

A Good King and his People, the special Care of Heaven.

A

SERMON

Preach'd *April 16. 1696.*

Being a Day of

Publick Thanksgiving,

For the Discovery and Defeat of the late Detestable Conspiracy against His Majesty's Person, and of
a Design'd Invasion from *France.*

To the Right Honourable
CHARLES
Earl of MONMOUTH, &c.

My Lord,

I Should not have presum'd to inscribe so Great a Name in the Front of so mean a Discourse, had not your Lordships Signal Loyalty to his present Majesty King William, your constant Zeal for the Liberties of England, and your extensive Candor to all True Protestants, conspir'd to encourage the Attempt.

For as our Late Common Deliverance, by the merciful Providence of God, was the Occasion of this Sermon; so I persuade my self your Lordship is too much affected with this great Blessing, to be displeas'd at the weakest Effort that any one can make, with a sincere and honest Design to celebrate it.

That your Lordship and your Noble Family may enjoy the Blessings both of this Life, and of that which is to come, is the earnest Prayer of,

(My Lord)

*Your Lordship's
very Humble and
Obedient Servant,*

JOHN PIGGOTT.

A
Thanksgiving Sermon
ON THE
Discovery of the Late PLOT.

PSAL. cxliv. 10.¹

It is He that giveth Salvation unto Kings: who delivereth David his Servant, from the hurtful Sword.

I Presume that upon the very reading these Words, you are convinc'd that they are not unsutable to the Work of this Day; who are here before the Almighty, to acknowledg that he hath eminently given Salvation to our *King*, and hath miraculously deliver'd him from the *hurtful Sword*; by bringing to light the hidden Works of Darkness, by baffling and defeating the late barbarous Conspiracy of wicked Men to assassinate his Royal Person, and to rob his Subjects of their establish'd Liberties, by encouraging and assisting an Invasion from *France*.

Especially considering that this Psalm, of which my Text is a part, is thought to have been compos'd after the Death of *Saul*, and in the beginning of *David's* Reign. Whenever it was, it certainly follow'd some extraordinary Deliverance, which *David* had receiv'd, and does in the Text, acknowledg to be given by a special Hand of God: and it is not improbable that it was in the beginning of his Reign; for tho *David* was at first anointed by a special Command of God² (while *Saul* sway'd the Scepter of *Israel*) to signify that God had chosen him to govern his People, and that upon *Saul's* Death he was immediately to fill up the Throne, yet after he was anointed King over the House of *Judah*,³ it was along time before he subdued the Rebellions of those that adher'd to *Ishosheth* the Son of *Saul*,⁴ who made some Pretences to the Crown, and was accordingly assisted by *Abner* the chief Captain of *Saul's* Host, and so made King over *Gilead*, and over the *Ashurites*, and over *Jezeel*, and over *Ephraim*, and over *Benjamin*, and over all *Israel*,⁵ except *Judah*, as the next Verse informs us, *ver. 10. But the House of Judah followed David.*

So that the greatest part of the first seven Years of *David's* Reign was spent in the Fatigues of a hazardous War; hazardous it must needs be, when he had rebellious and unnatural Subjects at Home, and cruel Enemies Abroad. Yet God was pleas'd by his remarkable Protection and Defence, to disappoint wicked Men in their Design against him.

Which occasions him in the beginning of the Psalm to express his grateful Resentments in such Words as these: *Blessed be the Lord my Strength, who teacheth my Hands to war, and my Fingers to fight: My Goodness and my Fortress, my high Tower and my Deliverer, my Shield and He in whom I trust; who subdueth my People under me.*

*q.d.*⁶ I disclaim all glorying in my own Prudence and Conduct, and desire to give the entire Praise of my Success and Victory to him that hath *girded me with Strength unto Battel*:⁷ who has *caused those to bow under me that rose up against me*. The Counsels of mine Enemies have been baffled by the Wisdom of God, and their Armies scatter'd by Him who is the Lord of Hosts.

1 Psalm 144:10 [*Ed.*].

2 1 Sam. 16. 12, 13.

3 2 Sam. 2.4.

4 Ver. 8. [2 Samuel 2:8, *Ed.*]

5 Ver. 9. [2 Samuel 2:9, *Ed.*]

6 Latin: quasi dicat, "as if one should say" or quasi dictum "as if said." *Oxford English Dictionary* online.

7 Psal. 18. 39.

God hath eminently been my Deliverer, for he hath saved me from those *whose Mouth speaketh Vanity, and whose right Hand is a right Hand of Falshood.*⁸ In which Description of his Enemies he plainly intimates they were such as paid no deference to Truth or Justice, to Honour or Religion: It refers to the Custom of the Jews, who when they swore lifted up their right Hand towards Heaven; and when they enter'd into a Covenant with Men, to signify their Consent, they gave one another the same Hand: *Their right Hand is a right Hand of Falshood;* they are Men that can break in upon their own Covenants, and violate their Oaths to God; Treachery and Cruelty compose their Character.

