

wrath, and employ his tongue to solicit our cause and procure us the richest blessings!

3. Then true believers have a friend in the court of heaven, who is agenting their cause, managing their concerns, and will make all things work together for their good. Whatever their cause be, and however fearful they may be about the issue of it, all shall go right at length, through the interest of their mighty Intercessor.

4. Believers cannot finally miscarry, and utterly fall away: for they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. Their Redeemer ever liveth to make intercession for them. So that neither their own sins, nor all the temptations of Satan, nor the frowns or allurements of the world, shall ever prevail to make them fall from their steadfastness, or from the favour of God: for Christ, as their High Priest, hath died for their sins, and will never intermit his suits to God in their behalf till they be safely brought to glory.

5. *Lastly*, Employ the Lord Jesus Christ as your High Priest, to bring you to God, depending on his merit as the ground of the expiation of your guilt, and giving you a title unto eternal life. And make use of him as your Advocate with the Father, to procure you all the blessings you stand in need of for time and eternity.



OF CHRIST'S KINGLY OFFICE.

PSALM ii. 6.—*Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion.*

THE New Testament leaves us no ground to doubt of our Lord Jesus Christ being the person here spoken of, as several passages in this psalm are expressly therein applied to him. The words contain a direct assertion of Christ's being appointed King of Zion, his spiritual kingdom—Therein we have,

1. His office: He is a *King*, invested with all regal power and princely authority: being 'King of kings, and Lord of lords;' yea 'the Prince of the kings of the earth.' And this name he hath written on his vesture and on his thigh, Rom. xix. 16.

2. His kingdom, over which he rules, the *holy hill of Zion*; which was an eminent type of the gospel-church, and is called *holy*, because the temple, the house of God was built upon it.

3. His right to this kingdom; *I have sent him my King*, says Jehovah. The Father hath placed him in that office, giving him, as

God-man, Mediator, 'all power in heaven and in earth.' He is 'given to be Head over all things to the church.'

4. The stability of this kingdom against all attempts made to oppose or destroy it, *Yet have I set my King, &c.*—Though enemies roar and rage, and leave no means unessayed to hinder the erection and establishment thereof; yet all their plots shall be unsuccessful, and all their deliberations shall miscarry. I have set him as King, and will maintain his throne.

The doctrinal proposition arising from the words is,

Doctr. 'Christ executes the Office of a King.'

In discoursing from this doctrine, I shall shew,

I. That Christ is a King.

II. What sort of a kingdom the kingdom of Christ is.

III. The acts of his kingly office.

IV. The properties of this King.

V. *Lastly*, Deduce some inferences for application.

I. I am to shew that our Lord Jesus Christ is a King. This will appear, if ye consider,

1. That he was prophesied of in the Old Testament under this character. Thus old Jacob on his death-bed says of him, Gen. xlix. 10. 'The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come.' And says the evangelical prophet, Isa. xi. 1, 2, 3. 'There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord: and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord, and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears.'

2. That he was of old promised to his people under this notion: Isa. ix. 6, 7. 'Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even for ever. Zech. ix. 9, 'Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold thy King cometh unto thee: he is just and having salvation, lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.' Micah v. 2. 'Out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be Ruler in Israel.' He is called *the King* by way of eminency, Cant. i. 4. 'The King hath brought me into his banqueting-house.' Ezek.

xxxiv. 24. 'I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them.' That he should be a King, was declared to his mother, by the angel, before his conception in her womb, Luke i. 32, 33. 'He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David. And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end.' And hence he is called 'King of kings, and lord of lords.' Rev. xvii. 14.

