

THE LORD RULES OVER ALL.

His kingdom ruleth over all.—Ps. CIII. 19.

THIS is a psalm of praise, wherein the Lord is magnified for his mercy especially. This mercy is the more to be praised and admired, because the object of it is so unworthy and contemptible, man, who is so sinful, ver. 8, 10; so weak, ver. 14; so frail, ver. 15, 16. Man, in his greatest flourish, is but like the grass, which is soon cut down, or withereth; or like a flower, which fades of itself, or is blasted with a puff of wind. Oh, but the Lord's mercy is more durable than life. The shortness of our lives would be a sad consideration indeed, if the mercy of God did end with our life. Oh, but this follows us when we leave the world, beyond death and the grave; and can reach those that we leave behind us too: ver. 17, 'His mercy is from everlasting to everlasting, and his righteousness to children's children.' Here mercy that will survive us, that will never die; that we may meet with in another world, when our place in this shall know us no more; and faithfulness, that will continue from generation to generation, and will be mindful of children's children when we are dead and gone. And the comfort of this, ver. 18, belongs to those that believe in him, and shew the truth of their faith by sincere obedience, by care and mindfulness to do his will. To shew everlasting mercy to such is part of his covenant; and if we deal not unfaithfully with him, as to our part, we need not doubt but he is willing to perform his part. And as he is willing, so he is able too; for he has all power in heaven and earth; he has all things under his dominion, and rules over all, ver. 19. His throne is in heaven; he rules and reigns there. But though the glory of his kingdom do most appear in heaven, yet is not his kingdom and dominion confined to heaven, it reaches every where, thing, place; it rules over all. The whole world is his kingdom; his dominion extends over all. The words need not more explaining, but what we shall offer afterwards.

Obs. The Lord rules over all. All things belong to his kingdom, and are under his dominion. He reigns everywhere, and rules all and everything.

Nothing is more plain and express in Scripture than both his reign and the extent of it. For the first, Ps. xciii. 1, 2, Ps. xcvi. 1, 2, where we have his royalty, and his throne, and the basis of it; so מֶלֶךְ signifies; and Ps. xcix. 1. His throne is not only in heaven, but between the cheru-

bims, amongst his people, ver. 2; and not only in Zion, 'but above all people. For the extent of it, add but 1 Chron. xxix. 11, 12, 'Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all,' &c.

For the explication of the universal dominion of God, so necessary, so useful to be understood, and that we may lay a groundwork for the application, which may be exceeding profitable and comfortable to us at all times, especially in the worst, I shall endeavour to give you a clear and particular account of the act, the object, and the mode of it.

For the first, *to Rule*, includes these three things:

1. Authority. Rule, without authority, is but usurpation. God is the fountain of all just authority: Rom. xiii. 1, 'There is no power but of God.' All such authority, whether economical in a family, or civil in the state, or ecclesiastical in the church, is from God; and he, from whom all is derived, has incomparably more himself. His authority is sovereign; all else in the world (how sovereign soever called and accounted), it is subordinate to his; under it, subject to it, depending on it; and so far as it is not subject, it is usurpation and rebellion. He is the 'King of kings,' &c., Rev. i. 5; and the authority of the greatest monarch is not so much, compared with his, as that of a constable, or the meanest officer, compared with that of a prince.

2. Power. To keep those who are to be ruled in subjection; to make them yield and submit to the authority of the ruler. Without this he will be but a ruler at courtesy, and rather have the name than the reality of a governor. Now the Lord has all power; he is *παντοκράτωρ*, the Almighty ruler; he can make the powers of earth or hell to stoop to him, or crush them; and usually in Scripture, where his rule and government is mentioned, his power is annexed: Ps. lxi. 7, 'He ruleth by his power for ever,' מְשֹׁל עוֹלָם. He ruleth by his power over the world: Rev. xix. 6, 'The Lord God omnipotent reigneth;' Rev. xi. 17, 'Thou hast taken thy great power, and hast reigned.'

3. The actual ordering and disposing of what is under him, for the ends of government—the actual exercise of power and authority for this purpose. And so, when the Lord is said to rule, the meaning is, he shews his authority, and uses his power, in the ordering and disposing of all things as seems good to him. He makes them all serve his end and design; he works all things according to the counsel of his will; he orders all things in a suberviency to those purposes he had from eternity; he actually so disposes of all things so as to serve the ends for which they were appointed. And in this respect it is said, John v. 17, 'My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.' He is still at work, still ordering all by his providence. He is not like an artificer, who, when he has made a clock, and set it in order, and hanged weights upon it, leaves it to go of itself; but (as one says) more like a musician, who, knowing his instrument will make no music of itself, does not only tune it, but actually touch the strings, for the making of that harmony which pleases him.

This, for the first, what it is to rule; and what we are to understand thereby, when God is said to rule. Let us now see what he rules—what is the object or subject of his government; and that is no less than all things, 'He ruleth over all.' Now, that we may more distinctly view this, let us look upon it in the several parcels which make up this *all*.

1. He rules both heaven and earth: Isa. lxvi. 1, 'The heaven is my throne, the earth is my footstool.' Both heaven and earth are under him,

both are subject to him. The glory of his kingdom appears most in heaven, but the power of it reaches the earth, yea, and hell too. That is the proper place of rebels indeed ; but he has them in chains ; they will not yield obedience, but he keeps them in subjection, and shews that he is their ruler by executing justice upon them, and making them feel the power of his wrath. They would not obey the laws of his government, and therefore the penalty is inflicted on them ; and this is an act of government, as well as enacting laws and propounding or giving rewards.

2. He rules not only heaven and earth, but all the parts thereof ; the whole world, and every part of it, Ps. cxiii. 5. In heaven, the angels, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, Col. i. 16, are subject to him, and ordered by him as he pleases ; for he has put them in subjection unto Christ also, as he is Mediator, 1 Peter iii. 22. And he orders them as his servants, as 'ministering Spirits,' Heb. i. 14 ; he says to one, Go, and he goeth, Mat. viii. 9. As a servant stands in the presence of his lord, waiting for his orders, ready to receive his commands, and to do his pleasure, in such an humble and observant posture do the angels stand in the presence of their sovereign.

And as the thrones and principalities in heaven are under his rule, so are the kingdoms of the earth, 2 Chron. xx. 6. Nebuchadnezzar, one of the proudest and mightiest tyrants on earth, was forced by the hand of God (to whom the greatest kings on earth are less than worms) to acknowledge this, Daniel v. 20, 21, and iv. 82, 84, 85. He acted as one who had none above him, none to control him ; but the Lord made him know he was a subject, and that whoever possess the kingdoms of the earth, yet the Lord is indeed the ruler of them.

Yea, his dominion reaches unto the sea, Job xxxviii. 8-11. The sea, in his greatest rage, submits and obeys as under his rule and government, Ps. lxxxix. 8, 9, and xciii. 2-4. He can as easily still the rage of the furious, when it is like the swelling waves in a stormy sea ; or if they will storm against their great sovereign, can make them know subjection as he did Pharaoh, Ps. lxxxix. 19 ; Behemoth and Leviathan, the king over all the children of pride, are ruled by him, and he will rule over those that are prouder than he, and make them stoop or break them.

8. He rules not only great things, but small. The least things in the world are ruled and ordered by him as well as the greatest. *Dii magna curant, parva negligunt* ; that God regards great things, but concerns not himself with small matters, was the speech of those that knew not God ; nothing at all is exempted from his government, the least things are under his disposal. The conception of Laban's cattle may seem a small thing ; yet the Lord concerned himself in this, and admonished Jacob in a dream how he disposed thereof, Gen. xxxi. 11, 12. He takes care of the meanest creature, Ps. cxlvii. 9, Mat. vi. 26 ; the lilies, the grass of the field are under the influence of his government, vers. 28-30 ; he clothes them, they are his subjects, wear his livery ; nay, there is not the least sparrow falls without his order, Mat. x. 29 ; there is not so much as a hair, but is under his notice and disposal, ver. 30 ; he orders and overrules the very least things as well as the greater. Things so mean and inconsiderable as we mind them not, judge them not worthy of our thoughts, care, or regard, they are all under the government of God, and he actually orders and disposes of them.

4. He rules not only all beings, but all motions, Acts xvii. 28. As those things that live, have their life from him, and those things that have not life, have their being from him ; so both have their motion from him, he

gives it, and he orders it. All the motions in the world are governed and overruled by him ; all the wheels of this great engine, as they are of his framing, so, whether they be greater or less they move not without him ; he sets them on motion, he quickens it, he stops it when he will ; he directs it how and whither he pleases. If a sparrow move not without him (as before), what motion can we imagine exempted from his government and disposal ? How could Paul be so confident of the safety of his company, that not a hair should fall from the head of any of them, Acts xxvii. 34, but that God who has the ordering of all things and motions, even to that of a hair, had assured him of it ! vers. 23, 24. When a man, in the battle mentioned 1 Kings xxii., drew a bow at a venture, who was it that guided the motion of the arrow, so as to smite the king of Israel rather than any about him ? who was it that directed it, so as to enter between the joints of his harness, rather than to hit some other part of his armour, ver. 34, but that God who had designed and foretold his death ? ver. 17.

5. He rules not only actions, but events, so that acts and undertakings have not such an issue as they promise or threaten, but such as the Lord pleases to order. That which is unlikely to succeed has the desired issue, and that which is likely to prosper, succeeds not at all ; because all events are in God's hands, and he disposes of them, not as we think probable or improbable, but as he thinks fit : 1 Kings xx. 11, 'Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off.' Why so ? Because the event is in the hands of God, and he can dispose of it against those that are most confident, and for those who see little cause to expect it, Eccles. ix. 11. 'Time and chance happeneth to them all,' i. e. their endeavours have such success as the hand of God will guide them to ; yet this, though it order all things, being invisible, things seem many times to fall out rather at adventure, than according to the regular endeavours that have been used in order to them. Herein the people of God, whatever advantages they have had for the carrying on of their affairs to a good issue, yet still ascribe it unto God, and owe him so much as though they had done nothing, being sensible that whatever they did, it would have come to nothing, if he had not given a good event, Ps. xviii. 39, 40, and Ps. xlv., from the 8d to the 8th verse. And he is their king, their ruler upon this account, because their deliverances and successes were from him ; he overruled all to issue in good events.