And how justly this same Description may be affixt to our Enemies, I need not say; since we all understand the Language of a Despotick and Arbitrary Power, which in the late Reign made great Advances against our Civil Rights, and against our Religion too:⁹ And as for *Lewis the 14th of France*, the Ashes of the Protestants demolished Temples, the Blood of their slaughtered Innocents, both in *France* and in the Vallies of *Piedmont*, are enough to make his Name for ever to be condemn'd in History,¹⁰ as being one of the most barbarous Sons of Violence and Blood. Now a Deliverance from such Enemies as these, did so awaken the Gratitude of *David*, that he cries out, *I will sing a new Song unto thee, O God:*¹¹ as if he had said, I will not alienate from my great Deliverer that Tribute of Praise that is his rightful Due. Then followeth the Text, *It is He that giveth Salvation unto Kings; who delivereth David his Servant from the hurtful Sword.*

Which Words will furnish us with these two general Heads of Discourse:

- I. That the Salvation and Victory that good Kings obtain, is given them of God.
- II. That it is by a special Providence of God that righteous Kings (and consequently the People under their Government) are delivered from the mischievous Designs and Plots of evil Men.

I say *righteous Kings*, because my Text saith, *David thy Servant;* and I add these words, *from the mischievous Designs and Plots of evil Men*, because my Text says, *from the hurtful Swords*, i.e. from the design'd Mischiefs of the hurtful Sword, which was to take away the Life of the Innocent.

I begin with the first of these, namely;

That the Salvation or Victory that Good Kings obtain, is given them of God.

All that I shall say to this Observation shall be only to prove it, that I may make the better way to the second, which I design (God willing) principally to speak to.

For the Proof of this first Observation, see the 9 *Eccles.* 11.¹² *I return'd and saw under the Sun, that the Race is not to the Swift, nor the Battel to the Strong, &c.* A swift Runner may tire in a Race, and come last to the Goal; and a strong Army miss of Victory, for Success in War does not always ensue upon vast Preparations, and a mighty Force.

So that sometimes the most unlikely Undertakings succeed well, when the most probable and best-laid Designs are defeated and broken. And how is this brought about, but by the Finger of God? Who as he hath *made*, so he also *governs* the World, and gives Success and Victory to whom he pleases; to whom we may say, as King *Asa* in his Prayer, 2 *Chron.* 14. 11. *Lord, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with Many, or with them that have no Power.*

God hath sometimes given a Defeat to a numerous Army by visible Miracles. Need I instance in

8 Ver. 8. [Psalm 144:8, *Ed.*].

9 Speaking of King James.

10 Louis XIV. Insert something from Encyclopedia Britannica on these incidents.

11 Ver. 9. [Psalm 144:9, *Ed.*].

12 Ecclesiastes 9:11 [*Ed.*]

that amazing Check that the proud King of *Assyria* met with in the Overthrow and Ruine of his Army by an Angel, who slew an hundred fourscore and five thousand in one Night? Or need I tell you of the Wonders God wrought in *Egypt* for his People; or what a Deliverance he gave them at the Red-Sea?

This Doctrine that I am now upon was so well understood by *David*, that he frequently renounced any Dependance upon an external Force: *There is no King (says he) saved by the Multitude of an Host: A mighty Man is not deliver'd by much Strength.*¹³ And in the 44th *Psal.* 6.¹⁴ *I will not trust to my Bow, neither shall my Sword save me.*

And this is yet further confirm'd by *Solomon*, *Prov.* 21. 31. *The Horse is prepar'd against the Day of Battel: but Victory is of the Lord.*

To whom but to God could the Victory of *Gideon* over a very numerous Army be ascribed, when the Clattering of Pitchers, the Sound of Trumpets, the Light of Lamps, and the united Cry of 300 Men,¹⁵ [*The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon*] discomfited a Mighty Host, and caused every Man's Sword to be against his Fellow? But what need I run so many Ages back, when there have been so many Instances within our Memory, to confirm my Observation?

Particularly the late Glorious Revolution by the Undertaking of the then Prince of *Orange*, the present King of these Realms. How did all things concur to bring about our Deliverance from Popery and Arbitrary Power?

When we saw no way of escaping, how did God dispirit the Army of the late King, which on a sudden was struck with such a Pannick Fear, that those that went not over to our Deliverer were scattered in the greatest Disorder, like Men under the visible Effects of the highest Consternation and Fear?

So that our Deliverance advanc'd towards us with incredible Swiftmess, and was, beyond all Expectation, obtain'd with little or no expence of Blood.

We were not exalted to our Happiness upon the Graves of our Friends, or the Ashes of our Dwellings. And are not all these the indelible Characters of the Divine Hand? To close this Head: To whom, but God, shall we attribute his Majesty's Success in the Reduction of *Ireland*; and since, in several Conquests and Victories, both by Sea and Land, and particularly the Success of the last Campaign? But I have said enough to this first Observation.

Observ. 2. That it is by a special Providence of God, that righteous Kings and their People, are deliver'd from the mischievous Designs and Plots of evil Men. In discoursing on this Argument, I shall attempt these three things.

I. To tell you when we may look upon a Deliverance, from a Plot against a good King and his People, to be by a special Providence of God.

II. Assign some Reasons, why God Almighty, by his special Providence, does at some times deliver a righteous King and his People, from the mischievous Designs and Plots of evil Men.

III. Make some Use suitable to the Solemnity of this Day, and that Deliverance for which we are

13 *Psal.* 33. 16.

14 *Psalm* 44:6 [*Ed.*]

15 *Jugd.* 7. 2 & 22.

assembled to praise God.