3. That he has all the ensigns of royalty. He has a sword: hence it is said, Psal. xlv. 3. 'Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O thou Most Mighty.' By this we are to understand the word of God, which is the great instrument by which he maintains and propagates the glory and honour of his kingdom in the world.—A sceptre, which is another badge of royal majesty, Heb. i. 8. 'A sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.' By this we are to understand his Spirit, which he puts forth in the government of the world, and in his operations of grace in the hearts of his people, guiding and conforming them, through his word and ordinances, to the holy will of God.—A crown: It is said, Rev. vi. 2. that 'a crown was given him, and he went forth conquering and to conquer.' And we read of a crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, Cant. iii. 11.—An escutcheon or coat of arms: He bears the lion in his arms; hence called 'the Lion of the tribe of Judah,' Rev. v. 5; which imports that he should be a great conqueror and a victorious King.—A throne, Heb. i. 8. 'Thy throne O God, is for ever and ever.—Subjects, over whom he rules, even all the creatures in heaven and in earth, Psal. ii. 9. 'His kingdom ruleth over all,' Psal. ciii. 19. All the angels of heaven have taken the oath of allegiance to him, Heb. i. 6. 'Let all the angels of God worship him.' More especially he rules in the church. God the Father has set the crown on his head, and he holds it by immediate tenure from Heaven.—He enacts laws, which all his subjects are bound to obey. His laws are contained in his word, and they reach both the outward and the inward man.

4. That he sealed this truth with his precious blood.—When Pilate asked him, 'Art thou a King then?' he answered, 'Thou sayest that I am a King.' To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world. On this account it is said of him, that 'before Pontius Pilate he witnessed a good confession,' 1 Tim. vi. 13.

From all which it is evident, that our Lord Jesus is a King. Yea, he is King of kings, and hath a pre-eminence over them all; and therefore he is called 'the Prince of the kings of the earth.' And indeed he must needs be so; for it is by him that kings reign

and princes decree justice.—They all hold their crowns by immediate tenure from this great King. And he infinitely outvies them all; having the highest throne, the largest dominions, and the longest possession.

II. I proceed to shew the nature of Christ's kingdom, or what sort of a kingdom it is. Christ has a twofold kingdom.

1. An essential kingdom. He is Lord and King over all the creatures by nature, inasmuch as he is the eternal Son of God, equal with his Father in all things. In this respect he has a universal empire, which extends over all things in heaven and earth, yea and to hell itself. He is the sole Monarch of the whole world; and all the princes and potentates of the earth are but his vicegerents that govern under, and should rule for him. He is 'the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords,' as the apostle styles him, 1 Tim. vi. 15.

2. He has an economical or Mediatorial kingdom. Originally the kingdom belongs to him as God, and derivatively it belongs to him as God-man and Mediator. He is constituted King by divine appointment and institution, *I have set my King upon my holy hill of Zion.* He is invested with authority over all the creatures; hence it is said, Eph. i. 22. 'God hath put all things under his feet.' He rules from sea to sea, and to the ends of all the earth, yea to the utmost bounds of God's creation. 'He hath given him power over all flesh,' as this King himself says, John xvii. 2. All things are subject to his government, and ready to fulfil his pleasure, when he issues his word of command.

The church is his peculiar and special kingdom. God 'hath given him to be head over all things to the church,' Eph. i. 22. This kingdom is a spiritual kingdom: hence he says, 'My kingdom is not of this world,' John xviii. 36. The king thereof appeared not in worldly pomp and grandeur, attended with a splendid equipage, surrounded with armed guards, or having a brilliant and magnificent court, but in spiritual splendor, suited to the nature of his kingdom, Zech. ix. 9. forecited. His throne is in the heavens, not on earth, Psal. cx. 1. His sceptre is a spiritual one, the word of God, which he wields for the good of his people; it is the rod of his strength, which he sends out of Zion, and by the instrumentality of it he makes them willing in the day of his power, Ps. cx. 2, 3. Compare Isa. ii. 3. 'Out of Zion shall go forth a law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.' The subjects of this kingdom are spiritual men, born of God, begotten of the word of truth, the incorruptible seed of the word, John i. 12. The way of its administration is spiritual, reaching neither men's bodies nor purses, but their

consciencés; 'the weapons' of it 'not being carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds,' 2 Cor. x. 4. Its laws are spiritual, reaching the innermost parts of the heart; and the benefits of it are spiritual, righteousness, peace, joy in the Holy Ghost,' &c.

