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A
SERMON

Preached on the
Publick Thanksgiving,
JUNE 7, 1716.

Appointed by Authority for Sup-
pressing the *Unnatural Rebellion.*

By *W. HARRIS.*

Published at the Request of the Hearers.



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PSAL. LXVIII. 20.

*He who is our God is the God of
Salvation, and unto God the Lord
belong the Issues from Death.*



THE Words are a Description of the blessed God; of his Relation to his People, and Concern for their Good. He is *their* God in a special Manner, and so, as he is not the God of any other. And He is the *God of Salvation* to them, who works Deliverance from the Power of the greatest Enemies, and surrounding Dangers. And to *God the Lord belong the Issues of Death*, i. e. the Death and Destruction of their Enemies is from his Hand, and by his Direction and Appointment: Or rather, *their* Escape and Release from the greatest Extremities is proper to God, and He *delivers* them from *so great a Death*.

What is chiefly observable is, the *Form* of Expression, or the Manner in which 'tis delivered. *He who is our God is the God of Salvation, &c.* 'Tis more than a meer *Affertion*, or direct affirming the thing; that God saves his People. It implies something *peculiar* to God, and highly Honourable to him: 'Tis that

which belongs to Him, as *our* God, and which can agree to no other.

The Words may be resolved into two Propositions, the one from the plain and direct Sense of them, the other from the Form, or Manner of Expression: Namely, *First*, That God is the God of Salvation to his People; *Secondly*, That 'tis the peculiar Glory of the Great God to be so. I shall briefly open them both, and apply them together.

I. *That God is the God of Salvation to his People.* The Psalmist is speaking here of Deliverances and Victory over their Enemies; of the Temporal and outward Salvation he wrought for them: *Kings of Armies did flee apace*; and the *Almighty scatter'd Kings, &c.* And this Consideration of them is most suitable to the present Occasion, as it seems especially intended. Now this may be conceived in the General, in two Instances.

§ 1. Sometimes He *prevents* the Ruin designed. The crafty Enemies of the Church form deep Designs of Mischief, and aim at nothing less than utter Destruction. Their Counsels ripen and mature by long Consideration, and gather Strength, and grow to Perfection by mutual Consultation and Confederacy. *The Kings of the Earth set themselves, and the Rulers take Counsel together.* They sometimes seem to have adjusted the whole Affair, to obviate every Difficulty in the Way, and guard against Surprise and Miscarriage. It is fit for speedy Execution, and just ready to take effect, before they have any Notice of their Danger, or Way of Escape, and without any visible Means of Relief and Help. *The Enemy triumphs*

umphs in the Prospect of Ruin, and glories in the Confidence of Success ; and has no Doubt or Fear of accomplishing his Design. *Moses* records the Insults of the *Egyptians* ; The *Enemy* said, *I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the Spoil ; my Lust shall be satisfied upon them* : They had already conquered, and taken Possession in their ambitious Thoughts and greedy Rage. Ex. xv. 9.

But now the God of Salvation frustrates the Tokens of the Liars, and makes the Diviners mad ; breaks in Pieces their well concerted Measures, and dashes all their Confidence at once. His tender Mercies speedily prevents, when we are brought very low ; and He breaks the snare which was laid, and they escape as a Bird from the snare of the Fowler, before they are taken in it. Isa. xlv. 25. Pl. lxxix. 8. — cxxiv. 7.

The most remarkable Instance of this kind is that of the *Jews*, in the Time of *Mordecai*. *Haman*, the Favourite of King *Ahasuerus*, thought himself affronted by *Mordecai's* Neglect, who bowed not, nor did him Reverence. He vows a bloody Revenge, the Extirpation and Ruin of the People of the *Jews*. He sought scorn to lay Hands on *Mordecai* alone, but thought to destroy all the *Jews* who were throughout the whole Kingdom. By subtil Insinuations he easily gains upon a credulous Prince, and obtains a Writing that they might be destroyed. And Letters were immediately sent by the Post into all the King's Provinces, to destroy, to kill, and cause to perish, all the *Jews*, both young and old, little Children and Women, in one Day. And in another Place, they were sold to be destroyed, and to be slain, and to perish. There was to be a general Massacre of the whole Race of the *Jews*. Esth. iii. 2. — 6. — 9. — 13:

Jews at once. They were to be cut off Root and Branch. Every thing was appointed and prepared, and ripe for Execution, before they could be apprized of the desperate Design, or capable of securing themselves against it.

Queen *Esther* by *Mordecai's* Direction, ventures into the King's Presence, and finds Favour in his Sight ; discovers the whole Design ; raises a generous Indignation in his Royal Breast ; procures the Letters devised by *Haman* to be reversed. *Haman* himself, the Principal Agent, was hung upon a Gallows ; *Mordecai*, who had formerly detected a Conspiracy against the King's Life, had his old Services upon this Occasion remembred, and was highly honour'd and advanced. And in every

Ch. viii.
17.

Province where-ever the Decree came, the Jews had Joy and Gladness, and Feasting and a good Day, and many of the People of the Land became Jews, for the Fear of the Jews fell upon them.

Thus God prevented by a wonderful Appearance the Destruction of the whole Body of the Jews, and delivered those *who were appointed to dye.*

§ 2. Sometimes he *rescues* them out of the Hands of their Enemies, when they actually attempt Mischief against them, and are suffered to prosper and prevail. He does not leave them in their Distress, or suffer them to *perish in their Affliction.* He works Salvation for them out of the Danger into which they are brought : This is the more ordinary Case, and I shall represent it distinctly in all the remarkable Instances throughout the Scriptures.

1. Sometimes he blasts the *Counsels* of their Enemies ;

Enemies. He smites them with judicial Blindness, and suffers them to run into fatal Errors. The whole Design miscarries by over-sight; and his People are delivered and saved not for want of Will or of Power to destroy them, but by meer Inadvertence and Mistake; by following false Measures and wrong Advice. He *hides* Counsel from them.