I. 1 am to tell you, when we may look upon a Deliverance from a Plot against a King and his People, to be a special Providence of God.

I. When Men of great Policy and Skill, that are engag'd in such Plots, are seiz'd with a Spirit of Giddiness, being inclin'd to follow that Advice that in all probability will weaken the Attempt, and lay open the whole Conspiracy.

How often hath God turn'd the Counsels of Plotters against themselves? For He, in whose hands are the Hearts of all Men, hath made some of them that were big with the Designs of his Peoples Ruin, empty themselves in their own Confusion.

Guilt has been legible in their Countenances, and thro the Infatuation of their Counsels, they have served the * Interest they design'd to overthrow. And as the Lord turn'd the Heart of the King of *Assyria* unto the *Jews*, to strengthen their Hands in the Work of the House of God, *Ezra* 6. 22. so he does frequently turn the Counsels of his Enemies to the Service of his Church; and their Policies are so baffled by the Spirit of Wisdom, that they meet with nothing but Disappointment and Shame. As in *Herod's* Plot against the Life of our Lord, who fearing that he would rival him in his Throne, forms a Design to murder him. And altho *Herod* was a Man of very great Craft and Subtilty, yet in this Conspiracy his Sagacity seems to be revers'd; (according to that of the Prophet, *Isa.* 44. 25. *He turneth Wise-men backward, and maketh their Knowledg Foolishness*) and he acts directly repugnant to all the celebrated Maxims of Policy; for altho he knew that the Wise-men had seen Christ's Star in the East, and were going to worship him, yet he never thinks of sending his Guards with them, or going himself in a Religious Disguise, which according to Human Probability might have effectually brought about the Barbarous Design. But what could he do? The Hand of God was against him, and he acts like one under the Power of Infatuation;¹⁶ for he sends these Wise-men to search diligently for the young Child, and entrusts them to bring him word where he might go and worship him.¹⁷ Surely never Prince acted more against the Rules of Policy! to depend upon the Notice of those Men, whose Persons he knew as little of, as their Studies; and of whose Kindness, Constancy and Fidelity, he had less Assurance than of either: they came from a far Country, some say from *Susa* in *Persia*, others from *Arabia Felix*; the former is about 920 Miles, the latter above 1240.

Now, I say, that he should trust such as these, to me is an incontestable Evidence that he was seized with a Spirit of Giddiness and Infatuation, and that God by a special Providence render'd his abominable Design abortive; especially when I consider that the wise Men were warn'd of God in a Dream that they should not return to *Herod*,¹⁸ and that accordingly they departed into their own Country another way;¹⁹ while *Joseph* is warned by an Angel in a Dream to take Jesus and his Mother, and flee into *Egypt*: all which contributed to give a total Defeat to *Herod's* black Design against the Life of our Lord.

Alas! Men are sometimes under such disorder within, by an Influence over-ruling all their Designs, that they cannot take the most rational Advice that is given them.

As in the Plot against *David*; *Achitophel*, like a politick Minister of State, gave very proper Advice (humanly speaking) to *Absalom* to bring about the Assassination of his Father: For *Achitophel* said

* As appears by the present National Association, which was occasioned by the late Conspiracy.

16 Quos Jupiter vult perdere hos dementat. [Those whom Jupiter wishes to destroy these, deprives of reason. Google Translate]

17 Mat. 2. 8.

18 Mat. 2.12.

19 Ver. 13. [Matthew 2:13, Ed.].

unto *Absalom*, *Let me now choose out twelve thousand Men, and I will arise and pursue after David this Night; and I will come upon him while he is weary and weak-handed, and will make him afraid, and all the People that are with him shall flee, and I will smite the King only.*²⁰

You see the Design was to come upon *David* suddenly, when his Forces were dispers'd and scatter'd abroad, and could not easily be alarm'd; which seems to be somewhat like surprizing King *William's* Guards, and attacking him in his Winter-quarters.

Whether our late baffled Conspirators took their Politicks from him, I know not; sure I am they met with no better Success.

But to proceed; Notwithstanding the seeming Rationality of *Achitophel's* Advice, *Absalom* declines the taking of it, and chooses rather to receive the Counsel of *Hushai*, which did not look half so probable, as you may see from the 7th Verse to the 14th of the same Chapter: So that *David* might well cry out in the Words of my Text, *It is God that giveth Salvation to Kings, and delivereth David his Servant from the hurtful Sword.* For by God's infatuating their Counsels, *David* and his People were deliver'd from mischievous Designs and Plots.

Now what shall we say when God maketh the Diviners mad, and disappointeth the Devices of the Crafty, so that their Hands cannot perform their Enterprize? Shall not we confess that it is by a special Providence of God that all this is done?

2. Then may the Deliverance of a King and his People be ascrib'd to a special Providence of God, when the deep-laid Design is uncover'd, and the black Project brought to light, by some unaccountable Means.

