

found, as well in the Holy Scriptures as in heathen writers, acknowledging and proving the interposition of Providence; both to punish and reward the nations of the earth according to their deeds. Nor can it be necessary: For this is a truth which the general consent of mankind hath admitted. Excepting only a few professors of *Science falsely so called*, who would attribute the whole to *second causes*: Not considering how many of the transactions alluded to no human sagacity could, on this supposition, unravel: And, moreover, that whether God works his purpose by a *second*, a third, or a fourth cause, it is equally God that works all the while. But such men look only to the instrument: To them *the arm of the Lord* that wields it *hath not been revealed*.

But let us, my Brethren, cultivate more humble and devout dispositions. Let us endeavour to improve by the awful judgments that have fallen on past ages. But particularly let us strive to *discern the Signs of these present times*, that we may *flee from the wrath to come*. For this purpose we shall now proceed

2. To consider whether there be not now evident marks of a divine visitation in the world.

Under this head I do not mean to dwell, (for time will not permit) on that spirit of discontent and turbulence; that desire of unsettling ancient habits; that disposition to quit the slow but sure ways of sober industry, and to rush into new adventures—which are in themselves curses of no light nature and infallibly lead to others tenfold more severe; and which, notwithstanding, now seem to have infected a considerable part of mankind. But I will only draw your attention to the present miserable situation of France—A country whose desperate attack on our dearest rights might well provoke us, but whose excessive sufferings are enough to draw compassion from the bitterest enemies it ever had.

The people, of whom I speak, were but lately, as a nation, very flourishing and powerful; but they had amongst them many crying abuses and corruptions: And it may not be altogether useless to notice a few of the principal ones; that we may see how naturally (such is the wise appointment of God) their sufferings have grown out of their sins.

In the first place, then, the established religion of the country was deformed by many and grievous errors; and their public worship was superstitious and absurd in the extreme. Their doctrines of transubstantiation, and purgato-

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