



[The following Essay was wrote and published immediately after the great fire, March 20, 1763, and is now republished as applicable to the late Conflagration.]

THE uncertainty of human life, the transitory nature and continual vicissitudes of this present state of being and of all enjoyments and possessions in it, are truths so well known to every thoughtful person, and have so often been the subjects of judicious writers in all ages, that the strongest invention can perhaps scarce find any thing new to offer, and a modest Muse with reluctance undertakes the theme: Yet such is the frailty of human nature, that when a sudden Catastrophe surrounds us the mind is flattered and disconcerted, and does not readily collect those reflections suitable to the occasion, or else by having been used to neglect such reflections, from a conception that they must needs flow naturally from such calamities as should produce them, the mind through disgust, may not immediately conceive them when wanted. It is true, the voice of nature has always been the same, is continually sounding, and understood by all; yet strange to say, what we hear the ofteneft, we attend to the least, and what we are the most certain of, we give the least heed to; but there are times when good providence sends a louder summons by the struggles of nature, and proclaims those truths, which though they could not operate by the importance of their nature, yet may force their effect by rousing the passions; but here frailty again takes place, from extreme thoughtfulness, the passions being roused, we rush on to confusion and error; like pilots growing careless by a long calm, we steer by the gale of passion, instead of the compass of understanding, heedless of the port of truth, and negligent of those duties, to which the passions were only designed to urge us.

To point forth and familiarise these truths, has been the well handled subject of the best writers; but while nature continues to turn non, and the wisdom of her voice remains in any measure neglected, the theme cannot be truly exhausted, nor the repetition of it needless.

For these ends, this Essay is presented to the public view, if it pass under the judgment of able minds, they will acquiesce in any truth, and at least may from hence take a hint for nobler thoughts; besides, there is a satisfaction we all feel in giving vent to the throbbings of the bosom, and in collecting to some order, those thoughts which float through the mind on such occasions.

Let this then be the apology; but if still any one should censure me for treading in this unaccustomed path of writing, I must quit the dispute and screen myself beneath the horrors of that never to be forgotten night, when the flames broke loose on our houses, and laid so large a part of our capital in ruins: I am sensible that painted images become real sorrow, and are never to be used but when the passions are sluggish; and therefore passing over that ample field for description, which the late unhappy catastrophe affords, shall confine myself to those sober facts which no body should be ignorant of, and with which every body must needs be affected.

It was then in the first watches of the morning, when our bodies were fast fettered with soundest sleep, that the fire was first discovered, and the town alarmed with an out-cry; the inhabitants were speedily collected, and though the fire was found in the cellar of a brick house, yet it soon eat through its prison; the wind blowing fresh urged on the flames, and with surprising fury they ravaged in spite of all opposition or means to suppress them; the cinders and burning ruins were carried to the leewardmost part of the town, by means of which some who thought themselves in no danger, were the soonest consumed, and the inhabitants of them being gathered to assist at the head of the fire, suffered the greatest losses at their own houses; the like evil happened to numbers of tradesmen, whose shops were so quick fuel for the flames, that their tools and stock were all consumed before they could repair to them; in some places we heard the shrieks of mothers and children roused from their beds by the surrounding flames, and no man to help; here we might behold the aged, the sick and the bed-ridden, whose distance from the seat of the fire gave them hopes of security, driven forth to the inclemencies of the weather, not knowing where to shelter; there we might see those whose least thoughts were placed on their substance, and whose greatest anxiety was to save their lives: Thus raged this fire, forcing its way at the windows of brick houses, whose slated roofs were thought a sufficient defence, thus adding burning to burning, till it left no building unconsumed where the wind would let it pass. The natural horrors of the night added terror to this catastrophe, and at once rendered it more dismal to the eye, more grievous to be born, and more difficult to be suppressed, till the odious night wore out, and with it vanished the height of our fears; but not so the reality of our sorrow, the risen sun assuaged the gloom of the night, but gave us a dismal prospect of its havoc; a spectacle shocking to sensibility! Like the blasted trees of summer, or the skeleton of some delightful body; yet far less ungrateful to the sight than sorrowful to be reflected on. Take a survey then of these extended ruins, here once lived the loyal subject, the tender father, the obliging friend, and a good commonwealths-man; but their habitations, as with one sweep of a scythe, are all cut off, and they thrown on the charity of their friends: And is this all? Alas there are still more heart-piercing scenes; walk through the ruins, and take a more particular account; here lived the laborious tradesman, on whose daily industry depended the sustenance of a numerous family; there lived one whose circumstances were straitened with poverty, and distressed by sickness; here lived one just emerging from indigence, and reaping the first fruits of honest industry; there lived those whose comfortable circumstances afforded a refuge for the needy, and an habitation for the friendless; here lived those whose subsistence depended on their situation for business; there lived those whose all was in their houses, and here those who are still unhappily answerable for all they lost; there lived, and there was the subsistence of the aged and infirm, whose frugal industry in youth, had procured them the merited support of easy old age, when the body unstrung for labor can no longer support itself—But all cut off, their industry appears no more, and the fatigues of youth overtakes them, when age should be at rest; the children must beg, and the industrious must be dependent, the forehanded repeat his toil anew, and the debtor lay at mercy; the friendless must seek for other patrons, and they who patronized implore compassion; the affluent aged must forget their ease, and too soon lose the benefit of that substance which they could not carry hence.

Amazing shock! Is this the uncertainty of human life? Is it thus we have no abiding place here? Is it thus that the places that knew us shall know us no more? And do riches thus take to themselves wings? what a gust of passion breaks forth in all our minds? yet let us stop short to sighs, attend the voice of reason, to those solemn admonitions so loudly proclaimed by this dreadful catastrophe: What a lesson then is here of the uncertainty of earthly enjoyments! We lay our selves down to our mortal rest possessed of substance and affluence, and in a few hours we are awakened to take leave of

all. Where shall the miser bestow his hoards, or the extortioner his ill gotten gains, or how shall the worldly man secure his happiness when flames surround them? The huge pillars of smoke which we beheld floating to the sky were at once small as a trail of our possessions and declarative of their loss: But what say these mighty ruins? they shew us at how uncertain a tenure we hold our enjoyments, for next under a sovereign providence we seem indebted even to the stability of the wind that it did not vary and roll the flames over the whole town. With how much ease then can we shift the scene and suppose ourselves in the situation of the present distressed; was it our goodness, or vigilance that protected us? And if being destroyed, we should have felt sorrow; being so narrowly saved can we fail to meet with sympathy? and if ever the golden rule was capable of a benevolent application the most infernal must now feel it, and the most hardened put it in practice; and he who on this occasion does not bestow beautifully to the relief of the immediate sufferers, must either flatter himself with some peculiar infallible protection, or being desperate in giddiness, bid a bold defiance to all calamity. Nor can any one, though not immediately exposed to this destruction, or tho' distant from this capital, surmise that they have no part in its general admonition; 'tis nature's voice, that well known herald of the Almighty which tho' it be now uttered here, yet echoes every where; 'tis but one 11th of that amazing scourge, brandished by the hand of vengeance, against a guilty world; the same fire may parch up that land which it does not consume, and earthquakes make its desolation worse than the present; if therefore we are common tenants of a state variegated with joy and sorrow, methinks 'tis natural we should in some measure share the good of it which we all want, seeing we are equally exposed to the evils of it, under which we all desire to be relieved.

O, my soul, what a thought arises! can it with truth be said, that any in human shape, though their daily support were robbery, should lurk for the confusion of a public calamity, and plunder the property of the distressed; or that any after cool deliberation, upon whatsoever pretence, should either publicly or privately discountenance that relief to the distressed which we may all at some time want, and which humanity suggests? forbid it heaven!

