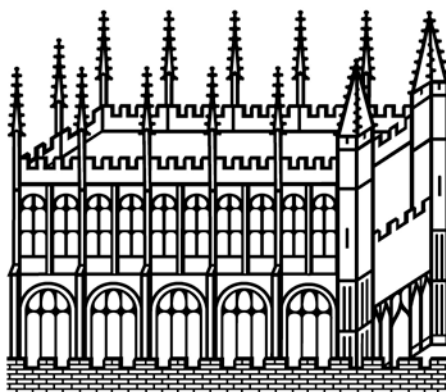




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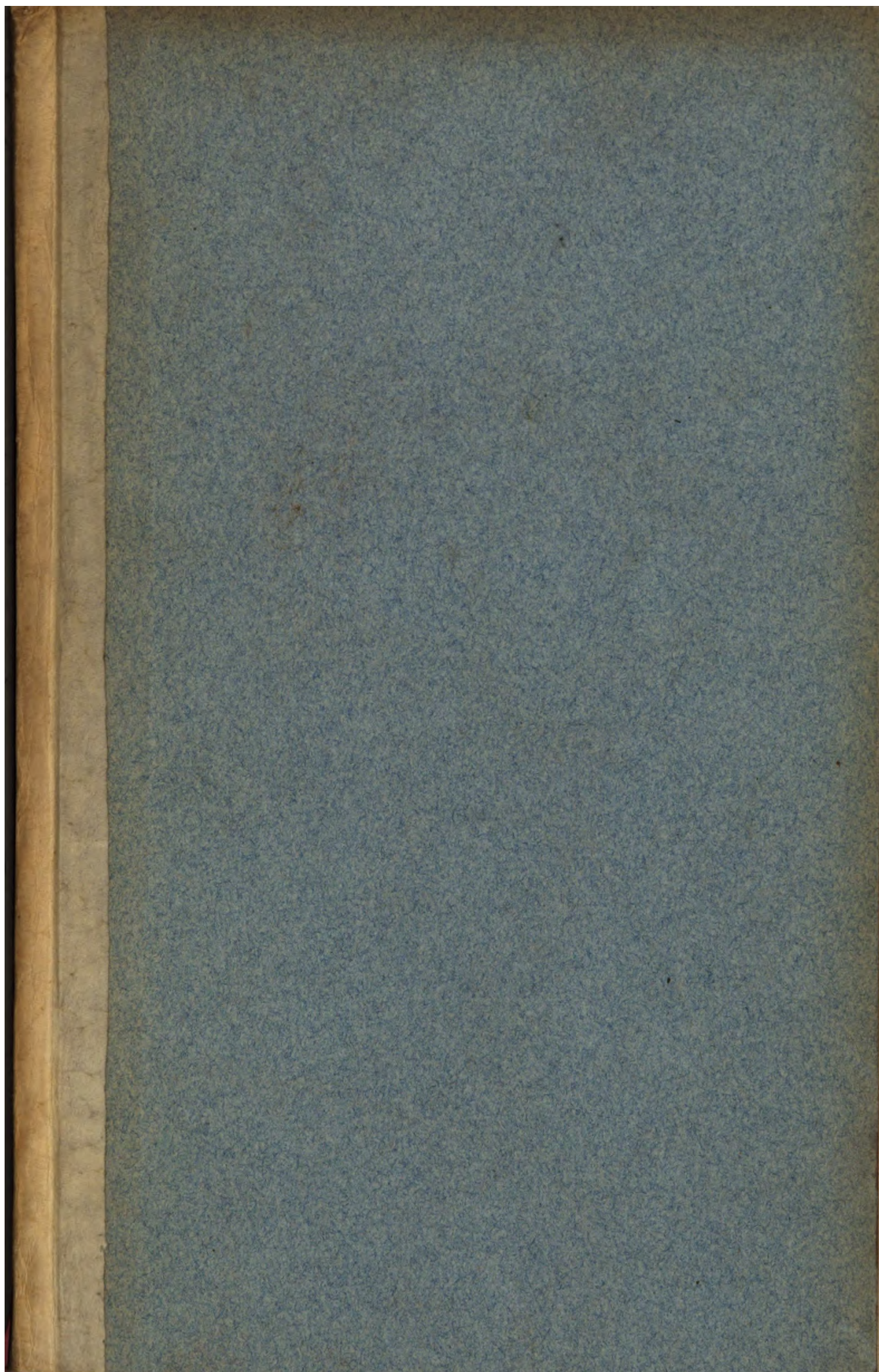
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1474
A
THANKSGIVING
SERMON,