The administration of his government with respect to this kingdom is either external or internal.

1. It is external; and that again is either more general, or more particular. (1.) More general, in the course of his providence. He as Mediator has a providential influence on all the affairs of this world, ordering and determining them to the special benefit and interest of his people. Hence it is that all things work together for the good of those who love God. We have an admirable scheme of divine providence in Ezek. i. There you may see how all the wheels, i. e. motions and revolutions here in this inferior world, are guided and directed by the Spirit that is in them; and in verse 26. it is all run up into the supreme cause: there you find one like the Son of Man, which is Jesus Christ, sitting upon the throne, and giving forth orders for the government of all. (2.) It is more particular, in his appointing laws, ordinances, and officers, in his church, to manage and govern it, and to inflict censures upon scandalous offenders.

2. It is internal, in the hearts of his people. He subdues them to himself in a day of power, writes his laws upon their hearts, and rules and governs them. In this respect it is said, Luke xvii. 21. 'The kingdom of God is within you.' There he sits enthroned King, and sways his royal sceptre. But more of this anon.

III. The acts of Christ's kingly office may be reduced to these heads, viz. subduing sinners to himself, ruling and governing them, defending and protecting them, restraining his own and their enemies, and conquering them. Of each of these I shall treat in order.

*First*, Christ exercises his kingly office in subduing a people to himself, making them willing in the day of his power to submit to his authority and sceptre, Psal. cx. 3. and so subjecting them to him as willing subjects. For this end consider,

1. That the great design of Christ's kingly office as Mediator is to raise up to himself a kingdom in the bowels of the kingdoms of the earth, Acts xv. 14. and to make the subjects of men the subjects of the divine Mediator. So that those who will not allow a spiritual kingdom within a temporal one, refuse Christ to be King.

2. Our Lord has a right to this kingdom, having purchased it with his blood, Acts xx. 28. He comes not without a title to conquer, but has the title of his Father's gift and his own purchase.

Ere he could attain to the possession of this kingdom, he beloved to swim through a sea of bloody sufferings, and he purchased every subject with the immense price of his precious blood. Thus his title is indefeasible.

3. Though our Lord has this just right to the kingdom, yet his subjects have sworn allegiance to the Prince of darkness, and are in actual rebellion against him. That is the common character of them, which we have Tit. iii. 3. 'We ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.' And they will never yield to him, till they be overcome by his mighty power. He gets no subjects but by stroke of sword, and the exertion of the same power that was put forth in his own resurrection.

4. Christ as a King doth by power overcome them at length, and makes them willingly submit to him, renounce obedience to the devil, the world, and their own base lusts, his enemies, and causes them cheerfully stoop to the yoke of his obedience, and to say, as Isa. xxvi. 13. 'O Lord our God, other lords besides thee have had dominion over us: but by thee only will we make mention of thy name.'

5. The weapons wherewith Christ subdues his subjects are his word and Spirit, whereby they are effectually convinced of their sin and rebellion, and reduced to subjection to him. The word is the rod of his power, by which he has subdued nations to himself. It was by this word that in the primitive times he overturned the empire of the devil, silenced the heathen oracles, and demolished the Pagan idolatrous worship. And because the word comes to many without the Spirit, therefore Christ has many subjects in appearance only, mere pretenders to loyalty to him; they are really the subjects of Satan, and only feign submission to Zion's King. But where the Spirit comes with the word, there the heart is subjected to Christ in very deed, 2 Cor. x. 4; and Christ has a kingdom not only among them, but within them.