Alas, we sojourn in a vale of tears, sorrow on every side surrounds us, and calls for those duties which we feel impressed in our natures, duties so endeliably engraven, that a heathen said, "in nothing do we more imitate the immortal Gods, than in doing acts of kindness," the voice of revelation is still more explicit, and so plain, that he who runs may read. Possessions take to themselves wings; to what purpose is it then, that we distress, perplex and corrupt our minds in getting wealth, the possession of which is so precarious? With what face can we swell with the conceit of riches and assume airs of importance, disdain, oppress, and tyrannize over those beneath us (perhaps only) in fortune, when a few hours may set us all on a level? How much does it become us while in effluence to demean ourselves with such honesty, humanity and beneficence, as that if calamity should overtake us, we may stand confessedly the worthy objects of needful relief? Methinks this catastrophe is big with instruction, could any one see the dire havoc produced from so small a fire, and not feel the obligations we owe to the community in our economy of this necessary but devouring element, and of every thing that is apt fuel for the same? for as our possessions are not secured by our own single carefulness, the duty therefore becomes general; and may I be permitted to take a hint from this dreadful desolation, and point it forth as an emblem of that destruction, which the passions when let loose produce in human minds; when the first excess is not suppressed, like the late fire they ravage, increase by running, and may destroy every thing valuable in the mind; may entirely strip us of that real treasure which only can stand us in stead when a greater conflagration shall seize this earth, when we shall be as little anxious to save our lives, as many lately were to save their worldly possessions.





Dr. *Mayhew's*
DISCOURSE

ON THE

Death of K. GEORGE II.

And Accession of K. GEORGE III.

A
DISCOURSE

Occasioned by the Death of

King GEORGE II.

AND THE

Happy Accession of His Majesty

King GEORGE III.

TO THE

Imperial Throne of

G R E A T - B R I T A I N ;

Delivered Jan. 4th 1761.

A N D

Published at the Desire of the West Church and
Congregation in *Boston, New-England.*

By Jonathan Mayhew, D. D.

Pastor of the said Church.

B O S T O N : N E W - E N G L A N D .

Printed and Sold by EDES & GILL in *Queen-Street,*
M, DCC, LXXI.

SCC


11,467.4



TO the Christian, the Truly-Pro-
testant, and very Loyal SOCIE-
TY, who attend the public
Worship in the WESTERLY Part of
Boston,

THIS DISCOURSE, published at
their Desire signified by their *Commit-
tee*, is now gratefully INSCRIBED, with
the sincerest Wisbes for their tempo-
ral and spiritual Welfare, and with due
Acknowledgments of the many Ob-
ligations by them laid upon

The AUTHOR.



GOD ruleth in the Kingdom of Men.

DANIEL IV. 18.

—*The most High ruleth in the
Kingdom of Men*—

THE present unusual and gloomy appearance of the place * in which I now stand, may seem the natural presage of a discourse replete with gloomy ideas, with lamentation and mourning. But yet methinks this is a season adapted to awaken various, and even contrary passions in our breasts; a season wherein we almost unavoidably mingle some of the tears of joy with those of sorrow; and wherein wholly to indulge, or wholly to repress either of them, would hardly be innocent; at least not very congruous. On one hand we justly mourn the death of an excellent king, whom every good British subject was habituated to consider rather under the amiable and endearing character of a father, than the more awful one of a sovereign. And where is the heart so hard, so unfeeling, so devoid of all sentiment, as to remain untouch'd, unaffected, at the death of such a king, the common father of his people? What bosom does not heave? What eye is not ready to overflow, on so melancholy an occasion?

BUT,

* In allusion to the pulpit hung with mourning on this occasion,

8 *GOD ruleth in the Kingdom of Men.*

BUT, on the other hand, have we not cause for gratitude, that heaven spared him to us so long? and for joy, that his royal grandson and successor is peaceably ascended the throne? And this at such a mature age, and adorned with so many royal qualities, as give us the reasonable prospect of sitting under his shadow with great delight; and, in a Word, of enjoying under his reign the continuance of all those numerous blessings, which we so long enjoyed under the auspicious reign of his late majesty. The same object has often both a bright and a dark side; and, by being turned round, gives relief, or even pleasure, to the pained eye of the spectator. As our felicity is never pure and unallayed in this evil world; so neither is our sorrow ever, or hardly ever, unmixed; but usually attended with some circumstances, which, being duly considered, may administer comfort to us. This is our present case: That sovereign hand which gave the wound to our hearts by the death of his late majesty, has almost healed it the same hour, and turned our mourning into joy; or if not into joy, has at least ministered the best consolation that the nature of the case would admit of. For the loss of a good king cannot be any way so effectually made up, or remedied, as by another, worthy to succeed him, reigning in his stead; especially one descended, from him, and in whom he may be considered as, in some sort, still living and reigning. Such is the consolation that gracious heaven affords to us, and to three kingdoms, at this season of our common mourning. And both reason and religion as much require that we gratefully receive the consolation offered, as that we humbly lay to heart that event of providence, by which we came to need it.

IT

IT becomes us as men, and especially as christians, on this occasion to look up to the sovereign ruler of the universe, who “removeth kings and setteth up kings”, as seemeth good in his sight. Him we are to consider as the author of those revolutions, and other great changes, which take place from age to age in the kingdoms of this world; and should make a religious improvement of the present dispensations of his providence towards us. It is with a view at assisting you in so important a duty, that I have chosen the words just now read, for the subject of my discourse at this time—“The most High ruleth in the kingdom of men.” The words occur three several times in this fourth chapter of Daniel; which consists of a manifesto, or solemn declaration, which Nebuchadnezzar the great king of Babylon published “to all people, nations and languages”; and which the prophet, for the honor of God’s name, thought proper, it seems, to preserve intire with his own writings, to be transmitted to future generations. Nebuchadnezzar is spoken of in scripture as one of the greatest monarchs that ever lived in the world. “Thou, O king”, said Daniel to him, “art a king of kings; for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field, and the fowls of heaven hath he delivered into thy hand †”. Profane history speaks of him conformably to this account ||. He

B

was

† Chap. II. ver. 37, 38.

|| He is said to have held in subjection Syria, Phenicia, Arabia and Egypt. “Strabo likewise asserts that this king among the Chaldeans was more celebrated than Hercules, and that he proceeded as far as the pillars of Hercules [near the streights of Gibraltar] and led his army out of Spain into Thrace and Pontus.” Vid. Dr. Newton’s XIIIth *Dissertation on Prophecy*.

10 GOD *ruleth in the Kingdom of Men.*

was as proud and impious as he was great. And God seems to have raised him up as he did Pharaoh, that he might “shew his power in him, and that his name might be declared throughout all the earth”. It seems that he was for a time much alarmed, and even convinced, by the miraculous deliverance of the three pious Jews from the fiery furnace, whom he had ordered to be cast into it for not worshipping the golden image which he had set up; and he made a decree, that no one should speak against the God whom these men worshipped.* But his heart, like Pharaoh’s, resumed its former hardness; and was so lifted up with pride, that God resolved to humble him in a very signal manner. And the main design of his manifesto, contained in this IVth Chapter of Daniel, is to declare to all the world the wonderful means by which God did this; by which he convinced him of his supreme dominion, his power and providence, and the wisdom and justice of all his dealings with the children of men. So that this may be called the proclamation whereby that mighty, and once impious monarch, recognized God’s universal dominion, as the King of kings and Lord of lords. “I thought it good”, says he, “to shew the signs and wonders that the high God hath wrought towards me. For how great are his signs? and how mighty are his wonders? His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom”, &c. He then proceeds particularly to relate what had happened to him; the astonishing signs by which God humbled his proud heart, and made him confess, that he indeed “ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.” What these signs and wonders were, I now forbear particularly to mention, lest my discourse should be drawn out to too great a length. But in general, he had

* Dan. C. III. v. 29.