In *Absolom's* Rebellion against *David*, *Ahitophel's* Advice, whose Counsel in those Days was as if ^{1 Sam. xvi} a Man had enquired of the Oracle of God; was to a ^{23.} speedy Pursuit of *David*, while he and his Men ^{—xvii. 2.} were weary and weak-handed; which was certainly reasonable, and had the fairest Prospect of Success; a masterly Stroke of experienced Policy. But *Hushai* said, The Counsel which *Ahitophel* has given, is not good at this Time. He advises to delay, for a more pompous and regular Pursuit, till he could gather all the Tribes of *Israel* together, and go to War in his own Person; which seemed only fit to flatter the Ambition of vain and easy Minds. This Infatuation proved the Ruin of *Absolom*, and Deliverance of *David* from this unnatural Attempt. For *Absolom* and all the Men of *Israel* said, the Counsel of *Hushai* the Archite, is better than the Counsel of *Ahitophel*; for the Lord had appointed to defeat the good Counsel of *Ahitophel*, to the Intent the Lord might bring evil upon *Absolom*. In the Reign of *Jehoram*, the *Moabites* mistaking the Water for the Blood of the Kings, which looked red with the Morning Sun shining upon it, came to spoil *Israel*; but the *Israelites* rose up and smote the *Moabites*, so that they fled before 'em; and they went ^{2 Kings} forward and smote the *Moabites* in their own ^{iii. 22.} Country. 2.

2. Sometimes he *dispirits* and strikes them with Amazement. He gives a secret Terrour to the Minds of their Enemies, and strikes them with a *panick* Fear. A sudden Surprise and unaccountable Dread has terrified and dispersed a numerous Host, prevented impending Ruin, and opened a way of Deliverance and Escape. Among the Blessings of Obedience, we find it promised; The Lord shall

Deuter. xxviii. 7. *cause thy Enemies who rise up against thee to be smitten before thy Face; they shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways.*

And we find Joshua puts them in mind of it;

Josh. xxiii 10. *One of you shall chase a thousand; for the Lord your God he it is who fighteth for you, as he hath promised: Yea the Wicked are sometimes made to flee when none pursue them, upon the slightest Accidents and meer Imagination.*

Proverbs xxviii. 1.

Thus when *Midian* prevailed against *Israel*, and because of the *Midianites*, the Children of *Israel* made themselves *Dens in the Mountains, and Caves, and strong Holds*; and when *Israel* had sown, the *Midianites* came and encamped against 'em, and destroyed the *Increase of the Earth*. For they came up with their *Cattle and Tents*, and they came as *Grasshoppers for Multitude*, and they and their *Camels* were without Number; and *Israel* was impoverished because of the *Midianites*. At this time *Gideon* with three hundred Men discomfited the whole Host of *Midia*, not by a superiour Number, or equal Strength; but by Surprise and Fear. So *Gideon* and the Men which were with him, came to the Outside of the Camp in the Beginning of the middle Watch, and blew the Trumpets, and brake the Pitchers in their Hands; and

and the three Companies blew the Trumpets and brake the Pitchers ; and held their Lamps in their left Hand, and their Trumpets in the right ; and cried, the Sword of the Lord, and of Gideon. This gave the Terrour and Fright, and they had nothing left to do but to stand still and see the Salvation of the Lord. And they stood every Man in his Place round about the Camp, and all the Host ran and cried and fled, and three hundred blew the Trumpet, and the Lord set every Man's Sword against his Fellow, even throughout all the Host. In the Hurry and Confusion they were in, they fell foul of one another, and destroyed themselves.

When Jonathan and his Armour-Bearer smote the Philistines ; There was Trembling in the Host, in the Field, and among all the People : ^{1 Sam. xiv. 15.} The Garrison and Spoilers they also trembled ; and the Earth quaked, so that there was a very great Trembling. And the Watchmen of Saul in Gilboa of the Benjamites, looked and beheld the Multitude melt away, and they went on beating down one another.

So when Benhadad the King of Syria gathered all his Host, and went and besieged Samaria, it was reduced to the greatest Extremity. The Famine was so great, that an Ass's Head was sold for fourscore Pieces of Silver, and the 2 Kings fourth part of a Cab of Dove's Dung for five ^{vi. 24.} Pieces of Silver ; and Women boiled their Sons ^{— 27.} to eat. In this great Distress God wrought a Salvation this way : The Lord made the Host of Syria to hear a Noise of Chariots, and a Noise of Horses, even a Noise of a great Host ; and they said one to another, Lo, the King of Israel hath hired against us the Kings of the Hittites, ^{Ch. vii. 6}

— 16. *and the Kings of Egypt to come upon us. Ter-
rified with this Creature of their own Imagi-
nation, like Men frightened with their own
Shadow; They arose and fled in the Twilight, and
left their Tent, and Horses and Asses, even the
Camp as it was, and fled for their Lives. And
so the People went and spoiled the Tents of the
Syrians, and found a rich Supply of all Provisi-
on without their own Care.*

3. *He destroys their Power and Force. When
their Enemies are in full Capacity of Power,
and easily able to crush them; when they on-
ly wait a proper Leisure, and meditate the
most convenient way, how they may strike
the furer Stroke, and most effectually cut
them off: God sometimes in such a Case saves
his People by a mighty Hand and out-stretched
Arm.*

*So when Pharaoh pursued the flying Israe-
lites with a numerous Host, sufficient to de-
vour and eat them up; he destroyed the
whole Army in the Red Sea, drowned and
deluged them in the mighty Waters: And*
Exod. xiv. *Moses stretched forth his Hand over the Sea,*
27, 28. *and the Sea returned to his Strength when the
Morning appeared, and the Egyptians fled a-
gainst it; and the Lord overthrew the Egyptians
in the midst of the Sea. And the Waters return-
ed and covered the Chariots and Horsemen, and
all the Host of Pharaoh which came into the
Sea after them; there remained not so much as
one of them. Thus the Lord saved Israel that
Day out of the Hand of the Egyptians; and
Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the Shoar, and
Israel saw the great Work which the Lord did up-
on the Egyptians.*