6. He rules and orders not only the substance, but the circumstances of things and actions. To instance in time and place. How was it that Abigail came to meet David just at that time, which if she had slipped, he had massacred Nabal's family ? Why, God sent her, which is the account David gives of it, 1 Sam. xxv. 32, 34. How was it that the decree of Augustus, for taxing of the world, came forth just at the time when Mary was ready to be delivered ? Why, the Lord so ordered it, that what he had so decreed and foretold concerning the birth of Christ in Bethlehem might be fulfilled, Mat. ii. 5. When Nebuchadnezzar went to war, and was in doubt whether to fall upon Rabbah of the Ammonites or upon Jerusalem, Ezek. xxi. 20, 21, how came he to a determination ? Why, the Lord over-ruled all the means he used for his direction, so that he resolves to bend his force against Jerusalem, because God had determined to have it destroyed.

7. He rules and disposes both end and means. God had an intention to make his people, who were before *Jezreel*, the scattered of the Lord, to become *Jezreel*, the seed of the Lord, to bless them with plenty ; and hereupon so orders the means, as they might see his hand herein bringing about this end, Hosea ii. 21, 22. Here is the Lord, in the first place—I will hear—

influencing all the means, from first to last, so as Jezreel has the end of all the blessing promised.

The Lord stands in no need of means to accomplish the end he aims at. But when he will make use of means, he shews his all-governing and overruling power, not only in blessing means that are good, and proper, and usual, but in making any kind of means to serve his turn; so he can dispose of bad instruments to promote a good end. Thus he made use of the Assyrian to accomplish his whole work upon mount Zion, Isa. x. 12, though he had no such thought nor intention, but a quite other design, ver. 7. And he can make strange and unusual means accomplish his pleasure, as well as usual and ordinary. So he orders the ravens to feed one prophet, 1 Kings xvii., and two bears to destroy those who mocked another, 2 Kings ii. 24.

8. He rules and disposes not only things orderly, but such as seem most confused. Not only such affairs as are so well ordered that we may easily be persuaded some divine influence does dispose of them; but those that have such a face of confusion and disorder, that it will be hard to believe that the Lord has any hand therein; even such does he rule and order, though we see him not acting therein, till the darkness and disturbance be over. What horrid disorder was there in the actings of Jacob's sons, conspiring against their brother, throwing him into a pit, selling him to the Ishmaelites, Gen. xxxvii. Who could suspect that the Lord had a hand in any of this? Yet his hand was in it all. The confusion and disorder of it was indeed from the visible actors; but the Lord was all this while working this chaos into a beautiful form, and when he had done, then it appears with a lovely face, and is so represented by Joseph himself, Gen. l. 20, and xlv. 4, 5, 7, 8. Who could have expected that such a dismal cloud would have thus cleared up? But this is the Lord's doing, and such things he is wont to do, while he is ruling over all, and all are over-ruled by him.

If you should see such a black and dismal face of things as may tempt you to conclude that God has forsaken the earth or the place where you are, that he can never mingle with such confusions, or intermeddle in such horrid disorders, stay a little before you yield to such conclusions. The Lord once, out of chaos, brought a well-ordered world. He rules still; and can, when he pleases, out of mere confusion and darkness, bring forth a new heaven and a new earth, wherein righteousness may dwell.

9. He rules and orders things, both necessary and contingent or casual. Things necessary, such as proceed from necessary causes, which act in one certain uniform way, and cannot of themselves vary nor proceed otherwise; such are the course of the heavens, the eclipses of the luminaries, the seasons of the year, the ebbings and flowings of the sea. The Lord gave law to all these, and keeps them to the observance of it, yet overrules them, and gives them other orders when he pleases. The heavens declare the glory of God this way, Ps. xix. 1; not only by their fabric and influences, but by their course and motion, which he instanceth in verses 4-6, Ps. lxxiv. 16, 17. He has settled all the climes of the earth, and the seasons of the year, Jer. xxxi. 35, 36. The Lord has fixed the course of these things, they cannot vary therein of themselves; but he himself can change it when he thinks fit, and has given instances of his overruling power herein. He has changed the course of the sun, and made it stand still, as in Joshua's time; or go back, as in Hezekiah's time. And the course of the sea too, how uncontrollable the motion thereof seems to be! The Red Sea and Jordan are evidences that he who rules all can overrule anything.

So things contingent and casual, which fall out uncertainly or accidentally,

which those who know not God ascribe to chance and fortune, the Lord orders them, they fall out as he pleases. He disposes of them certainly, how uncertain soever they be in respect of other causes, Prov. xvi. 88. The lot is so ruled and directed by the Lord, that it falls just so as he would have it, and can do no otherwise; so when a man is slain casually, the Lord is said to 'give him up to death,' Exod. xxi. 18. There is an instance which will clear it, Deut. xix. 4, 5; in this case, which is so every way accidental, the Lord is said to deliver the man into the hands of him that slays him.

10. He rules and orders not only that which is good, but that which is evil and sinful. God is no way the cause, no way the author, of sin. It is the work of the devil, he brought it into the world; but being there, and the Lord permitting it to be there, Acts xiv. 19, Ps. cxviii. 12, he takes such order about it that it may appear he rules over all, and that there is not anything in the world but is subjected to his government and under his disposal. Accordingly,

(1.) He limits and bounds it, so that it proceeds not so far as Satan and the depraved will of man would have it; otherwise it would overwhelm the world, and no flesh would be saved. He restrains it in many by common grace, and breaks the power of it in his people by effectual grace. He withheld Abimelech from sinning when he had a mind to it, Gen. xx. 6.

(2.) He overrules it to good ends, and disposes it to excellent purposes. So the horriddest sin that was ever acted in the world was ordered by him, to promote the most blessed and glorious ends; and so he had disposed of it in his eternal counsel, before the actors were in motion or in being, Acts iv. 27, 28 and ii. 28. They designed therein the satisfying of their own malice and cruelty; but he disposed of it to the getting himself the greatest glory, in the redemption and salvation of lost sinners.

So the wickedness of men, in afflicting and persecuting his people, is overruled by God to the destroying of wickedness, the promoting of holiness, and the preparing of greater glory for them. He orders sin, so as it tends to destroy sin; the sin of oppressors, so as to purge sin out of his people, Isa. xxvii. 9. Isa. i. 25, he turns his hand upon them, in letting loose the hands of oppressors and persecutors against them. So that there is a double hand in their sufferings: the hand of wicked men, and that would destroy the oppressed; the hand of God, and that would destroy their sin. And the hand of God prevails, and thereby shews that he rules over all. He orders sin, so as it tends to promote holiness, to advance its opposite, Rom. v. 8, 4, Heb. xii.; he orders it so as to make way for greater glory, 2 Cor. iv. 17. Thus he brings the greatest light out of the blackness of darkness, and 'turns the shadow of death into the morning,' thereby making it evident that he rules over all; makes the greatest evil advance the greatest good; and that which is the worst of all, to serve the best and most glorious purposes.

11. He rules things natural and voluntary. Natural, such as have their next causes in nature, the hand of God rules therein, as in thunder and lightning, Job xxxvii. 2, 8; wind and rain, Jer. x. 18, Ps. cxlviii. 7. Not to stay upon other particulars, read Psalms civ. and cvii., and you will see plentiful evidence hereof in these and many other instances.

But more particularly, he rules things voluntary; such are intelligent and rational beings. Man in special is the subject of his government. Those amongst the sons of men that are his he disposes and takes care of, yet in a more peculiar manner. The Scripture is full and clear in expressing how man is governed by him in birth, and life, and death. He takes order about

his conception, formation, and birth, Job x. 9-11, Ps. cxxxix. 14-16. He fixeth the period of his life, and determines how many his days shall be upon earth, Job xiv. 5. He orders what his state and condition shall be while he lives, Ps. lxxv. 6, 7, 1 Sam. ii. 7, 8, Ps. cxiii. 7, 8. He rules the mind and heart, Prov. xxi. 2, Ps. cxix. 86, and cv. 25. No heart so obstinate but he can bend it; none so fast closed but he can open it, Acts xvi. 4; none so refractory but he can turn it whithersoever he will; none so frozen and congealed but he can melt and dissolve, and make it ductile as water. He alone has the sovereignty over the hearts of men: 'he opens, and no man shuts,' &c. The will, that impious faculty that will stand out when the whole man besides is conquered, he can subdue at his pleasure, and make it run into a ready compliance with his own will. He rules the tongue and words, Prov. xvi. 1. Man without him can neither prepare his heart to speak, nor speak what he has prepared; both is from him, who has the command both of heart and tongue; and he can guide the tongue to speak what shall be more effectual than what it was prepared to utter. Augustine is a remarkable instance hereof, who, beginning his sermon, was led to another subject than what he designed, and was prepared to speak of; and found afterwards that he was overruled thereto by the hand of God for the conversion of a seduced soul, which the discourse he had intended, it is like, would not have touched.

He rules and orders his feet and paths. If we were left to take our own course, whither would we run? Jer. x. 28. Who then shall direct him? Ps. xxxvii. 28. When we have found out a way which our own judgment thinks best, and our own inclination leads us to, the Lord often leads us out of it, and directs us better, Prov. xvi. 9. He rules hands and actions, Ps. xviii. 84. It is he that holds and guides the hand, or else it would make nothing but blots; his guidance is the sufficiency and strength of it for every service, for any work he calls us to. And so Nehemiah seeks it: Neh. vi. 9, 'Now therefore, O God, strengthen my hands.'