GOD ruleth in the Kingdom of Men. 11

a remarkable dream, or vision, wherein, under the similitude of cutting down a mighty tree, was, according to the prophet's interpretation, prefigured his own fall from his greatness, and his being driven from men. And when the king said, "Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty? While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken, The kingdom is departed from thee," &c. And "the same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar." Of which event we find the prophet afterwards giving the following account to his son Belshazzar—"All people, nations and languages trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew, and whom he would he kept alive, and whom he would he set up, and whom he would he put down. But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him: And he was driven from the sons of men—till he knew that the most high God ruled in the kingdom of men, and that he appointeth over it whomsoever he will †."

THUS wonderfully was this great king brought down, till at the end of the days appointed, he lift up his eyes to heaven, and his understanding returned unto him. And he concludes his proclamation in the strong and emphatical terms following, which discover an heart very deeply imprest with what had befallen him for his former pride, tyranny and impiety—"Now I Nebuchadnezzar", says he, "praise, and extol, and honor the king of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment; and those that walk in pride he is able to abase".

BUT

† Chap. V. ver. 19, 20, 21.

12 GOD *ruleth in the Kingdom of Men.*

But to return; The words of the text may be considered as an intire, independent sentence, tho' they indeed make but a part of one, as they stand in the several places where they occur in this chapter. In this light it is proposed to consider them; and they will, I suppose, be a proper introduction to some reflexions on the present occasion, as they assert God's supreme dominion in and over the kingdoms of men.

FOR the illustration of this subject, it is to be observed first in general,

I. THAT all nations, all kingdoms, are in the hand of God, who has an original right, and absolute power over them. He hath made of one blood all nations for to dwell upon the face of the earth; and has the intire disposal of them. The absolute sovereignty of God over all nations, is represented in very strong and sublime language by Nebuchadnezzar in this chapter, after his reason returned to him. "His kingdom", saith he, "is from generation to generation: And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" The prophet Isaiah expresseth himself upon this subject in language not less emphatical. "Behold, the nations are as a drop of the bucket", saith he, "and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing — all nations before him are as nothing, and they are counted to him as less than nothing and vanity". And a little after in the same chapter—"It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth

eth them out as a tent to dwell in ; that bringeth the princes to nothing : He maketh the judges of the earth as vanity". [Chap. XL.]

Now, God's ruling in the kingdom of men, expresseth in general that supreme power, that uncontrollable dominion, which he exerciseth over all nations from one generation to another : Not only his right and power, but his actual government over them. For his ruling in the kingdom of men, implies his continual agency and providence therein, and his reigning over them as a sovereign Lord ; not merely his power and authority to do so. And accordingly, whatever befalls states and kingdoms ; their rise, enlargement and prosperity, their fall, their declension, and the various calamities that happen to them, are in scripture attributed to God's over-ruling providence, as the accomplishment of his sovereign pleasure concerning them. And that these things are justly ascribed to him, is evident from many considerations ; particularly from his having enabled his prophets to foretel, many ages before-hand, the changes and revolutions which should take place among the nations of the earth : Which predictions have been punctually verified by the event.

Thus the ancient prophecies respecting the Jews, the Egyptians, the Babylonians, the Ninevites, the Tyrians, and many other nations, have long since had a most exact and surprising accomplishment ; as any one, acquainted with the prophecies, and with what has since actually befallen those nations, must acknowledge †. And in this book of Daniel's prophecies,

† Many of these predictions, together with their respective accomplishments, are set in a clear and strong light in the Rev. and very learned Dr. Newton's Dissertations on prophecy, Vol. I.

14 GOD ruleth in the Kingdom of Men.

cies, was foretold, with an astonishing precision, tho' in figurative language, what should come to pass in the four great successive monarchies, or empires of the world; the Assyrian or Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Macedonian and the Roman; in, or during, the latter of which, the God of heaven was to set up a kingdom of a peculiar kind, which should never have an end, or be left to other people: "And the kingdom, and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall [at length] be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; and all dominions shall serve and obey him"* . Nor is the present state of the Jews, or indeed the general state of the christian world at this day, any thing less than a demonstration of the truth of prophecy: which is, at the same time, a kind of visible demonstration of the truth and reality of God's ruling in the kingdom of men. For, certainly none but he, who hath the fates and fortunes of all nations in his own hand, and the most absolute disposal of them, could possibly enable men so particularly and exactly to foretel what should befall them in remote ages, as the prophets have actually done. And the accomplishment of so many prophecies already, as it is an undeniable proof that the world is governed by divine providence, so it gives us an assurance, that those predictions in these sacred books, which still remain unfulfilled, shall also have their accomplishment at the appointed time; when "the mystery of God shall be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets". But,

II. God's ruling in the kingdom of men, may express more particularly and directly that authority and sovereign power, which he exerciseth from age

to

* Chap. VII. ver. 27.

GOD ruleth in the Kingdom of Men. 15

to age over the kings and potentates of the earth ; and which truly denominate him the King of kings and Lord of lords. *That* being may well be said to rule in the kingdom of men, on whom all earthly kings are entirely dependent ; who raiseth one to a throne, and casteth down another ; who gives to all kings their authority, and limits them in the exercise thereof ; who gives them whatever qualifications they have for ruling ; who also gives to their lives and reigns, either a shorter or longer term, as he pleaseth ; who makes their reign either a blessing to the kingdoms which they govern, or the contrary ; and who will finally judge even them in righteousness. With the greatest truth and propriety may he be said to rule and govern in the kingdom of men, who exerciseth such a dominion over the monarchs of the world. And to enlarge a little here cannot, I suppose, be thought improper on the present occasion.

1. GOD ruleth in the kingdom of men, as all earthly kings derive their power and authority originally from him ; or as they reign by his permission and providence, and as his ministers. This is in effect asserted in the words immediately following the text— “ and giveth it” [i. e. the kingdom] “ to whomsoever he will”, in the exercise of that sovereign dominion which he hath over all. In conformity whereto, the prophet addresseth himself thus to Belshazzar, the son and successor of Nebuchadnezzar. “ O thou king, the most high God *gave* Nebuchadnezzar thy father a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honor †.” And the apostle Paul asserts in a more general way, and without any exception, that “ there is no power but of God” ; that “ the powers that be are ordained of God” ; and that kings, and indeed other inferior rulers, are “ God’s ministers”, appointed

† Chap. V. ver. 18.

16. GOD *ruleth in the Kingdom of Men.*

pointed to govern the world under him, the Lord of all; and to carry on the designs of his providence therein. So that human government, being duly administered, is in effect the government of God. For which reason we are admonished to be subject “to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake, whether it be to the king as supreme, or unto governors as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well*.”

GOD does not indeed, by any immediate act of his own, place a crown upon the head, and put a scepter in the hand of him, whom he has ordained to reign, and seat him upon a royal throne. He leaves nations (ordinarily, I mean) to the free exercise of their liberty and discretion, under the general law of reason, to chuse their own forms of government, and to model them as best suits them respectively. Some nations neither have, nor are required to have, any kings at all. Some crowns are, properly speaking, elective, by the fundamental laws of the kingdom. In other kingdoms the crown is hereditary, either with certain limitations and exceptions, or without any, according to the various constitutions of different kingdoms; which constitutions themselves are not, however, absolutely immutable. In all which respects it may truly be said, that nations are left to the exercise of their natural discretion and liberty. But still religion, and even reason, teaches us to acknowledge the hand and providence of God in the exaltation of any particular person to a throne. In elective kingdoms the thoughts and counsels of the electors are, tho’ imperceptibly, so over-ruled, that the choice falls at last upon him, whom God had ordained to reign; and thus, without knowing his purpose, they fulfil his sovereign

* 1 Pct. II. 13, 14.

sovereign pleasure. And where the crown is hereditary according to the constitution, God in his providence often interrupts and defeats the succession, either by the death of the presumptive heir, or by other means; and sometimes the crown devolves at last to one, so remote from it by blood, that he was very unlikely ever to wear it, according to human rules of judging; or it is perhaps transferred to another race. These things are common, and well known; by which God shews his own sovereignty in the kingdom of men, and makes it manifest that he "gives it to whomsoever he will".