Such an Instance we have of a special Providence of God towards the *Jews*, in defeating that execrable Conspiracy that was formed against them by *Haman*, who was prime Minister of State under *Ahasuerus*; and being affronted by *Mordecai* the *Jew* in that he refused to do him Reverence,²¹ was resolv'd to revenge it not only on him, but upon the *Jews* in all the King's Provinces; and having (no doubt) very frequently insinuated, that they were a factious and disloyal People, and great Enemies to *Ahasuerus's* Government and Empire, it seems by what follows, he was not a little confident that the King would grant his Request, and that the many thousands of *Jews*, that were dispers'd through the Emperor's Dominions, should be offer'd up as an entire Victim to his Ambition and Rage: for in the 7th Verse 'tis said, *That in the first Month, (that is, the Month Nisan) in the twelfth Year of King Ahasuerus, they cast Pur, that is the Lot, before Haman from Day to Day, and from Month to Month, to the twelfth Month, that is the Month Adar.*

To understand which Words, you must consider that in those Eastern Countries the People before they undertook any considerable Enterprize, cast Lots for a lucky Day.

Thus did *Haman* in his Conspiracy against the *Jews*, cast *Pur* for a lucky Day to begin his bloody Work upon, which happened upon the 13th Day of the 12th Month, which is called *Adar*; which according to modern Computation answers to our *February*, the 15th of which was fix'd upon for the Assassination of our King: as if God Almighty would signify by his Providence, that in all the voluminous Records of Time, there was never any Instance of a Plot came so near that which we have lately escaped, as this remarkable one in sacred Story.

Now *Haman* having advanced the Matter thus far, lest the King should scruple to sign the Warrant

²⁰ 1 Sam 17. 1, 2. [The verses cited are 2 Samuel 17:1, 2; Ed.]

²¹ Esth. 3. 2.

for the Massacre, since by so doing he would lose a considerable Revenue, by taking off such a vast Body of his Subjects, he offers to return into the King's Exchequer ten thousand Talents of Silver:²² what Talents they were is somewhat uncertain, some think the Sum might be about two Millions of Mony Sterling; but be it more or less, the King is content, takes off his Ring from his Hand, and gives it to *Haman* to sign the Warrants that were to be issued out for the Execution of the *Jews*. *Haman* having received the Privy-Seal, shows his Activity; for he presently calls for the Secretaries of State, that they might write his Pleasure to the several Officers of the Militia in the Kingdom, to the King's Lieutenants, and Governours of every Province,²³ that they should destroy, kill, and cause to perish all *Jews* both young and old, little Children and Women, in one day, &c. and this Order was disperst into every Province by a swift Post.

And that those to whom this Order came, might do the work the more effectually, they are promised to have the Spoil for a * Prey, that they might be the more severe, and that their covetous Desire might prompt them on to an universal Slaughter. But as a Prelude to this Tragical Day, (which 'twas hop'd would be very lucky) *Haman* faint with the Thirst of Blood, resolves to take off *Mordecai* first, and accordingly sets up a Gallows of 50 Cubits high: probably that he might be exposed as a Spectacle of Contempt to a numerous Croud.

But the very Night before the Morning that *Mordecai* was to die, the King could not sleep, *Esth.* 6. 1. and instead of the ordinary Diversions of the Court, calls for the Records of his Empire; and the Person that was to read them, was, doubtless by the special Providence of God, guided to that place in those Chronicles, that reported an eminent Service *Mordecai* had done some time before, in discovering a Plot against *Ahasuerus's* Life.

The King immediately enquires whether *Mordecai* had ever been rewarded; and finding he had not,²⁴ instead of being hang'd the next Morning, is made to ride in Triumph through the Streets of the City, while *Haman* his potent Enemy is forc'd like a Lacquey to attend his Horse of State.

Thus God by an unaccountable Turn of Providence, dashes the Design of *Haman*, and his Plot proves abortive; and by another Turn as strange as the former, *Haman* is forc'd to leave his Court-Preferments, to be lifted up upon a Gallows of his own erecting: for in the 9th of *Esther* 1.²⁵ we read, *that in the twelfth Month, (that is, the Month Adar) on the thirteenth Day of the same, when the King's Commandment and his Decree drew near to be put in Execution, in the Day that the Enemies of the Jews hop'd to have power over them, (tho it was turned to the contrary, that the Jews had Rule over them that hated them) - no Man could withstand them, for the Fear of them fell upon all the People.*²⁶

Thus are the Wicked sometimes taken in the Devices they imagine; in the Net which they hid is their own Foot taken. Their Mischiefs return upon their own Heads, and their violent Dealing comes down upon their own Pate.

Josephus relates, that *Caligula* having a Design to vent his bloody Rage on the *Jews* for refusing him Divine Honour, was, by a dome-stick Sword, presently forc'd to resign his revengeful Breath. And 'tis the Observation of one, that the *Persian* Nobles incensing the King against *Daniel*, did occasion his growth in Favour, together with their own Destruction.

22 Ver. 9. [*Esther* 3. 9, *Ed.*]

23 Ver. 12. [*Esther* 3. 12, *Ed.*]

* *As were the Irish in the late Reign.*

24 Ver. 2. [*Esther* 6. 2, *Ed.*]

25 *Esther* 9:1 [*Ed.*]

26 Ver. 2. [*Esther* 9:2, *Ed.*]

Thus in the several Ages of the Church hath God by the most unaccountable Methods deliver'd righteous Kings, and their People, from the Plots of wicked Men; particularly the Deliverance we praise God for this Day was brought about, by Means as improbable as if a Bird of the Air should tell the Matter,²⁷ or the Stones in the Walls²⁸ of a seditious Conventicle should cry out *Treason*. How was * one of our Enemies bow'd by an invisible Hand, to make a Discovery of the wicked and black Designs of others of them! as *Balaam* bless'd *Israel* when he had more mind to curse 'em. Nay, several of our late Conspirators (it seems) were struck with some kind of terrible Apprehensions at the Thoughts of that Execrable Villany they were in a little time to commit; and have since fallen prostrate at the Feet of that Prince, whom they design'd to have laid at theirs. Does not this Deliverance then bear the Character of a *special Providence of God*?

