude, did his Utmost to imprint God's special Favours on his Mind: *I remember, says he, the days of old, I meditate on all thy Works, I muse on the Work of thy hands.*<sup>33</sup> And in another Psalm, this excellent Person shows how proper Meditation is to excite us to the Work of Praife: — *My mouth shall praise thee with joyful Lips; when I remember thee upon my Bed, and meditate on thee in the Night-watches.* And the Psalmist being jealous of his own Heart, gives himself this solemn Charge; *Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and forget not all his Benefits.*<sup>34</sup> Our Necessities will prompt us to pray, but the work of Praise depends on our Ingenuity. Alas! such is the Ingratitude of most men, that there is hardly any thing in the world sooner forgot by them, than the Works of God: and 'tis a stain in *our Character*, that we so much resemble the *Israelites* of old, who *sung God's Praise, but soon forgot his Works.*

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<sup>31</sup> Psal. 139. 17, 18.

<sup>32</sup> Psal. 18. 1, 3, 46, 47, 48, 49.

<sup>33</sup> Psal. 143. 5.

<sup>34</sup> Psal. 103. 2.



The Benefits we receive from Heaven, are too commonly written in dust, so that they are presently wip'd out, soon forgotten; they pass thro our Minds just like Birds thro the Air, that leave no track behind them: whereas in Souls that are truly thankful, and duly wrought up to the work of Praise, the Favours of God are very deeply engrav'd; and the sense such retain of them, is both lively and lasting.

The *Mighty Acts* of special Providence that God hath bestow'd upon us as a Nation, for their number are so many, they can't be recounted; for their Quality so excellent, they can't be express'd: so that a man must close his Eyes not to see them, and be as insensible as a Rock, if he does not make some grateful Returns.

4. The praising of God for the *Mighty Acts* of his Providence, imports our having such a warm sense of his Mercies, as may engage us to make the most solemn and open Acknowledgments for them. Some indeed are so little affected with the Favours of Providence, that they receive them as the discharge of a Debt, rather than with a sense of being under any Obligation to the Giver. Now in things of a lower concern, that man is mark'd for his ingratitude, that receives a considerable Kindness with a cold Indifferency: But what words can set forth the vile Ingratitude of those, who receive the special Favours of Divine Providence without any inward sense of Joy, or outward expression of Thankfulness?

There is no regular discharge of the Duty of Praise, without a cordial Reception of the Divine Benefits, and a grateful Acknowledgment to the kind Benefactor. And whenever our Hearts are warm'd with a sense of Divine Love, our Tongues will sing aloud of God's Goodness. Agreeable to this, was the practice of the Psalmist: *I have not hid thy Righteousness in my Heart, I have declar'd thy Faithfulness and thy Salvation, I have not conceal'd thy Loving-kindness and thy Truth from the great Congregation.*<sup>35</sup> To whatever other sense these words may be accommodated with respect to the *Messiah*, to whom they are applied by the Author to the *Hebrews*, I now consider them as they report the grateful Practice of the Psalmist. Again, elsewhere says he, *I will sing of the Mercies of God for ever; with my mouth will I make known his Faithfulness to all Generations. I will publish with the voice of Thanksgiving, and tell of all his wondrous Works. But who can utter the Mighty Acts of the Lord? Who can shew forth all his Praise?*<sup>36</sup>

Finally, to our verbal Acknowledgments we must join the regular Conduct of our Lives, and the prudent Distribution of our Alms. *Let us break off our Sins by Righteousness, and our Iniquities by showing mercy to the Poor; if so be it may be a lengthening of our Tranquillity.* The most agreeable Hymns will be but grating Discords, unless they are follow'd with Acts of Charity. The Calves of our Lips will be insignificant, without the Sacrifice of our Alms; which, when offer'd from a right Principle, and to a due End, *is an Odour of a sweet Smell, and a Sacrifice acceptable and well-pleasing to God.*<sup>37</sup>

'Tis observable, that when *Abraham* return'd from the slaughter of the Kings, and *Meichisedeck* refresh'd his weary Troops with Bread and Wine, the conquering Patriarch gave the Tenth of the Spoils he had taken in War to the Priest of the most High God. And whether it was from this Instance, or any other of the like nature, I will not determine, that the Gentile Nations fell into a Practice not unlike it. 'Tis well known, that among the Heathens, when they have had successful Campagns, they devoted the first and best of the Spoil to the Service of his Temple, by whose favourable Influence they suppos'd the Victory was obtain'd. And among the Jews, besides the Obligations they were under to devote the Tenth of their Estates to the Service of God, there was

<sup>35</sup> Psal. 40. 10.