When

When *Sennacherib* the King of *Affyria*, came with a mighty Force and laid Siege to *Jerusalem* in the Days of *Hezekiah*, what Confidence does he express of Victory; and what Triumphs does he raise over the God of *Israel*, as well as the People of *Israel*? *Have 2 Kings any of the Gods of the Nations delivered at all his xviii. 33: Land out of the Hands of the King of Affyria? Where are the Gods of Hamath and Arphad, of Shepharvaim, Hena, and Jvah? Who among all the Gods of the Countries have delivered their Country, that the Lord should deliver Jerusalem out of my Hand?* Thus he reproached the living God: And they were reduced to the utmost Danger and Distress: *It was a Day of Trouble, and Rebuke, and Blasphemy.* Now God destroyed in one Night the insulting Host by the Hands of a mighty Angel. He set them free from the threatening Ruin, and roled away the Reproach from *Israel*. *And it came to pass, that Night the Angel of the Lord went out, and Ch. xix. smote in the Camp of the Assyrians an hundred 30. and fourscore and five thousand, and when they arose early in the Morning, behold they were all dead Corps.* So *Sennacherib* the King of *Affyria*, departed, and went, and returned, and dwelt at *Nineveh*.

4. He over-rules them against their own Design, and makes them *Instruments* of Deliverance. 'Tis an admirable Art of divine Providence to over-rule the Designs of wicked Men, and serve its own Purposes by their Opposition to it, making the Wickedness and Wrath of Man to glorify him. This is like turning the Stream from its natural Course, or sailing with a cross Wind. The Mysteries of

Providence often unfold *Sampson's* Riddle, and we find *Meat out of the Eater, and Honey out of the Strong*. What was designed for their Ruin and Extirpation, is made use of for their Safety and Establishment.

Joseph's Brethren by unkind Usage, and Selling him into *Egypt*, were the undesigning Instruments of his publick Usefulness, and high Advancement and Glory. *But as for you, ye Gen. l. 20, thought evil against me, but God meant it for Good, to bring to pass as it is this Day, to save much People alive.* *Haman's* Contrivance to root out the Jews from all Parts of the Kingdom, was the Means of their greater Liberty and higher Favour. His Envy at *Mordecai's* Neglect, occasioned that singular Honour to be paid him, as well as his own Ruin. The Malice of *Daniel's* Enemies, and of the three Children, who first procured the *impious Decree*, and after informed against them for the Breach of it; tho' they brought them to the fiery Furnace and Lion's Den, gave the happy
 Dan. Ch. iii. —vi. Occasion of their higher Promotion and Esteem; and of the greater Regard to the God of *Israel*, which it was directly levelled against.

5. Sometimes he *changes* their Enemies Heart, and inclines them to favour them. After a long Course of Suffering and Affliction, he changes the Hearts of their Enemies towards them, and disposes them to show them Kindness; which is the peculiar Agency of the *Father of Spirits*.

A harden'd *Pharaoh* was brought by repeated Plagues, and the Power of present Conviction, to consent to let *Israel* go. *He called for Ex. xii. 31. Moses and Aaron by Night, and said, rise up and*

and get ye forth from among my People, both you and the Children of Israel, and go serve the Lord, as he said; and also take your Flocks and Herds, as you said; and be gone, and bless me also. The People were more disposed, and in earnest: The Egyptians were urgent upon the People, that they might send them away, for they said, we are dead Men. And the Lord gave the People Favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent to them such things as they required. He can easily make them a Weight to their Oppressors too heavy to be born, and able to sink them like a Mill-stone about their Necks. *Who-soever shall fall on this Stone, shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to Powder.* The Ark, which was the great Token of the divine Presence, and the Glory of God to Israel, became a Plague to the Philistines, and they consult to send it away with Honour. —33. —36. Matt. xxi. 44. 1 Sam. v.

But the most remarkable Instance of this kind, was that of Cyrus: When the People transgressed very much after all the Abominations of the Heathens, God suffered them to be taken Captive by the Chaldeans, and carried away to Babylon in the times of Nebuchadnezzar. They slew Multitudes of them; burnt the House of God; and break down the Wall of Jerusalem, and burnt the Palaces with Fire. Them who escaped the Sword, carried he away to Babylon, where they were Servants to him and to the King's Sons, till the Reign of the Kingdom of Persia; till the Persian Empire conquered the Chaldean; which was threescore and ten Years. —19. —20. —21. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 14.

Now after this long Captivity, God stirred up the Spirit of Cyrus, according to a Prophecy of

of him two hundred Years before he was born, to
 Isai. xlv. make Proclamation thro' all his Kingdom, and
 xlv. put it into Writing: *Thus saith Cyrus King of Persia, All the Kingdoms of the Earth hath the Lord God of Heaven given unto me; and he hath charged me to build a House in Jerusalem, which is in Judea: Who is there among you of all his People, so his God be with him, let him go up.*
 2 Chron. xxxvi. 22. So we read in the Book of Ezra: *In the first Year of Cyrus King of Babylon, the same King Cyrus made a Decree, to build the House of God, and the Vessels of Gold and Silver which Nebuchadnezzar took out of the Temple which was in Jerusalem, and brought into the Temple of Babylon; those did Cyrus the King take out of the Temple of Babylon, and delivered them to the Governour.* And we find after, that Darius ordered by a Decree, Expences and Materials for the Building of the Temple, with this solemn Imprecation in the Close; *The God who hath caused his Name to dwell there, destroy all Kings and People who shall put to their Hand to alter and destroy this House of God which is at*
 Ch. v. 13.
 Ch. vi.
 — 12. Jerusalem.

The whole Nation returned to the quiet Possession of their Land and Temple, after so long an Oppression, not only with the Leave of the Prince, but with many Marks of Favour and Honour.

6. He raises up extraordinary *Instruments*, and fits and spirits them for it: Persons particularly fram'd for Great Designs, and fitted for special Purposes by extraordinary Wisdom and Courage, &c.

Moses led the Israelites through all the Straits of the Wilderness; and Joshua to the quiet

et Possession of *Canaan*, with a constant Exercise of the noblest Vertues, and greatest Conduct.

