

*The CONSISTENCY of MAN'S FREE-AGENCY, with
GOD'S FORE-KNOWLEDGE in the GOVERNMENT
of the WORLD, proved and illustrated:*

I N A

DISCOURSE,

PREACHED IN THE

PARISH CHURCH OF GREAT YARMOUTH,

On THURSDAY, APRIL the 23d, 1789;

Being the Day of GENERAL THANKSGIVING,
FOR HIS MAJESTY'S HAPPY RECOVERY.

BY SAMUEL COOPER, D. D.

Y A R M O U T H :

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I. T I M O T H Y,

CHAPTER ii. VERSES i. and ii.

I EXHORT THEREFORE, THAT FIRST OF ALL, SUPPLICATIONS, PRAYERS, INTERCESSIONS, AND GIVING OF THANKS, BE MADE FOR ALL MEN; FOR KINGS, AND FOR ALL THAT ARE IN AUTHORITY, THAT WE MAY LEAD A QUIET AND PEACEABLE LIFE, IN ALL GODLINESS AND HONESTY!

WHOMSOEVER either zealously enjoins the duty of prayer and thanksgiving to others, or discharges it with sincerity himself, must necessarily first believe;—that the providence of God adjusts every even the minutest parts of the creation, and regulates every event in the universe. He must therefore be firmly persuaded, that no GOOD can happen to us,—as well where the agency of *man* is interposed, as where they do not intervene as instruments,—which GOD in his loving kindness has not appointed;—and that even no SEEMING EVIL can befall us, which the same all-merciful Providence has not foreseen, and which he will not in the event, convert to REAL GOOD.

Upon a former occasion, not indeed on a day of PUBLIC THANKSGIVING, but, of PUBLIC HUMILIATION, I took the opportunity of proving and explaining to you so fully, the truth of the perpetual AGENCY OF PROVIDENCE over mankind, considered, both INDIVIDUALLY and NATIONALLY,* without the belief of which, all prayer and thanksgiving, is certainly but either idle mockery, or detestable hypocrisy, that I trust, it is not now necessary for me to enter into an investigation of the GENERAL PRINCIPLES of that doctrine, as that would be only to repeat once more, what I before taught.

There is however ONE, and at this time, but one objection to that explanation, against which, I wish further to caution you; as it may without a previous guard, at first sight appear, either sufficient, totally to subvert the whole fabric, or at least to make it totter on it's basis.—An objection, which, it must be confessed, has sometimes afforded a momentary triumph to infidels, and does perhaps still serve to support at least the doubts of sceptics; notwithstanding it has under different forms been often answered, and certainly is capable of receiving the most complete refutation. It must however be confessed, that it has likewise been adopted by writers of a very different kind, even by men, —too sincere in the belief of Christianity, and too celebrated for their acquisitions in human learning,—not to impart to it a weight

* See the Author's former Sermon on Providence.

weight and authority, which it could not claim from its own strength. And, as authority has more influence over the bulk of mankind, than even reason itself, it is a duty the more incumbent upon me, to attempt at least, to convince your understandings of the falsity of the objection, by unravelling its fallacy, and by that means, exposing its real weakness.

The argument is founded upon the seeming incompatibility of PRESCIENCE IN GOD, with FREEDOM IN MAN.—For, to the objectors it appears incomprehensible, that God should be able CERTAINLY TO FORESEE, FREE CONTINGENT ACTIONS.

Some of them indeed, do not deny, but that both these positions are true, separately considered;—and even maintain, that THEY BELIEVE them both, though they appear to be inconsistent with, or contradictory to each other. If they would be content to assent to them upon the authority of Scripture, notwithstanding they are unable to give a solution of this difficulty, which they state; they would have good and incontrovertible grounds for their belief. For it well becomes the ignorance of man to receive as indisputably true, whatever God in his infinite wisdom has declared, though human reason is itself unable to discover it. But, when they affirm, that upon the principles of reason only, they assent to the truth of two propositions, which at the same time appear to them irreconcilable with each other, they must, most certainly, have only deceived them-

themselves, and mistaken an illusion of the imagination, for that conviction of the understanding, which can alone be the result of reasoning, and intuition. For 'till all the boundaries and land-marks of human knowledge be first broken down, and carried away, no man can discern the truth of two contradictory propositions; and if they be once removed, nothing is left us to contemplate, but the desolate view of one shoreless ocean of scepticism.