Thus the Lord rules over man, and over every part, and every act. Indeed, of all the creatures on earth, man only is capable of that which is properly government; he is the only subject that can be ruled by laws. Accordingly, he has enacted laws for us, and enforced them with penalties, and encouraged obedience to them, by promises of reward. And according to our observance of his laws he will judge what subjects we are, and will answerably proceed in the execution of them; by ennobling those with the reward promised who shew themselves faithful subjects, or by inflicting the penalty on those who prove refractory and disobedient. And thus doth the Lord most properly rule over men; though, in a larger sense, he rules over all things.

I might shew how he rules over his people in a more peculiar manner than over other creatures or other men, how he orders and overrules all things to secure them from evil and to do them good, how he commands all things to serve them for these purposes, Ps. lix. 18. His government reaches unto the ends of the earth; but he makes it known he rules in Jacob in a more special manner, he having a particular respect to them in his whole government, Deut. xi. 12. But the enlargement of this I reserve to the application.

I should proceed to the third general proposed, and give an account of the mode of this government, shewing what kind of rule it is, by some properties of it, whereby its excellency and transcendency above all other will be manifest.

1. It is a supreme sovereignty. He that rules over all has none above him, none co-ordinate with him, none but such as are below him, indefinitely

below him, none but what are subjected to him, and under him at an infinite distance.

The powers of heaven, those that are called thrones and principalities there, are not only subjects to him, but his servants. They attend in his presence, and while they wait on him they adore him; the splendour and lustre of his majesty is greater than they can well behold, Isa. vi. 1, 2. 'With twain they covered their faces,' as not able to endure the infinite splendour of his glory and majesty, no more than our weak eyes are able to behold the sun shining in his full strength. 'And with twain they covered their feet,' as abashed in sense of their own vileness and imperfection, in comparison of the incomprehensible perfections of their glorious sovereign. 'And with twain they did fly,' to shew their readiness to execute his commands, their swiftness in doing him service. They do not only serve but worship him, Heb. i. And as to be a servant is simply something less than to be a subject, so worship denotes greater subjection than any other service. Thus are the powers of heaven subject to him.

The powers of hell tremble before him, James ii. 19. Though they be called the 'rulers of the darkness of this world,' and the chief of them the 'god of the world,' yet before the Supreme Majesty of heaven they have not the confidence of free subjects, but tremble as slaves. Those that have led all men captive are the Lord's prisoners; they are in a lower and worse capacity than other of his subjects, they are rebels under punishment for their disobedience. He is ruling them, and will rule them for ever, in wrath. He has them in chains, they cannot stir without his leave; they could not so much as enter into a herd of swine till they had begged leave. Thus are the powers of hell subject to him.

As for the powers on earth, the highest and greatest of them are but his under-officers, and more under him incomparably than the lowest and meanest of their subjects are under them. They have their power and commission from him; he has limited them as he saw fit; and if they will not keep their bounds, and really acknowledge their subjection to their Great Sovereign, he will 'rule them with a rod of iron, and break them in pieces like a potter's vessel,' Ps. ii. 9, 10. A mighty Cham, a great Mogul, a grand Signior, the highest prince and potentate, is no more to him than a worm, or a fly, or a grasshopper is to us, no more than a potter's vessel, which is of less worth than any living creature is to us. They are but a small part of their dominion, that which is under their government, but their whole dominion is as nothing to the Great King, Dan. iv. 85. So that to him they are not the thousandth part of that which seems to be nothing, so much inferior are they to the Supreme Majesty of the world, and so much should they be subject to him; and if they will not, he will be 'terrible to the kings of the earth,' Ps. lxxvi. 12. He will cut off the proud, and cruel, and presumptuous spirits of oppressing Nimrods, and that in a terrible manner. He will make them know (though they be apt to forget it) that they are subjects, and that the Lord reigns and is their Sovereign, and that the kingdom is his alone who rules over all; that he is 'the blessed and only potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords,' 1 Tim. vi. 15, the only Supreme and Sovereign ruler, and Lord of all.

2. He rules absolutely; his government is unlimited, for who can bound him who rules over all? Other rulers are limited by laws or contracts, but none give law to God, nor lay obligation on him but himself; he has no other bounds but his own wise and holy will, and his will is law to heaven and earth, and all creatures therein, Dan. iv. 85, Ps. cxv. 8, and cxxv. 16. It is too great a power for any mortal man to be trusted with, to make his

will a law and rule to others. The Lord has subjected all to his laws, and if others will entrust their rulers with a freedom to do whatever they will, they do it at their peril. The corrupt and depraved will of man may prove a pernicious law ; but as it is the prerogative of God, so it is the advantage of the world that the will of God should be its law, and that all things should be ordered according to his pleasure, because his will is infinitely and perfectly wise, and holy, and good.

8. He rules irresistibly. His government is uncontrollable. None can give check to his orders, nor hinder him from accomplishing his pleasure, Isa. xlv. 10, 11. Whatever he pleases shall be done, and woe to those that attempt to hinder him, Isa. xlv. 9, Jer. xviii. 8, 4, 6. No powers in the world can any more hinder the Lord from ordering all in heaven and earth as he pleases, than the clay can hinder the potter from forming it into what shape he list. So Dan. iv. 85, Job ix. 12, 13. As none should question his proceedings, so none can stop them. Those who presume they are strong enough to help others, shall not be able to help themselves when he falls upon them ; they must stoop, yea, fall irrecoverably, Job xi. 10. Whatever the Lord undertakes, whether to save or destroy, whether to do good to those that please him, or hurt those that offend him, he will do it unavoidably ; there is none can hinder him, Rom. xi. 9, 2 Chron. xx. 6. All the resistance that any created power can make to the Lord in his course of governing the world will be but like that which a snail can make to the foot that treads on it, and will crush it. All the impediment they can give him is no more than a fly can give a wheel that is whirled about with a strong hand. All attempts of the powers of hell or earth to hinder the Lord from ordering all as he pleases will be as ridiculous, Ps. ii. 1-5.

4. He rules perfectly. There is not the least weakness or imperfection in his government, as there is in that of other rulers ; nothing of error or mistake ; nothing that the most excellent prudence would order otherwise ; nothing defective, for want of judgment as to things present, or want of experience as to things past, or want of foresight as to things to come ; for he has all things, past, present, and to come, clearly before his eyes, in every act of government, and in his ordering of every particular, Ps. cxlvii. 5. The Lord is great, as he is the ruler of the world ; and as he rules all things with great power, so with infinite wisdom. It is an infinite understanding that governs the world, Prov. iii. 19, 20. And as there is perfection of wisdom, so also of righteousness, in his government, Ps. xcvi. 1, 2, the basis of his throne (as before) Ps. xxxvi. 5, 6. All these perfections, so infinitely great in all dimensions that none can give an account of their height, and depth, and length, and breadth, do shine forth in preserving man and beast, in the Lord's disposing of all things in the world, from the highest to the lowest.

5. He rules all at once. Orders all things, in heaven, and earth, and under the earth, together. Men cannot do two things at once, but first dispose of one business and then of another ; order the affairs of one place now, and when that is done, despatch the concerns of another. But the Lord orders all the affairs of all parts of the world at once ; he can mind them all together, how infinitely various they seem ; the multiplicity of them is no more distraction to him than if he had but one thing in hand. He has a governing hand over all things, in all their actions and motions, throughout the whole world, and his hand is in them all at once ; and in those affairs which he manages by instruments, while they are acting under him they are acted by him, and he acts immediately in them all ; how far soever they may be asunder, he influences them all together.

And though this be hard to conceive, yet must there be no doubt of it,

if we believe that God rules over all. For since there are many millions of things in being and motion at once, if the Lord did but order one or few things at once, the greatest number of them would be and move without him. Since he rules over all, and none subsist or move without him, he must be conceived to put forth millions of governing acts at once, as many together as there are things and motions in the world.

6. He rules easily. The government of the whole world, and all things in it, gives him not the least trouble. He takes care of all without any solicitude; he orders all, without any toil; he acts all, without any labour; he does it continually, without any weariness. Οὐ γὰρ κάμνει ὁ Θεὸς προσάτων, οὐδὲ ἀδύνησι πρὸς τὴν πάντων ἐργασίαν, *Athanas. contra Arian. Orat.* 8. God is not weary with ordering the universe, nor is all the work of the world too much for him; he does it all with as much ease as we do that which may be done with a word, or a look, or a beck; he rules the world as easily as he made it. 'God said, Let there be light, and there was light,' Ps. xxxiii. 6, 9. He does not properly speak; he did not so much for the making of the world; it was enough that he willed it. Μόνον ἐθέλησας καὶ ἔποιησας τὰ πάντα, *id. ibid*; he only willed it, and all things started out of nothing; and with as much ease, with such a word he upholds and governs the world, Heb. i. 8; by his word he upholds all things in their being, and order, and motion; his word is enough for all. It is sufficient that he wills it: Τὸ βούλημα μόνον ἱκανὸν ἐστὶν αὐτοῦ πρὸς τὴν τῶν πάντων δημιουργίαν; his word or will was enough to make all, it is enough to govern all; it costs him no more toil or trouble, than a word of our mouth, or an act of our will costs us, Ps. cxlvii. 15-18; he rules and orders all things as easily as if he had but one thing to order; all are not so much to sovereign power and all-sufficiency, as any one, the least, the easiest is to us; he rules the world, as if an artist could make a clock go with his eye, and keep it in true and constant motion only by looking on it; the most miraculous acts of his government are done as easily as we breathe, Exod. xv. 8, 10.