We have several Instances of this Kind among the Judges. Thus *Ehud* deliver'd *Israel* from *Eglon* by a wonderful Conduct, and Presence of Mind. He came to him in his Retirement with a Message from God, and those who were with him went out: And *Ehud* put forth his left Hand, and took a Dagger from his right Thigh, and thrust it into his Belly; the Haft also went in after the Blade, so that he could not draw the Dagger out of his Belly. And *Ehud* went forth thro' the Parlour, and shut the Doors of the Parlour upon him, and locked them; and *Ehud* escaped while the Servants tarried; and blew the Trumpet in the Mount of Ephraim, and the Children of *Israel* went down with him from the Mount; and he said, Follow me, for the Lord hath deliver'd your Enemies the *Moabites* into your Hand; and they slew of the *Moabites* at that Time about 10000 Men, all lusty, and Men of Valour, there escaped not a Man. So the *Moabites* were subdued that Day under the Hands of *Israel*, and the Land had Rest fourscore Years. Thus he deliver'd them from an unrighteous Servitude, in an extraordinary Way, by a special Warrant from God; for the Lord raised them up a Deliverer, ver. 15. and he brought a Message from God, ver. 20. And the Lord delivered the *Moabites* into their Hands, v. 28.

And while *Deborah* judged *Israel*, *Baruch* her Captain General obtained a signal Victory over *Sisera*, the Captain of *Jabin's* Army. And the Lord discomfited *Sisera*, and all his Chariots, and all his Host, with the Edge of the Sword before *Barak*, so that *Sisera* lighted down from his Chariot,

— *iv. 14.*

— *15.*

Judg. iv. 21. riot, and fled away on his Feet. And after Jael, as he lay asleep, with a Nail of the Tent, and a Hammer in her Hand, smote the Nail into his Temples, and fastned it to the Ground, so he died. And this was the Subject of that noble Song recorded in the fifth Chapter of that Book.

Judg. xv. 14. The Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon Sampson, i. e. endowed him with extraordinary Strength; so that the Cords with which the Men of Judah had bound him, to deliver him to the Philistines, became as Flax burnt with Fire, and his Bands loosed from his Hands. And with a

— 16. new Jaw-bone of an Ass he slew a 1000 Men. And when he was shut up in Gaza he took the Doors of the Gates of the City, and the two Posts, and went away with them Bars and all, and put them

— xvi. 3. upon his Shoulders, and carried them up to the top of an Hill which is beyond Hebron. And when the Lords of the Philistines, and a great Multitude were met together, and he was sent for to make them Sport, after his Eyes were pulled out: He took hold of the two Pillars of the House of Dagon their God, and bowed himself with all his Might; and the House fell upon the Lords, and all the People therein; so the dead which he slew — xxix. 30. at his Death were more than they which he slew in his Life.

When Goliath defied the Armies of the living God, and they were dismayed, and greatly afraid; God spirited David, tho' young, and disdained by Goliath, to give a signal Defeat in the most unequal Combat: And David put his
1 Sam. xvii. 49. Hand into his Bag, and took thence a Stone, and slung it, and smote the Philistine in his Forehead, and the Stone sunk into his Forehead, and he fell upon his Face to the Earth. So David prevailed
over

over the Philistine with a Sling and a Stone: And he ran and stood upon the Philistine, and took his Sword, and drew it out of his Sheath, and slew him, and cut off his Head therewith. And when the Philistines saw their Champion was dead they fled. 1 Sam. xvii. 50, 51.

I could give many Instances of later Times; as the Duke of Saxony, the great Patron of the Reformation in its Infancy. *Gustavus Adolphus* Vid. Sleid. Comm. passim. in *Sweeden*, who defended the Protestant Interest with so great a Glory, against the Popish Powers round about him. The first Princes of *Orange*, who shook off the Spanish Yoke. The late Glorious King *William*, who delivered the frightened Nation at the Revolution, gave a Check to the swelling Pride of *France*, and laid the Foundation of our present happy Settlement. Some other *Generals* have been raised up, of many personal Virtues, and great Capacity, of deep Penetration, and cool Courage, and prospered and honour'd with a long Series of Glorious Victories, and uninterrupted Successes.

7. He sometimes saves by *miraculous Appearances*, and altering the stated Course of Nature. The miraculous Plagues of *Egypt* prepared the Way for the Deliverance of *Israel*. And they after walked upon dry Land in the midst of the Sea, and the Waters were a Wall to them on the right Hand and left. And the Sea returned to its Strength, and cover'd the Egyptians. And in the Time of *Joshua*, when they fought against the *Amorites*, 'tis said; the Lord cast down great Stones from Heaven upon them, that they died. And they were more who died with Hail-stones, than they which the Children of *Israel* slew with the Sword. And *Joshua* said upon that

- 12, 13. that occasion in the Sight of *Israel*; *Sun*, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou *Moon* upon the Valley of *Ajalon*; and the *Sun* stood still, and the *Moon* stayed, until the People had avenged themselves on their Enemies. And we find at another Time, when the People shouted, and the Priests blew the Trumpet, that the *Walls of Jericho* fell down flat, so that the Men went up to the City, and took it, and utterly destroyed all that was in it. There's a memorable Instance in the Time of *Deborah*; They fought from Heaven, the Stars in their Courses fought against *Sisera*, i. e. the heavenly Bodies by unkind Influences, perhaps raising Storms, and Thunder in the Air, or shooting down piercing and pestilential Rays. While *Samuel* was offering the Sacrifice of *Burnt Offering*, the Lord thunder'd with a great Thunder on that Day, upon the *Philistines*, and discomfited them, and they were smote before *Israel*.
- Chap. vi. 20. the City, and took it, and utterly destroyed all that was in it. There's a memorable Instance in the Time of *Deborah*; They fought from Heaven, the Stars in their Courses fought against *Sisera*, i. e. the heavenly Bodies by unkind Influences, perhaps raising Storms, and Thunder in the Air, or shooting down piercing and pestilential Rays. While *Samuel* was offering the Sacrifice of *Burnt Offering*, the Lord thunder'd with a great Thunder on that Day, upon the *Philistines*, and discomfited them, and they were smote before *Israel*.
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- 1 Sam. vii. 10. with a great Thunder on that Day, upon the *Philistines*, and discomfited them, and they were smote before *Israel*.