<sup>36</sup> Psal. 89. 1. (also cited is Psalm 27:7 and 106:2. *Ed.*)

<sup>37</sup> Phil. 4. 18.

something they were oblig'd to part with, out of the Spoils they took in War. Now, *if the Jews were not to appear before the Lord empty*, but every man was to give as he was able, according as the Lord had bless'd him; how much stronger is the Obligation upon us who are eas'd in a great measure of that Charge, to which the Ceremonial part of the Jewish Religion constantly oblig'd its Votaries? Upon days of Fasting, we are requir'd *to deal our Bread to the Hungry*, much more on days of Thanksgiving. 'Tis remarkable, that when the Jews celebrated a Day of Thanksgiving for their Deliverance from the malicious and mischievous Designs of *Haman*, 'twas not only a Day of *Feasting and Joy*, but *of sending Portions to one another, and of Gifts to the Poor*.<sup>38</sup> And what time can be more seasonable than this *Good Day*, this Day of solemn Triumph, to dispense our liberal Alms? To close this Head, let us remember that our Praises must be offer'd to Almighty God with Affection and Fervour, with Sincerity and Delight, in Faith, and in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. But I hasten,

*Thirdly*, To speak to the great Obligations we are under to praise God for the *Mighty Acts* of his special Providence, wrought in favour of his People. And,

1. Our Obligation to praise God for his special Favours, is founded on natural Equity. Praise, as well as Prayer, is a Branch of Natural Religion: *I will*, says the Psalmist, *praise the Name of God with a Song, and will magnify him with Thanksgiving; this also shall please the Lord better than an Ox or a Bullock, that hath Horns and Hoofs*.<sup>39</sup> In which words, Praise is prefer'd to Sacrifices, the most solemn part of God's positive Worship among the Jews: And hence we collect that God was better pleas'd with the hearty Praises of his People, than with the Victims they laid on his Altar. Praise is a just Tribute that we owe to Heaven: Can any thing in the world be more equitable, than that he who is the Author of our Victories, should be the Object of our Praises? There is a moral Obligation upon Men to give each other what is just: *Render*, says the Apostle, *to all their dues; Tribute to whom Tribute is due, Custom to whom Custom, Fear to whom Fear, Honour to whom Honour*.<sup>40</sup> And 'tis upon this natural Principle of Justice, that open and solemn Acknowledgments for special Benefits, are God's just Due, and our indispensable Duty: *Give unto the Lord the Glory due unto his Name*.<sup>41</sup> But alas, how common is it to rob God of the easy and just Tribute of his Praise! especially when Armies have been flesh'd with Victories, they are apt *to sacrifice to their own Net, and burn Incense to their own Drag*; they give the Glory of their Successes to their own Prowess and Conduct. *Moses* having a jealousy of the *Israelites*, cautions 'em against this particular Sin: *Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God — to say in thy Heart, My Power and the Might of my Hand hath gotten me this Wealth*. The Wise-Man has long since remark'd, *That the Race is not to the Swift, nor the Battel to the Strong*. And says the Psalmist, *I will not trust to my Bow, neither shall my Sword save me. The Horse is prepar'd against the day of Battel, but Victory is of the Lord*. And elsewhere, *In God*, says he, *we boast all the day long, and praise thy Name for ever*: which words are thought to be the Result of *David's* pious Reflections upon the glorious Success of *Israel's* Arms against the *Canaanites*; where he traces all back to the first Cause, and accordingly gives the Glory of that Victory, not to *Moses* or *Joshua*, but to the Lord of Hosts. And unless we practice agreeably to this, we slight the Kindness of Heaven, and violate the Law of Nature. 'Tis impossible to be ungrateful, without being unjust; especially when the Favours that God bestows, are a signal Return to the Prayers of his People: As we may well esteem the late glorious Victory, for which we are assembled to praise God this day. How often have we in this place pray'd for the Success of her Majesty's Arms, together with those of her Allies? and have expostulated with God in the words of the Psalmist, *Wilt not thou, O God, who hast cast us off; Wilt not thou, O God, go forth with our Hosts?*<sup>42</sup> And did we not on that occasion solemnly promise, if God would hear our Cry, and plead

<sup>38</sup> Esth. 9. [Esther 9:22, Ed.]