Formidable however, as this difficulty may at first view appear, it is in reality only a mere phantom, which entirely owes it's visionary form and shape, to a mist, raised from words. For it must either arise from the supposition, that by the CONTINGENCY of human actions, is meant, that they are the offspring of mere CHANCE, and then they must be either EFFECTS WITHOUT A CAUSE, which is absurd, or the effects of SOME CAUSE, which though not visible to finite, may be to infinite wisdom; or it must arise from the supposition, that those events, which are ONLY called CONTINGENT, because they are UNCERTAIN in their issue to us, can not be therefore known with CERTAINTY to God.

But, as both these suppositions are founded on false principles; the deductions which are drawn from them, must likewise terminate in error. For though every man, is endued with a power to CHOOSE, and ACTS in consequence of his OWN CHOICE, yet,

yet, as every such action must arise from some MOTIVE, and is consequently the EFFECT of some INTENTION OF DESIGN in man, otherwise, man could NOT be a RATIONAL AGENT;—the actions of men therefore, no more than the works of God, can with propriety be called, the produce of CHANCE.

On the contrary. Each motive produces its correspondent action, in all the varieties of human agency, as much as each law of nature, does its correspondent effect, in the multiform phenomena of the universe. For, where we have an equal knowledge of those motives, and these laws, we can equally account for the regularities and aberrations of men, as for all the motions of the heavenly bodies;—we can equally point out the cause of the steady perseverance of some men in a regular course of virtue, and the eccentric deviations of others,—of the calm gentleness of one nation, and the wild ferocity of another,—as we can explain the reasons of the continued revolutions of the planets in their orbits, and the still seeming eccentricity of the comets,—of the gentle lapse of a river, or the tumultuous agitations of the ocean. Were it not so, all precept would be vain, and even all revelation useless. For what is the intent of either human or divine instruction, but to supply us with MOTIVES as well as PRINCIPLES, to controul the headstrong violence of our passions, to speak them into peace, to say to them, thus far shalt thou go and no further, and to keep all the lawful emotions of our nature, confined, within their own proper banks of reason and religion.

As to the supposition, of any ABSOLUTE CONTINGENCY in human actions, so that the actions themselves, and their effects, cannot be discerned by the all-seeing eye of GOD; it is not only inconsistent with every IDEA of a CREATOR, and therefore incongruous to REASON;—for he, who MADE man, must KNOW, what is IN man, and he, who KNOWS the MOTIVES, must foresee the actions;—but it is likewise contradicted, by what man himself can actually discover, and refuted, by what we ourselves daily experience.

For, notwithstanding all this much talked of CONTINGENCY of FREE actions, can not even every one of US, KNOW, in respect to those with whom we are intimately acquainted, HOW in certain cases THEY WILL ACT? And for what purpose, are all the pains, which some men take to investigate human nature; but, that from the knowledge of human motives, they may be able to foresee, and in diverse instances with almost absolute certainty to foretell, what in given circumstances, will be the FUTURE actions, not only of individuals, but even of whole nations? Could we not derive some knowledge of this kind, from the informations we have received of the actions, intentions, and designs of other men in the several past ages, and nations of the world;—history could not convey to us any instruction, nor could experience impart to us any wisdom.

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That even we therefore, poor, purblind, and diminutive creatures, as we are, have SOME PRESCIENCE, OR FORESIGHT of HUMAN ACTIONS, CONTINGENT as they are called, is evident, both to reason and experience. Can any one then with the least appearance of argument, or the slightest probability of conjecture, maintain, that a discernment similar in kind, but infinitely more excellent in its nature and degree, does not belong to HIM, who at one glance beholds the whole and wide expanded circle of creation? If it be asked, why our foresight is so limited in its discoveries? — the answer is evident; — that it arises from the small circumference of that horizon, which bounding our view, necessarily circumscribes all the circumstances and motives of mankind, from which our knowledge can possibly be derived. From hence then it follows, that only the actions of THOSE men who are removed to such a distance from us in PLACE OR TIME, that their motives are beyond our ken; can truly be said to be CONTINGENT EVEN in respect to us. But no actions whatsoever can possibly with propriety be affirmed to be CONTINGENT to that SUPREME BEING; WHO, is the CREATOR and MAKER OF ALL THINGS. For, arguing analogically from our own faculties, as employed only for a moment, upon a very small, — even an infinitely small part of HIS works, REASON can teach us; — that ALL successions of ages, and of countries, must be to HIM, but ONE ETERNAL NOW, and EVER PRESENT VISION.