The several Fiftys sent to take *Elijah* were destroy'd with Fire from Heaven: And the great Host of the King of *Syria*, which came to fetch — vi. 8. *Elisha*, were smote with Blindness.

When *Daniel*, and the three Children were cast into the Fiery Furnace, and Lions Den; He bound up the Influence of devouring Flames, and stopped the Mouths of Lions. He changed their Natures, and checked their natural Tendency. I might add the miraculous Deliverance of *Peter* from Prison, when the Chains fell from off his Hands, and the Iron Gate opened to them of its own accord. And *St. Paul's* miraculous Escape from the Shipwreck.

Acts xii. 7, 10. the Chains fell from off his Hands, and the Iron Gate opened to them of its own accord. And *St. Paul's* miraculous Escape from the Shipwreck.

Acts xxvii. the Chains fell from off his Hands, and the Iron Gate opened to them of its own accord. And *St. Paul's* miraculous Escape from the Shipwreck.

I shall only further observe here, That God can never be at a Loss to save his People, who has

has so many Ways to save them: And how many of these Instances agree to our own Case, I suppose will easily offer it self to every ones Observation, without the help of a *Hand* to point it out. I proceed now to the

II. That *'tis the peculiar Glory of the great God to be a God of Salvation.* This arises from the *Modification* of the Proposition, or the peculiar *Manner* of Expression. For 'tis more than a simple Assertion; or, as if it were only said, That God is the Saviour of his People. 'Tis plainly ascribing something to him in a Way of Eminence and Peculiarity; something highly Honourable and Glorious, which properly belongs to Him, and can agree to none besides.

The Apostle uses a like Form of Expression: *Now He who stablishes us with you in Christ, 2 Cor. 1. and hath anointed us, is God.* 'Tis quite another^{21.} Thing than meerly to have said, 'Tis God who stablishes and anointeth us; for that were only simply to assert the Truth of it, that 'tis God who does so; as we ascribe any other Effect to him: But the Force of the Expression is, as if he had said, 'Tis only a God can do this: 'Tis the proper Work of God, and glorious Effect of Divine Power: 'Tis doing something for us which only God can do, and is above all the Power of a Creature.

So that here we have two Things briefly to consider in this Form of Expression. 1. That 'tis *proper* to the Great God to be the Saviour of his People. 2. That 'tis highly *honourable* to him.

§. 1. That 'tis *proper* to him: So he speaks in the Prophet expressly, *I, even I, am the Lord, Isa. xliii.*

and besides me there is no Saviour. This will appear if we consider two Things.

1. The *Salvation* he works for them. This is often Great in its Kind, and in its Importance to them. He saves them from the Hands of powerful Enemies, and the brink of utter Ruin. He raises them up from the lowest Distress, and at the last Extremity. He delivers them from the *Paw of the Lion and the Bear*, and plucks them *as Brands out of the burning*. He restores their full Liberty, and numerous Blessings, and makes their Salvation entire and complete. Perhaps all their Safety and worldly Happiness depends upon it, and they had been otherwise quite *swallowed up*. So that upon a cool and distinct Review, we find our selves amazed at the greatness of the Salvation; and can't but wonder at the Dangers we have escaped, or the Mercies we securely possess; *since thou hast given us such a Deliverance as this; and who delivered us from so great a Death.*

Besides, the *Circumstances* of the Salvation are often very remarkable, and the Manner of it as wonderful as the Thing it self. They are surprised with an unexpected Salvation; above their Fears and beyond their Hopes; without any visible Way of Relief, and when *all Hope that they should be saved is taken away*: To the Astonishment of their Enemies as well as themselves; and the equal, tho' different, Disappointment of both: So that upon due Consideration of the Matter, they see Reason to say with the delivered Church, *This is the Lord's Doing, and 'tis wonderful in our Eyes.* Their Rock is not as our Rock, even our Enemies

them-

themselves being Judges. And when God turned ^{Pfal.}
again the Captivity of Sion, we were like them ^{CXXVI. 2, 3.}
who dreamed; then said they among the Hea-
then, the Lord hath done great Things.

The Case is so singular, and involved, that there must be a Change in the Frame of Things: The whole Face of publick Affairs must be altered in order to it. A great Concurrence of wonderful Circumstances meet together, and all necessary to the Event: Not one of them could be spared; any one of them wanting, like a Spring out of order, would stop the whole Motion, and spoil the Frame of the merciful Design. When we see a Deliverance wrought by the removal of several of the great Powers of the Earth; by many surprizing Incidents; by unaccountable Awes and Restraints upon the Minds of Men, and strange Interposures and Appearances of Things; we cannot but cry out, This was indeed the Finger of God. None but he who sitteth in the Heavens, and laughs at the vain Devices of the Wicked, could bring it to pass. Such Events have sometimes forc'd the Acknowledgment of a Divine Being and Providence, from Minds least disposed to believe them, and strongly prejudiced and averse.

He repeats their Deliverance one Time after another. 'Tis not a single Deliverance, or a Salvation once wrought for them, how great and wonderful soever: One mighty Effort of Divine Power once for all; but 'tis a Course of Deliverance: He has been the Saviour of his People in all Generations, and many Times, to the same Generation of Men. So the Church speaks: *Many a time turned he a-*
way

Psal.
lxxviii.
38.

way his Anger, and did not stir up all his Wrath. Many a time have they afflicted me from my Youth, now may Israel say. — Yet have they not prevailed against me. The Church of God had been long ago destroyed, and rooted out of the Earth, if God had not many a time saved and delivered it ; for it is often weak and defenceless ; forsaken of Human Help, and Creature Dependance : 'Tis always unequal in Number and Strength to the Power of its Enemies. The *Jews* were surrounded with powerful Enemies ; the Heathen Nations lay round about the Land of *Palestine*, and they were often invaded and carried Captive. The first Christians lived in the midst of the *Roman Empire*, their profess'd Enemy, and were destitute of earthly Power : But God has been the Guardian and Protector of his Church in every Age, and as often delivered them, as they have been reduced to Extremity. So has God saved these Nations from a continued Course of wicked Designs against them ; from the restless, and implacable Malice of Popish Powers, with very small Intermissions, from the beginning of the Reformation to this Day.