3. We may then ascribe a Deliverance of King and People to a special Providence of God, when after the Enemy hath advanc'd his Design near to Execution, a seasonable and sudden Discovery is made.

When the Enemies of God are promising themselves undoubted Success, how opportunely are their Measures sometimes broken, and their Designs defeated?

Pharaoh resolving to pursue and overtake, and divide the Spoil, and saying his Lust should be satisfied; instead of meeting with the Sweets of Revenge, is overtaken with the Bitterness of Death, and the *Israelites* are as it were surpriz'd with Salvation.

Thus *Mystery Babylon*,²⁹ in the Revelation, is represented as being suddenly surpriz'd by the Judgments of God, while she was priding her self in the Grandeur of her State.

And the Psalmist, to show the Speciality of Divine Providence, in his Deliverance from the bloody Deigns of *Saul*, represents God riding towards him upon a Cherub, and flying upon the Wings of the Wind; to denote how swiftly and seasonably he came for his Succour and Help. And thus God hath done for our King and us; when some like Sheep were appointed to Slaughter, and others destin'd to Slavery, then suddenly he interposes by a special Providence, and prevents the design'd Mischief: he prevented us by the Blessings of his Goodness; and when he turn'd back our Captivity, we were like those that dream,³⁰ (as the Psalmist speaks:) for our Deliverance was so surprizing and sudden, that we were like Men awak'd out of Sleep, forc'd to pause a while, being instantly transported with silent Wonder! Our Enemies were like *Jehu*, driving on furiously, but suddenly their Chariot-Wheels drop off; and they are stop'd: so that we may say with the Prophet, *Isa.* 64. 3. *Thou didst terrible things which we look'd not for, thou camest down, and the Mountains flowed down at thy Presence.*

O the unlooked for, unexpected Discoveries that God hath made for our Safety, and our Enemies Confusion! How amazingly hath he laid open that which had lain concealed in the thickest Darkness! all things were prepared and ready: In what a Posture was the late King to make his Descent, seeming only to wait for the Signal, which, blessed be God, none had the Opportunity of giving! For by the seasonable Interposition of the Divine Providence, a Discovery was made; and just as the Enemy was coming in upon us like a Flood, the Lord lifted up his Standard against them.³¹ So that well may our *English Israel* say, *If God had not been on our side when Men rose up against us, they had swallowed us up quick.*³²

27 Eccl. 10. 20.

28 Hab. 2. 11.

* Pendergrass

29 Rev. 18. 7. [*Mystery Babylon* comes from Revelation 17:5, *Ed.*]

30 Psa. 126. 1.

31 Isa. 59. 19.

32 Psal. 124. 2, 3.

O how has God baffled the Confidence of Man, and let him see that no Weapon form'd against his *Zion* shall prosper!

How has he snatch'd us from the very Jaws of Death! how have our Souls escap'd as a Bird out of the Snare of the Fowler!³³ To what shall we ascribe our Deliverance, but to his special Providence who hath helped us right early?

4. That Deliverance is by a special Providence of God, that is eminently serviceable to his People.

As surely all will confess that our present Deliverance is likely to be, but the Bigots of the Roman Faction, and those who are scarce a Remove from them; I mean such as can absolve Men dying under the Guilt of the blackest Crimes, without any Tokens of Remorse.

How dreadful had been the Condition of all the Protestants in *Europe*, if He that had so successfully vindicated and secur'd their Rights, should have been barbarously Aassassinated? But how much worse had it been with us, (even such of us as might have surviv'd the Fatal Blow) who must have exchange'd our Liberties and Laws, for the Usurping Tyranny and Slavery of *France*; and instead of singing this Day, the Tears of our Widows and Fatherless Children, might have been mixed with the Ashes of our City, and our Streets floated with a Stream of Human Blood?

5. Then we ought to ascribe the Deliverance, &c. to a special Providence of God, when it is a direct Answer of our Prayers, as this Salvation and Deliverance must be acknowledged to be.

How often have we in this Place pray'd that God would defend his Majesty's Person against secret Plots and open Violence, and that the Angels of God's Presence might encamp round about him? To which we have had so visible a Return in his Majesty's Preservation, and in the Discovery of this Execrable Plot against his Life and Government, that without incurring the Suspicion of Enthusiasm, we may conclude our Prayers are answer'd, and have great Reason to cry out with *David*, *Now we know that the Lord saveth his Anointed, and will hear him from his holy Heaven, with the saving Strength of his Right hand.*³⁴

Therefore let us chearfully own that God hath answer'd our Prayers, and never cease to offer them to him for the good Conduct of his Majesty's Counsels, the farther Success of his Victorious Arms, and the Preservation and Prosperity of his Royal Person; that his Reign may be prosperous, and his Days many; and that when he has finished Time, he may leave his Government upon Earth, to reign with Christ in Heaven. *Let the King joy in thy Strength, O Lord, and in thy Salvation let him greatly rejoice: for thou hast given him his Heart's Desire, and hath not with-holden the Request of his Lips.*³⁵

I now proceed, in the second place, to offer some Reasons why God Almighty by a special Providence do's sometimes deliver a good King and his People from the Plots of evil Men.