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Whether therefore, an event *has* happened, or *will* happen, that is to say, — whether as it regards us, it be past or future, these terms can never appertain to it, when it is considered in relation to GOD. PAST, PRESENT, AND TO COME, are to HIM, THE SAME. — TO HIM, whom neither space, nor time can circumscribe, every event must be equally, CERTAIN, because at all times, it equally, IS. HE sees, at one view, every tribe of men, and each individual of every age and nation, which WAS, IS, or ever WILL BE upon earth; to each therefore he has allotted his station; and as the moral governor of the universe, he has involved in every man's condition, the temporal rewards of his virtue, and the correction or punishment of his vices; whether the events arise from the unconscious operations of the works of nature, or from the free and voluntary actions, of mankind upon each other. TO HIM therefore it was equally as well known, when he sent down that national calamity, which we so lately deplored; as it NOW is to US, when we are met to return thanks for its removal;—whether we should receive it with those dispositions of mind, which are most acceptable to HIM, and which, would through his all-bountiful goodness, avert from us a lasting punishment; or,—whether, still remaining ungrateful for our past blessings, and insensible of his all-ruling power, we should continue to be the objects of his displeasure, and consequently become the just victims of his vengeance. HE certainly foreknew our contrition for our former ingratitude, and the penitent anguish of our souls under our late affliction; and had
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therefore pre-determined the present happy event, and extraordinary HUMAN MEANS he would select, as the instruments of turning our sorrow into gladness. Whilst therefore in our effusions of joy for his MAJESTY'S restoration to health, and our own consequent restoration to happiness, the common feelings of our nature prompt us to express the gratitude which we justly owe even to the HUMAN INSTRUMENTS;—let us with a still vastly more lively gratitude, united with the most exalted piety, most fervently and unremittingly pour forth our tribute of thanksgiving, which to the conviction of our understandings, has been shown to be so abundantly due, to THAT SUPREME, EFFICIENT CAUSE; “TO WHOM ALONE OF RIGHT BELONG, ALL HONOUR AND GLORY, PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING, BOTH NOW AND FOR EVERMORE.”

If indeed, the objection to the providence of God, had been really well founded, which, I trust, has been amply proved, to be altogether groundless; then certainly, the duties of prayer, and thanksgiving, would upon the principles of reason alone, be totally annihilated; and even difficult perhaps would it have been to engage mankind to perform them, upon the authority of revelation. For who can reasonably be expected, to offer up prayers to a being, for the averting from us, future calamities; which, that being cannot foresee; and to thank him for past blessings; which HE could not foreknow? But having already reconciled, the injunctions of revelation, with the deductions

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of reason; let us now, with the most implicit submission, attend to the exhortation of the Apostle in my text, and carefully consider, both it's PRINCIPLES, and it's CONSEQUENCES.

In the foregoing chapter, he had taught Timothy, that, "the END of the whole commandment is CHARITY, out of a pure heart, and good conscience, and faith unfeigned." He had likewise shown, how, "some teachers had swerved from that end," and that "his own blasphemies and persecutions were pardoned, because they had been done ignorantly in unbelief." Having again enjoined Timothy, "to hold faith and a good conscience," he then begins the second chapter, with this exhortation, "I exhort therefore that first of all, supplications, prayers, and giving of thanks be made for ALL men; for KINGS and for ALL that are in AUTHORITY, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour." And certainly, as charity is the END of the commandment; nothing could possibly, more effectually illustrate and promote that end, than an injunction to pray for the temporal and eternal happiness of the whole race of mankind; whatever may be their state and condition, and in whatever region and country they may exist. What exhortation likewise, can more efficaciously tend to produce the CONSEQUENCE of such a practice, THE LEADING A QUIET AND PEACEABLE LIFE IN ALL GODLINESS AND HONESTY, than, the command, to make all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving,

giving, for KINGS, and ALL in AUTHORITY? Since upon the conduct of kings, and the exercise of their authority, the comforts of the people must very much depend; considered in relation to BOTH the circumstances, which are generally supposed to constitute the happiness of man;—the outward condition of his body, and the inward state of his mind.