*Secondly*, Christ exercises his kingly office in ruling and governing his subjects. No kingdom can be without a government; and Christ's kingdom must needs be an orderly kingdom, which he himself governs as the supreme Head and Monarch. Now,

1. Forasmuch as the church is a visible society on earth, whose head is in heaven, Christ governs them externally.

(1.) Giving them laws according to which they are to demean themselves every way towards God and towards their neighbour, Isa. xxxii. 22. 'The Lord is our Lawgiver.' Those laws which are the laws of the kingdom of Christ, are written in the Bible, and are

a transcript of his perfections, and derive all their authority and vigour from him alone, and not from the church, or any body of men whatever. And none have power to add to or diminish from the laws of this great King.

(2.) He gives them officers in whose hands he has lodged this government who are to be accountable to him for their administration, on whom they depend, and from whom they derive their power. These are neither Pope nor prelates, none of these being officers of Christ's appointment; nor yet the civil magistrate, who as such is not so much as a member of the church; and while there were no magistrates but what were enemies to the church and the cause of Christ, yet Christ appointed a government therein; as appears from 1 Cor. xii. 28. 'God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.' But these officers are preaching and ruling elders; as is clear from what the apostle says, 1 Tim. v. 17. 'Let the elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.'

(3.) He gives discipline and censures to controul the unruly, and check the scandalous, and keep the society clean; to which all that own Christ as a King ought to be subject, who rules his people by church discipline, as well as teaches them by the ministry of men. This appears from what our Lord himself says, Mat. xviii. 17, 18. 'If he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man, and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.'

2. But seeing Christ is God, and his laws reach the inner man, which lies open to no other but himself, he governs his people internally.

(1.) Writing his law in their hearts, in consequence of the divine promise, Heb. viii. 10. holding forth their duty to them by an inward evidence, making them to know what his will and pleasure is, that they may obey it from the heart. Hence he says, Isa. xxx. 21, 'Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.'

(2.) He powerfully inclines and over-rules them by his Spirit unto obedience, while he sits at the helm, and steers the ship of the soul what way he will, Acts xx. 22. To which we may add,

(3.) Those secret rewards and corrections which are sent from his

own hand; while he bestows on them spiritual comforts and soul-feasts when in the way of their duty, and gives them such strokes for their correction, even for secret faults, as may let them see, that though their King be in heaven, yet he judges on the earth. Hence he says to the church of Pergamos, Rev. ii. 17. 'To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it.' And to the church of the Laodiceans he says, Rev. iii. 19. 'As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.'

*Thirdly*, Christ executes his kingly office in defending his people. The kingdom of Christ always had and ever will have many enemies, who will continually be within bow-shot of its subjects. These enemies are the devil, the flesh, the world, and death. Christ defends against these, as a king defends his subjects.

1. By preserving his church in being, notwithstanding all the cunning and furious attempts to destroy her. Hence the bush, though it burn, will not consume. Of her he says, Isa. xxvii. 3. 'I the Lord do keep it: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.' And he keeps every particular believer, so as they never totally and finally fall away, John x. 28. 'I give unto them eternal life (says he): and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.'

2. By giving them necessary support and help under all sufferings, troubles, and temptations, never leaving them, no not at the hour of death. Hence it is said, Isa. lxiii. 9. 'In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.' 1 Cor. x. 13. 'There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man; but God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.' For this he makes use of the angels as he will, they being 'all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation,' Heb. i. 14. And he can employ men, even the worst of men, in that service: hence the earth helped the woman, and opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth, Rev. xii. 16.

*Fourthly*, Christ executes his kingly office in restraining his enemies, and those of his people. While, though their power remains with them to annoy his people, yet he sets bounds to them, over which they cannot pass; Psal. lxxvi. 10. 'Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee (says the Psalmist): the remainder of wrath shalt

thou restrain."—Christ has all his and his people's enemies, outward and inward, in a chain: and no further can they go than he is pleased to let out a link to them. If it were not so, all would quickly be over-run; but one jot they cannot go beyond his permission.