<sup>39</sup> Ps 69. 30, 31.

<sup>40</sup> Rom. 13. 7.

<sup>41</sup> Psal. 29. 2.

<sup>42</sup> Psal. 108. [Psalm 108:11, Ed.]

our Cause, and scatter our Enemies, that we would praise him with the Voice of Thanksgiving? And shall we not now pay *our solemn Vows to the Almighty, which our Lips utter'd and our Mouths have spoken when we were in trouble?* And when 'tis evident, that God has given a *Spirit of Judgment to those that sit in Judgment, and Strength to such as turn the Battel from the Gates.* And if these things should be forgotten, we shall break both a voluntary as well as a natural Obligation, and become doubly guilty of so foul an Ingratitude that no words can describe. But I hope I speak to such as are ready to say with the Psalmist, *We love the Lord, because he hath heard the voice of our Supplications; because he hath inclin'd his Ear unto us, therefore will we call upon him as long as we live. Blessed be God who has not turn'd away our Prayer, nor his Mercy from us.* But,

2. Our Obligation to praise God for the *Mighty Acts* of his peculiar and distinguishing Providence, may be argued from the special Advantages that attend the regular Performance of this Duty: And they are such as these.

(1.) The faithful Discharge of the Duty of Praise is attended with a peculiar Pleasure; a Pleasure truly rational and sublime. We are indeed assur'd, *That none of God's Commands are grievous; and that the ways of Wisdom are ways of Pleasantness, and all her Paths are Peace:* tho it can't be denied, but that some Duties of Religion have more of difficulty and labour attending them than others; as Repentance, and the Mortification of Sin, which are attended with much Trouble and Sorrow, tho temper'd with some degrees of Hope and Comfort.

I might also instance in the Duty of Prayer, a Service in which good men delight; yet Confession, which is a part of Prayer, cannot be manag'd aright, without sorrowful reflections on our Guilt and Folly in sinning against God. But when we engage in the work of Praise, we fix our Eyes on his astonishing Goodness display'd in various Instances on our behalf, which must needs afford us a very agreeable Prospect, and occasion a sublimated Pleasure.

Prayer is most suted to the State of the Afflicted, but Praise to the Condition of the Chearful, as the Apostle *James* intimates in these words: *Is any among you afflicted? let him pray: Is any merry? let him sing Psalms.*<sup>43</sup> A pleasant and delightful Practice, as the sweet Psalmist of *Israel* assures us from his own Experience: *Praise the Lord, says he, for the Lord is good: Sing Praises to his Name, for it is pleasant.*<sup>44</sup> And in another Psalm, *Praise ye the Lord, for it is good to sing Praises to our God; for it is pleasant, and Praise it comely.*<sup>45</sup> Praise is the Offspring of Divine Love, than which nothing can produce a higher Pleasure and Joy in the Mind; Love is the most soft and easy Passion, which being influenc'd and excited by the distinguishing Kindnesses of Heaven, causes the Soul to overflow with Joy and Gladness. When the Royal Psalmist had pray'd for the utter Destruction of the Enemies of God, he immediately subjoins; *But let the Righteous be glad, let them rejoice before God, yea, let them exceedingly rejoice. Sing unto God, sing Praises to his Name: Extol him that rideth upon the Heavens by his Name Jah, and rejoice before him.*<sup>46</sup> And when God had signally preserv'd the Psalmist, and rescu'd him from the hands of his treacherous Foes, he reviews his Deliverance with a peculiar sort of Pleasure: for says. he, *Thou hast turn'd for me my Mourning into Dancing; thou hast put off my Sackcloth, and girded me with Gladness. To the end that my Glory may sing Praise to thee, and not be silent: O Lord my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever.*<sup>47</sup>

(2.) Another Advantage that attends our praising of God, is, that it will restrain us from the commission of Sin, and quicken us in the performance of the necessary Duties of our Holy

<sup>43</sup> James 5. 3. (This should be James 5:13, Ed.)