To prove this, can it be necessary for me to describe the horrid state of a nation, where either for the punishment of it's crimes, or for a trial of it's virtues,—or for some other reason not immediately discernable by us,—God permits a tyrant, to seize upon the property of his subjects, without law, equity, justice, or humanity;—to deprive them of their liberties, and immure them in a darksome dungeon, unknowing of their accusation, and unconscious of any crime:—to rob them of their lives,—by substituting private assassination for legal judgment;—to rack their bodies with the most agonizing tortures, so as to induce even innocence herself, when unable to sustain the anguish, to avow the perpetration of a crime it was impossible for her to commit;—I again ask,—need I take upon me the painful task of recounting to you, the miseries, which history teaches us, others, have suffered from wicked rulers?—Need I describe the dire state of persecution, under which the Apostle lived, when he gave the injunction in my text; or the sufferings they sustained to whom it was given?—to teach you how much the comfort and well being of society must depend upon the
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conduct of KINGS, and the exercise of that power, which is intrusted to every one in authority.

Thanks be to God! That WE can only learn from the revelations of OTHERS, the evils and calamities which tyrants so frequently produce; but thanks be likewise to the same Almighty goodness, WE have the unspeakable happiness of knowing from our own present experience, what BLESSINGS, an humane, virtuous, and pious monarch is able to confer. Our prayers and supplications can only be offered up to God, to entreat, that HE, who is the KING OF KINGS, would be graciously pleased to continue his blessings to us; and our thanksgivings ought incessantly to be poured forth, that he has given us a king, to be the instrument of good to his people.

But, when nations are suffering under circumstances the very reverse of those in which we rejoice; where can they look for succour in their distress,—where can they seek either some mitigation, or total redress of the evils, under which they groan, but, of HIM WHO RULETH OVER ALL?—Would they attempt to find a remedy, by an union of their own strength and power, as a people; how can they effect even this without HIS aid?—Who, though he has left the actions of men to their own choice, has adjusted the events of them to their punishment or reward; and how can they procure HIS assistance, without acknowledging his power, and imploring his help?—But if, without looking up to
God,

God, as the supreme governor of the universe, and the great and ultimate disposer of all events, they assume vengeance to themselves, and dissolving the government, return once more to that STATE OF NATURE, out of which they emerged, or rather, to a state worse than that,—of TOTAL ANARCHY and CONFUSION;—(those bonds of PARENTAL AUTHORITY, and of FILIAL UNION, which at first BOUND MEN TO EACH OTHER, being now SNAPT ASUNDER,)—they will involve themselves in far greater evils, than those, which they endeavoured to remove; and being inured to those habits of cruelty and ferocity, which a civil war necessarily implants and nourishes,—they must at length be forced to submit, either to some one tyrant, worse than he was, against whom they at first united;—or, instead of bearing the yoke of ONE, submit to the far greater burden of MANY.—Thus, by violating a primary duty of Christianity,—NOT TO DO EVIL, that even GOOD MAY COME OF IT,—they will have filled their country with the forbidden evil, without reaping the expected good.—But if, on the contrary, men would but obey the injunctions of the Apostle, they would in all such cases, not only in due time, that is, at that time, which God sees fittest for man, have the cause of their sufferings removed; but, even whilst they continued to sustain them,—such would be the efficacy of prayer upon their own minds, that the yoke would become easier, and their burden lighter.—For, the very exercise and habit of prayer, would eradicate those emotions of resentment, anger, wrath, and revenge, from their bosoms, which only

serve to give a keener edge to our calamities; and by implanting mildness, meekness, gentleness, forbearance, and resignation in their stead, either heal their wounds, or render the sufferer more insensible to pain.

The duty of men therefore, under the sufferings which are inflicted upon them, in consequence of the GOVERNMENT, under which they live, is the same, as under any other misfortunes they sustain, from any other circumstances, in which they are placed; and their relief must arise from the same means.—That is to say,—in both cases, they must not, “*be themselves*”
 “*anxiously solicitous for any thing, but in every thing by prayer*”
 “*and supplication, and thanksgiving, to let their requests be made*”
 “*known unto God;*”—for then, as the Apostle says,—“*the peace*”
 “*of God, which passeth all understanding, will keep their hearts*”
 “*and minds, through Jesus Christ.*”

This is a mode of seeking relief upon all occasions, by which we can never be in danger of committing any crime.—But every repeated application of it, will be a new increase in piety, and virtue; and make us become the still more fit to receive the benefit we ask.