For the SUCCESS of
His Majesty's Forces

In Suppressing
The late Wicked and Unnatural
REBELLION.

Preached at PORTSMOUTH,
October 9, 1746.

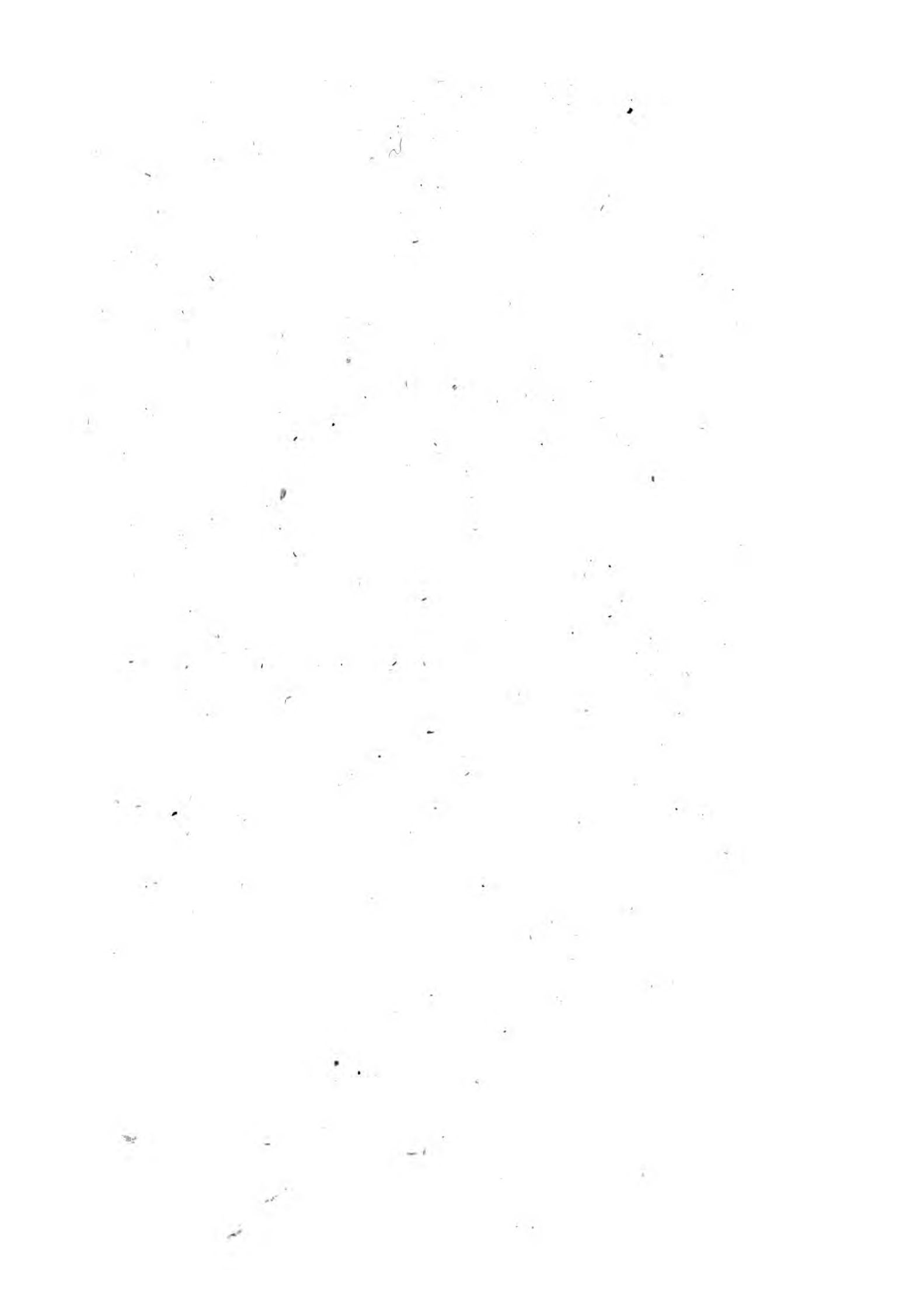
By JOHN NORMAN.