<sup>44</sup> Psal. 135. 3.

<sup>45</sup> 147. 1. (That is Psalm 147:1, Ed.)

<sup>46</sup> 68. 3, 4. (That is Psalm 68:3-4, Ed.)

<sup>47</sup> Psal. 30. 11, 12.

Religion. Christians will be able, thro the Grace of God, to baffle the most violent Temptations to Sin, while they retain a vigorous sense of the Divine Goodness on their Souls; for they argue thus with them selves: “Has God by a peculiar and distinguishing Providence watch’d over and defended us? Has he scatter’d the Proud in the Imaginations of their Hearts? Has he encompass’d us about with his Favour as with a Shield? Has he indulg’d us with the Blessings of the upper and the nether Spring? Has his right Hand and his holy Arm gotten us the Victory over our Enemies? And shall we dare again to break his holy Commandment? God forbid. How can we do this great Wickedness, and sin against God?” Again, with regard to the Duties of Religion, none are so likely to perform them as those whose Hearts are inflam’d with the Love of God; there is no Motive more powerful to engage us in a steady Course of Obedience: so much the Royal Psalmist intimates in these words; *For thy Loving-Kindness is before mine eyes, and I have walk’d in thy truth.*<sup>48</sup> So long as we keep the Loving-Kindness of God in view, it will make us *steady ad unmovable, always. Abounding in the work of the Lord.* And proportionable to the vigorous sense we have of the Divine Favours, will be our Care to honour and please God. If our Hearts are enlarg’d with a sense of his Love, we shall run swiftly in the way of his Precepts.

Those Men that are rightly dispos’d for the work of Praise, and who retain a quick sense of their Obligations to Heaven, will argue themselves into a conformity to the Divine Precepts after this manner: “We are unworthy to breathe in God’s Air, or to tread on his Earth; we are less than the least of all his Mercies; we are before him as nothing, *yea, less than nothing, and vanity*; we are guilty rebellious Creatures; we have abus’d his Patience, despis’d his Goodness, affronted his Holiness, dar’d his Power, and provok’d him to Anger most bitterly by our repeated Abominations; yet hath he loaded us with his Benefits: *the Lines are fallen to us in pleasant places, and we have a goodly Heritage: What shall we render to God for all his Benefits? We will take the Cup of Salvation, and call upon the Name of the Lord.* Nothing can be too much for us to do or suffer for him, who is our Hope and Help, *our Fortress and strong Tower*, our kind and generous Benefactor, our *Shield and out exceeding great Reward.*” Now if such an Advantage as this does necessarily attend the regular Discharge of the Duty of Praise, how great is our Obligation to perform it!

(3.) Another Advantage attending the work of Praise, is, that it will give the Soul such a view of God’s absolute Perfections and relative Goodness, as will greatly humble it. No Person ever set such an Example of Humility, as the incarnate Son of God, because no Person had so comprehensive a Knowledge of the Perfections of the Godhead: O how great, how surprizing is this ravishing Mystery! The blessed Jesus was holy and harmless, undefil’d and separate from Sinners; he had not the least Pollution to humble and abase him, *yea, he thought it no robbery to be equal with God, yet he humbled himself, and became obedient even to the Death of the Cross.* But tho we profess to be the Disciples of this blessed Lord, we are encompass’d about with manifold Sins, and yet are so vain as to think too highly of our selves. Now a Soul that is often engag’d in the work of praising God, gains such a view of the Divine Excellency, as discovers its own Guilt and Deformity, and so keeps it at the foot of God: For the clearer our Conceptions are of the Divine Attributes, the deeper sense we shall get of our own Ignorance and Weakness. This effect it had upon *Job: I have heard of thee by the Hearing of the Ear; but now mine Eye seeth thee: Wherefore I abhor my self, and repent in Dust and Ashes.*<sup>49</sup> Now ’tis no slight favour to have our Humility increas’d, which is not only a bright Ornament to the Christian Life, but it is that on which God sets a high value, and to which he has made great Promises: *The Meek will he guide in Judgment, the Meek will he teach his way.*<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Psal. 26. 3

<sup>49</sup> Job 42. 5.

<sup>50</sup> Psal. 25. 9.