This is a mode, by which, we may not only, most surely alleviate our own wants, but relieve likewise those of our fellow creatures.—This is a method, by which, the poorest man is
 enabled

enabled to do more acts of charity, than the most opulent, with all his wealth, is able to impart.—This affords means, by which, the most indigent, can return to the most bountiful benefactor, infinitely greater benefits than he receives.—This opens a way, by which, the meanest subject can confer greater blessings upon his KING and COUNTRY, than the most potent monarch has, by any other means, power to bestow.—May we not then, without being liable to the accusation of presumption, but from a well-grounded confidence in the promises of the Gospel,—RETURN THANKS TO GOD, THAT HE HAS BEEN PLEASED TO RESTORE OUR MONARCH, TO THE ARDENT PRAYERS OF HIS PEOPLE?—And surely, my brethren, if there be subjects upon earth, who ought incessantly to implore, the protection and favour of Heaven, upon the monarch, under whose government they live;—and to offer up the most fervent gratitude to Providence, for delivering him from sickness, and enabling him again to wield the sceptre with his own hand;—if there be a nation, which ought ever to be returning thanks to God, for the national blessings they enjoy,—WE ARE THOSE SUBJECTS,—whose more peculiar bounden duty it is;—WE ARE THAT NATION,—which enjoys the *privilege* of being *that chosen* people!

Would time permit me, now more fully to illustrate to you, the conduct of Providence, in the government of nations, and more amply to trace out his ways, in his dealings with mankind; I could not possibly make choice of a subject, which would more
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clearly and effectually evince it, than in minutely pointing out to you, his continued operations, in the whole progress, formation, and establishment of our own constitution. For though, to an infidel, or sceptical politician, it may perhaps appear, to be the mere fabrication of men ;—to any one, who looks deeper than the surface of things, it must be evident, that it could not have been completed without the HAND OF GOD.—For, it is composed of materials, the most various and discordant ;—brought in different ages, by inhabitants of countries, most various and opposite in their manners, laws, customs, and institutions ;—by Romans,—by Goths,—by Saxons,—by Danes,—by Normans ;—and in later times, by inhabitants of various other countries, both near and remote ;—and all these other various materials, were intermixed with the original, and native produce of this island.

Prior to experience, what could we possibly expect to find,—but,—that a fabric, thus composed of such different, and heterogeneous materials, must be rude and mis-shapen in it's form,—weak and feeble in it's structure ?—If again, we consider that the workmen, who at different times devised the plans, and contributed their labour to build it, were as discordant in their designs, and as various in their strength and skill, as the materials of which it was composed ;—that the part which one had erected, another pulled down ;—a column, or an arch, which one supplied, another removed ;—a center of the building,
which

which one had raised, another took away ;—what idea, I repeat, could any one, prior to experience, form of such an edifice ?—But that it was an huge, unwieldy pile,—which, from the imperfection of the materials, and unskilfulness of the workmen, was tottering to it's fall ;—and whilst it lasted,—served only as a monument of misemployed industry, and of human weakness ?—For, where there is no *selection* in the materials, there can surely be no *beauty* in the work ;—and where there is no *uniformity* of design,—there evidently can be no *proportion*, nor *unity* in the whole. For otherwise, *design*, must be the effect of *chance*,—and *coherence*, the offspring of *incongruity*.

But if, on the contrary, this fabric be an object of the highest admiration ;—and even of such envy to other nations, as to be deemed the most complete model for their imitation,—from it's superiority in beauty, elegance, and convenience, to every other constitution, which ever was, or now is ;—if an attempt to frame such a form of government, were the wish, and desire of the wisest nations, and of the profoundest legislators of antiquity,—but, which, they were unable to accomplish ;—where can we look for THAT ALL-PIERCING MIND, and ALL-PLASTIC HAND, which brought forth *unity* out of *variety*,—which struck out *harmony* from *discord*,—which produced the most perfect *symmetry*, out of an unformed *chaos* ?—So that the whole body is fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth ;—a perfect system,—in which,—the authority of the
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king, the *power* of the *nobles*, and the *liberty* of the *people*, reciprocally support, and are supported by each other.—Where each part remains firm, by its own proper principle of cohesion ; and where, the equal pressure of the parts upon each other, supports the WHOLE in the common center of gravitation ?—To whom, I say, can we look, as the designer and finisher of such a work ?—but to THAT ALL-MIGHTY ARCHITECT and RULER, who *puts down one king, and sets up another*,—who turned the most jarring and contradictory wills of men,—whilst operating in ways the most diverse and opposite,—to fulfil, in the most perfect concord, *his own* intentions, and complete *his own* designs—HE,—whilst men were gratifying the inclinations of their own free wills, who were always ignorant of the future consequences of their own conduct, and were often using means, which frustrated their own devices ;—HE, I say, made all of them, his own instruments in the production of events, diametrically opposite to those, which were the objects of their own choice ; and therefore destructive of the apparent natural consequences of their own actions.