2. GOD ruleth in the kingdom of men, as all earthly kings derive from him whatever qualifications and abilities they have for reigning, as well as their authority. How great? how important, is the difference between a wise and good, and a weak and bad king? The welfare of nations, under God, depends very much upon the talents and character of the kings, whom he exalteth to reign over them. Nor is it less evident that he bestows the various gifts and talents by which kings are distinguished from one another, than it is that they reign by his permission, and providential ordination. Wisdom, magnanimity, and other royal qualities, are the gift of God; of which none are possessed in any greater degree, than he saw fit to bestow them, in order to accomplish his own wise and holy purposes. And from some these qualities are withheld, with the same general design. For, according to the holy scriptures, important events are brought about in nations, and in the state of the world, as well by the folly and infatuation of some kings, as by the wisdom of others; all in conformity to the will and purposes of heaven. And this is one way, in which God manifests his own sovereignty in the kingdom of men.

C

3. GOD

18 GOD ruleth in the Kingdom of Men.

3. GOD ruleth in the kingdom of men, by succeeding the administration of kings, and by making them great public blessings, or the contrary, according to his own pleasure. Most commonly indeed, wise and good kings reign successfully, while weak and wicked ones prove rather a curse than a blessing. This is not, however, universally the case. It is obvious that the success or prosperity of an administration, does not solely depend upon, nor is always in exact proportion to, the wisdom, justice, fortitude, and other princely virtues of him that sits upon the throne. The views and endeavours of the best kings are sometimes frustrated; while those of far inferior ones are crowned with success, both in peace and war. It is God that giveth salvation unto kings, and thereby to kingdoms: He it is, that bringeth them down. And both these he does, in such ways, and by such means, as plainly evince his sovereignty in the kingdom of men; and shew to kings and kingdoms at once, their absolute dependence upon him for prosperity. How many great and common calamities are there, which befall nations from time to time, that the wisest and most powerful monarchs can neither prevent nor remove? And how many public blessings are there, which kings have little, or perhaps no hand at all, in procuring? Riches, and honor, and power, and all national blessings, must be acknowledged to come originally from God, sometimes by the instrumentality of kings, and sometimes without it; and in his "hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all".

4. GOD ruleth in the kingdom of men, as he gives to the reign of earthly kings either a shorter or longer term, as seemeth good in his sight. Mighty monarchs are sometimes "deposed from their kingly thrones" for their sins, as Nebuchadnezzar was. When his
mind

mind was hardened in pride, it was said unto him, “ The kingdom is departed from thee”; and instantly, his glory was taken away, and he was “ driven from men”. Belshazzar his son did not profit by his example ; and therefore met with a still more fatal overthrow. No sooner had the hand upon the wall written his doom, and Daniel interpreted it,—“ God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it”, &c. than he was slain ; “ and Darius the Median took the kingdom”. How many other proud, arbitrary and tyrannical princes, who have thought themselves above all controul, have suddenly been brought down to the dust ? either expelled their kingdoms, or come to an untimely end, and left their thrones to others ? Nor is the sovereignty of God in the kingdom of men, less manifested in depriving earthly kings of their power and dominion, than in conferring them at first. In the language of the royal psalmist, “ Promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge : he putteth down one, and setteth up another †.”

BESIDES : It is appointed unto all men, and no less to kings, even great and good kings, than others, once to die ; and to give an account of themselves to God. Their greatness exempts them neither from the common mortality, nor from the righteous judgment of God, in whose hand their breath is. From some the great arbiter of life and death, soon taketh away their breath, even in early youth ; so that they hardly know what it is to wear a crown, before they are commanded to resign it ; and called to appear before the high tribunal of him that “ regardeth not the persons of princes”. Other kings are taken away in the midst of their years ; and all their devices, pro-

C 2

jections

† Psalm LXXV. 6, 7.

20 GOD ruleth in the Kingdom of Men.

jections and designs, whether good or bad, are at once brought to nothing; sometimes to the joy, and sometimes to the sorrow of their subjects; and not only of their own subjects, but of other nations. To other kings God is pleased to grant length of days, and a reign of many years; so that they are satisfied with life, and see many happy effects of their reign, before their days are numbered and finished. Now, God manifesteth his sovereignty over the kings and potentates of the earth, by cutting short, or protracting their life and reign, in this manner: And hereby, in part, it appears, that he indeed ruleth in the kingdom of men.

It may, not improperly, be added here, that a great deal depends upon the time, and particular circumstances, wherein kings are taken out of this world. There are, with respect to their subjects at least, I might say with respect to themselves also, both favourable and unfavourable conjunctures for them to die in. As the case may be circumstanced, the death of a king, tho' of no very eminent qualities and virtues, may be of fatal consequence to a kingdom: As, for example, when the succession is left doubtful, different persons laying claim to it, and each of them supported by powerful factions. In this case, how often have nations been thrown into confusion, and involved in all the calamities of a civil war? Or, tho' the succession is uncontroverted, yet if the heir be not arrived at an age proper for governing a kingdom, the death of a king in these circumstances is a great calamity: For "Wo to thee, O Land," says Solomon, "when thy king is a child." God sometimes taketh the nations by removing their kings at such times as these, and others that are not so favourable. And tho' the death of

of

GOD ruleth in the Kingdom of Men. 21

of good kings will always be sincerely lamented by good and dutiful subjects; yet it must be owned that, in certain circumstances, the death even of such kings can hardly be looked upon as a frown of divine providence, in any other sense than that, in which the common mortality of mankind is so. As, for example, if they die when they are far advanced in years; when they are almost past bearing the weight of government; when their kingdoms are in flourishing circumstances; when the succession is undisputed; or there are no parties or factions powerful enough to create public troubles and commotions; when the successor is of mature age for wielding a sceptre, and is endowed with such princely virtues, as naturally inspire the hopes of great happiness under his reign: When all these circumstances take place, they greatly alleviate that sorrow which all good subjects must in some degree feel, on the death of a good king. And God's sovereignty in the kingdoms of men plainly appears by the particular time and conjuncture, wherein he removeth kings out of this world: For, that these circumstances, whether favourable or otherwise, together with the duration of each monarch's life, and the length of his reign, are all fixed, all determined by the most High, no man who believes a providence, can consistently doubt.

UPON the whole (for I must not enlarge): God does not only shew himself sovereign in the kingdom of men, by the persons whom he exalteth to earthly thrones, by the various qualifications which he bestows upon them, by prospering or not prospering their reign, by sometimes casting them down from their thrones before their lives are come to a period, and by the particular time and circumstances wherein they are respectively taken out of this world by death:

He

22 GOD ruleth in the Kingdom of Men.

He does not hereby only shew his sovereign power in and over the kingdom of men, but he also manifests hereby his favor and goodness towards nations, or his righteous displeasure. He executeth loving-kindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth, by the dispensations of his providence towards kings and kingdoms. The welfare of nations immediately depends, in a great measure, upon the kings whom God placeth over them. It is said of Israel, with reference to Saul, that God “gave them a king in his anger.” After a while, he brought about a *revolution* in that kingdom, and gave them David in his kindness, a man after his own heart, who was a great blessing to the nation. And when David died in a good old age, after a prosperous reign, and when he had in a manner subdued all their enemies, his son Solomon succeeded him in the throne, whom the queen of Sheba addressed in the equally pious and courtly terms following: “Blessed be the Lord thy God which delighted in thee to set thee upon his throne, to be king for the Lord thy God. Because thy God loved Israel, to establish them forever, therefore made he thee king over them to do judgment and justice.”