7. He ruleth continually. His government is indefectible, he is always ruling over all, without ever ceasing, without the least intermission. If the Lord should but withdraw his governing hand a moment, all the wheels of the great fabric of the world would stand still or fall to pieces. When those whom we call the rulers of the world are asleep, or idle, or worse, God is still at work; his over-seeing eye is ὀφθαλμός ἀκοιμητός, an eye that 'neither slumbers nor sleeps,' Ps. cxxi. 8, 4, Zech. iv. 10, 2 Chron. xvi. 9. They run, they are always in motion, never shut, never diverted, ever beholding the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the government of it, Exod. xv. 18, Ps. cxlvi. 10. 'The Lord shall reign for ever,' for ever; not only because of the continuance of this sovereign dignity, but because of the ever continued exercise of his regal power.

Thus much for the explication of this grand truth.

For the proof of it, there is little need of reasons and arguments, when there is so much evidence from Scripture, as I have already given an account of. Only take notice of these three particulars:

1. The Lord has right and title to rule over all.

2. He is able to rule all. And,

3. He is concerned, and so willing to exercise such an universal government.

Each of these alone will be a sufficient confirmation of this truth, but taken all together, they make up abundant evidence. He that has right to rule, may rule if he be able; and he that is able, will rule actually if he be concerned. But the Lord *may* rule over all, he has right to do it; and

he can rule over all, he is able to do it; and he is *willing* too, being highly concerned to do it; and therefore he actually governs all.

1. The Lord has right and title to rule over all. No creature has so much right to rule over any one thing as he has to rule over all; for all things are his own, Ps. lxxxix. 11; heaven and earth, the world, and the fulness of it, *i. e.* whatever is in it, all things wherewith the world is replenished, Ps. lxxiv. 16. So particularly man is his own, Ps. c. 8, and all that men enjoy are his, 1 Chron. xxix. 14, 16; all are his own, because he made them all. And so you may observe in the texts before quoted, where the Lord is spoken of as proprietor; his making of them is mentioned, that being the foundation and ground of his propriety. Indeed, nothing can be so much our own as that is God's which is created by him; by virtue of this, everything created is his own in the fullest sense; absolutely, without any limitation; totally, without any co-partner; principally, without any subordination; primarily, without any derivation of title from others; independently, without any dependence upon any other for his title; so that what we count most our own, is not near so much ours, as everything is his.

Now, an absolute owner or proprietor has right to possess, or make use, or dispose of, or order what is his own as he sees fit, Mat. xx. 15, Esther i. 22. The world is more the Lord's than any man's house is his own, and so has all right to rule it. The same word, *dominus*, signifies both a lord and an owner; and *dominium*, both rule and property; so far as any one hath property, so far he is a ruler, and may dispose of what is his own. And we have them joined together in Scripture, 1 Chron. xxix. 12, where you have the kingdom or dominion, and the right or title to it (all are thine). The Lord's kingdom rules over all, because all his own.

2. He is able to rule over all; he, and he alone is in a capacity to do it. And this is evident by those infinite perfections of his, which I have given you an account of heretofore.

(1.) He is *almighty*. He can do all things, and therefore he can order and rule everything; he can keep all in subjection, and make them serve the ends he has appointed them, Rev. xix. 6. Omnipotency is sufficient for the government of all things. An universal power is more able to rule all, than our limited particular power to govern any one thing.

(2) He is *omnipresent*. Everywhere present, and so can observe and take order about everything wherever it is. He fills heaven and earth, Jer. xxiii. 24; no part of the world, but he is fully in it; he more than fills it, 2 Chron. ii. 6. There is not any part of the world which is at the least distance from him; and therefore he is in a capacity to order and govern all.

(3.) He is *omniscient*. His knowledge is infinite, and reaches all things, and therefore he knows how to order all things, and how to extend his rule over all. He understands the nature, and temper, and power, and motions of all creatures, and accordingly discerns how they may be ruled, how they are to be ordered, Heb. iv. 13. The minds and hearts of men which are not subject to the government of any creatures, because they are not known to any, are open to the eye, and under the inspection of God, and so under his rule and government. And thus it is evident that the Lord is able to rule over all, and all-sufficient for the government of all things.

3. He is willing to rule over all. He has not only right and power, but a will to govern the world; and so nothing is left to make us doubt but that he actually rules it. That he is willing is evident, because he is highly concerned. The end for which he made all would not otherwise be attained if he did not order and dispose of all in a tendency thereto, Prov. xvi. 4. He

made all things for his own glory; but they cannot promote this end, they will not glorify him, unless he concur, and order, and rule, and overrule them. He made all things, *ad responsum ipsius*, to answer him, so some; *ut obtemperent ipsi*, so others to the same sense, that they may obey him. But that they may obey him he must keep them under his rule and government, otherwise his end in making them may be lost. Now the Lord is not willing to be frustrated in his great design, and therefore willing to rule all for the promoting of it. And hence we may certainly conclude that he actually rules over all.

I will but endeavour to remove one objection out of the way, and then proceed to application.

If God rule over all, then all things would be excellently ordered. But there seems to be one thing remarkable in the government of the world, which men are apt to think would be otherwise ordered if the Lord did concern himself in the governing of all things. And it is this: in all ages good men have ordinarily fared worst, and those that are bad have fared best in the world. These have ruled, while those were under hatches; these have prospered and flourished, while those have been oppressed or afflicted; these have had power, and plenty, and successes, while those have been under wants, sufferings, persecutions. This has not only occasioned the heathen who knew not God to question his providence and universal government, *διὰ τοῦ ὁραῖν, κατὰ μὲν ἀγαθούς δυστυχούντας*, when they see the misery of good men, *κατὰ δὲ κακούς ἐν αὐτοῖς εὐπορούντας*, and the prosperities of bad men; but it has been a stumbling-block to the best of God's people, which some of them could hardly get over: Ps. lxxiii. 2, 3, 4, 5, 12, 'My feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For there is no bands in their death; but their strength is firm,' &c.; whereas he himself, and the generation of the righteous, met with other measures: ver. 14, 'All the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning.' So Job, when himself was under so grievous afflictions, observed the wicked were in great flourish, Job xxi. 7; and Jeremiah expostulates with the Lord about it, as a strange dispensation, of which an account could not be easily given, Jer. xii. 1, 2.

But in answer to this, 1, There would be no reason to question the universal government of God upon this account, if the nature and tendency of prosperity and afflictions were but rightly apprehended.

It is thought a disparagement to the government of the world that wicked men fare well therein. But if outward prosperity do not make them fare well, the show will vanish. Now, prosperity is so far from being good to evil men, that there is scarce anything worse in this world than to prosper in ways of wickedness. It is as if a physician should leave a wilful patient to please himself with such a diet as will heighten his distemper, and tends to make it incurable. Would you think this a favour, or that the sick person is well dealt with, how much soever his fare pleases him? No better, no more favourably does the Lord deal with wicked men when he suffers them to prosper in their evil ways. Alas! this prosperity tends to harden them in wickedness, and to fasten them irrecoverably in the ways that lead to destruction: Prov. i. 32, 'The turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.' 'The ease' (for so we may render that which we read the *turning away*) 'of the simple,' their freedom from afflictions, tends to ruin them, though they are so simple as not to understand it. 'And the prosperity of wicked men' (for these are fools in Solomon's language) 'will destroy them.' And is it any great favour for the Lord to give them that which will prove destructive to them?

Their prosperous state is but a fattening them for the day of slaughter. And thus the prophet resolves this difficulty, Jer. xii. 8. And so some understand that of the apostle: James v. 5, 'Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts as in a day of slaughter.' A beast that is intended to be killed is put into fat pasture, and seems to fare better than another that is left to shift for itself on a bare common. But a fat pasture is no sign of favour unless it be a favour to be killed sooner. Look upon prosperous sinners as fattening for slaughter, as preparing for a sudden, terrible fall, and their prosperity will be no exception against the divine government of the world. Says Isidore, We ought not to lament those who smart when they offend, *Ἀλλὰ τοὺς ἀτιμωρητί ποιούντας*, but those that go on in sin unpunished. As it is not so grievous to be sick as to have no cure, those that suffer here are in the way to be healed, but those that go on unpunished, *εἰς ἀναλγησίαν ὁδεύουσιν*, lose all sense of their disease, their case is next to desperate. If their path were hedged up with thorns, or met with some rubs in the way, it is like they might take up; but when their way in wickedness is plain and pleasant, they are never like to stop till they run themselves into eternal ruin. Nothing makes the case of a sinner more dangerous and desperate than a continued prospering in sin.

And as wicked men cannot be reasonably accounted to fare well for all their flourish and outward prosperity, this being so dangerous, so destructive, so much a curse, so dreadful a judgment, so on the other hand, those that are good cannot be thought to fare ill because of their afflictions and sufferings in this life; for afflictions are necessary for them, considering the sickly complexion of the best souls in this life, even as physic is for a diseased body. If the Lord did not use this method, it would signify he cared not for them, regarded not whether they were well or ill, whether they lived or died; *ὁ τεμνόμενος καὶ καύόμενος πρὸς Θεραπεῖαν ὁδεύει*, when they are lanced and seared, they are under cure; *ἀπὸ τῆς ἀλγηδὸνος Θεραπεῖας καρπασάμενος*, though it be grievous, it is the way to their recovery. This helps them to more health, and strength, and life, in the inner man, 2 Cor. iv. 16; this makes them more fit for service, more fit for communion with God, and capable of greater glory, ver. 17. And does God deal ill with them in thus doing, in dispensing that which is so necessary, so highly advantageous to them? Is there anything in this dispensation thus truly represented that can impeach God's government of the world? Is there anything that does not become him, that does not speak the ordering of a divine hand?