In separate and detached parts of this plan, the operations of God have been often clearly and distinctly delineated.—But these, I shall pass over in silence, as most of these events are annually celebrated by our Church ;—and therefore, you have repeated opportunities of hearing the causes and consequences of them minutely explained. It only remains for me therefore
now,

now, to remind you of the anguish, which we felt for his Majesty's late affliction, and the still further miseries, which we feared, would have accrued from it's continuance.—This, it is necessary for me to do, for the most important purpose, of pointing out to you, the ALL-DIRECTING PROVIDENCE OF GOD, in the events produced by the FREE AGENCY OF MAN,—(the only purpose for which, we would wish to remember it);—and thus teach you to be truly grateful to GOD, for the blessing of that recovery, for which, we are now enjoined by authority, to offer up to HIM, our unfeigned praises, and thanksgivings.

Need I to observe to you, that our sorrows flowed not from one single spring?—That one source of them, arose in our common feelings, as MEN;—the other, in the more peculiar sensations, which belong to us, as SUBJECTS?—To know only, that a most amiable monarch, though he was even unrelated to us in that capacity,—was afflicted with the direst malady, which can possibly befall human nature;—to think of the poignancy, with which, the affliction must pierce the exquisitely susceptible bosom, of one,—who is a pattern of all that is amiable, as a wife,—and of all that is exemplary, as a mother;—of one,—pre-eminent in virtue, as in rank;—to recollect,—how much it must wound the breasts of an amiable offspring, who return the utmost anxiety of parental love, with the tenderest warmth of filial affection;—must alone excite in every heart,—the least
sensible

sensible to the best affections of human nature,—the tenderest regret, and the sincerest sorrow!

But, when to the consideration of him, for whom we mourned,—as the object of veneration, and as a bright example of our imitation, as a MAN,—were added likewise,—our reverence and love towards him, for the blessings he imparted to us,—as a SOVEREIGN, and as the FATHER OF HIS PEOPLE ;—NO words can paint the horror, with which, we contemplated our situation at the moment; and the gloom which overspread our future prospects!—What gleam of hope from mortal help, could we discern?—What effectual human remedy could we foresee?—To prayer alone, could we have recourse ;—to implore of GOD, —that he would either be graciously pleased,—in his own good time,—to remove the malady ;—or,—to teach us, under it's continuance, to bend in mute submission to his UNERRING WILL. Thus, endeavouring better to fit ourselves, for the enjoyment at least of any future benefits, God might be pleased to vouchsafe us, by humbly resigning ourselves to the deprivation of those blessings, we had so long enjoyed ;—and which, —we then began to be sensible,—we had so little deserved.

A faint ray of hope indeed, that the affliction might not only be temporary, but even of short duration, was soon thought to be discerned by some ;—but which, was deemed by others, to be merely visionary, and illusive.—They represented it, as either,
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—the suggestion only, of ignorant pretence; or cunning imposture;—or, at best,—as the delusion of hope,—which rather imagines it beholds, what it wishes to see,—than really beholds, what it warmly describes.—Whilst some however, were eagerly flattering themselves, with so indistinct a glimmering of comfort;—yet,—whether, in the mean time,—the same system of conduct would be adopted, which, under the auspices of our most gracious sovereign, with the favour of Heaven upon his pious endeavours, procured happiness to ourselves, and made us the envy of other nations;—was still to them,—and indeed to almost all,—a subject, of most anxious doubt, and most solicitous enquiry.—But, it was not long, before this suspense,—harrassing as that was,—seemed to be converted into the still more melancholy conviction, of an indubitable certainty.—Far,—far distant,—be the spirit of party from these sacred walls!—Would to Heaven, it were banished from every place!—And, God forbid!—that whilst I am aiming to teach you, your duty to your CREATOR, I should endeavour to excite in you the least animosity, against any one of your fellow creatures.—God forbid also!—that I should use the language of adulation, to the best, or the wisest of mortals, in a place, set apart for offering up our prayers and praises, to the ALL-MIGHTY and ALL-WISE RULER OF THE WORLD.—Anxious however as I am, to make you fully sensible of the happiness, to which we are restored, by the event we are now met to commemorate;—and to teach you with heart-felt gratitude, to acknowledge in it,—the all-pervading