It being evident then, from what has been said, that God ruleth in the kingdom of men, giving it to whomsoever he will; and also, that his favor and righteous displeasure are manifested towards different nations, or towards the same nations at different times, by the “manner of the kings that reign over them”, and by the time and circumstances of their removal out of this world: These things being evident, I say, what still remains, is, that we apply this subject to ourselves, and to the present occasion, by making some reflexions on the reign and death of his late majesty,
and

GOD ruleth in the Kingdom of Men. 23

and on the accession of George III. to the imperial throne of Great-Britain.

AND it will not, as is humbly conceived, be improper here, in the first place, to take a cursory view of the providential means, by which the British crown devolved to the illustrious house of Hanover, and consequently to his late, and his present majesty. For such a retrospect on the events of divine providence, at the same time that it will be a farther illustration of God's ruling in the kingdom of men, and giving it to whomsoever he will, may also serve to establish us in the principles of true British liberty, and of loyalty to his present majesty, as founded in, and resulting from, those principles. Nor will you, I am persuaded, think I go beyond my proper sphere, if, upon such an occasion, I inculcate loyalty, and obedience to the established government; and this upon the very principles on which that government is founded, in opposition to those of despotism and tyranny.

LET me remind you then, that after the death † of queen Elizabeth, (the glory of whose reign, otherwise truly great, was obscur'd and tarnish'd by religious persecution) it pleas'd God, doubtless for the sins of the nation, to raise four princes successively to the throne, whose reigns were all inglorious, and some of them infamous to the last degree; princes of great pride and vanity, of arbitrary notions and practices, of little wisdom, policy or discretion, and still less truth, sincerity and honor; princes who were always the dupes of our ancient, enterprising and dangerous enemies, of jesuits, popish ministers or popish wives; princes whose reigns disgrac'd the nation abroad, and were sore visitations of divine providence upon it.

THE

† In the year 1603.

24 GOD ruleth in the Kingdom of Men.

THE last of these four kings whom the most High gave us in his anger, James II, * was an open, professed and bigotted roman-catholic ; who stuck at no measures in order to introduce the religion of Rome, to despoil the British nations of their ancient liberties, and to entail upon them the two-fold curse of popery and slavery ; which have indeed a close connexion one with the other. The king daily made prodigious strides towards a despotic power ; to establish which on the ruins of the British constitution, was his manifest aim. And he doubtless promised himself success in this execrable design, by reflecting on that series of events in and after the reign of his father, from which he ought to have drawn other conclusions. That unhappy prince, king Charles I. by favouring the papists contrary to law, and many flagrant violations of the constitution, had involved the nation in a civil war ; a war entered into on one side, in defence of public liberty, on the other, in the support of tyranny ; and which did not end but with the ruin, both of the constitution, and of the infatuated prince who had been the blameable cause of it. King James seem'd to take it for granted, that the nation would never again, at least not so soon, have recourse to arms, or resistance, in defence of its rights and liberties ; but rather submit to the most cruel tyranny, than attempt to rid itself of it by those means which, however necessary, had been attended with such dismal consequences : Especially as the doctrine of passive obedience and non-resistance had, ever since the *restoration*, † been the established doctrine, which no one could contradict with impunity. It had, however, been a more just, as well as more safe inference, that the brave people who had lately made
such

* He succeeded his brother Charles II. in 1684.

† In 1660.

such efforts in defence of their liberties, would not now tamely submit to arbitrary sway; but again have recourse to some extraordinary means of self-defence, if driven to extremities, whatever doctrines they might profess to believe. But— *Quem Deus vult perdere, prius dementat*— Those whom God designs to destroy, he first infatuates; so that they resolutely persist in such measures, as must needs terminate in their ruin. The king was deaf to all the remonstrances of reason and justice, of policy and interest; and would suffer no check in his mad career to destruction. Nor was there, perhaps, ever another king, to whom the words of the prophet to Belshazzar, were more applicable than to this prince, whom neither the fate of his unhappy father, nor any thing else, could keep from destroying himself— “ O thou king, the most high
 “ God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father a kingdom—
 “ But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind
 “ hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly
 “ throne, and they took his glory from him. And
 “ he was driven from the sons of men, and his heart
 “ was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with
 “ the wild asses— And thou his son, O Belshazzar,
 “ hast not humbled thine heart, THOUGH THOU KNEW-
 “ EST ALL THIS ! But hast lifted up thy self,”* &c.

IN this critical conjuncture, it pleased him who ruleth in the kingdom of men, not only to open the eyes of all the friends to public liberty and the protestant religion, to see the common danger which threatened them, but also to unite their hearts and counsels in an extraordinary manner to guard against it. Party-distinctions, which had hitherto run very high, were now laid aside. The illustrious prince of Orange, the king's son-in-law, who was known to be at once a lo-

D

ver

* Dan. V. 18.

26 GOD ruleth in the Kingdom of Men.

ver of liberty, a true protestant and an hero, was secretly applied to for his advice and assistance, which he generously resolved to afford, to the utmost of his ability. He accordingly, after mature deliberation, and by concert with the leading and better part of the lords and commons of England, arrived there with a very considerable armament†; but relying chiefly on the known good-will and affection of the people in general, whom a sense of their common danger had united. It was not long after his arrival, that king James, conscious he had justly forfeited, and intirely lost, the affections of all his subjects, except the romancatholic party; seeing himself forsaken, and people of all ranks flocking to the standard of the prince; calling to remembrance, doubtless, the tragedy of the 30th of *January* 1648; and not being ambitious, it seems, to share with his father the glory of *martyrdom*;* thou ight proper to provide for his safety by a precipitate flight into France: Which court had before graciously offer'd him her assistance in his design to enslave the British nations. † Then it was, that the glorious REVOLUTION took place: For the throne being declared vacant by two grand conventions of the lords and commons, by means of the *abdication*, i. e. the *running away* of
king

† Nov 5. 1688.

* This sort of *martyrdom* was very common in ancient times, according to that of the poet——

——— “ Sine cæde et sanguine pauci

“ Descendunt reges*, et siccâ morte tyranni.”

Juv. Sat. X.

Few tyrants to the grave in peace descend;
Abhor'd they live, and *bloody is their end.*

* *King* and *Tyrant* were almost synonymous and convertible terms with the Latin poets, orators and historians: For they hardly knew of any kings, but what were also tyrants; and had scarcely the idea of such a limited, legal monarchy, as British subjects have the happiness of living under.