(4.) Those that are not backward in praising God for the Mercies they have receiv'd, are ordinarily favour'd with richer Benefits. The just Tribute of Praise they send up to Heaven, does not return empty. 'Tis remarkable in Nature, that the Vapours which are exhal'd by the Sun, and ascend towards Heaven, make way for fruitful Showers: so the Praises (as well as the Prayers) we direct upwards, draw down for us a liberal Supply. *Let the People praise thee, O God, let the People praise thee; then shall the Earth yield her Increase, and God, even our God, shall bless us.*<sup>51</sup> Whereas an ungrateful Silence will stop the Current of Divine Favours, and shut up the Bowels of Mercy it self. And now who that has the least spark of Ingenuity can want a Disposition to engage in a Work so pleasant and easy, so honourable and advantageous, that does tend to the enlarging the Powers of our Minds, and the perfecting of our Natures, and happily secures to us future Blessings? The Worship of the Jews under the Old Testament was costly and troublesome; but what God requires of us under the New, is the easy and cheap *Sacrifice of Praise, the Calves of our Lips.*

Finally, I might argue our Obligations to praise God from the Nature and Excellency of the Duty it self. Praise is justly to be prefer'd before Prayer, as being the more noble and excellent piece of Service. Our Obligation to pray, commenc'd with our Guilt; but Praise was the proper employ of Man in Paradise, as it shall be hereafter in Heaven. Now that which was the Duty of reasonable Creatures in Innocency, and remains to be so since the Fall, and shall be their Employment in Heaven, ought to have the preference to other parts of Worship. Praise is a work common to the Church Militant and the Church Triumphant. Those that are admitted nearest to the Throne of God, and have the brightest views of his Glory, are always engag'd in this agreeable Service: The Language of Heaven is *Hallelujah*. 'Tis in the work of Praise that we have near and close Communion with Angels and the Spirits of just Men made perfect, as well as with him who is the Head of all Principalities and Powers.

The united Thanksgivings and Praises of a whole Kingdom, is as if Heaven was come down upon Earth, or as if we had begun our Heaven here. In a word, as our Obligations to praise God are eternal, so the work of Praise, like the Object we adore, shall last for ever. But what refin'd Delights will mix with our Songs, when we strike up in concert with the whole Host of Heaven, we shall not perfectly know, till we are got out of this World, that's full of Discord and Hatred, into the other where there is nothing but Harmony and Love. But I proceed to the last thing I propos'd, *viz.*

To make some Improvement suitable to the solemn and joyful Occasion of our present meeting.

Waving several Inferences that might be drawn from what has been discours'd, I shall mention but two, and hasten to a Close.

1st, If we are under such great Obligations as you have heard to praise God for the *mighty Acts* of his distinguishing Providence, then 'tis reasonable the signal Favours these Kingdoms have shar'd should be transmitted to Posterity.

What History can furnish us with such a surprizing Series of Blessings, as has attended these Nations from the happy Revolution in 1688, to this very day? None either antient or modern, except what we meet with in the Holy Scriptures.

Therefore let us hand down the Knowledg of these things from Age to Age, that upon a serious review of them, both we and our Children may be encourag'd to hope in the Mercy, and trust in the Arm of the Lord of Hosts. And for this very end, God gave a Law in *Israel*, that they should shew to Posterity *the Praises of the Lord, his Strength, and the wonderful Works he has done. For he*

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<sup>51</sup> Ps. 67. 5, 6.

*established a Testimony in Jacob, and appointed a Law in Israel, which he commanded our Fathers that they should make them known to their Children: That the Generations to come might know them, even the Children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their Children: That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the Works of God; but keep his Commandments.*<sup>52</sup>

2dly, How reasonable is it that we should praise God with the most exalted Vigour, as well for the late *mighty Acts* of his Providence, as for those of an antienter date! I hope many of us have a warm and a lively sense of the great Goodness of God to us, in the astonishing Success of her Majesty's Arms, and those of her Allies, under the Command of the Duke of *Marlborough*. And if our Minds are suitably affected with the late glorious Victory, for which we are assembled to praise God, we shall not make a faint and languishing Acknowledgment, but engage all the active Powers of our Minds, that we may *praise him according to his excellent Greatness*. To promote which end, let me prevail with you to consider the following things.