providence of God ;—whatever is necessary to be said, for the accomplishment of these important purposes, I shall dare to say, —equally disdaining to deprecate the censure, as to court the applause of man.—Duty therefore, compels me to observe,—that SOME,—in the midst of our general distresses,—in their eagerness to seize the helm of state,—in their haste to grasp it more speedily,—and their wish to hold it more firmly,—did not at least MATURELY consider,—that they attempted to lay the ground-work of their plan, in principles, not only incapable of cohering with those of the constitution in general ; but which were in their nature, even repulsive of those particular principles, upon which, his Majesty's own right, and that of his family, was at first founded, and is now so firmly established.—Upon principles too, which must in the event, either for ever have excluded the rightful Monarch, from re-assuming his seat upon the throne ; or at least, upon his recovery, have reserved for him only,—a participation in a divided crown and empire :—Upon principles,—which would also in the mean time, have left him deprived of that common protection for his person, and for the preservation of those comforts and conveniences, which, the equitable spirit of our laws, trusting nothing to the particular characters of individuals, however amiable, extends without discrimination, to the peasant, and the peer.

Some faithful ABDIELS however,—faithful alike to the monarch and the people,—in this dread moment of danger to the
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state,—arose,—with the most irresistible tide of pathetic eloquence, and with the most irresistible strength of argument, successfully to oppose, and happily to disconcert these measures.—They nobly stood forth as the guardians of the constitution.—They opposed themselves as bulwarks, for the protection of that sovereign, to whose defence indeed they were bound, but bound only, in common with many others,—by every tie of public, and of private duty.—In a noble emulation of their spirit, the spirit of the people likewise arose.—An almost unexampled loyalty, and sacred regard to the constitution, diffused themselves around,—penetrated to the remotest corners of the country, and animated and invigorated almost every breast.—The understandings of the people were enlightened;—and they justly discerned, that their own liberties, and their Monarch's rights, were inseparable; and that they only, who were faithful subjects to HIM, could be true friends to THEM.

Will you say, that this was only the common triumph of truth over error,—aided by that natural impulse of affections, which will at times, impetuously break forth from the human heart, like a torrent, and which, it is in vain to attempt to stop, in the fury of it's course?

Be it so!—Though certainly, even the vanquished could boast of much worldly wisdom, and politic sagacity. But, advance one step further, and then try, whether you do not discover that
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same ALMIGHTY POWER, which we have so often seen, suffering men indeed to act according to their own wills,—yet turning aside the consequences they intended, by an interposition of events, which renders all their volitions and designs, vain,—and all their actions and attempts, ineffectual?—See, whether you do not find, that the very eagerness, with which, the attempt was made, the more hastily to snatch into their hands, the reins of government, was not the very circumstance, which frustrated their attempt?—and whether, even the very labour, which some employed, to make their power, when they should be in possession of it, to stand fast as a strong mountain, which nothing could move,—was not the very cause of their not attaining any share of it, even for a moment?—Look likewise, and behold the same ALL-RULING PROVIDENCE, who is our constant guide, protector, and benefactor, not only restoring our sovereign, and the blessings of his government, to the prayers of his people;—but in the abundance of his mercy, which always gives us more than we can ask or think, in a much shorter space of time, than even the most sanguine of his subjects, or the most affectionate of his servants, could even dare to hope?—Look once more,—at the HUMAN AGENCY, which God thought fit to employ, as the INSTRUMENT of this blessing;—and say,—whether it is not in vain, that human cunning, and worldly wisdom, look down with disdain, contempt, and scorn upon him, *whom the Lord hath determined and delighted to honour?*