† France had offered him 30,000 men to support his tyranny.

king James, the prince and princess of Orange were *electèd*, and invited into it ; and soon proclaimed king and queen, to the great joy of all the true friends to liberty. The administration was, however, to be solely in the hands of the king, during his life. In bringing about which happy revolution, even many of those, both clergy and laity, heartily joined, who had before been loud and clamorous in asserting the senseless, brutish principles of passive obedience and non-resistance, in consequence of the supposed divine, indefeasible right of kings by inheritance : Opinions now exploded by all men of sense. †

THIS was a new and memorable æra in the English history. The *declaration of rights* presented and read to William and Mary, when they were invited into the throne, ascertained the rights of the subject, and reduced the prerogative, which had been extended beyond all bounds in many preceding reigns, to its ancient limits. It was declared by the two conventions before-mentioned, that the kings of England held the crown by virtue of an “ original contract,” in opposition to the notions of an indefeasible hereditary right : And this was the basis on which the government was settled. Provision was now made by many

D 2 parliamentary

- ‡ “ Mr. HAMPDEN. It is a disgrace to our church to have taken up such opinions ; and I will venture to prophesy, that
 “ in future times our clergy must renounce them, or they
 “ will be turned against them by those who mean their destruction. Suppose a *papist* king on the throne. Will
 “ the clergy adhere to passive obedience & non-resistance ?
 “ If they do, they deliver up their religion to Rome ; if they
 “ do not, their practice will confute their own doctrine.
 “ Lord FAULKLAND. Nature, Sir, will in time besure to see
 “ right whatever opinion contradicts her great laws, let who
 “ will be the teacher.” —

Dialogues of the Dead, Dial. I.
 Reputed Author, Ed. LYTLETON,

28 *GOD ruleth in the Kingdom of Men.*

parliamentary acts, for securing the public liberty, and the future peace and prosperity of the nation. To which ends, amongst other things, the succession to the crown was limited to the protestant line of the royal family, and all romancatholics, however nearly related to it by blood, declared forever incapable of reigning in England. The like was done in North-Britain, at that time a distinct kingdom.

KING William and Queen Mary being dead without leaving issue, the princess Ann, a protestant, and a daughter of the then lately out-lawed king James, ascended the throne in conformity to the parliamentary settlement of the succession. In her reign the union between North and South-Britain, which king William had zealously recommended before, was happily accomplished. An union, which the author of nature had pointed out between two nations on the same island; both lovers of liberty, both brave and warlike, both generally protestant; mutually standing in need of one another's assistance against their common enemies; and whose situation, and martial spirit, whenever they were at variance, had render'd them fore scourges to each other. Queen Ann, tho' a Stewart, reigned not without reputation and glory, till one or two of the last years of her life, when she had fallen into the hands of bad ministers and counsellors. Her son, the duke of Gloucester, who was otherwise to have succeeded her, died the year before she came to the throne. † So that the elector of Hanover was now the presumptive heir to the crown. But the queen was suspected, and not without some good reasons, of a design to set aside, if possible,

† He died in 1700, being in the 11th year of his age. He was a prince of great hopes, whose father was prince George of Denmark, the queen's husband,

GOD ruleth in the Kingdom of Men. 29

possible, the protestant succession in that illustrious house, in favour of her [doubtful] brother, the chevalier de St. George; who, whether he were or were not, the son of the then late king James, was yet excluded from the throne by law, as a romancatholic. Some, indeed, deny that the queen had any such intention; and that, with as much confidence as others assert it. But be that as it may, upon her death §, the elector of Hanover (George I.) was immediately, and without opposition, proclaimed king of Great-Britain, in conformity to the parliamentary settlement of the succession, confirmed by repeated acts in both the preceding reigns. He was a protestant, nearly related to the crown by blood; at least nearer than any other protestant prince, or princess, then living †. And he reigned with wisdom, justice and clemency, tho' not without some disturbances, and one open rebellion, raised in favour of the pretender. He died in the 13th year of his reign, leaving behind him the character of one of the wisest, justest, and most magnanimous princes of his age. And on the death of this truly great and good king, the British crown devolved, by the right of succession as limited by parliament, to his late majesty king George II. ‡

By this brief deduction you see, on one hand, the repeated efforts of tyranny, and on the other, the glorious struggles for liberty, of which Britain was the scene for many years. You see how God ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. You see how mercifully he delivered the British nations from one popish and arbitrary king
at

§ In 1714.

† The mother of K. George I. was a grand-daughter of K. James I. A princess of a very distinguished character.

‡ Anno 1727.

at the revolution; and how he preserved it once and again from another; I mean the pretender, whom many persons were desirous of introducing, to the prejudice of the protestant succession. You see how God has been the guardian of our liberties, civil and sacred. You see that British subjects have the happiness of living under a legal and limited monarchy; and, what are some of the fundamental principles, on which the present government is established. In fine, you see by what right the princes of the house of Hanover have ascended the British throne; not a chimerical and imaginary, but a solid, legal and parliamentary one: The best and most indisputable right, that any king can possibly reign by, unless God himself should, by a voice from heaven, proclaim him king, or require us, by a prophet, to pay our allegiance to him as such.

BUT some may possibly expect, that I should say something more particularly concerning his late majesty. And indeed, tho' I cannot pretend to give his just character, yet it would be hardly decent to pass over his many royal virtues in silence; or to bury so good and venerable a king, without recollecting some of those things, which ought to make us honour his memory.

HIS late majesty was unquestionably endow'd with a brilliant genius; with a great share of natural penetration and sagacity. Nor was that genius uncultivated by learning; such learning especially as becomes a king. He is said to have been extremely well versed in history, particularly that of Europe; and to have had a very thorough understanding of the political interests and connexions of all the kingdoms and states therein. Without which it would indeed have

have been impossible for him to maintain his character as the chief bulwark of its liberties, and of the protestant religion, as he actually was. As he came into England at about thirty two years of age, and lived there about twelve years before he came to the throne, he had, during that period, an opportunity to acquaint himself, not only with the British constitution, but with the peculiar temper and genius of the people. Nor could he fail to reap great advantage from the institutions, the political maxims, and the example of so wise a king, as his royal father. And he was, like him, what may be properly called, a constitutional king: One who well knew both the extent of his own prerogative, and the rights of the people; one who made the laws the rule of his government, and whom even malice can hardly accuse of either doing, or attempting to do, an arbitrary, illegal thing, during his whole reign. And it should be remember'd here, that the British constitution and laws are so wise, so excellent, that he who uniformly makes them the rule of his administration, must of consequence be a good king; at least he cannot easily be supposed to be a bad one.

AND merely not to have been a bad king, is perhaps greater praise than is due to far the most of those, who have reigned from the days of Nimrod to the present time. But to stop here, would be very injurious to the character and memory of his late majesty. He appeared, throughout his reign, to have the true interest and honour of Great-Britain at heart; knowing that kings, especially British kings, are made for the people, and not people for kings. Notwithstanding some [to us] unhappy, but yet necessary and unavoidable *connexions*, we have reason to think that his majesty's uniform and great aim was, to promote
the

32 *GOD ruleth in the Kingdom of Men.*

the good of his kingdoms. He was indeed indefatigable in his endeavours to this end; and, in the language of the apostle, "attended continually on this very thing". He was an encourager of learning, of manufactures and commerce; the two latter of which, I suppose, never flourished so much in Great-Britain, as under his auspicious reign.

His majesty was at once a prince of great justice and great clemency. The former was evident from his care to have the laws duly executed, without respect of persons; and his not allowing the meanest of his subjects to be oppressed, so far as it was in the power of a British king to prevent it. Nor were private property, the life and rights of the subject, ever more secure perhaps, than under his administration. His majesty's clemency appeared in many instances; but in none more conspicuously, than in his conduct towards those who were engaged in the black rebellion of 1745. Very few examples were made of royal justice, after that horrid rebellion was at a period. But how many traitors, even obliged, and therefore ungrateful ones, were made examples of the royal grace! His majesty had a greatness of mind, which made him chuse rather to reclaim his rebellious subjects by his lenity, than to rid himself of them by a justifiable severity. And there is reason to think, that this truly god-like method of proceeding had a great and happy effect; and was the means, not only of reconciling, but strongly attaching to his person and government, many people who had been unreasonably disaffected thereto before.