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A Thanksgiving SERMON.

Deuteronomy xxviii. 7.

*The Lord shall cause thine Enemies
that rise up against thee to be
smitten before thy Face: They shall
come out against thee one Way, and
flee before thee seven Ways.*

AL MIGHTY GOD, who super-
intends and governs the Affairs of
the World by his wise and good
Providence, having signally ap-
pear'd for us, in suppressing that *monstrous*
and *unnatural Rebellion* by which we were
lately so much alarm'd; we should think
ourselves obliged to join in publick and so-
lemn *Thanksgiving* for such a Salvation;
and this is the Duty to which, by our most
gracious Sovereign's Royal Proclamation,
we are now called.

A 2

In

4 *A Thanksgiving Sermon.*

In the Time of our Trouble, and when we were under such Apprehensions of Danger as gave us much Uneasiness, Prayers were every where offered up to Heaven for the Defeat of our Enemies, Deliverance from the Calamities of an intestine War, and a Restoration of the publick Peace and Tranquillity : And as, by a divine Blessing on his Majesty's Counsels and Arms, these great Mercies have been obtained ; surely they ought to be in the most grateful and devout manner acknowledged ; and this God expects from us. Not that he wants any Returns that we are capable of making for the Favours which he bestows ; nor is it to be supposed, that there can be any Addition made to his essential Glory by our most exalted Praises ; but he is *pleased* with our sincere, though faint, Attempts to proclaim the Honours of his Name, and such is his Condescension, that he has signified so much to us by saying, *Whoso offereth Praise glorifieth me*, Psal. l. 23.

Now that we may be deeply affected with the great and undeserved Goodness of God in the Deliverance, which we are assembled this Morning to thank him for, I have formed a short Discourse, grounded upon the Passage of Scripture which has been read, and endeavoured to make it as suitable as I could to the present joyful Occasion.

The

A Thanksgiving Sermon. 5

The Words contain a great Blessing promised to the *Israelites* if they behaved themselves answerably to what God required of them, and obey'd the Precepts which they were commanded to have a strict and dutiful Regard to. Upon that Condition, they were encouraged to expect that Providence would smile upon them with regard to their Persons, Estates and Employments; that their Plenty would be continued, that they should be advanced above the People round about them, and be victorious over their Enemies. *The Lord shall cause thine Enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy Face, &c.* You see they were assured that God would be with them, fight their Battles, and defeat any Forces that should make War upon them, so that they should either be cut off and killed upon the Spot, or flee before them by many different Ways, that they might make their Escape, and not fall into their Hands.

Thus God engaged to favour *Israel*, and thus he has been graciously pleased to favour *us*, though we are such a sinful People, and he might justly have suffered our Enemies to prevail against and triumph over us.