2. If these things were of another nature; if prosperity did signify some favour to those that are bad, and afflictions did speak more severity to those that are better; yet the small continuance of them makes them inconsiderable. Their 'light afflictions are but for a moment,' no more is the prosperity of the other. Compare it with eternity, and it is nothing. *Θεοῦ εὖ ἀνθρωπίνου βίου διάστημα τὸ μηδὲν ἴσθιν*, to God, the whole space of a man's life is as nothing. What if the Lord were severe to his children for this moment, it is nothing to that everlasting kindness which they shall shortly meet with, but never be deprived of. He loves them here, but it is not fondness, or feminine tenderness, to let them have that which pleases them though it be hurtful. *Illos fortius amat*, it is a strong, a masculine love, which is to do them good, and keep them under sharp discipline, if nothing else will do it. But this will be needful but for a while, it is but for a moment.

The wicked, on the other side, they are under the sentence of condemna-

tion. And what if he give them a little respite, and let them take some refreshment betwixt the sentence of death passed on them and the terrible execution? Alas! in a few moments they are to die, to die eternally. And is this such a forbearance, is this so great a favour, as to make it a question whether the proceeding do become the Ruler of the world, the Judge of heaven and earth!

8. This exception will have no force, can take no place, in those who believe a future judgment. The great Ruler of the world has several acts of government, which have their appointed times, and to which he proceeds gradually and regularly. Here in this life he gives his laws, and expects what observance they will meet with. He has reserved judgment and execution in distributing rewards and punishments till this life be ended; they are principally for another world. The Lord, in great wisdom, passes from one to another distinctly; but vain men would have these confounded and run into one another. They would see judgment before trial, and execution before the assizes; and crowns and rewards before the combat be ended, before the race be finished, before those who are to be judged have given full proof of themselves, Heb. ix. 27; Acts xvii. 31, 'Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world,' &c. If he had not appointed such a day, and given assurance of it; if all things should proceed with good and bad to eternity, as they do for a little time: then there might be some more colour for this exception. But we would have all done here, and appoint the day presently, and so leave no work for the great day of his appointing. If the Lord should proceed with all here according as they are and do, *περιττος ἢ ὁ τῆς κρίσεως λόγος*, Isid. lib. v. epist. 215, the appointment of a future judgment would be in vain.

Stay but a while till things be ripe for judgment, or do but believe what God has given assurance of, that the Judge is at the door, and will speedily reward all according to their works, and then all will be clear. The day is at hand when God will fully vindicate his government, not only to the reason of men (as he does now), but to their senses, and then there will be no occasion to complain that those that are bad fare well, and those that are good fare worse. Then you will see the righteous ruler of the world making a vast and everlasting difference betwixt good and bad; and in the mean time you have as much reason to believe it as if you saw it now.

Use 1. For information. This serves to inform us in several things which much concern as in point of belief and practice. Particularly,

1. In reference to superiors, whether civil magistrates or church governors, or heads of families, or rulers of others in any capacity. Hereby we learn,

(1.) That all are subjects in respect of God. He rules over all, and therefore all are to acknowledge him as their sovereign, and themselves as subjected to him. The highest on earth are as much subjects to the great God as the meanest of their vassals are to them; and those, whoever they are, who consent not to this subjection, and demean not themselves accordingly, they are rebels to God, whatever they are amongst men. So he accounts them, and they may expect he will proceed answerably against them. So Saul, though a king, his not observing of God's command, is branded as rebellion, and aggravated as a crime equal to witchcraft and idolatry, 1 Sam. xv. 22, 23. They are to subject themselves to the sovereign of the world with trembling, and to serve him with fear, Ps. ii. 10, 11.

(2.) They are but officers in subordination to him; the highest of men, no more than under-officers. For he rules over all, and therefore is above all, and so there are none but who are under him. He alone is supreme, and

the greatest are below him at an infinite distance ; he is higher than the kings of the earth, Ps. lxxxix. 27, Eccles. v. 8. The higher powers are all under him, whose being ruler over all speaks him the Most High. It is no disparagement to the highest on earth, no, nor to the principalities and powers in heaven, to be counted his underlings.

(3.) All their authority is derived from him. If he rule over all, none have power to rule but what he gives and allows. None have any authority but whom he authorises. All subordinate officers derive their authority from the supreme magistrate ; if they challenge or use any more, they usurp. He is the fountain of all authority ; there is none in channel or cistern but what comes from the fountain, Rom. xiii. They have their commission from him ; they have no more, no other power, than is contained in the commission which they have from the supreme governor of the world ; what they act beyond it, against it, is no act of authority, but of presumption and usurpation.

(4.) All authority should be exercised for him ; and that has no authority, whatever it be, which is not for him. He that is the original of all power in church, state, and families, must needs be the end of all, Rom. xi. 36, Heb. ii. 10. All is from him, and all is for him, who rules over all. That which is not for him is so far by no authority from him, for he gives no authority but for himself. What, then, is that which is against him ? Any law, or order, or command, of powers higher or lower, which is against the will and interest of God, is no act of authority, for there is no authority but what the Lord gives ; and to be sure he gives no authority against himself, Deut. i. 16, 17, 2 Chron. xix. 5-7.

(5.) Hence we may learn how we are to obey our superiors. He that rules over all must be first obeyed, and all others as they stand in relation to him. They are under him, and subordinate to him, and so must be obeyed in subordination to him, and no otherwise ; never above him, never against him. When their wills not agreeing with his come in competition, then he who rules over all must have the pre-eminence in this case. The equity of it is so clear, we may appeal to the consciences of any who acknowledge the sovereignty of God, as the apostles did : Acts v. 29, ' We ought to obey God rather than men.' The case is more clear than if we should put it so, whether it be better to obey the prince or a constable, judge ye ; for he that rules over all is infinitely more above the highest on earth, than the greatest monarch is above the meanest officer.

When any of the sons of men, whether magistrates, or pastors, or parents, or masters, enjoin us to neglect anything which is our duty, or do anything which is a sin ; not to obey them is no disobedience to any authority, for none has the least authority to enjoin any such thing. God, who is the rise of all authority, never authorised them to require any such thing. Such injunctions, though they be the acts of such who are otherwise in authority, yet they are not authoritative acts, but private, or worse. And not to comply with them is not to disobey authority, but to disown usurpation upon and rebellion against him who rules over all ; and none will question these but those that neither understand what God is nor man.

2. We may learn much hereby concerning the nature of sin ; that which may lead us to hate it and fear it, and not only avoid, but mortify it ; this will shew us how great a crime it is, how dangerous, how unreasonable.

(1.) How great a crime it is. It affronts the greatest authority in the world ; it provokes the supreme Majesty of heaven and earth ; it dishonours him who rules over all. That is a rule obvious to and acknowledged by all, the greater the person is whom we offend, the greater and more heinous is

the offence: *Τῇ ποιότητι τῶν προσώπων τὰ ἁμαρτήματα κρίνονται* (says Chrysostom). We judge of offences by the quality of the persons offended. It is a crime (as he goes on) to injure a private person, but more criminal to offer an injury to a ruler. And still the greater the ruler is, the more heinous is the crime. How then does that crime rise, which strikes at the sovereign Majesty of the world; which offers injury to him who rules over all, in comparison of whom the greatest potentates on earth are but as grasshoppers! The greatness and heinousness of sin is unmeasurable, even as the greatness of that God whom it offends is incomprehensible. An offence against a king (says Isidore, lib. iv. epist. 179), *κἄν μικρὰ γάρ*, though it be small, *μεγάλα τῇ ἀξίᾳ τοῦ πεποιθότος κρίνεται*, yet is judged great because of the dignity of him that suffers by it. What sin then can be small, which is directed against the great Ruler of all things? No sin can be little, being against such a Majesty, in comparison of whom all things, the greatest of all, are as nothing.

(2.) How dangerous it is. The violation of God's law must needs deserve a greater penalty than the violation of any laws of men; for what are all other lawgivers to him who gives laws to heaven and earth? or what is their authority to his who rules over all? To neglect the charge of a constable, is nothing to the crossing the edict of a mighty prince. What, then, is it to break the law of God, betwixt whom and the greatest prince the distance is incomparably greater than between the mightiest monarch on earth and the meanest officer!

And as the penalty is more grievous, so the inflicting of it is more certain and unavoidable, for he that rules all can order anything to do execution upon a sinner; and whither will ye fly from him who rules everywhere? or who can deliver you out of his hands who rules over all? Do ye provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are you stronger than he? What powers will you muster up to secure you from him who overpowers all? Will you 'call to the mountains and rocks to fall upon you, and hide you from the face of him that sitteth on the throne'? Oh, but he can cleave the rocks, and cause the mountains to melt like wax before him; for he rules over all, and rules irresistibly.

(3.) How unreasonable it is. He that ventures on sin, must do it without reason. Since God rules over all, there is nothing can be reasonably hoped for to draw to sin, there is nothing can rationally be feared to fright him to sin.

[1.] For fear. It is most unreasonable and absurd to fear where no fear is, and not to be afraid where there is most occasion of fear; but sin is most irrational both these ways. You are not afraid of God when you sin against him, when you do that which most provokes him; yet he is most to be feared, since he rules over all; for, upon this account,

First, He can make anything a suffering, even that which you most value, which you most affect, and that from which you have the greatest expectations, from which you look for the most comfort, the greatest security. He can order your greatest friends, your most endeared relations, your sweetest and most valued enjoyments, to be your sufferings and punishments, and can make you feel his indignation against sin, in and by any of them, or all of them. If he do but speak the word, that will be enough to turn them into quite other things than you account them; to make them your dangers, when you look they should succour you; to make them your grievances, when you look they should be the refreshments of your lives; to make them your tormentors, when you expect them to be your comforters. For everything must and will be, not what you think it is, but what he will order it

to be; for he rules over all, and can overrule everything to be and do what he will, and to prove such to you as he pleases.