2. The *Instruments* and Means he makes Use of. God ordinarily works by Instruments in the Works of Grace and Providence, and not *ordinarily* in an immediate Way. But then the proper Agency and Influence is from himself. He only works by them, and makes Use of them to serve his own Purposes. Now we find that God sometimes makes Use of very unlikely Means, which seem the least fitted in themselves, and the least likely to succeed.

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He produces great Effects by weak and feeble Causes, and Things which seem no Way equal or proportionate to them: He hangs the greatest Weights upon the smallest Wires; as when a Victory is gained by a small Handful of Men, and by the weaker Side; when the greatest Events take their Rise from little Accidents; like the small *Head* of a great River. In this Case now the *Power* more evidently appears to be of *God*, and not of *Man*. The Success must necessarily be imputed to a secret Influence, and invisible Agent, to the wise Direction of a superior Cause.

Or when the Instruments are most apt, and seem best appointed; when they appear with the greatest Advantage, and even promise Success. Why, 'tis in that Case nevertheless, to be considered as the Work of God: Because all the Instruments are fitted by Him, and used by Him, to the greatest Purposes of which they are capable. He gives them Wisdom and Courage; directs their Thoughts and Motions: They are wholly under his Conduct, and cannot stir without his Leave, or prosper without his Blessing. He *teacheth their Hands to war*, Psalm *and their Fingers to fight*. The *Horse is prepared for Battle*, but *Victory is of the Lord*. This only can account for the *unequal* Success and various Events of the same Instruments and Means: Why the weakest prove sometimes surprizingly successful, and the ablest and most likely, fail and miscarry. *The Race is not to the swift*, i. e. 'tis not always so, as it would be in the meer natural Course of Things; *Nor the Battle to the strong*; *nor Bread to the wise*; *nor Riches to Men of Understanding*; *nor Favour to Men*

Men of Skill; but Time and Chance happens to
 1 Cor. i. *them all. And God sometimes chooses the foolish*
 27. *Things of this World to confound the Wise, and*
weak Things to confound the Mighty, that no Flesh
 —29, 31. *should glory in his Presence; but he who glorieth,*
let him glory in the Lord.

§ 2. 'Tis highly *Honourable* to Him, and one great Part of the Divine Glory, to be the Saviour of his People. This appears if you consider,

1. The *Display* He makes of his own Perfections. God appears Glorious in all his Works, in the meaner Parts and stated Course of Nature and Providence: But He eminently shines in the Deliverance of his People, and extraordinary Appearances in their Favour. What a Display does He often make of Divine *Wisdom*? What a Reach and Compass of Knowledge, what Depths of Understanding, in revealing the dark Designs of their Enemies, unravelling all their Schemes, disappointing the whole Contrivance of Mischief; confounding all the Policy of Earth and Hell together; yea, and turning them all against themselves, and making them fatal to their own Interests. He
 1 Cor. ii. *destroyeth the Wisdom of the Wise. And Wis-*
 6. *dom of this World, and the Princes of this*
World come to nought. Yea, He taketh the
Wise in their own Craft. And the Wicked are
snared in the Works of their own Hands. What
 a mighty Power shines forth, when the Strong God, the Lord God Omnipotent, who reigns in the Earth, defeats the boldest Attempts, scatters and disperses the greatest Numbers, breaks their Power in Pieces, and rescues his People by a mighty Hand. So God saved Israel
 for

for his Name sake, *that he might make his mighty Power to be known.* The Snare is broken, in which we were taken, and we are escaped. When God saves the Poor from the Mighty, he gives just Occasion for the humble Challenge, and holy Triumph; *Who in the Heaven can be compared to the Lord? Who among the Sons of the Mighty can be likened to the Lord?* How eminently does his Love appear? His tender Care, and distinguishing Regard to them who fear him, and put their trust in him, before the Sons of Men. He delivers them because he delights in them. Don't he own a special Relation, and shew how he loves them, when he works a great Deliverance for them; and the Kindness and Love of God our Saviour towards them appear in a glorious Display, and real Effects? Is there not a great Instance of Covenant Faithfulness, and punctual Regard to his Word? He has given many gracious Assurances of kind Regards to encourage their Trust, and quicken their Supplications: *Call upon me in the Day of Trouble and I will deliver thee.* He is a Refuge, and a present Help in time of Trouble. He will be with them to the end of the World; and the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against them. Now in Cases of great Deliverance from Danger and Ruin, he shews his inviolable Faithfulness, and remembers his Word unto his Servants on which he has caused them to hope.

So that, upon the whole, God never appears more Glorious in himself, or gives a greater Display of his Perfections to the World, than when he appears as the God of Salvation to his People.

