

LETTER

Samuel Dillingham
to William Sancroft (1617–1693)

15 January 1652

From the ruins of Fotheringhay Castle, the sad monument of God's wrath upon a place where we first practiced the doctrine of cutting off princes.¹

Be of a good confidence still; as yet there's ground enough to think God can work without miracles. Till the Scots be thrice more totally routed, and three more Edinburgh castles entailed thereupon, I cannot despond so far, in reference to things there, as he who has already taken that text in the Fourth Lament. "We have looked to a nation," etc. Nay, but at present, and not before, I begin to reckon them something.

Let Portugal, that inconsiderable prince, apostatize into embassages (which yet may be only of complaint), I'll not give him six-pence for his neutrality. France is a little better resolved. Let Spain stroke us upon the head for his own advantage. Holland will have more wit, and be honester, though against their wills. Let all means disappear, I'll then hang upon that Providence (which permitted the Benjamites, and does still the Turks) for an alteration more immediately; and till the book of Judges be erased out for Apocrypha, or the Ottoman history burnt, I shall neither think much of some men's success nor the better of their cause.

The enclosed was of the last week; it comes late only so far as you saw before. You see, sir, how God has taken the kirk off that foolish humor. They would be saved, but Providence must do it either by their arm, or not at all; which was to tie God almost to impossibilities, at least to debar Him the use of His most likely means. And what have they got by it? But a kingdom united may stand. But for us, we are so far in engagements against the best of governments that (for all the simple plea of our own senses, I think he was out of his senses who durst first venture his conscience upon so weak a plank) we deserve never to see king again. Which yet I am confident we shall, all old blind bardisms and witchcrafts to the contrary notwithstanding.

Henry Cary, *Memorials of the Great Civil War in England* (London: Henry Colburn, 1842), II:398–399.

¹ Mary (1542–1587), Queen of Scots, was beheaded at Fotheringhay on 8 February 1587.