*Fifthly* and *lastly*, Christ executes his kingly office in conquering his enemies, and those of his people. This conquest is twofold. (1.) When now he takes away their power in part. Thus is the devil conquered already, that he has not all the world so at his will, and under his yoke of slavery, as before the coming of Christ, when he ruled among the nations with an unlimited sway. And thus the devil and the flesh are conquered in the day of converting grace, when the power of these enemies is broken, and the captives are delivered from the tyranny and bondage in which they were formerly held. Thus the wicked world is conquered, when their rage against the people of God is laid aside, and the church enjoys tranquillity: 'For I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her, Zech. ii. 5. And death is conquered when its sting is taken away, which it is as to every believer; so that they can say, 'O death, where is thy sting?' 1 Cor. xv. 55. (2.) There is a complete conquest remaining, which will be at the last day, when Christ will gather in all his people into one glorious company, transport them into those mansions of bliss which he has prepared for them, and reign over them for ever in heaven: when all his own, and his people's enemies are utterly destroyed from the presence of God, and the glory of his power. 'For he must reign till all his enemies be put under his feet,' 1 Cor. xv. 25. Then death and hell shall be cast into the lake of fire, Rev. xx. 14. and the devil and all his slaves shall be shut up for ever in the infernal Tophet. This shall be the most signal display of the glorious conquests of this King, and the trophies of his victory shall be the subject of the song of the redeemed for ever.

This kingdom of Christ will be eternal, Luke i. 33. 'He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end.' Dan. ii. 44. 'The God of heaven shall set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed,—and it shall stand for ever.' It is true the way of its present administration will cease, and so he will deliver up the kingdom to his Father, but exhibiting it as consummated and perfected. But Christ shall remain the King, Head, and Husband of his church for ever, Rev. xix. 7. and he shall be the eternal bond of union betwixt God and the saints.

IV. Let us consider some of the properties or qualities of Zion's King.

1. He is a King of ancient, glorious, and honourable extract: for he is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person. His goings forth were of old, from everlasting. And he is God over all, blessed for ever.

2. He is an absolute king, who makes laws for his subjects, but is not bound by any himself. His will is his law, and he does without controul whatever seems good to himself in heaven and in earth. Yea, so uncontrollable is his government, that none may oblige him to render a reason of his actions. 'Who may say unto him, What dost thou?' But though Christ be an absolute monarch, yet his government is no way tyrannical, but managed according to the eternal rules of righteousness, justice, and holiness.

3. He is a wise King: for he is the wisdom of God, yea, God only wise; and therefore infinitely able to guide his subjects through all the labyrinths of danger and difficulty wherein they may be involved; while he 'teaches them in the way of wisdom, and leads them in right paths; so that when they go, their steps shall not be straitened: and when they run, they shall not stumble,' Prov. iv. 11, 12.

4. Christ is a very powerful King: for he has more than the strength of an unicorn; yea, he has an arm that is full of power, being the Lord of hosts, strong and mighty in battle; and therefore infinitely able to secure his subjects against all the attempts which devils or men can make against them. Yea, so great is his strength, and so mighty is his power, that one angry blast thereof will make all his enemies to fly as chaff before the wind; and therefore he says, 'Who will set the briars and thorns against me in battle; I would go through them, I would burn them up together,' Isa. xxvii. 4.

5. Christ is a just King: 'Just and right is he.' Though clouds and darkness may be about him, yet 'justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne,' Psal. cxvii. 2. So that his government is impartially exercised, without any by-respect to the great or the small, the rich or the poor, &c. Neither the meanness of the poor and low, nor the honour and greatness of the high and noble, will incline him to do any thing in the least inconsistent with the immutable rules of perfect justice. 'He accepteth not the persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor; for they are all the work of his hands,' Job xxxiv. 19.