Secondly, As he can make anything to be a suffering, so he can make any suffering to be most grievous. He can make anything prove an affliction, and he can make any affliction, even that which you make lightest of, to be intolerable. He can put a hell into anything, and can make that which you count but a spark to give you the tortures of the most dreadful flames, and can order that which you think you can go lightly under to sink and crush you; for he rules all, and everything obeys the order that he gives it. That which seems little will prove great, a greater affliction and calamity than you imagine; and that which seems light will be too heavy to be borne, if he who rules over all will so dispose of it.

Thirdly, He can make all things to be his executioners. He can employ any of them in heaven, or earth, or hell—those that can do you most mischief, or that you are most in danger of, most obnoxious to, most afraid of—and can give any of them commission to inflict his wrath for sin; yea, or if need were, he could employ them all together to make the sinner miserable. There is not any of them would decline the employment if he laid a command upon them, they would all concur together to pour out his indignation, if he did but give them order; for he rules over all, and can overpower all to do his pleasure.

Oh, what madness is it to sin against such a God; to provoke him who rules over all! If sin did not bewitch men, if it did not deprive them even of the ordinary use of reason, they would never venture to sin upon any consideration; since there is that in sin, which, if considered, is so dreadful, as to outweigh whatever may be put in the balance against it, as if it were nothing. Particularly, how little or nothing is there in the fear of man, if weighed, to sway any to sin against this great Ruler of the world? To fear man, in this case, is to be afraid, where there is no cause to fear. For,

First, What need he fear man, or any creature, or all of them together, who is under the protection of him who rules over all? What is it to be under the protection of him, who can dispose of all things in the world for your safety, who can order anything to secure you against the rage and violence of all? What need he fear, who stands for him, who has all things that may endanger or secure him at his beck and command? While you refuse to sin, you stand for God; and while you are for him, he is for you. And what stands he for, who rules over all? If you know him, you will make account, that all other things, if they should be all set against you, stand but for cyphers. They are no more, when set against him who overrules and overpowers all. For,

Secondly, They can do nothing, more or less, against you, without him; nothing without his permission, without his power, without his concurrence. Balaam had as great a mind to do Israel a mischief as any, being under the power of such temptations to do it, as most suited his corrupt temper; but for all that, he professes he could do nothing at all, Num. xxii. 17, 18, beyond the word of the Lord. What if those whom you displease, by refusing to sin against God, be as fierce as lions, yet the Lord is the keeper, he has them fast; they cannot come near you, unless he let them loose. If you provoke him to let them loose upon you, there is danger; but the danger is in offending him, not them. It is he, therefore, that is to be feared, not they. If they should break loose, he can break their teeth, or maim their paws, or disarm them of their strength, and make them as weak or as tame as you would have them; or can call them in with a word

when they are running upon you with open teeth. If he do but say, *Down, sirrah!* the fiercest of them cannot so much as wag, will not dare to move in the least against you. One word of the great Ruler of the world will make them crouch and lie at your feet, and fawn upon you, instead of tearing and devouring you. And is it reasonable then to offend God, who has such command over them, for fear of them, who can no way stir or move without him?

Thirdly, If they should be permitted to do all they can against you, yet that is little or nothing, in comparison of what he can do, whom you incense by sin. They can but only touch your bodies or outward concerns; but he is Ruler over all. He has dominion, not only over your bodies and estates, but over your souls; and he can order and dispose of them unto everlasting miseries or happiness as he pleases. It is but a little that you hazard, a very inconsiderable thing, for an inconsiderable time, by offending men; but you hazard all, and all to eternity, by sinning against God; and that is so great and dreadful a hazard, so much in all reason to be feared, as should swallow up all fear and respect of the other, Luke xii. 5. To sin against God to avoid any danger from men, is to fear him who can do no more than 'kill the body,' and not to fear him who can 'destroy both body and soul in hell;' which is, as if a man, to escape a shower of rain, should throw himself into the sea. Is that the way not to be wet? Or, as if one, to save the scorching of his clothes, should throw himself headlong into the fire. You would think the fear which put a man upon such a course were absurd indeed, and such as became none but a distracted person: no more reasonable, no more void of madness, is any fear that drives a man to provoke him who is Ruler over all.

[2.] Nor are the hopes more reasonable which may be made use of, to allure us to sin against this great God. In that he is ruler over all, it appears that all such hopes are vain and delusive, and such as grossly abuse the souls of men.

Particularly, *first*, can ye hope for secrecy? Oh, but how or where can ye be secret in respect of God? He that rules over all rules everywhere; and so, not only his presence, but his ruling power, is in every place. It is in every quarter, in every corner of the whole world. It reaches from the highest heaven to the centre of the earth, yea, to the bottom of hell, Ps. cxxxix. 7, 8, &c. Nothing, no place, is out of the eye, or in the least distance from the ruling hand of God. If you will presume to be anywhere secret, or to act, or speak, or think, anything secretly in respect of God, you must find out a place where he rules not. If you dig into the bowels of the earth for a retirement, or dive into the bottom of the sea, or withdraw as far from all company as heaven is from earth, or cover yourselves with as thick darkness as any is in hell, all will be in vain: not only his over-seeing eye will be upon you, but his all-ruling hand will be with you, wherever you are, or whithersoever you go. The darkest, the closest, the remotest retirement, is no more out of his presence, no more out of the reach and stroke of his all-ruling power, than the most open or public place in heaven or earth.

Or, *secondly*, do ye hope for pleasure in sinning against God? Oh that word, *against God*, is enough to dash all hopes. Will he suffer you to have any true pleasure in displeasing him, who can and does order all things as he will? He rules over all, and so rules all the concerns of pleasure or pain, of grief and delight, and can dispose of them as he pleases. He can make that which you fancy to be the greatest pleasure in the world, to prove the bitterest thing that ever you meddled with, and can not only embitter

the act or object which you count delightful, but can so order it, as it shall turn all you have besides into bitterness, and make all your other enjoyments as gall and wormwood. No art can prepare so bitter infusions as that hand that rules all. Ask Cain what that pleasure proved which he took in satisfying his malice. It was such a delight as made his life a burden to him ever after, Gen. iv. 18. Ask Amnon what that pleasure proved which he had in defiling Tamar; or Zimri, in the Moabitish woman; they would tell you the bitterness of death was in it. Ask David what pleasure his lust afforded him; he will tell you, such as a man takes in having his bones broken, Ps. li. 8. If you fancy such pleasure as this, you may have it in sin here, and that which is more intolerable hereafter; but if you look for better, you are like to be deceived, so long as God rules over all.

Or, *thirdly*, do you hope to gain by sin, or to get any advantage in unlawful ways? This hope is as vain and unreasonable as the other. If God rule over all, and all actions and events be ordered by him, you can get no gain without him. If he order it, it will be either in mercy or in wrath. To hope that he will order anything in mercy, which is got by dishonouring him, is a madness; and if you have it in wrath, it is such an advantage as you may wish the worst of your enemies, if you might wish them that which will prove the greatest mischief. What gained Achan, by his wedge of gold? or Judas, by his pieces of silver? or Ananias, by his sinful saving? No more will you gain really by sin, whatever show of advantage there may be. It will prove no better than the coal which the eagle stole, which though she thought a booty, yet it served only to fire her nest. If God rule over all, and order everything as he pleases, what can be the matter of your hope? To look that he should order that to answer your expectation, which lies directly cross to his will, is as unreasonable as what is most so. And thus you see how absurd and irrational an evil sin is, since it can be promoted by no fears, by no hopes, but what are without or against all reason.

Use 2. For exhortation. If the Lord rule over all, let us give up ourselves to be ruled by him. His ruling power and dignity calls for this subjection; and let us be ruled by him, and subject to him, in all things. The extent of his dominion calls for this. He not only rules, but rules over all. Let me insist upon this a little distinctly.

1. The Lord rules, therefore we ought to be ruled by him, and to resign up ourselves to the government of God. He stands in relation to us as our ruler; this obliges us to subject ourselves to him. Let us give our consent to be his subjects, and shew our subjection by all obedience; and for the manner of it, our subjection should be answerable to his dominion. We must submit to him, not only as a ruler, but as to such a ruler as the Lord is.

(1.) We must be subject to him as supreme. The higher the authority, the greater must the subjection be. Now, God is the sovereign Lord of the world; all other governors rule but under him, and for him, in his name, and by his authority. Those whom the apostle calls *ἐξουσίαι ὑπερχούσαι*, transcendent powers, they are, in reference to the supreme Ruler of the world, but *διάκονοι* and *λαίτουργοι*, Rom. xiii. 4, 6, 'ministers of God,' such as officiate under him. We are to be subject to them for his sake, but subject to him for himself, ver. 7. The greatest tribute, fear, honour, to the greatest and most supreme Ruler. The highest power should have the most submissive subjection.

(2.) We must be subject to him absolutely. For his government is absolute, and has no bounds nor limits, but his own will. Our subjection must be answerable, without reserve, without limitation; extending as far as the will of God, yielding to every part of it, not excepting any particular,

great or small; whatsoever he would have us do, or suffer, or part with. We must yield to his will, whenever he signifies it, without questioning the reason or equity of it, or excepting against it for any seeming difficulty or danger, however it cross our humours, or carnal inclination, or worldly interest. It must be in all things correspondent to what they profess in one particular, Jer. xlii. 5, 6. 'Whether it be good, or whether it be evil, we will obey the voice of the Lord our God.' We must not say, I will submit to his will in this or that; but as for such and such, which are so hard, or hazardous, or reproachful, or expensive, I must be excused. This is not the voice of one that is truly subject to God, but of a man that would rule himself, and be no further in subjection than he list.