This all that are concern'd for our holy Religion, and for the national Welfare and Prosperity must, I am sure, look upon
as

6 *A Thanksgiving Sermon.*

as a Mercy which we ought to set the highest Value upon, and should never forget ; and that we may view it in this Light, let us consider,

- I. What the vile and impious *Design* of the late *Rebellion* was, and how dreadful the *Consequences* would have been, had not Providence frustrated it.
- II. The *Progress* made by the *Rebels* in executing their *Design*.
- III. The kind and seasonable *Interposition* of a *Divine Hand*, in their Defeat and our Deliverance.

I shall endeavour to lay these Things before you, as well as I can, in a small Compass ; and then point out the Improvement which should be made of the great Mercy of God to us.

I. Let us consider what the vile and impious *Design* of the late *Rebellion* was, and how dreadful the *Consequences* would have been, had not Providence frustrated it.

It has long been the Happiness of *Britons* to live under the best of Governments, in the quiet and undisturb'd Enjoyment of our Religion and Liberties, secure in our Properties, and in the Possession of every Blessing belonging to us as a *Free and Protestant*

A Thanksgiving Sermon. 7

testant People. We have a most gracious Prince upon the Throne, whose Title is as firm as the Laws and Constitution of this Kingdom can make it; so that it cannot be disputed but upon Principles than which none can be more *absurd, destructive* and *flavish*; a Prince who has no Interest separate from that of his People, and who in the whole Course of his Reign has given the fullest Proofs of an inviolable Regard to their Rights and Prosperity: This must be acknowledged by all that will lay aside unreasonable Prejudices; and Malice itself cannot point out any Instance to the contrary.

Now the execrable Design of the Rebellion was, to dethrone our most excellent and rightful Sovereign, to set aside for ever the Succession in his illustrious Family, and to demolish the whole Frame, and tear up the very Foundations of a Government the best fitted of any upon Earth to make Subjects safe and happy.

With such a malicious Intention, did a Company of wicked Men, without any Provocation or just Reason for Complaint, and some of them distinguished by Marks of his Majesty's royal Favour, enter into Measures, in Conjunction with our avowed Enemies abroad, to ruin and destroy us: And that they might effectually do this; they would have set an *abjured, Popish Pretender*

8 *A Thanksgiving Sermon.*

Pretender upon the Throne; one who has been long bred up amidst all the *Tyranny*, *Superstition* and *Idolatry* of the Church of *Rome*, and who would have come (had God, as a Punishment for our Sins, permitted him) with a Heart full of *Rage* and *Resentment*, and with such an *arbitrary*, *persecuting* and *bloody* Spirit, as must have subjected us to the greatest Calamities.

Some thoughtless and deluded People, I believe, have been ready to flatter themselves, that the Case would not have been so bad, if such a Revolution had been brought about, as it has been represented; but sad Experience would soon have convinced them of their Mistake, and they would have seen their Folly with a Vengeance. The *Pretender's* Religion, I know, would have allowed him to promise fair to serve his own Ends, but it would have vacated the strongest Promises that he could have made to *Protestants*, and damned him for performing them, to the Prejudice of the Catholick Cause, and for keeping Faith with Hereticks.

What then could we have expected had we fallen into the Hands of such a Tyrant? Our Liberty would soon have been at an End; we must have seen with sorrowful Hearts, our Laws trampled upon, our Properties unrighteously wrested from us, free Parliaments abolished, and the
Lives

A Thanksgiving Sermon. 9

Lives of *Protestants* always in Danger ; nor can we think that any would have been suffered to make a Profession of the *Reformed* Religion without feeling the dreadful Weight of the *Secular Arm*, or that they could have escaped the most cruel Persecution without being false to God and Conscience. How soon would our solemn Assemblies have been at an End, and our Places of Worship taken from us ? Ministers and their beloved Flocks could not have kept together ; the free Use of the Scriptures would no longer have been allowed ; Prayers in an unknown Tongue would have been the established Worship ; the Veneration of Saints and Images, the absurd and monstrous Doctrine of Transubstantiation, and all the other gross and pernicious Errors of the *Antichristian* Church would have been forced upon us, and we must either have been exposed to Hardships in distant Regions, if we could have made our Escape, or *Prisons, Gibbets* and *Flames* must have been our Doom and Portion. Such Methods of Cruelty as these, and many more too shocking to be mentioned, have been practised by *Papists*. This is well known, and they themselves cannot have Impudence enough to deny it, when there are Facts without Number to prove the Barbarity.