And I. He does so, that he may the more remarkably advance his own Glory, that all the Inhabitants in the World may see what his Hand hath wrought. The Glory of God is the Supreme End of all his Dispensations, but eminently so in those signal Deliverances, which can be ascrib'd to no other Cause but a special Providence of Heaven.

33 Ver. 7. [Psalm 124:7, *Ed.*]

34 Psal. 20. 6.

35 Psal 21. 1, 2.

For if nothing else can claim a Share in our Deliverance, 'tis a horrid Alienation of the Divine Right, to with-hold any part of the Glory from God.

His Design is to appropriate the entire Glory of special Providences to himself: and one great Reason of such eminent providential Appearances, is to render his Divine Attributes the more illustrious in the World. For as one Star differs from another in Glory, so a distinguishing Salvation by a special Providence differs from a common Protection, in that the former renders the Perfections of the Deity bright and flaming, while the latter doth but obscurely discover them.

The one makes them conspicuous to every Eye, when the other seldom makes them fall under common Notice.

Now God by his special Acts of Providence designs to augment the Tribute of his Praise, and to advance his Honour so high that all may see it. *Jehovah* is jealous of his Honour, and cannot bear any Competitor; he will not give his Glory to another, nor his Praise to Graven Images.

For as his Wisdom, Goodness, Faithfulness and Power are eminently seen in National Deliverances by special Acts of Divine Providence, so in return for them he expects a large Revenue of Praise.

2. God delivers good Kings and their People by such special Acts of his Providence, that they may be the more deeply affected therewith, and the better relish the Deliverance wrought for them. What God has done in this late Deliverance, is to awaken all the Powers of the Rational part of Man, and to engage them intently in the Work of Praise.

Had God Almighty stifled this Plot at first, and prevented its being drawn out to so prodigious a Length, and so near to Execution as it was, we should not have been so affected with the Deliverance, as now when his set time to favour us was come.³⁶

For 'tis most likely, that when surpriz'd with Salvation even on the Borders of Ruin, and the Confines of Death, we should best relish so great a Mercy, and be deeply affected with so signal a Deliverance.

3. God delivers by special Acts of his Providence, that he may cure the Remainders of his People's Infidelity, and engage them to trust in him for the future.

Tho our Character as Christian signifies our *believing* in the *Father* and the *Son*,³⁷ and some of us can say, *Lord we believe*, yet we must also add, *Help thou our Unbelief*.³⁸

Who of us but finds a mixture of Infidelity within, that makes very strong Efforts against the Impressions of Faith?

Now a seeming delay in the bringing about an expected Providence, does suddenly occasion a misconstruction of the Methods of Divine Love and thereby a very steady Believer is without much difficulty weaken'd and shaken in his Confidence.

Nay, after the most signal Appearances of God, we are apt, like the *Israelites*, to call in question the Divine Goodness and Power, as the Psalmist remarks; *They said, Can God furnish a Table in the*

36 Psal. 102. 13, 14.

37 John 14. 1.

38 Mark 9. 24.

Wilderness?³⁹ A very unreasonable Question, when God had done so many *marvelous things* for them *in their Sight, in the Land of Egypt, in the Field of Zoan:*⁴⁰ *Dividing the Sea, that the Waters stood as an Heap;*⁴¹ *leading them by a Cloud in the Day, and conducting them by a Fiery Pillar in the Night.*⁴² Yet notwithstanding all these astonishing Instances of Omnipotence and Love, they *believ'd not in God, neither trusted in his Salvation.*⁴³ They had considerable remains of Unbelief; though they liv'd in an Age of Miracles. And how apt the People of God have been in every Age to relapse into Infidelity after his most marvellous Appearances, has been too notorious and visible either to be cover'd or excused.

Therefore one great End of God's condescending to appear for our common Safety, is to cure this Distemper of our Minds, and to engage us steddily to trust in him for the future; that we may *trust in the Lord*, after having found that *in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting Strength: A Strength that can never be wasted by Age, nor enfeebled by the Gates of Hell. For the Name of the Lord is a strong Tower, the Righteous runneth into it and is safe.*⁴⁴ By the Name of God we must understand either God himself, or those Perfections of the Deity that are eminently display'd in the Government of the World, upon which we are entirely to lean, in expectation of Safety and Conduct, present and future; which we have good ground to hope for, if we make him the *Object* of our Trust, who has been the *Cause* of our Salvation. *For they that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth forever.*⁴⁵

But before I pass this Head, I would insinuate that we are not to trust in God, so as to exclude the Use of Means. I would not have you imagine, that by trusting in God, I mean we are to sit still and do nothing; for tho we are not to trust in Chariots and in Horses, and in a numerous Host, yet we have no reason to expect our Enemies Defeat without them, unless we were assured of it by some extraordinary Revelation from God: for our Swords are not yet beat into Plow-shears, nor our Spears into Pruning-hooks; we are still to make use of Instruments of War, and to use the best Conduct that we can; yet after all, entirely to trust in our God, and to believe that he that has deliver'd, will still deliver and save his People.