(3.) We must subject ourselves to him freely and cheerfully. He that rules all irresistibly should meet with no resistance, no opposition from us. He that rules all easily should find us easily yielding to his whole will, without any backwardness or reluctance. We should shew that we will be ruled with a word, with a beck, with a look from God; for so he rules the rest of the world. We should not put the Lord to use force, to take the rod, or bring us to it, as we do those that are stubborn, by foul means. None of his commandments should seem grievous to us, for they are not so in themselves, 1 John v. 8. We should not need to be drawn or haled to it, but run of our own accord, Ps. cxix. We have a great example for it: Heb. x. 7, 'Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.' Ps. xl. 8, 'I delight to do thy will; thy law is in my heart.' It is in my heart to observe thy whole law. Thy will is not only in the written laws, but in my heart; there is that *within* which freely answers all thy laws *without*.

(4.) We must be in subjection continually. Not submit to him only by fits, and in a good mood, but live, as constantly under his government, his state and relation. As a ruler [he] abides for ever, and therefore so does our relation as subjects. We are not obliged only to some acts of obedience, but are continued in a state of subjection to him; his laws are always in force, and therefore should have observance every moment. He ever rules, and therefore we should be ever obeying. Our whole life should be an uninterrupted course of obedience, and a continued testimony of our subjection to him who reigns for ever and ever. The Lord will own no other as loyal subjects, but those whose subjection and obedience is continued, John viii. 81. If you continue in subjection to my word and will, then are ye my subjects indeed, not otherwise. He will reward no other subjects, Gal. iii. 10, James i. 25. So much for the first, 'He rules;' therefore we must be subject, and our subjection should be correspondent to his dominion.

2. *He rules over all*, therefore we should be ruled by him in all. We should resign up all to be governed by him; we should give up all that is within us, all that belongs to us, to be ordered and disposed of as he would have it. Not any faculty, not any motion, not any part, not any act, not any enjoyment, not any affair should be by us exempted from his government, but all given up to be ruled by him, whose prerogative it is to rule over all.

1. Let him rule our minds, and all the powers thereof.

(1.) Our understanding. Let them be ready to learn of him, and be taught by him, and shew their subjection by being teachable and tractable in all matters of divine revelation. Whatever he declares to be true, let the understanding yield to it, close with it, embrace it as a divine truth, though we cannot penetrate the depth of it, nor discern the mode of it, nor reach the reason of it. Let it be captivated to the authority of God, declaring his mind and truth, so as to make no question of it, nor yield to any arguings

against it, but to take his word for the truth of it, without further dispute, admitting no wisdom nor understanding against the Lord.

(2.) Our judgment. Let them be ruled by his judgment. Let us judge those things to be contemptible which he has declared to be so, whoever have high esteem of them, as the things of the world, riches, pleasures, honour, greatness; let us judge those things to be excellent, and worthy of all esteem, which he has commended to us, whoever despise them, as mortifiedness, holiness in its strength, life, exercise, and the gospel and means which tend to promote it; let us rather count those dogs and swine who trample upon these than question the judgment which the Lord has passed upon them; let us judge that to be most hateful and dreadful, which he has so represented to us: sin, more hateful, more dreadful than poverty, or slavery, or any affliction, or the greatest suffering whatsoever; and shew that our judgments are ruled by God, in demeaning ourselves towards these accordingly, as Moses did, Heb. xi. 24, 25. Let us judge those things more worthy to be our design and business which the Lord has commended to us as most worthy to be so, than those to which the generality of the world do give the pre-eminence. Heaven, and the things above, and the concerns of eternity, should be our design and business, if we will submit to the judgment of God. If we will rather follow the judgment of the carnal and sensual world, in preferring the things of time and sense, and the concerns of this present life, as fittest to be made our great work and business, we shew we are not those who will be ruled by God in our judgment of things.

(8.) Our thoughts. If we will have him rule over all, we must endeavour to bring every thought into captivity and subjection to him, 2 Cor. x. 5. Let those thoughts be stifled which the Lord will have suppressed; those rejected, which he would have excluded, Jer. iv. 14. Let those be entertained, which he would have admitted; and those cherished, which he would have abide in us, Ps. cxxxix. 17, 18. Everything, even to a thought, should be ordered as he would have it, if we will observe him as he ought to be observed, who rules over all.

2. Let him rule our wills. Here especially should the throne of God be erected and established, as rulers choose their royal seats in the places which are most advantageous for the government of the rest. If the will be in subjection to God, all will submit to his government; but if this be not subdued to him, nothing will be subjected to him to any purpose, Prov. xxiii. 26. This, above all, is that upon which all the rest depend. He that must have his own will is no subject of God's; they that are truly subjected to him, his will is theirs. 'Not my will, but thine be done,' said our great pattern. When the will lies prostrate before God, and wholly applies itself to his will, then does all yield to his dominion. 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' was the first act of subjection which Saul paid to the universal sovereign. It must be enough to sway you in any case whatsoever, to know that it is the will of God.

Particularly (1.) the will should be ruled by him in its inclinations. We should be careful that the heart incline to those objects, and no other; in that way, and no otherwise than the Lord would have them. What objects he has set before us, and commended to us as fit objects for our wills; to these they should incline, shewing averseness to any other; his will should be the line in which they move, and by which they are regulated. They must stop or advance at every signification of his pleasure; and beware of any bias from self, or the world, which may make them turn aside from the right way, or from their due objects.

(2.) In elections or refusals. When we are deliberating what means

must be used for the accomplishing of any end before us, the will of God must still preponderate, and always cast the scale. The means must be pitched on which the Lord offers, and which have warrant from his will; not those which eagerness after the desired end, or hastiness to be eased of some present grievance, or carnal wisdom or example, or the seeming success of others, or our own commends to us.

(8.) In our ends and intentions. These must be so under his government, as no ends must be aimed at, but what the Lord propounds to us. The serving, and pleasing, and enjoying, and honouring of God must be our last and chief ends; none but in subordination to these, none but what will serve and promote these.

Not the pleasing, or advancing, or securing of ourselves or others, or anything else, must be our end; but in the second place, and in subserviency to those which the Lord has made supreme; of which we have frequent mention, Col. i. 10, 1 Thes. ii. 4, 1 John iii. 22, 1 Cor. x. 31, 1 Pet. iv. 11. To aim at this as the principal, and at none at all which will not serve this, nor at any that may serve it but in a subserviency to it, is the best character of a loyal subject to the King of kings, and a clear evidence that the will is in due subjection to the great Sovereign of the world.

3. The conscience must be ruled by him. This must be subjected to him, and to him alone; for he alone is the Lord of the conscience. It is the will of God that obliges conscience; and this should suffer itself to be bound up by it, as nothing else should oblige or disoblige it but the will of him who rules over all. Though it be the freest faculty, and the most exempted from the control of any other authority, yet in all its acts and offices it must be in full subjection to God. Whether it oblige or impel, it must do it by virtue of his authority and will; whether it discern or direct, it must do it by his light and direction; whether it accuse or acquit, it must do it according to his order and sentence. It must demean itself in all as his vicegerent. *Βερεδς ἡ συνιδιχσις Θεός*. Conscience is God's deputy, and must in the exercise of this office confine itself to the orders and instructions of its sovereign Lord, he who rules all.

4. The affections must be ruled and ordered by him, and must receive law from him, as to their objects, and degree, and order.

(1.) The affections must have no other object, but what he proposes and directs them to. We should love nothing, but what he would have us love, 1 John ii. 15. We should fear nothing, but what he would have us to fear, no, not those things which we are naturally afraid of, Rev. ii. 10, Mat. x. 26, 28, Isa. viii. 12, 18. So we must desire nothing which he would have us to avoid; nor mourn for anything, but what he has made the matter of our grief; nor let anything be our hope or expectation, but what he has made so, Ps. lxii. 5.

(2.) For the degree. He has assigned it, and the assignment must be observed. The affections are the waves, the motions of the heart, and he has said to them, as to those of the sea, 'Hitherto shalt thou come, but no farther.' And we should labour to keep them within the prescribed bounds. The Lord himself should be loved above all, in the highest degree, Mat. xxii. 37. To other things he has assigned a far lower degree of affection: Mat. x. 37, 'He that loveth them more;' *i. e.* he that loveth them anything near so much; he that loveth them not much less. In the other evangelist it is, 'He that hateth them not,' Luke xiv. 26. We are to love God, *in toto valde*. Deut. vi. 5, *בכל מאוד*, 'with all thy vehemency;' but other things must be affected with some indifferency, 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30.

(8.) For the order of our affections, that must be such as the Lord has disposed it. He must be loved for himself; all other things must be no

otherwise affected, but for his sake; either because they come from him, or lead to him, or are some way like him, or help us the better to serve him; always for some respect to him, so that he must be the end and the rise of our affection in all things which we affect. To love anything, or desire it, or delight in it for itself, is to advance it into the place of God; and this is quite opposite to that subjection which is due to the Lord, and an open perverting of that order which he has set for our affections, and which must be carefully observed by those that will be subject to him.

I shall but briefly touch the rest, having stayed longer on these particulars than I intended.

The *fancy* must be ruled by him, the vanity of it corrected, and the vagaries of it restrained by the awe of his authority.

The *appetite* must be kept under his government. It must not be indulged in anything that may prove an occasion of sin or disservice to God. A straiter hand should be kept over it, that it bring in no provisions to the flesh. Those that feed themselves without fear, Jude 18, are unmindful of the subjection they owe to God; nay, the appetite should not be pleased, but for the better pleasing of our sovereign Lord; not for the sensual delight itself, but to make us more cheerful in his service, and better disposed for our work, and more affected to the spring of all that pleases us.