His majesty, like his royal father, was a prince of a heroic and martial spirit: A lover, indeed, of peace;

but one who would not suffer himself or his subjects

to be injured, without taking up the sword, when that measure became necessary. He was a king, not only of great spirit and resolution, and the most undaunted fortitude; but one who well knew how to command armies in the field, when there was occasion for it: Of which he gave some not inglorious proofs.

HIS majesty was a prince, even by the confession of his enemies, many of them at least, of great sincerity and truth, of strict probity and honor, in all his public transactions, both towards his own subjects and towards foreign states and kingdoms. He was far above that deceit, artifice, and low-cunning, for which most of the Stewart race were so eminent, the *royal martyr* himself not excepted. In short, his whole reign was a confutation of that infamous Machiavellian maxim, “*Qui nescit dissimulare, nescit regnare*”—He that knows not how to dissemble, is ignorant of the art of reigning.

IT was intimated above, that his majesty was a true protestant. As such he was a friend to toleration, and religious liberty; which cannot indeed be violated without violating the natural rights of mankind. His majesty did not affect, as *defender of the faith*, to make his own private judgment and conscience a rule to his subjects, or to tyrannize over their consciences. Nor did he, as *head of the church* by law established in England, endeavour to destroy the church equally established by law in Scotland; or desire to distress any of his good protestant subjects, who might, in some respects, dissent from them both. Some inconveniences and hardships, I mean legal ones, these latter might indeed be subjected to; which there is ground to think, a prince of so great equity and goodness, was so far from being pleased with, that he would have been
E
glad

glad to see them wholly removed. Happy had it been for the British nations, if all his predecessors in the throne had been of such generous and catholic principles—The true church of Christ needs not to have her faith *defended* by any other weapons, than those of sober reason and argument, unless it be against those who attack it with carnal ones. Indeed wicked men and hypocrites can hardly ever think *their* church secure, unless some other sword besides that of the spirit, is drawn in her defence. Tho' she have kings for her nursing-fathers, and queens for her nursing-mothers; tho' she be rocked in a princely cradle, and sweetly charm'd to her *repose* with royal lullabies; yet so perverse are some of her children, that they can take no rest, unless others, out of her pale, are put upon the rack, or otherwise harrassed with penal laws—But, blessed be God, all our royal defenders of the faith, since James II, have been content to be nursing-fathers to the church, by preserving the public peace, toleration, and liberty of conscience: The happy effects whereof have been very apparent in many respects. And considering the known justice and moderation of the royal house of Hanover, and also of other eminent and distinguished personages in church and state, we need not wholly despair of seeing the time, when all good protestants, and loyal subjects, shall have their share in the honors and emoluments of the state, without being subjected to any narrow-spirited, and injurious *tests*.

BUT not to digress. It may be said upon the whole, that the maxims of his late majesty's government were wise, noble and truly heroic. And as his views were in general pure, generous and sublime; so it pleased God to give him a prosperous reign. During his reign, there have indeed been some domestic troubles, as
well

well as foreign wars ; to prevent which, is not always in the power of the wisest and best kings. Nor can it be denied without blindness, or extreme prejudice, that some great and threatenng evils, have been growing in the nation ever since the revolution. Of which, however, those only ought to bear the blame, who were the criminal causes of them. And even notwithstanding these evils, it may be truly said, that all these reigns have been happy, attended with national prosperity and glory ; particularly that of his late majesty. He ever exerted himself wisely and vigorously, and, by the blessing of God, successfully, to promote the public good. The rebellion had a seasonable stop put to it ; and the prudent measures since used, have in some measure allayed old animosities, and united parties. There has not, perhaps, been greater harmony in the nation since the days of queen Elizabeth, if then, than during some of the last years of his majesty's reign. During which time, his majesty's counsels and arms have also been remarkably prospered, not only for the defence of his own dominions, but also for reducing the pride and power of France. Neither of the four quarters of the world is destitute of glorious proofs hereof. Nor is it easy to mention any period, wherein the national honor and prosperity were greater, than at the time of his majesty's decease : Even tho' he left his subjects engaged in a war, which we could have wished him to terminate with a glory and success, equal to that with which it had been carried on for some years before. This would have compleated both his and our worldly felicity ; and might have rendered the reign of king George II. the most glorious period in the British annals : Yea, it may, perhaps, still be so, notwithstanding this circumstance is wanting to compleat the felicity of it.

36 *GOD ruleth in the Kingdom of Men.*

GOD, indeed, blessed his majesty with a long life and reign, tho' not so long as his good subjects desired. He was, I suppose, the oldest reigning prince in Europe, at the time of his decease: And, for many ages past, no king of England had attained to his years †. Had God regarded the fond wishes of his loyal subjects, he might indeed have been immortal: For the time would probably never have come, when they would have parted with him without any reluctance. But the most High, who ruleth in the kingdom of men, hath seen meet to call him out of this world. And altho' we cannot resign so good a king, our common father, without a degree of sorrow; yet we have doubtless far more reason to bless God for sparing him to us so long, than we have to murmur or complain at his taking him away from us at last. And while we express such an ingenuous grief as becomes dutiful and obliged subjects on this occasion, there are, as was intimated before, many circumstances to console us under the loss, and make us acquiesce in this dispensation of divine providence.

It may truly be said of his late majesty, as it was of king David, that he "died in a good old age, full of days, riches and honor"*. He died as it were in the arms of victory; triumphing over his enemies, foreign and domestic; over the former by his arms, and over the latter by his goodness and clemency. He left the nation in as prosperous circumstances, as could well be imagined in a time of war. He had not only lived longer, but done more good, and therefore acquired more glory, than most kings, even good ones, had done before him. Nor, which is a most material circumstance, did he die till he saw his royal grandson and heir, trained up under his own eye,

† He was almost 77.

* 1 Chron. XXIX. 28.

eye, and that of a princess of very distinguish'd merit, arrived at such a maturity of life and judgment, as qualified him for taking the government immediately into his own hands.

How much better has God been to us in this respect, than our fears sometime since? not to say, than our deserts, which it were unnecessary to add. It is now almost ten years since God, in his holy providence, put us into tears and mourning, and awakened our serious apprehensions, by the untimely death of his royal highness Frederic, prince of Wales, the then heir apparent, and father to his present majesty. The late king was even then old and gray-headed, and was also said at that time to be infirm. The next heir to the throne, he who, by the grace of God, now sits upon it, was but about twelve years of age. So that we had great reason to fear, one of the woes would befall us, which Solomon speaks of; that of having a child, or scarce more than a child, to reign over us. His late majesty, in his great wisdom and goodness, took all possible care and pains to guard against the inconveniences and hazards of this, if it should please God to take him away during the minority, and tender age, of his royal grandson. But, to our great joy, it has pleased the most High to lengthen out his important life, till he beheld the heir of his kingdoms and dominions of full age, and indeed more than full age, to govern them: And it is some time since our just apprehensions above mentioned, were laid aside. Thus graciously hath he, who ruleth in the kingdom of men, provided for our welfare. And as his present majesty is the *first* king of Great-Britain, born therein, i. e. the first born in the island of Britain, since the kingdoms of England and Scotland were united, God grant he may prove a great and equal blessing

38 GOD *ruleth in the Kingdom of Men.*

bleſſing to both : And that the ſubjects of both, being now united in one kingdom as well as under one king, may have no ſuſpicions, no jealousies, no contentions among themſelves, unleſs it is a contention, who ſhall ſhew at once the greateſt loyalty to his majeſty, and the ſincereſt love to Britiſh liberty, as founded in, as eſtabliſhed and ſecured by, the Britiſh laws : Which ought indeed to be more ſacred with Britons, than the intereſt of any particular perſon or family whatſoever. In ſaying which, I truſt, I ſay nothing unbecoming a good ſubject, in contradiction to a ſlave.