“ THIS

“ THIS IS THE LORD’S DOING ! ”—*And as it is now marvellous in our eyes,*—let it remain so indelibly imprinted on our memory, that we may teach it to our children’s children !—Let it bring forth in us, it’s genuine fruits of praise and thanksgiving ; by instructing us and our posterity,—“ TO REJOICE IN THE LORD ALWAYS : ”—Again, I say, REJOICE !—Let us then pay the highest and most acceptable HONOUR to the KING, by learning of him, truly to FEAR GOD. For, though that eternal Son of God, who by his death, made an atonement for our sins, can alone afford us, an impeccable example of a godly life ;—yet every one knows, that even mere human patterns of goodness, however they may be ridiculed by some, have a powerful influence, in directing the conduct of others ;—and that the higher the station is, in which they shine, the greater is their efficacy.—Happy then, thrice happy nation,—where the brightest beams of PIETY and VIRTUE, resplendent on the throne, diffuse their rays all around upon the people !—For, when we look up to that elevated station, we behold the radiance of those, who have learned from their own experience,—may we also therefore learn the same,—that,—“ GODLINESS IS PROFITABLE UNTO ALL THINGS ! ”—To the ONE, it was,—from the inward peace and assurance which it bestows,—a most powerful, pre-disposing cause of his recovery.—To the OTHER,—from the trust and resignation it imparts,—it was the firmest support, under her affliction. And it remains now to BOTH in their prosperity, an abundant source of joy, which neither

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titles, rank, riches, nor dominion can give ;—and which likewise, nothing in this world, nor even the world itself, can take away.

Suffer not then, I beseech you, my brethren,—suffer not these examples, which the goodness of God has given for your benefit, to add only to your condemnation.—But, let *us* also LEAD A QUIET AND PEACEABLE LIFE, IN ALL GODLINESS AND HONESTY ;—and give the best security for our loyalty to our earthly Monarch, by an unreserved, and unremitting obedience to the will of our heavenly Sovereign.

Then, trusting in the merits, and mediation of our LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, we may humbly hope to be admitted hereafter, to that community of eternal peace, unity, and harmony,—the blessed society of JUST MEN MADE PERFECT ;—which neither faction shall distract, nor even party shall divide ;—but,—where,—the most humble piety, and the most unbounded benevolence, shall be the highest honour, and most exalted happiness.

Now to FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST,—to whom belong all MIGHT, MAJESTY, and DOMINION,—be all HONOUR and GLORY !

F I N I S.

Lately were published,

BY THE AUTHOR OF THIS DISCOURSE.

- I. The One Great Argument for the Truth of Christianity, from a single Prophecy, evinced, in a new Explanation of the Seventh Chapter of *Isaiah*: and in a general Refutation of the Interpretations of former Commentators.
- II. Consolation to the Mourner, and Instruction both to Youth and Old Age, from the early Death of the Righteous. In Two Discourses;—occasioned by the Death of his eldest Daughter, who had only just entered into her Twenty-first Year:—To which is subjoined, an Appendix, containing her Character, and two Elegies on her Death. Preached at the Parish Church of Great Yarmouth.
- III. Erroneous Opinions concerning Providence refuted,—the true Notion stated,—and illustrated by the Events which have lately happened to this Nation. Preached at the Parish Church of Great Yarmouth, on Friday, February 8th, 1782.
- IV. An Address after Confirmation:—Pointing out the Means of attaining Christian Perfection, and true Happiness. Delivered at the Parish Church of Great Yarmouth, on Sunday, August 24th, 1783.
- V. The Power of Christianity over the malignant Passions asserted; the real Causes of Persecutions amongst Christians are pointed out, and the true Grounds of mutual Forbearance in religious Opinions explained. Preached Nov. 3d, 1776.
- VI. The Necessity and Truth of the Three Principal Revelations demonstrated from the Gradations of Science, and the Progress of the mental Faculties. Preached on Commencement Sunday, June 29th, 1777.

Also formerly were published, by the same Author,

THE FOLLOWING WORKS:

- I. A Letter to the Clergy of Norfolk, upon the Abolition of Tythes.
In which, the Schemes proposed for an Equivalent, are examined.
- II. A full Refutation of the Reasons advanced in Defence of the Petition, for the Abolition of Subscription to the Articles and Liturgy,
By no Bigot to, nor against the Church of England.
- III. Explanations of difficult Texts of Scripture, in four Dissertations;
1st. On eternal Punishments.—2d. On Christ's cursing the Fig-Tree.—3d. On Mistranslations.—4th. On Christ's Temptation;—
in which, the Notions of a Vision, and the personal Appearance of Satan, are refuted.
- IV. A Letter to the Bishop of Gloucester;—in which, his Lordship's
DIVINE LEGATION is defended, both from the Misapprehensions of his Lordship's Friends, and Misrepresentations of his Enemies.
- V. Definitions and Axioms, relative to Charity, Charitable Institutions, and the Poor's Laws. In which, Houses of Industry were first recommended to the Attention of the Public.