6. Christ is a very merciful King. Mercy is the prevailing attribute of his nature, which he delights to make the children of men feel the benign effects of. Therefore he has proclaimed himself to be 'the Lord, the Lord God merciful and gracious.' He does not

willingly grieve nor afflict the children of men. He takes no pleasure in the blood of his most implacable and inveterate foes; and bears with a very tender hand upon his afflicted, broken, and discouraged people. For the bruised reed he will not break, nor quench the smoking flax. He heals the broken in heart, and binds up all their wounds. In all the afflictions of his people he is afflicted; and he that touches them, touches the apple of his eye.

7. Christ is a very meek and patient King. Never any in the world could have borne such indignities, or digested such affronts, as he has met with from such of his own subjects, to whom he has shewn the most distinguishing kindness. Had he not been thus patient, Judah and Ephraim had soon been unpeopled. 'As for them, they were bent to backsliding: though they called them to the Most High, none at all would exalt him,' Hos. xi. 7. Though he sent many prophets unto them, calling upon them, and saying, 'Return, ye backsliding children,' &c. yet they did not regard them. Who after this could imagine, that this just and jealous King would have entertained one thought of kindness towards them? yet hear what he says, 'How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together,' ver. 8.

8. Christ is a very beautiful King. His glory outshines the sun in its full strength. The united constellations of all created beauty fall infinitely short of his; for he is fairer than the children of men, yea, he is altogether lovely.

9. Christ is a most humble and condescending King: for he does not disdain to be acquainted with the meanest among the sons of men; the beggar will be as welcome to him as the prince. The poor and the rich are all one to him; and he takes as much notice of Job on the dunghill, as of David on the throne. Hear what the prophet, in the name of this great King, says, Isa. lxvi. 1, 2. 'Thus saith the Lord, the heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? for all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.'

10. Christ is a very rich and opulent King. The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof. He is the heir of all things. Honour and riches are with him, yea, durable riches and righteousness. So that those who are his honest and faithful subjects shall never want any thing that is good for them. Such are the immense trea-

sures and infinite riches of this glorious King, that all the ministers on earth, and all the angels in heaven, cannot possibly lay them open. For can they grasp the heavens in their arms, and the sun in the hollow of their hands? can they weigh the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? Suppose they could do all this, and a thousand times more, yet could they not give an account of the estate of this my King. So that his subjects shall never want either grace or glory.

11. He is an immortal and everlasting King. 'The heavens and the earth shall perish, but he shall endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shall they be changed. But he is the same, and his years shall have no end,' Psal. cii. 26, 27. Though the best, the wisest, and the richest kings upon earth will die, and leave their subjects exposed to many inconveniences consequent on their death, yet this King of glory lives for evermore, and will rule over his subjects with justice, mercy, and righteousness, through all the ages of eternity.

It remains to make some improvement of this subject.

1. The kings of the earth have no ground to grudge the kingdom of Christ its freedom in their dominions; seeing it is a spiritual kingdom, and quite of another nature than the kingdoms of this world; and interferes not with any of the just rights and prerogatives of earthly crowns. Yet how sad is it that this kingdom should be an eye-sore to the kings of the earth, and that they should employ their power to suppress and bear it down?

2. The Pope's supremacy, and the supremacy of the magistrate over all persons, and in all causes, whereby they have been made heads of the church, is daring blasphemy against Christ, a bold usurpation of his crown and dignity, and high rebellion against him, who will not suffer the jewels to be stolen from his crown, to deck the head of any earthly power whatever, without the severest testimony of his resentment.

3. There is a government of the church distinct from and independent upon the civil government, lodged in the hands of church-officers, whereby they have a power, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, to meet in judicatories, transact matters there according to the word and laws of this King, to dissolve their meetings in his name, to appoint fasts and thanksgivings, as the state of the church may require, to inflict censures on offenders, bind and loose, and to do every thing necessary for advancing this kingdom in a spiritual way, but no otherwise. And whoever presumes to hinder them in these acts of administration, or arrogate any of them to themselves, are in so far enemies to Christ and his royal prerogatives.

4. This government of the church is not alterable by any power on earth, whether civil or ecclesiastic; nor have they that are entrusted with it any power to give up the rights and privileges conferred on them by Christ to any person or persons whatsoever. If they do so, they are unfaithful to their trust, and their conduct will be highly resented another day.