4. God is pleas'd thus to act, to convince his Enemies that he is not only Rector⁴⁶ and Governour of the World in general, but that he do's by special Acts of Providence guard and defend his Church.

The successive Events of Time are disposed of by the Divine Order and Permission; and *the most High ruleth in the Kingdoms of Men*, Dan. 4. 17.

There is not any thing in this lower World that is brought about by a blind inflexible Destiny, (as some Heathens fancied;) or depends upon the Uncertainties of Chance, as others of 'em dream'd: for, says the Psalmist, *The Lord hath prepared his Throne in the Heavens, and his Kingdom ruleth over all.*⁴⁷ He is in the actual Exercise of an universal Dominion and Empire over Angels and Men. 'Tis not only the exalted Order of Seraphs, and those other bright Spirits above, that were never sullied by Sin, who are under the Conduct of God, but every Creature under Heaven is govern'd by the same Lord. Indeed some of the Heathens denied God's governing Providence in general, whilst others of 'em acknowledg'd it but in part;⁴⁸ for tho they would own that he took care of the great Affairs of Kingdoms and Nations, yet they thought it unbecoming the infinite Perfections of a God,

39 Psal. 78.9. [Psalms 78:19, Ed.]

40 Ver. 12. [Psalms 78:12, Ed.]

41 Ver. 15. [The verse cited is Psalms 78:13, Ed.]

42 Ver. 16. [The verse cited is Psalms 78:14, Ed.]

43 Ver. 22. [Psalms 78:22, Ed.]

44 Prov. 19. 10. [The verse cited is Proverbs 18:10, Ed.]

45 Psal. 125. 1.

46 God, as the ruler of the world. rare after 17th cent. *Oxford English Dictionary* online.

47 Psal. 103. 19.

48 *Magna Dii currant, parva negligunt. Cic. De Nat. Deor.*

to give so remarkable Stoop, as to take notice of particular Persons and Things. But we Christians, who are guided by a more certain Light, are well assur'd that *the Ways of Man are before the Eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his Goings*:⁴⁹ And as *Solomon* says in another place, *The Eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the Evil and the Good*.⁵⁰ He do's not fit in the Heavens, viewing what is done upon Earth as an idle Spectator, but governs by his infinite Wisdom what he has raised from nothing by his unlimited Power; and that he does so, is notoriously visible in those Deliverances that can be ascribed to no other Causes than what is Divine.

For who, taking notice how all things concurred to prevent the Murder of our King, and an Invasion from *France*, but must be forced to cry out, Surely there is a God that judgeth in the Earth, who is very much concern'd for the Happiness of those whom he owns for his People? Particularly how did the obsequious Winds, by the Direction of the Lord of the Universe, subserve to our Protecton, and to the Disappointment of our Enemies? The Divine Providence having thereby kindly laid an Embargo on our Fleet, contrary to the ignorant Wishes of our Merchants, that we might be ready to defend our selves, and prevent the intended Descent of our Enemies.

God expects when he appears so visibly, that all should *regard his Work, and consider the Operation of his Hands*; who says concerning his Church, *Isa. 27. 3. I the Lord do keep it, I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it Night and Day*. Which Promise has been eminently made good in the Discovery of the late Plot. And one great End of God's defeating the Machinations of evil Men, is to let all see the special Regard he has for his Church: *For the Eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole Earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose Heart is perfect towards him*.⁵¹

5. He delivers by such special Acts of Providence, that they may remain a lasting Terror to the Wicked in all after-Ages. As special Acts of Providence carry in them visible Tokens for Good to the People of God, so they bear amazing Characters of Terror to the Enemies of his Church. 'Tis to be hop'd, it will not a little weaken the Power of our Adversaries, to look back upon their baffled Policies; that which was formerly an Occasion of their Glorifying, will probably hereafter administer to their Confusion and Terror. *He that sitteth in the Heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in Derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his Wrath, and vex them in his sore Displeasure*.⁵² It will be a distracting Perplexity to the Wicked, and a great enfeebling of their Strength, to be forc'd to remember how God hath appear'd against them, and blasted their black Conspiracies against his Church. How will the Revolution of —88,⁵³ and the Discovery of this Plot in —96,⁵⁴ remain to Posterity a Subject of Shame and Trouble to the whole Romish Party? and one would think (if they have any grains of Modesty left, or are at all capable of reflecting on the Hand of God, which has so eminently appear'd against them) they should scarce ever dare to touch God's Anointed more,⁵⁵ or attempt the Ruin of his Church. However, he can make the Wrath of Man to praise him, and restrain the Remainder thereof if he pleases.⁵⁶

III. I shall close all with some Use sutable to the Solemnity of this Day, and that Deliverance for which we are come together to praise God.

I. If our King and we have been deliver'd by a special Providence of God, (as 'tis evident we have) what reason have we to be abased and humbled, that we are no more affected with so great a

49 Prov. 5. 21.

50 Prov. 15. 3.

51 2 Chron. 16. 9.

52 Psal. 2. 4, 5.

53 1688 [Ed.]

54 1696 [Ed.]

55 1 Chron. 16. 22.