B

Attempts

10 *A Thanksgiving Sermon.*

Attempts may be made to soften Things; and some may be so weak as to be imposed upon by the artful Devices, and false Colours which designing Men make use of to hide the Malignity of their Principles, and to make them appear harmless and benevolent; but this we may be assured of, that *Popery* is as *bloody* a Religion as ever it was; the Spirit which it breathes and inspires is *cruel*; "it is calculated (as one well observes) to suppress the tenderest Emotions of Humanity," and it can be no wonder if it prevails against *Good Nature* it self, when People are taught that they make a *Merit* of destroying their Neighbours that differ from them, and are so blinded and wicked as to believe it. *The Ethiopian cannot change his Skin: Sheeps Clothing* could not alter the Nature of *ravens* *Wolves*, and if the *Prince of Darkness* should assume the Form, and put on the Appearance of an *Angel of Light*, he would be a *Devil* still.

We may conclude therefore, that if the *Pretender* to an hereditary Right to the *British* Crown should ever wear it, (which God of his infinite Mercy forbid!) we must be a miserable People. And what a kind and good Providence ought we to esteem it, that a Design to bring us into such deplorable Circumstances has been so happily

A Thanksging Sermon. 11

happily defeated! And that we may be the more affected with our Deliverance, let us consider

II. The Progress made by the *Rebels* in executing the Design which they had wickedly formed, and were so much bent upon pursuing.

When the *insolent Invader* of our Country first landed, he brought such an inconsiderable Number with him, that the Account given of his being in *Scotland* was not presently credited; and when it was, we heard it spoken of with great Contempt; but it was not long before Things appeared with a different Face. The *Pretender's* Son was so audacious as to set up his Standard, and soon collected an Army too considerable to be despised. The unhappy Places to which they came were thrown into Confusion; great Outrages were committed; a Number of honest People suffered greatly, and more were in continual Danger of finding the same cruel Treatment. The *Plunderers* increased and grew formidable; the Capital City in that Part of *Great-Britain* fell into their Hands, which, with a Defeat of a small Body of the King's Forces, without doubt encouraged them to hope that they should be able to carry all before them: Their March towards

B 2 *England*

12. *A Thanksgiving Sermon.*

England was determined, and their penetrating so far as they did into it, was Matter of Surprize, and when recorded in History will be thought so by all that read it. The Terror spread by these *Sons of Violence* was great, and those that had more Fortitude of Mind than most of their Neighbours, could not but be under a Concern about the Consequences of the swift Advances that were made by the Enemies of our Country; and especially as there was Reason to apprehend that they might soon be joined, and powerfully supported by an Army of *Foreigners* who were watching for an Opportunity to be revenged upon us. What Confusion we should have been in, had the Rebels come near our *Metropolis*, we cannot say; but should their Strength have grown as they made a greater Progress, what a bloody Scene might our dear Country have been made! We thought of these Things when we were in Danger, and I mention them now to shew what a Mercy it is that the Danger is so happily over, and that God has delivered us from our Fears. This brings me

III. To take notice of the kind and seasonable Interposition of a *Divine Hand*, in defeating our Enemies and saving us.

The

A Thanksgiving Sermon. 13

The Providence of God, which universally operates, and is always employed in the Government of the World, has appeared in a Variety of Ways for the Preservation of his People. Sometimes he has in a very *extraordinary* Manner display'd his Power, Justice, Mercy and Faithfulness in their Deliverance, and saved them by *Miracles*. This was the Case, when the Children of *Israel* had a Passage made for them through the *Red-Sea*, and *Pharaoh* and his Host pursued them and were drowned. Many other Instances might be mentioned here, in which the Almighty's Arm was so surprisngly revealed, that we cannot read them without seeing it, nor will it be deny'd by any but resolved or stupid Unbelievers.