1. How little reason we had to expect that Divine Providence should cast the Victory on our side, when our Iniquities were so many and aggravated against Heaven. Surely we are a *sinful People, a Nation laden with Iniquity, a Seed of evil doers, Children that are Corrupters*. The Peace that we have had at home has render'd us stupid,<sup>53</sup> and our Plenty has been abus'd by Excesses.

*England* has been the Theatre of God's Judgments as well as the Scene of his Wonders: What an amazing Judgment was the late Storm!<sup>54</sup> Yet equally amazing is it that the Impression it made should be so soon worn out, and that awful Warning no better improv'd! How do Men lay the Reins on the Neck of their Lusts, and outrage God with his own Benefits? How have we spurn'd at the Bowels that founded towards us, and lifted up our Heels against him who has often stretch'd forth his Arm for our Salvation? Astonishing Goodness! that God should appear for so wicked and unthankful a People as we are, and make our Arms Victorious. Let this Consideration greatly excite us to praise the Lord of Hosts.

2. Consider the Seasonableness of this late Victory: Our Affairs had a very melancholy Aspect at home, the Spirit of a Party had too much prevail'd and divided the common Interest and Strength; and abroad almost all lay at the hazard of a Battel. Now at this critical Juncture did Providence interpose, and give the Victory on our side; nothing sure could have been more opportune: Let therefore the Seasonableness of this Victory inspire us with suitable fervour, and give a sprightly accent to the Hallelujahs we sing this day.

3. Consider the Greatness of this Victory: The *French* themselves call the *Day* that it was obtain'd, the *fatal*, and *mortal Day*. And if we take the number of the slain from their own Accounts, 'tis extraordinary; probably a more entire Victory has not been obtain'd in the last Age, in any part of *Europe*.<sup>55</sup>

We know some Princes abroad have boasted of Victories they never obtain'd, and have hurry'd their poor Slaves to the Temple to sing *Te Deum*, when their Armies have been beaten in the Field.

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<sup>52</sup> Psal. 78. 4, 5, 6, 7.

<sup>53</sup> Emotionally, morally, or spiritually dull, numb, or indifferent; lacking in natural feeling, moral sense, or spiritual awareness. Often with to. Now rare. *OEDO*.

<sup>54</sup> The Great Storm of 26 November 1703 was one of the most powerful and destructive storms in recorded English history. The storm came in from the Atlantic and cut a swathe of destruction across southern and central England and out into the North Sea. In London about 2,000 chimney stacks were blown down and at least 1,500 men were lost at sea as many ships, including the Royal Navy's entire Channel Squadron, were sunk. One warship was blown from Harwich all the way to Gothenburg in Sweden before it was able to sail back to England. There was extensive flooding in the West Country where hundreds of people and thousands of livestock were drowned in the Somerset Levels. Other instances of destruction include about 400 windmills which were destroyed, about 4,000 oak trees in the New Forest blown down, and the collapse of the first Eddystone Lighthouse. Source Fairford History Society website, <https://www.fairfordhistory.org.uk/the-great-storm-1703/>

<sup>55</sup> A quarter (about 12,000) of Marlborough's troops were killed or wounded, but the enemy casualties exceeded three times that number. *EBO*.

How has a neighbouring Monarch brib'd his own Historians to publish partial Accounts, that by hiding Danger from his People, he might keep up the Vigour of their Spirits!

But the *glorious Victory* we praise God for this day is so real and compleat, that we need not fear the Light, but leave our Enemies to tell the Story; for 'tis remarkable, that all the Accounts that have come since the Battel was fought at *Bleinheim*, rather enlarge than lessen the Successes and the Triumphs of that never-to-be-forgotten Day. Now the Greatness of this Victory is yet more visible, if we consider that the Flower and Glory of *France*, the best disciplin'd Troops that Prince had, were engag'd against us; and at the head of them some of the bravest Officers that have appear'd in fight, such as had been us'd to lead out to Battel, and to lead on to Victory; Troops the *French King* thought almost invincible, they having so often fetch'd home Victories thro Fields of Blood: and not only the *French* Generals, but the Elector of *Bavaria*<sup>56</sup> must be acknowledged a Man of an Enterprizing and Martial Genius; and one that formerly had spread his conquering Banners in the Plains of *Vienna*, and had been honour'd with Success and Victory in many Battels. Moreover, their Number was superior to ours, and they had very much the Advantage of the Ground: And so confident were our Enemies of Success, that they took no care to secure their Retreat, who were not us'd to be wanting in that respect. But notwithstanding all these things, we have obtain'd an entire Victory, so that the greatest part of the *French* Army was either slain in the Field, or push'd into the *Danube*.<sup>57</sup>