2. The peculiar *Acknowledgments* of a delivered People. God does not willingly afflict, or grieve the Children of Men: And Judgment, especially upon his own People, is his *strange Work*. He does not deal with Kingdoms and Nations, in this Respect, as he sometimes does with particular Persons; afflict them for Trial, or reserve them to be punished hereafter. He deals with them more suitable to their present State, and in greater Proportion to their Carriage towards him. The Reason is, they will only continue such in this World, but disband and separate in the next. They must now be treated according to their Doings, or not at all. This is laid down as a standing Rule in this
- 2 Chron. xvi. 2. Case. *The Lord is with you while you are with him; and if you seek him, he will be found of you: But if you forsake him, he will forsake you.* And more distinctly in the Prophet.
- Jer. xviii. 7, 8. 'Tis the Corruption and *Degeneracy* of a professing People, which lays them open to the Power of their Enemies, and to any of the Judgments of God. As often as *Israel* returned to Idolatry, they fell under the Power of their Heathen Neighbours, or were severely scourged and rebuked; till their long Captivity in *Babylon* quite cured them, and made an Idol an Abomination to them for ever after. We find *Ezra* makes this solemn Acknowledg-
- Chap. ix. 10. ment after the Captivity: *And now, O our God, what shall we say after this, for we have forsaken thy Commandment. And after all that is come upon us for our evil Deeds, and great Tref-*
- Chap. ix. 16. *pasts.* And *Nehemiah* particularly recounts the various Instances of their Sins. And I believe it will appear upon a careful Observation, that the greatest

greatest Dangers this Nation has been brought into, have been in Times of greatest Degeneracy, and under some crying and provoking Guilt: To Instance only in the Times of the *Civil War*, and of the *Plague and Fire of London*.

So that when God works Salvation for his People, 'tis always to be understood for an unworthy and sinful People, who have offended and provoked a jealous God, and brought themselves into Distress, by their Rebellion, and Disobedience to his holy Laws, or Ingratitude and Abuse of his Mercies: And that he can be supposed to act from no other Principle towards them, but great Kindness, and free Favour, and for the Glory of his own Name.

Now, when a sinful People are delivered, and saved in a wonderful Manner, and with a great Salvation, they must be prodigiously hardened and ungrateful, who don't find the kindest relentings of Soul under the Sense of Mercy, and are not provoked by it to the humblest Acknowledgments, and highest Praise. Is it not natural to suppose the most grateful Resentments in their Minds, and the *high Praises* of God in their Mouths; that they should rise in adoring Acknowledgments, and abound in Expressions of their Joy?

And so we find it has always been with good Men in this Case: We have the Song of *Moses*, the oldest upon Record in the World, for the Deliverance of *Israel* from *Egypt*. The Lord Ex. xv. 2. *is my Strength and my Song, and he is become my Salvation.* And the Song of *Deborah* for a remarkable Victory: *Praise ye the Lord for the avenging of Israel, &c.* Ezra proclaims, and Chap. ix. mag-13.

magnifies the Divine Mercy; *Thou hast punished less than our Iniquity deserved, and hast given*
 Ez. ix. 15. *such a Deliverance as this. O Lord God of Israel thou art Righteous, for we remain yet escaped as it is this Day. And Nehemiah, Nevertheless, for thy Mercy sake thou didst not utterly consume them nor forsake them, for thou art a gracious and merciful God.* The Church often records her solemn Praise for great Salvations: *If it had not been the Lord who was on our side now may Israel say — when Men rose up against us, when they had swallowed us up quick, when their Wrath was kindled against us. Blessed be the Lord who hath not given us a Prey to their Teeth. Our Help*
 Psalm cxxiv. 8. *is in the Name of the Lord who made Heaven and*
 — cxliv. *Earth.* And in another Place; *I will sing a new*
 9, 10. *Song to thee, O God; upon the Psaltry, and Instrument of ten Strings will I sing Praise to thee: 'Tis he who giveth Salvation to Kings, who delivereth David his Servant from the hurtful Sword.* They are forc'd to say when they are deliver-
 — cxv. 1. *ed, Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy Name give Glory, for thy Mercy, and for thy Truths sake.*

If God accounts himself glorified by the Praises of a delivered People: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorifie me; *i. e.* by magnifying his Mercy, and ascribing all the Glory to it; by all the Resentments of a grateful Heart, and Expressions of Love to him: Why then, the Glory of God must rise in Proportion to our Praise; and must be the greatest, upon these Occasions, which Creatures here on Earth are capable of.

III. To apply this to our selves, and the present Circumstances of our own Case.

§ 1. Let

§. 1. Let us consider the *Salvation* which God has wrought for us, and which we are here to Commemorate this Day. I shall only give you this short Account. After the peaceable Advancement of the *King* to the Throne, according to the known Constitution and Usage of the Kingdom, we began to think our selves safe, and perhaps to grow secure. The *disaffected* Part of the Nation, who were first amazed at the wonderful Appearance, like Men stunned with a Fall, quickly began to recover themselves, and shew their Disappointment and Rage; and from Mobs and Tumults in several Parts of the Kingdom, like the Froth and Foam of a troubled Sea, formed a dangerous *Conspiracy*, and grew up into an open *Rebellion*. Men of mistaken Principles, and fatally deluded; of restless Spirits, and boundless Rage; many of broken Fortunes and disappointed Hopes, joined with profest Papists at Home, and conspired with foreign Powers, to involve the Nation in civil Blood, cut off the Royal Family, root out the Protestant Religion, and set up an *abjured Impostor*.

Here was a Scene of *Villany* and *Folly*, the most surprizingly flagrant, and without a Precedent. For Subjects sworn to a Government, and having paid a solemn Homage; protected in all their Rights, unhurt and unprovoked: without any Shadow of Complaint or Pretence of Grievance, yea, highly favoured and indulged; against the known Laws of the Land, and their own publick Prayers for many Years together; to conspire and rebel against so wise and gracious a Prince, so condescending and endearing to all his Subjects; so hearty in our
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Interests, and able to promote them; of such Qualities as would oblige any other People, and charm them to Love as well as Obedience: For these Men to pretend Uneasiness and express Dis-respect, who had run such Lengths of Extravagance and Folly in the Courtship and Praises of former Princes, who were either scandalously *Vitious*, or open *Papists*, or *Weak* and misled in the great Articles of the Nations Interest: For these Men, I say, to conspire and rebel, who had deafned the World with loud Professions of Loyalty and Obedience, and spent an Age in the severest *Satyr*s against Rebellion; while the ever *steady* Friends of their Countries Interest were trampled upon and insulted, and they who bore the *largest* Share in the Publick Joy, had the *least* Share of the Benefit, and were the *only* Sufferers by it: This is a greater *Aburdity* in Reasoning, and a more prodigious *Ingratitude* in Morals, than any Age or Nation can easily parallel, and which Posterity will labour with the Belief of: What *Natural* Light does presently condemn, and even *Pagan* Gratitude would shame.