That Providence is concerned in all other Events, though not so remarkably as in *miraculous* ones, we, as Christians, profess to believe; and therefore you would justly blame me, and I should have great Reason to blame myself, if I had not a particular Regard for the Hand of God, in our own Case.

How happy was it for us when we were threatned with so many and such great Evils, that *Protestants* of every *Denomination* should so heartily unite in Opposition to the Enemies of our King and Country; that both Houses of *Parliament* should,
with

14 *A Thanksgiving Sermon.*

with such a glorious Zeal and Unanimity, enter into the most effectual Measures for the Defence of his Majesty's Crown and Honour, and the Safety of his People; and that the Nobility and Gentry, Merchants and Traders, and Persons of all Ranks, should exert themselves in so brave a manner as they did on the important Occasion! This we must esteem a very great Mercy, and we ought to look upon it as owing to the Influence of that Great Being who has the Hearts of all Men in his Hands.

His Majesty's appointing his Royal Highness the Duke of *Cumberland* to command his Forces at a Time of so much Danger, was such a Proof of his high and tender Regard for the national Welfare, "as will transmit the Remembrance of him to all future Ages, under the most honourable Character that a King can bear, the Friend, the Father of his People *:" And we cannot but look upon it, as a most kind Providence that our Sovereign made such a Choice; as to the Courage and Conduct of his illustrious Son, under God, our Success may be ascribed.

To the same Providence we must acknowledge it owing, that the Royal Hero was preserved through the great Fatigues and

* Dissenting Ministers Address to his Majesty.

A Thanksgiving Sermon. 15

and Difficulties, to which he, with an invincible Magnanimity, exposed himself; that our Enemies fled before him with so much Haste and Fear, and that, when they made a stand at last, and perhaps were confident of gaining their Point, the Bloody Controversy was decided in our Favour. Who was it that covered the young Conqueror's Head in the Day of Battle, and inspired his Officers and Army with the Courage which they discovered when he led them on to Glory and Victory? Surely the Hand of God must be in this. And when we remember what a Number of the Rebels fell in the Field, and how many were taken Prisoners, that the rest endeavoured to save themselves by Flight, or surrendered in hopes of Mercy, and that upon this there was an End put to the Rebellion, almost at once; we cannot, I think, but own that this was *the Lord's doing*, and we ought to be affected with it accordingly.

The Salvation which I have been speaking of, without doubt, was very great *in itself*, and the *Circumstances* of it (some of which have been mentioned) shew it to be so; to which I might add, many Things in relation to the *Consequences* of our Danger and Deliverance. His Majesty's Throne will, it is not doubted, be more securely established by our late Troubles, and the very great Concern which he
has

16 *A Thanksgiving Sermon.*

has shewn for his People upon this extraordinary Occasion, must increase the Number of his real and sincere Friends, and fix him and the Royal Family more firmly in the Hearts and Affections of all true Protestants.

And as the *wicked, barbarous* and *tyrannical* Spirit of *Popery* hath been so well and justly exposed from the Pulpit and Press, and shewed itself in so many Instances of Rapine and Cruelty, to the Ruin of many and the Terror of more, it may reasonably be hoped, that a Religion which transforms Men into Monsters will be had in the utmost abhorrence, and that if Attempts should be made at any time hereafter to obtrude it upon us, we shall oppose it with the warmest Zeal, as it is a Religion so contray to the glorious Gospel of Christ, and so destructive of Souls, as well as of the happy Government under which we live, and of the Liberty, Peace, and Felicity of Mankind.

Thus a wise God who brings Good out of Evil can, and we hope will, make our late Troubles and Fears subservient to our very great Advantage upon many Accounts; and by what you have heard, I am sure you will conclude, that our Deliverance from them is a Mercy to be highly esteemed and religiously improved.