Sometimes a great Army is defeated, when yet the greatest part of them escape; but here it was quite otherwise: Our Enemies *were given as Dust to the Sword* of our General, *and as driven Stubble to his Bow*.<sup>58</sup> Indeed the Dispute between the two Armies was hot and long; but the greater the Hazard in the Combat, the brighter the Glory in the Issue. 'Tis number'd among the Glories of the great Captain *Hannibal*, that he resolv'd to besiege *Rome*, tho he was never able to lead his Army within the view of her Walls. But what then shall we say of the matchless Courage of her Majesty's Captain General, who did not only march an *English* Army into the very heart of the *German* Empire to engage one more numerous, but when one Wing of ours began to give way, had the Prudence and the Presence of Mind to rally it again, which under God turn'd the Scale? So that once more the World has had a signal Instance of *English* Bravery, under the Influence and Blessing of Heaven: *For 'tis the Lord's doing, and it ought to be marvellous in our Eyes*.

4. Consider what kind of Enemies they were, which Heaven has vanquish'd by her Majesty's Forces; such as are false and treacherous, full of Mischief and all Subtilty, whose tender Mercies are cruel, a People profound for Slaughter, very expert in the use of those Weapons that devour Flesh. God has prosper'd our Arms against a Prince, whose exhorbitant Power and boundless Ambition have push'd him forward to aspire after a Universal Monarchy:<sup>59</sup> One that has stoop'd to all the base Methods, that could be fram'd by Earth or Hell, to accomplish his Designs.

<sup>56</sup> Maximilian II Emanuel (1662-1726). Elector of Bavaria from 1679 and an able soldier whose quest for dynastic aggrandisement led him into a series of wars, first as an ally of the House of Habsburg, later against it, an enmity that nearly cost him his holdings. *EBO*.

<sup>57</sup> At the Battle of Blenheim, 52,000 British, Dutch, and Austrian troops under Marlborough and Eugene of Savoy faced 60,000 French and Bavarian troops under the French marshal Camille comte de Tallard with Marsin and Maximilian II Emanuel (the elector of Bavaria). Eugene's forces faced those of Marsin and Maximilian II Emanuel at Lützingen, while Marlborough opposed Tallard at Blenheim. Prince Eugene mounted a strong diversionary assault on his flank while Marlborough's general Lord John Cutts mounted two unsuccessful assaults upon Blenheim. Cutts's attacks forced Tallard to commit more reserves to defend Blenheim than he had intended, and thus served to further weaken the French centre. Since Eugene kept Marsin fully occupied, Marlborough then launched the main attack across the Nebel River against the French centre. Marlborough's advance was hotly contested by French cavalry attacks, and only his personal direction and Eugene's selfless loan of one of his own cavalry corps enabled Marlborough to maintain the momentum of his attack. Once successfully launched, however, the attack proved irresistible. The Allied cavalry broke through the French centre, dividing Marsin's army from that of Tallard, and then wheeled left, sweeping Tallard's forces into the Danube River. Tallard himself was taken prisoner, and about 23 battalions of his infantry and 4 regiments of dragoons were pinned in Blenheim. Marsin and Maximilian II Emanuel managed to withdraw their troops from the battle in the meantime, but on the French right wing all the infantry around Blenheim surrendered. *Encyclopedia Britannica* online

<sup>58</sup> Isa. 41. 2.

<sup>59</sup> The reference here is to Louis XIV of France; who through the War of the Spanish Succession sought to place his grandson (Philip, duc d'Anjou) on the throne of Spain. This would have given Louis influence of the larger portion of Europe (*Ed.*)

How has he persecuted and destroy'd his own Subjects, and with what Treachery and Baseness has he acted towards his Neighbours? bidding an open defiance to Honour and Religion, breaking all solenn Engagements and Treaties, upon the least prospect he had to enlarge his Dominions, and to prepare his way for Universal Empire.