ACCORDING to the lateſt advices from Britain, which came to town the laſt evening, it ſeems that a very ſpeedy peace is not now much expected, at leaſt, that it is not to be depended upon. We have indeed his majeſty's declaration to the court on the day of the late king's death, wherein, I think, this is implied : A declaration conceived in ſuch terms, as tend to raiſe our expectations of great felicity under his reign. You will doubtleſs hear with pleaſure part of a ſentence or two, extracted from it, as it has not been made public amongſt us—After ſpeaking of the great loſs which he and the nation had ſuſtained in the ſudden death of the king, his majeſty proceeds thus : “ But animated by the tendereſt affections for
“ this MY NATIVE COUNTRY, and depending on the
“ advice, the experience and abilities of your lord-
“ ſhips, on the ſupport and aſſiſtance of every honeſt
“ man, I enter with chearfulneſs into this arduous
“ ſituation; and ſhall make it the buſineſs of my
“ life to promote in every thing the glory and in-
“ tereſt of theſe kingdoms”—A declaration truly
worthy a young Britiſh monarch; which we ought
to conſider, not as words of courſe, but as proceeding
ing

ing from the royal heart of him that made it. * May that God, who hath the hearts of all kings, as well as of their subjects, in his hand, confirm his majesty in these noble sentiments, these truly royal purposes; and attach the hearts of all good men to his person, government and family. May he cloath his enemies with shame, while the crown flourishes on his head; and while three kingdoms with their dependencies, happy under his auspicious reign, shall with one voice say, “ Long live king George III; and die at least as old, as prosperous, as venerable, as much beloved, as much honoured, as George II !”—All this we sincerely hope for; and more than this we could not, perhaps, very modestly desire ———

THOUGH we ought always to remember our late soveraign with the greatest veneration, our allegiance must now be, or rather is already, transferred to his royal grandson and heir; in whom, in some sense, he still survives & reigns. These Northern American colonies have indeed ever distinguished themselves by their loyalty, and their zeal for the protestant succession in the house of Hanover. We had accordingly a great share in the affections of his late majesty; the happy fruits of whose royal care, and indefatigable endeavours for our security and welfare, we now reap in
some

* Since this discourse was delivered, we have had his majesty's gracious, and most excellent speech from the throne, to both houses of parliament: In one paragraph of which, he is pleased to express himself thus—— “ Born and educated
“ in this country, I glory in the name of BRITON; and the
“ peculiar happiness of my life will ever consist in promot-
“ ing the welfare of a people, whose loyalty, and warm af-
“ fection to Me, I consider as the greatest and most perma-
“ nent security of My throne: And I doubt not but their
“ steadiness in those principles, will equal the firmness of
“ my invariable resolution to adhere to, and strengthen,
“ this excellent constitution”——

ome measure, and are likely to reap in still greater abundance in future times. His royal highness, the late prince Frederic, had also a great concern for the prosperity of the colonies, as he well knew both their loyalty, and their importance to Great-Britain. And had he lived to ascend the throne, we should doubtless have had in him such another friend and protector, as we have lost in his late majesty. We have no reason to doubt, but that his present majesty will have the same gracious regard for us ; and, perhaps, perfect that deliverance so happily begun, and carried on so far, for his American subjects, within these few years past. May God give us favour in his eyes, as he did in the eyes, both of his royal grandfather and father, that our great loss in them may be made up in him ! This we have reason humbly to hope, if we persevere in our accustomed loyalty ; and still conduct ourselves as dutiful subjects. And if our late, ever-honoured king, could now speak to us. I am perswaded he would admonish us to shew our regard to his memory, not so much by fruitlessly lamenting his death, as by a dutiful and loyal behaviour towards his successor ; as the certain way to secure his royal favour, and, by the blessing of heaven, to prolong, or even to increase, our tranquility and happiness. I almost imagine I hear him speaking to Us, in common with all our fellow-subjects, in such terms as these —

“ Alas ! my children, why do you thus in vain lament my departure from you ? Was not man born to die ? I was long happy in your affection, and dutiful regard to me. You were also long happy under my government, tho’ less so than I sincerely desired to make you. The relation of king and subject no longer subsists between us. But death, which has dissolved that relation, has not been able to diminish my love to you, and concern for your

“ happiness.

“ happiness. I cannot indeed now promote it my-
 “ self: But, behold THAT ROYAL YOUTH, whom you
 “ lately hail’d to the British throne!—Let all faction
 “ cease; be loyal; be public-spirited. And in him,
 “ as you have another George, expect also another
 “ friend to your liberties; another guardian of your
 “ laws; another father; another victor over your ene-
 “ mies, with extended empire, and increasing glory!”—

BUT let me now close this discourse with some very
 short reflections of a practical nature—How transi-
 ent is all worldly greatness and glory! Whose death
 is it, my brethren, that we have been meditating upon?
 Is it not that of a king? a great and prosperous king?
 one, whose fortune, whose riches and honor, might at
 once excite the envy of most other monarchs, and
 leave them in despair of ever attaining thereto. But,
 alas! what is worldly felicity, worldly glory? a sud-
 den gleam; a meteor darting along the sky, which is
 no sooner beheld, than it falls, and disappears forever—
 “ Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.”—

IF kings, if great and good kings, such as the sove-
 reign of the world has dignified with the title of *gods*,
 must so soon “ die like men,” certainly we common
 mortals should not either flatter ourselves with the hope
 of immortality here, or place our supreme felicity in
 this world. Can any of us hope ever to arrive at such
 worldly prosperity and greatness, as our late sovereign
 enjoyed? Not, certainly, if we are in our right senses.
 But would even that satisfy us? Not, unless we were
 more than mad.—Alas! it is only a low ambition, a
 sordid spirit, that could take up contented with such a
 portion, such an happiness, without looking beyond
 the grave: For “ man being in honor, abideth not”—

42 *GOD ruleth in the Kingdom of Men.*

WE are, moreover, admonished by this dispensation of providence, to place our chief hope and confidence, not in man, not even in mighty kings, and potentates, but in the most high God, who ruleth in the kingdom of men, and hath the breath of all kings in his own hand — “ Put not your trust in princes, says the royal psalmist, nor in the son of man in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth ; he returneth to his earth : in that very day his thoughts perish. Happy [then] is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God, which made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that therein is ; which keepeth mercy forever.” — The Lord shall live and reign forever : And the obedient subjects of his kingdom shall be ever secure, ever happy, in his favour and protection, tho’ the kingdoms of this world are moved and overturned, or both earth heaven were dissolved !

To conclude then : Let us all be admonished to put our trust in the great, the eternal God ; and, in the way of well-doing, to commit the keeping of our bodies and souls to him, as unto a faithful creator. Let us both fear God, and honor the king ; which duties the apostle joins together. Let us endeavour to lead quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty ; “ as free, and not using our liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God ;” and, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, honor and immortality. Let us be faithful and diligent in discharging the duties of our several stations in life ; knowing that we are soon to pass off the stage of this world, and to give an account of ourselves to God the judge of all. And let me remind you, that in the judgment of the great day, it will be of far less importance, who has been a king, or mighty monarch, and who a person of low degree, than it will be, who has
been

GOD ruleth in the Kingdom of Men. 43

been a truly upright and good, and who a dishonest and wicked man. For when the sea, death and hell [hades] shall deliver up the dead that were in them, and the small and great shall stand together before God, they shall be "judged every man according to their works."

WHEREFORE now unto him, the king eternal, immortal, invisible, who hath prepared his throne in the heavens, and whose kingdom ruleth over all; unto him be glory for ever and ever, AMEN.

Page 24, bottom, for 1684, read 1685.

T H E E N D.