A Thanksgiving Sermon. 17

I proceed now to the last Thing proposed, which is, to point out the Improvement that ought to be made of the Deliverance which I have been briefly representing to you.

1. And the first thing I have to mention is, that we should have our Eyes and Thoughts raised towards the *God of our Salvation*. He is frequently mentioned in Scripture under that Character; so Plal. lxviii. 19, 20. and in other Places. *Give us, saith holy David, Help from Trouble, for vain is the Help of Man.—Through God we shall do valiantly: for he it is that shall tread down our Enemies.* Many more Texts might be cited, which are expressive of the same Sentiments. So that whatsoever *Instruments* God may make use of in the Deliverances which he is pleased to work out for his People, it is fit that we should look to *him* as the great *Author* of them, and such as are under the Influence of religious Principles will do so. Therefore though it becomes us to do Justice to the glorious Character and extraordinary Merit of the *Illustrious Duke*, whose Services to his Royal Father, his Country, and the Protestant Interest, will gain him an immortal Reputation; and though the Bravery of the Army under his Command ought not to be mentioned but with high Applause; yet it should never be forgotten,

C

that

18 *A Thanksgiving Sermon.*

that we are indebted to a gracious Providence for Victory and Deliverance; and we should say with *David* 1 Chron. xxix.

11. *Thine, O Lord, is the Greatness, and the Power, and the Glory, and the Victory, and the Majesty: For all that is in the Heaven and in the Earth is thine; thine is the Kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as Head above all.*

2. The great Goodness of God to us, should be acknowledged with Hearts full of *Thankfulness*. In the Beginning of my Discourse, this was taken notice of, and therefore I shall say the less about it here. Let the Language of the devout Psalmist in the xviii. Psalm instruct us in, and excite us to the Duty which I am now recommending. *The Lord liveth, and blessed be my Rock; and let the God of my Salvation be exalted. — It is God that avengeth me and subdueth the People under me. — He delivereth me from mine Enemies, yea, thou liftest me up above those that rise up against me, thou hast delivered me from the violent Man. — Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the Heathen, and sing Praises unto thy Name.*

Such as are of an ingenuous Temper, and have any Sense of Gratitude, will be thankful for great Benefits received; and
when

A Thanksgiving Sermon. 19

when we consider how seasonably and remarkably Providence has appeared for us, though (as the Effect of Divine Resentment, and of the Displeasure of God against us for the crying Abominations of our Land) we might have been devoted to Destruction; we must, I think, be sensible that we have the greatest Reason to be thankful, and to bless the Name of the Lord: and here I would mention the Words of the cxviith Psalm; *Praise the Lord all ye Nations: Praise him all ye People. For his merciful Kindness is great towards us; and the Truth of the Lord endureth for ever: Praise ye the Lord.*

3. The Defeat of our Enemies and our Deliverance from them, should be considered as Matter of Joy as well as of *Thankfulness*. It ought indeed to excite Compassion in us to think how many have been Sufferers by our late Troubles; and the Wickedness of those that were engaged in the late Rebellion, with the sad Consequences of their aggravated Guilt to themselves, should move Pity, and the Religion of Jesus not only allows but recommends such a Temper; it should, however, give us much Pleasure that God has, in his great Mercy, disappointed them in their wicked Purposes, broken their destructive Measures, kept us from falling into such cruel Hands, and favoured and defended

20 *A Thanksgiving Sermon.*

our *righteous Cause*, and we ought to rejoice in his Salvation, and in the Victory that he has given us. *Jehoshaphat* and his People, we are told, went to *Jerusalem with Joy: For the Lord had made them to rejoice over their Enemies*, 2 Chron. xx. 27. And a holy and religious Joy upon such an Occasion as this is, undoubtedly well becomes us.