Indeed, *WILLIAM* the Third, of glorious memory, gave frequent Checks to the Ambition of this Prince; but Heaven seems to have reserv'd the great Work of humbling this proud Tyrant to his immediate Successor in the Throne, who has by her victorious Arms obscur'd the Glory of *France*.

5. Consider the Distance of the place, which was the Scene of the late glorious Victory: This happy Circumstance ought to engage us to praise God with the more Warmth and Vigour. We have the Advantage of the Victory, without hearing the confused noise of the Warrior, or seeing of Garments roll'd in Blood. O what cause have we to bless God, that the War has been kept out of the Bowels of our Country? Who can relate the Miseries and Desolations that the Inhabitants of those Places are involv'd in, where great Battels are fought, by the Sallies and Excursions of different Parties, before Victory is cast on either side?

No Words can describe what Horror fills those places that are made the Seat of War, where men lose their Property, and are in continual hazard of their Lives, have their Houses plunder'd and then fir'd, their Daughters and Wives ravish'd in their view, and the dismal Groans of the Dying always in their ears. But blessed be God, we of this happy Nation are kept from such Distresses by his indulgent Providence.

6. A Victory over the Enemies of our Religion and Liberties, is greater in its Consequences than for a Nation to escape a Plague or a Famine: for neither of these Judgments affect the Religious or the Civil Liberties of a People; the Law has still its free Course, Courts of Justice are open. And 'tis remarkable, that *David* chose rather that a Famine or a Pestilence should be brought on his Kingdom, than to flee before his Enemies.<sup>60</sup>

What can a Protestant Nation expect if conquer'd by Papists, whose Resentments are deep and their Revenge high, being both excited by Superstition? What can we expect less than to be hinder'd in the Exercise of our Religion, and to be depriv'd of our Civil Rights and Properties, than which nothing can be dearer to us, both as Protestants and *Englishmen*?

'Tis remarkable, that when the *Grecians* were set free by *Flaminius* the Roman General, their Joy was too big for their Hearts, and they could scarce believe their own ears: For when the Cryer proclaim'd their Liberty, they desir'd that sweet word LIBERTY might be repeated again. O shall not we, who have our Liberties secur'd to us under a happy Constitution, be sensible of our Privileges, as likewise of the important Consequences of the late Victory? A Victory that has not only secur'd and sav'd the sinking Empire, and inspir'd with Vigour the whole Confederacy, but will be to us a Pledg of future and greater Blessings, if our Sins do not provoke God to depart from us, and give us the Reverse of our present Happiness.

But some may be ready to say, that we push this matter too far, and conclude the Goodness of our Cause from the Greatness of our Success. To such we are ready to grant, that Success will not make a Cause good, if it be not so before. But if to defend the Liberties of Mankind against a mighty Oppressor, be a good Cause, ours is so: If to maintain the Title of a Protestant Queen to the Imperial Crown of these Realms, together with the Succession as by Law establish'd in the Protestant Line, against the Design of imposing a supposititious Heir on the Nation, be a good Cause, ours is so; and

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<sup>60</sup> 2 Sam. 24. 13.



God has own'd it from Heaven, in the late memorable Victory we are assembled to praise him for this day. But in the midst of our Praises and Triumphs, let us be humble and modest, let not our Successes render us too sanguine and confident. In a word, let us be careful that no Excesses stain the Glory of this Thanksgiving-Day.

To conclude: Let us earnestly pray that as God has begun to humble a haughty Tyrant by the hand of a Woman, so her Majesty may scourge his Insolence, and lay all his Honour in the dust.

May Success attend the Counsels, and Victory the Arms of Q. ANNE; may She be the happy Instrument of restoring an honourable and lasting Peace to *Europe*, and may Her Piety transcend that of all Her Predecessors: May her Name be great on Earth, and shine in the Rolls of Fame as long as the Sun and Moon endure: May the Wisdom of God direct Her, the Angels of God encamp round about Her: May she always reign in the Hearts of her Subjects, and trample on the Necks of her Enemies; and let all the People say *Amen*.

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Note: In the original text, there were a number of marginal references (mainly Scripture references). These have been rendered as footnotes in this text. The position of these footnotes were assigned by the transcriber and any inaccuracy in their positioning is his alone.