56 Psal. 76. 10.

Deliverance, and that our Return bears no better a proportion to the merciful Providence we are under? Surely we have abundant Cause to mingle our Tears with our Songs, that the great Deliverance we enjoy has had so little Influence upon us! Is there not as much Profaneness in our Streets, as much Carnality and Lukewarmness in our Churches as ever? Do we not still continue in our old Sins, after such a new and astonishing Deliverance? What can we expect should follow on such Stupidity and Ingratitude, but that that God who has broken the Snare for our Deliverance, and set our Feet in a large Place, should give us the Reverse of our Happiness, and deliver us into the hands of our Enemies, unless we repent? We read in 1 Kings 11. 9. that *the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his Heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice.* The double Appearance of God in an extraordinary way, did highly aggravate his Apostacy and Revolt from him: And what Shame and Confusion of Face belongs to us, whom God has loaded with his repeated Benefits, since we have made no Returns suitable to them? And except we thoroughly humble our selves, what can we expect, but that God will be angry with us till he hath consum'd us, so that there shall be no remnant nor escaping? Pray observe what follow'd upon the Ingratitude of *Hezekiah*, 2 Chron. 22. 25. *But Hezekiah render'd not again, according to the Benefit done unto him for his Heart was lifted up; therefore there was Wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem.*

2. Hath God Almighty by a special Act of Providence deliver'd our King and us his People from the hurtful Sword? Let such a Mercy never be forgot, but transmitted to Posterity. May the Characters of this Deliverance never be defac'd by Time, but its Memory be kept alive and fresh in Generations to come; that the Children that are yet unborn, who probably will enjoy the Advantages of it, may hereafter praise God for it, and declare it to their Children.⁵⁷ Let us not be like the *Israelites* of old, who sang God's Praise, but soon forgot his Works.⁵⁸ May the Circumstances of this wonderful Salvation add a sprightly Accent to the Hallelujahs that shall be sung for it, to the utmost Limits of Time; that the Memory of this Mercy may live as long as the Sun and Moon endure. 'Tis remark'd by a learned Man,⁵⁹ that the City *Shushan*, the Royal Seat of the *Persian* Monarchy, was pourtrayed on the East Gate of the Temple, that the *Jews* might readily recognize and call to remembrance the wonderful Deliverance of *Purim*, which was wrought in *Shushan*, Esth. 9. 26. Has God Almighty delivered our King and us? let us hope in him, and never forget his Benefits.

3. As Heaven hath signalized WILLIAM, our LAWFUL and RIGHTFUL Sovereign, by repeated Acts of special Protection; let us, who profess to be his obedient Subjects at all times, afford him the most visible Tokens of a sincere and signal Loyalty. 'Tis true, he has been engaged for some time in a War very expensive, but it has been for our Safety, and in the hazard of his own Life: and shall we regret the parting with a little of our Estates, to keep out a dreadful War from the Bowels of our Country, and for the Defence of our Lives and Liberties? 'Tis not many Years since, that we would have given the two Thirds of what we had, that the other Part might have been secur'd to us. Therefore let us not murmur at our present Expence, because it is to support the Interest of a Protestant King, whom a continued Deliverance from successive Dangers has mark'd out for the Darling of Providence; a Prince in whom meets the Prudence and Courage of all his renown'd Ancestors; and whom not to value and esteem, would be to slight the God that hath girded him for Battel.⁶⁰

4. Let us chearfully and cordially praise God for our common Deliverance, a Deliverance so great, that we lack Words to set it out to the full; for it is big with Mercy, I had almost said, with Miracle!

57 Psal. 78. 6.

58 Ps. 106. 12, 13.

59 *Dr. Lightfoot's Temple*, ch. 3.

60 *Judg.* 8. 34, 35.

Who but must confess, that the Finger of God was in it, and that the Signatures of a special Providence are deeply impress'd upon it! And shall not we with the most exalted Vigour of Mind praise God for such a Deliverance as this, that has in some respects hardly any Precedent or Parallel? Let us all beware that we never provoke him by fresh Provocations to throw off his Care, to remove the Candlestick of his Gospel, and give us up as a Prey into their Teeth, whose tender Mercies are Cruelties. For know, that our God will not always be at the Charge of Miracles for our Preservation, if we remain in the Practice, and under the Power of our Sins: for if instead of Repentance and Reformation, we are multiplying our Transgressions against Heaven, they may in a sort contribute towards another Plot. In a word, let no unseemly Folly or Excess cast a Blemish on our Thanksgiving-Day: Nay, let our whole Lives, as well as our Lips, praise our great Deliverer; and let us not cease to speak of the Glory and Honour of his Majesty, and of his wondrous Works, and to declare his Glory among the Heathen, his Wonders among all People. Let us sing forth the Honour of his Name, and make his Praise glorious; for surely what we rejoice in, *is the Lord's Doing*, and ought to be *marvellous in our Eyes*.

To close all; Let our Assemblies ring with singing of God's Greatness, and praising his Power, that the Heavens may eccho back again, *It is God that giveth Salvation to Kings*, and hath saved *WILLIAM his Servant from the hurtful Sword*.

This text was transcribed from image files generated from the Google Books version of John Piggott's book, *Eleven Sermons Preach'd Upon Special Occasions* (London: John Darby, 1714), 1-32 (<https://books.google.com.au/books?id=ARkHAAAAQAAJ>). The original is in the Bodleian Library, Oxford University.

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.

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