4. The Experience we have had of the Mercy and Kindness of God to us, should engage us to pray earnestly for the Continuance of his gracious and powerful Protection. We ought to look upon the Deliverance which we are praising him for, as an Answer to the many fervent Petitions and Intercessions that were offered up when we were in Distress; and as we reap the happy Fruits of our Applications to the Throne of Grace, this should excite us to continue them; and if we have a true Sense of our Duty, and a sincere Regard to our own, and to the publick Welfare and Safety, we shall do so. Certain it is that the Favour of God is our only sure Defence, and nothing else can be depended upon: And how can we expect so great a Blessing if we do not think it worth asking? Let us therefore remember what God has already done for us, and take Encouragement from the Kindness of his Providence
to

A Thanksgiving Sermon. 21

to be more constant and fervent in Prayer. *He hath heard our Voice and our Supplications ; and because he hath inclined his Ear unto us, therefore should we call upon him as long as we live.* Psal. cxvi. 1, 2.

5. The great Goodness of God to us in putting an End to our late Troubles and defeating our Enemies, should strongly induce us to *put our Trust* in him at all Times, and to honour him by such an Affiance as is his due.

We have been a People highly favoured by Providence, and often saved by God's *Right Hand*. Our Deliverances have been many and surprisngly great, and now there is another added to the Number, which will be recorded and transmitted down to Posterity as a signal one ; so that we have the highest Reason to make Jehovah our Confidence, and this will be our Security. *They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion which cannot be removed but abideth for ever.* — *As the Mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his People from henceforth even for ever.* Psalm cxxv. 1, 2.

6. Happy will it be for us if our late Troubles and our Deliverance out of them may be the Means of *Reforming* us, and making us a better People. If we keep
on

22 *A Thanksgiving Sermon.*

on Sinning against the Mercies which we have received, this will discover monstrous Ingratitude, and be a dreadful Aggravation of our Guilt; and if we don't amend our Ways and Manners, and turn to the Lord, we have just Ground to fear that the Consequences will yet be deplorable. The Sins of *Britain* are our greatest and worst Enemies. That abominable Practice of *profane Swearing*, which, in Defiance of the Laws of God and Man, is so common among People of all Ranks, is a *prodigious Iniquity*, and as it destroys all Reverence for *an Oath*, which is the strongest Security that any can give, for their behaving well as Members of a Community, so if such as are accustomed to that *odious Vice* are drawn in to be perjur'd Traytors, it may be easily accounted for. As to *more sensual Vices*, " they tend (as " a very eminent and judicious Divine has " observed) to make us an Effeminate, " Mean-spirited, a Lazy, Slothful, Un- " healthful People, useless to the Glorious " Prince, and excellent Government we " live under; neither fit to endure the " *Hardships*, or encounter the *Hazards* " of War, nor apply ourselves to the *Bu- " siness*, or undergo the *Labours* that be- " long to a *State of Peace*, and do con- " sequently tend to infer upon us a de- " plorable, but unpitied, *Poverty*, and " (which all will pretend to abhor,) *Sla-* " *very*

A Thanksgiving Sermon. 23

“ *very* at length*”. And nothing can be more certain than that by our Wickedness we forfeit the Protection of Heaven upon which our Happiness depends, and expose ourselves to God’s righteous Judgments.

Let all then resolve to reform what is amiss in themselves, and do all they can in their several Places to promote a general Reformation, that we and our Posterity may be safe and happy. Now *bles-
sed be the Lord God, the God of Israel,
who only doth wondrous Things.—And
blessed be his glorious Name for ever, and
let the whole Earth be filled with his
Glory ; Amen and Amen.*

* *Howe’s Works*, Vol. II. p. 284.

F I N I S.

1. The first part of the document
describes the general situation
of the country and the
state of the economy.
It also mentions the
importance of the
agriculture and the
industry.
The second part of the document
describes the political situation
and the state of the
constitution. It also
mentions the importance
of the law and the
justice.