This desperate Design however was detected and suppressed by a great Concurrence of wonderful Circumstances: The Death of the *French* King just before; The Awe and Suspence of Foreign Powers who seemed best disposed to it: The Flight of some Capital Offenders, who were most capable of serving it. The strange Discovery and early surprizing some principal active Leaders: The entire Defeat by a smaller Force, at the very same Time, in both Kingdoms, without one single Instance
of

of Success in the whole Attempt ; seem plainly to argue that God was on our Side, and their rash and unhallowed Design, without any solemn Acknowledgment of God, that I could ever learn, was blasted and confounded by him.

How great this Salvation was, which God has wrought, will appear in nothing so sensible as in the sad Calamities of a *Civil War*, and the necessary Consequences of a successful Attempt, countenanced by the Popish Powers abroad, and the whole Popish Interest at Home, while the Nation divided within it self, and assisted and supported by the different Powers about us, had been a Scene of Confusion and Seat of Blood : There had been the Disturbance of all our quiet Possessions, and perpetual Fear and Alarms of Danger ; every where a *confused Noise and Garments rolling in Blood*. The deepest Resentments of a bigotted Prince : and enraged Party : The Bondage of Popish Superstition and Foreign Dependence : The Ruin of all our establish'd Rights, and an Entail of Misery upon our Posterity.

How Injurious and *Inglorious* a Part in the Men of this Generation, to betray that *Religion* and *Liberty*, which was procured for us by so wonderful a Providence of God ; sealed by the Blood of our Fore-fathers ; and transmitted down to us by so jealous a Care all along : To the perpetual *Infamy* of the present Age, and the deserv'd *Curses* of the next !

§ 2. Let us be suitably *Affected* and carry it suitably to the Author of it. For Example,

Adore the Divine Being, and the mighty Display of Himself in our Deliverance. Let

us

us magnifie the Lord our Saviour ; *praise him for his mighty Acts and his wonderful Goodness to the Children of Men* : In protecting us from bloody Desolations, and securing our numerous Blessings : In fixing us, we trust, upon sure Foundations, after many Shakings, and giving Strength and Establishment to the present Settlement, by those very Means which were designed to overturn it.

Let us *Love* the Lord our Deliverer. Should not Salvation from Ruin work a kindly Sense in every grateful Breast, and enflame our Heart with Love ? Let the Cords and Bands He has loosed, bind us the faster to Him, and our Ransomed Lives and Mercies be offered up a *Living Sacrifice* to the God of our Salvation.

We should *Love one another*. Should not they who share in the Mercy of a *Common Deliverance*, reckon themselves bound and endeared to one another, and obliged to mutual Kindness and Good Will ? I dare venture to say upon this Occasion, It will never be well with the Nation, till Good Men of all Perswasions, have learnt to drop their private Resentments and Party-Quarrels, and more closely unite in Affection and Interest ; till all who have good Principles and sober Minds, who are true Lovers of their Country, and hearty Friends of the present Government, who dread the Calamities of a Civil War, and foreign Popery and Slavery ; heartily join together to support the Government which God has delivered, and secure the Salvation He has wrought.

We should *live* to him, and improve the Mercies he has saved. *Render to the Lord according to his Benefits*, in returns of Duty as well

well as Love and Praise. Improve the Mercies restored and spared ; the Blessings saved from Ruin ; the envied Happiness of our Civil Liberties and Sacred Opportunities. View them as rescued from the Power of our Enemies, and use them with Thankfulness to the best Advantage.

Trust him for the future. Commit the Care of the Nation's Welfare to the God of our Salvation, as well as of our own Souls. Trust him in every Trouble and Danger, who has so often appeared and eminently saved. Wait a good Issue of present Uneasiness and Disturbance, not presumptuous and secure ; but yet not discouraged and affrighted. There seems to be a *Swell* of Water after the Storm, and the foaming Waves are not quite settled into a Calm. Look to him who *stills the Noise of the Sea, and the Tumult of the People* ; and can easily say to a raging Tempest, *Peace, be still.* Consider our Interest and Concern with the *God of Salvation*, and the Grounds of our Plea and Hope. So the Apostle has taught us to argue : *Who has delivered us from so great a Death, and doth deliver, in whom we trust that he will yet deliver.* And encourages us from this Consideration ; *In nothing terrified by your Adversaries, which is to them an evident Token of Perdition, but to you of Salvation, and that of God.*

To conclude ; Let us look for the final Salvation. The Glory of all God's Salvation is the *eternal Redemption purchased* by Christ ; the *great Salvation* of the Gospel. The immediate Context of these Words in the Psalmist, speaks expressly of the Glory and Victory of the Messiah ;

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fiah ;

- Ver. 18. *fiat: Thou hast ascended on high; thou hast led Captivity Captive; thou hast received Gifts for Men, yea for the Rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them. He who saves us from the Power of our Enemies, and delivers in Danger, will rescue us from the Captivity of Satan, and all the Powers of revolted Spirits, in a State of Rebellion to God. If*
- Rom. v. 10. *when we were Enemies, we were reconciled to God by the Death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his Life. He will restore rebellious Sinners to the Divine Favour, and recover them from their Apostacy and Distance to God, to a State of confirmed Friendship. The great Captain of our Salvation, who conquered the Powers of Darknest, will bring the many Sons to Glory: He will set them out of the reach of Danger, and give them Possession of the Heavenly Inheritance: A State of Rest and Joy, without the Fear of any Enemy, or*
- Rom. viii. 21. *Danger of Revolt for ever. Let us now wait for our Deliverance from the Bondage of Corruption into the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God;*
- 1 Theff. i. 10. *and be found waiting at last for the Son of God from Heaven, the great Deliverer from the*
- Jude 12. *Wrath to come; and looking for the Mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal Life.*

F I N I S.

A Sermon preached Nov. 5. 1713. By W. Harris.
Preparing for the Press by the same Author,
Self-Dedication, Personal and Sacramental, briefly
opened and urged.