5. None have power to appoint any parts of worship in the Church that Christ has not appointed. For he is the sole Lawgiver of the church, and has in his word appointed the platform of the worship which he requires of his subjects. And therefore for any to appoint ceremonies and rights of worship which bear not the stamp of his institution, act in opposition to his laws; and all their rites are useless and unprofitable. Equally culpable are those who presume to make any terms of communion, or of admission to the ordinances of the church, but such as Christ has left behind him. This is high rebellion against the King of Zion.

6. The truth of the kingdom of Christ is a solid ground of suffering, on which people may comfortably lose whatever is dear to them in the world, knowing they are in the way of their duty. And this was the ground of the sufferings of the Lord's people in the persecuting reigns before the Revolution, whose memory ought to be always regarded, for their zealous and firm adherence to the prerogatives of Christ's kingdom.

7. The church shall ride out all the storms that can blow upon her, whether from earth or hell. All plots and contrivances against her shall be defeated in the end; for her King liveth, and will never suffer the gates of hell to prevail against her. The crown shall flourish on his head, when the church's enemies shall be ruined, and their kingdoms laid by for ever.

8. However weak any poor believer be amongst many enemies, yet the broken ship shall surely come to land. The spark of grace shall be preserved amidst an ocean of difficulties and corruptions, within or without. The seed of grace sown in the heart shall be maintained, and spring up in the fruits of holiness. All Christ's honest subjects shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

9. Whoever they be that refuse subjection to the ordinances and discipline of Christ's house, do in so far reject Christ from ruling over them. Consider this, ye that neglect a regular attendance upon the ordinances of divine institution, and will not submit to discipline and censure for your scandalous, and offensive behaviour. Ye are the enemies of Zion's King, and your conduct plainly declares, that ye will not have this man to reign over you. Repent of this your rebellion, otherwise ye shall be slain as his enemies.

10. See, believers, ye that are striving against sin and Satan, and waging war with your lusts and all Christ's enemies, to whom you are to have recourse for help in all your difficulties; even to your Almighty King, who is infinitely able to help you in all straits. Make use of him daily as your King, applying and trusting to him for life, strength, defence, and victory over all your enemies.

11. *Lastly*, Ye that are strangers to Christ, captives to Satan, and under a miserable thralldom to your own lusts, will ye be persuaded to come under the sceptre and government of King Jesus; take on his yoke, and subject yourselves to him and his blessed government. For motives, consider,

(1.) The great glory and dignity of his person. He is God equal with the Father, the wonder of men and angels. The most glorious monarch that ever swayed sceptre among men, is but like a worm of the earth, or a despicable insect in the air, compared to him. All created excellencies fall under a veil, when his glory begins to shine.

(2.) He has the best right to govern your souls. The devil and your vile lusts are all usurpers. But Christ is your rightful Lord. He has an original right to you as God, and a derivative right as Mediator. He hath an unquestionable title by the grant of the Father, Acts ii. 36. 'Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.' And he hath a right by his own merit and purchase, Rom. xiv. 9. "For this end Christ both died, and rose again, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.' Ye are his, whether ye will or not. Ye are entirely at his disposal. He has more power over you than the potter has over the clay. Your own consent and willingness adds nothing to his title; but it will fearfully aggravate your sin, if ye refuse it.

(3.) Consider the misery of your condition till once ye submit to him. Ye are under a miserable bondage to the devil; ye are slaves to the prince of darkness; that spirit rules in you that worketh in all the children of disobedience. Your condition will grow still worse and worse, till it be incapable of any further addition of misery. Ye are now without God, without the promises of the covenant, without peace, without the pardon of sin, having no communion with God, or title to heaven. Ye are slaves to your sordid lusts, under the curse of the law, and condemned already. Whenever ye die out of Christ, ye shall die in your sins; and he that was your ruler and leader in this world, will be both your companion and tormentor in the world to come. O fearful condition! Can ye sleep quietly in your chains? When ye hear

that Christ was anointed by the Father to preach good tidings to the meek, to proclaim liberty to captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; should not this make you sigh, nay cry, through the grates of the prison, to this glorious Deliverer who stands at the door? When ye see Christ's standard pitched in the gospel, and his glorious banner displayed there, will ye not repair to it, and list yourselves among his faithful subjects?

(4.) It is your greatest dignity to be subjects to Christ. Theodosius the Emperor thought it a greater honour to be a servant to Christ, than the head of an empire. Christ's subjects are called vessels of honour, a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, &c. They are consecrated, and set apart for God, to be the objects of his special grace, and the instruments of his glory and service in the world. This advanceth them to great dignity and honour. Subject yourselves then to Christ, and ye shall arrive at the highest pinnacle of honour.

(5.) His government is most sweet and pleasant. His yoke is easy, and his burden light. His cross is better than the world's crown. Submit then to his easy sceptre.

(6.) Consider the great happiness that will attend your subjecting yourselves to Christ's government. It is introductive to every privilege, mercy, and blessing, that men can desire. By this ye will be delivered from the vassalage of Satan, the servitude of sin, the malediction of the law, and danger of the wrath to come. Let this prevail on you to submit to this King.

(7.) By this ye will put the crown upon his head, and give him the reward of his bloody death and sufferings, when ye renounce sin and Satan, and all the lusts and idols that exercised dominion over you before, and betake yourselves to him by faith, and give your hearty consent that he shall reign in your souls.

(8.) This is the design of all God's ordinances and dispensations; all the arrows in the gospel-quiver are levelled at this mark; it is the point and centre into which all these blessed lines are drawn. Submit to him, then, and disappoint not the design of all his love and grace to poor sinners.

(9.) Ye can have no saving benefit by Christ, unless ye submit to him as your King. It is through his kingly office that all his other offices are made effectual. All the blessings and benefits of his purchase are conveyed to believers this way. It is by his regal power that he changes their natures, powerfully inclines them to believe on him, and to love and obey him. If ye accept not of him as your King, ye can have no benefit by him at all. Ye must receive him as your Lord, as well as your Prophet and Priest.

(10.) *Lastly*, If ye will not stoop and bow to him, he will break you in pieces. God has settled an irreversible decree, that 'to him every knee shall bow;' and if they do it not cheerfully and willingly, they shall be made to do it with force and constraint. He has a rod of iron, and therewith he will break in pieces the mightiest potentates of the earth that will not subject themselves to him. Hence we have that counsel given them by the Spirit of God, Psal. ii. 10, 11, 12. 'Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little: blessed are all they that put their trust in him.'

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OF CHRIST'S HUMILIATION.

PHILIPPIANS ii. 8.—*He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*

HAVING discoursed of our Redeemer and his incarnation, and the several offices he executes under that character, I come now to treat of his amazing humiliation and abasement, to which he willingly submitted, in order to accomplish the redemption of elect sinners. The text holds forth his state of humiliation.

1. The voluntariness of it: it was no matter of force or compulsion; *He voluntarily humbled himself.*

2. The nature of it: it was *obedience*, viz. to the Father's will, which comprehends the whole of what Christ did and suffered for our redemption.

3. The depth of it: it was *unto death*; and he could go no lower. As for the kind of death, he humbled himself to the basest and most humiliating kind of it, *the death of the cross*. Under this is comprehended his burial, and continuing for a time under the power of death. Death had our Redeemer as low as it could carry him.

4. The continuance of this humiliation. He had a race thereof set before him, in which he continued till he came to death, as the end of it.

Christ's humiliation was a voluntary thing; he voluntarily did and suffered whatever he did and suffered for us, Psal. xl. 7. 'Lo, I come,' said he. Even in the deepest points of his humiliation, 'he was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth,' to oppose the