The *senses* also must be kept under his rule and order, who rules over all. We should not touch, nor taste, nor handle, nor look, but as he would have us. Such a covenant as Job made with his eyes, Job iii. 1, should be made with all our senses, to oblige them to that subjection and observance which everything and part of us owes to the universal sovereign.

The whole *body* should be wholly ruled by him, Rom. xii. 1. Service is the greatest subjection, and the body should be offered up in such service. It is λογική λατρεία, reasonable, most agreeable to reason, that it should be given up in such subjection; or it is that which the word requires, so λογική may signify. It is *secundum os verbi*, as the Syriac renders it, according to the mouth of the word; it is (as all acceptable service and worship must be) prescribed by the word. The Lord, in his word, does require, that not only the soul, but the body, should be in such subjection to him, as to be wholly at his service.

The *body*, and every part of it. To instance only in the principal; the tongue should not move, but as he would have it, and that it may not, the like course should be taken with it, as David took. He knew 'the tongue is an unruly member,' so he puts it under the government of God, Ps. cxli. 3. He would have it so watched and guarded as nothing might issue out but what pleased the Lord. The hands, Ps. cxix. 48, the employment of our hands should be that which he commands.

Finally, all our *ways*; every step should be ordered according to that rule which he has enjoined us to walk by: Ps. cxix. 133, 'Order my steps in thy word.' In the disposing of our affairs, in the improving of our talents, in the employing of our estates, we should consult with him how he would have all ordered; and when we know his will, that should be a law to us, a law worthy in our account of so much more observance than any other, as he is superior to all.

And so I have shewed you how we are to subject ourselves to God, and to give up all to be ruled by him, since he rules over all. Now, to persuade you to resign yourselves and your all to be governed by him, let me add something by way of motive.

1. Take notice of the necessity of it. He is the ruler of the world, and will be; he will not lose his right, nor can any deprive him of it, nor hinder him from exercising his universal authority; he has power enough to make

it good against the opposition of ten thousand worlds ; he would cease to be God, if he should cease to be the ruler of all things. And, therefore, as sure as he is God, he will rule you one way or other. If you will not consent that he should be your ruler, you shall find him rule you whether you will or no. Even those that are so much addicted to sin, as to be enemies to his government, maugre all they can do to decline it, shall feel the power of it ; for he will rule even in the midst of his enemies, Ps. cx. 2. If you will not stoop to his gracious sceptre, he will crush you with a rod of iron, Ps. ii., Rev. xii. 5 ; if you will not submit to his ruling power, he will bring you under his feet, 1 Cor. xv. 15 ; if you will not consent to be ordered by his laws in all things, he will exercise his dominion and authority over you, by inflicting the dreadful penalty of his disobeyed laws, Isa. i. 19, 20. You may be under such a government as to be subject to it is more desirable than the greatest dominion in the world ; but if you refuse this, he will rule you in a terrible manner, and threatens it with an oath that you may be sure of it, Ezek. xx. 38.

2. Consider the equity of it. The Lord is in all right the ruler of all things ; he has all right to rule over you. You are his creatures, you are the work of his hands, he made you of nothing ; you are more his own than anything is yours that your hands ever made, than anything is yours that you count most your own. And shall not the Lord have the ordering and disposing of that which is his own, so much his own ? When you are so absolutely, so wholly his, will you not be ordered and ruled by him ? This is such iniquity to God, such injurious dealing with the Most High, as the whole frame of the world may be astonished at ; and accordingly the Lord seems to appeal to heaven and earth against it, Isa. i. 2, 8. The ox knows his owner, will be ordered and ruled by him, but those over whom the Lord has much more dominion, and who are far more his own, and whom he has much more obliged, they will not be subject to him, nor ruled by him, they rebel. This is such unequal, such injurious carriage towards God, as the very lifeless and senseless creatures may well abhor it—heaven and earth may be astonished at it.

8. Consider the advantages you may be sure of by subjecting yourselves to God ; they are great and many. I shall but instance in two or three.

(1.) You will be under the protection of God. And the advantage of this is answerable to the greatness of him who obliges himself to vouchsafe it. It is above all other, because the Lord rules over all. A prince owes protection to his subjects, and is obliged to secure them, both from private injustice and open violence ; while they submit to his government they ought to be secured by it, he is the minister of God for that end, Rom. xiii. And will not the Lord protect those who submit to his government ? He is infinitely more able to do it, because he rules over all, and he is no less willing ; his relation to them as their ruler gives assurance of this. He is concerned in point of honour that those who will live under his government should live there safely ; that those who will be ruled by him should not suffer for it. It is the glory of his kingdom that, as it rules over all, so the true subjects of it should be safe above all, Isa. xxxiii. 15, 16. Those who shew themselves the subjects of God by observing his laws in such dangers as threatened Judea, in Sennacherib's invasion, he will take care they shall be secured. Though they dwell in the plain, most exposed, they shall be as safe as if their habitation were on high, above the reach of danger. He will be to them as a munition of rocks, an impregnable fort, such as can neither be battered nor undermined, such as need neither fear forcing nor starving. Hezekiah could secure one of his subjects from the violence

of another, but he knew not how to secure them against the Assyrians. Oh, but the Lord can secure his subjects against all the powers of the world, against all the powers of darkness. He who rules over all can overpower all. He has the whole *posse* of the universe, and can raise it when and for whatever purpose he will; the whole militia of heaven and earth is at his beck and command.

He has provided such a guard for each of his faithful subjects as will secure them not only against all the force on earth, but all the power of hell, Ps. xxxiv. 7. There is an host of angels encamp about those that fear him. All the guards that princes have are nothing to this. Any one of this host is more than a whole army, can destroy the greatest army of men in a moment, Isa. xxxvii. 36. Such attendance, such security will the Lord afford his subjects, wherever they are, in all their ways, Ps. xci. 9-12.

(2.) He will take care of all your concernments. He that rules over all, can and will order and dispose of all your affairs for you. You need not be careful and solicitous about them. He that rules over all, if you be willing to have all ordered by him, is willing to take the care of all your concerns upon himself, Philip. iv. 6, 7. When you are apt to be perplexed about the public, or your private affairs, or those of your posterity, address yourselves to him by a petition, take but the course which he has prescribed you, and so leave all to him who rules all, who has provided that hereby you have such tranquillity and quietness of mind and heart as will free you from all anxiety and trouble.

Oh what a privilege, what an advantage is it to be a subject to such a ruler! Those that will be ruled by him may not only be freed from danger, but from all care and trouble; he will have this lie upon himself, not upon his subjects, 1 Peter v. 5, 7. Do but humble, do but submit yourselves to him, as becomes the subjects of so great a Lord, and then you need care no more, he will take all the care for you, and so takes it all off from you, Ps. lv. 22. Is anything too heavy for thee? Such is the indulgence of thy sovereign Lord, he would in no wise have thee burdened, he would rather have thee cast it upon him. He who rules all with ease can as easily bear all, and he is willing to bear all, rather than any of his subjects should be burdened with anything.

Who would not be subject to such a Lord? Who would not resign up himself to such a government, where the ruler is ready to bear all himself, and will lay nothing that is heavy, leave nothing that is grievous, upon any subject of his? And that you may not doubt but the Lord is willing to ease you of all care and trouble, know further, that he counts it a disparagement to his government to have you solicitous and troubled about the things which he undertakes to rule and order, for what does it signify but that the Lord either is not able or not willing to order them for the best, and as they should be ordered? And by doubting of this you impeach the excellency of his government, or entrench upon it; as if you said, if you were able you would order things otherwise, as though you knew how to govern better. Hence, when Melancthon was extremely solicitous about the affairs of the church in his days, Luther would have him admonished in these terms, *Monendus est Philippus ut desinat esse rector mundi*, Let not Philip make himself any longer governor of the world. When we ease ourselves of cares and fears by casting them upon God, we acknowledge his government, and acquiesce in it, rest pleased and satisfied with it; and this being much for his honour, there is no doubt but he is willing thus to ease us of our burdens, by rolling all upon him who rules over all.

The government is upon his shoulders, he is sufficient for it ; let him alone with it. Trouble not yourselves about either public or personal concerns ; if you be his subjects indeed, you will find him disposing of all for the best ; he will order them better for you than you can do for yourselves, he will order them better than you can think. When you or others have run affairs into such disorder as you cannot expect that anything but evil and mischief will be the issue thereof, yet he can retrieve all, and either prevent the evil or turn it into good. Yea, he not only can, but will, so overrule it, for those that are willing to be ruled by him : Rom, viii. 28, ' All things shall work together for good to them that love God.' Who can make all things thus to work but he that rules over all ? It is he that can set all on work, and make them work together, concur jointly (though the severals be of quite other tendencies) for the good of his subjects. And he will do it, for his government is not domination or tyranny, which respects only the interest of the ruler, without regard of the subject's good, for that is the difference between tyrannical and regular government ; ' *Ἡ μὲν τύραννος πρὸς τὸ οἰκεῖον*, a tyrant minds his own pleasure, profit, and greatness, (Isid. lib. iii., Ep. 194). ' *Ἡ δὲ βασιλεῖα πρὸς τὸ τῶν ἀρχομένων συμφέρον βλέπει*, but lawful government minds the good of the subject. Though the Lord be absolute, and infinitely above those whom he rules, and expects no advantage by them, yet so far he condescends as to order all things for the good of those who are truly subject to him. He has made such a connection betwixt his glory and their happiness, as whatsoever advances his honour tends to promote their happiness. And in his government of the world he disposes of all things accordingly. Do but subject yourselves to him, and give up yourselves to be wholly ruled by him, and you will find that he takes such care of all your concerns as to order them far better for you than you can or would dispose of them by your own prudence or the assistance of others, if they were left to be ordered by yourselves, or ruled as you would have them.

(3.) He makes all his subjects to be kings. Every one that will be ruled by him shall have the honour and power of a king, Exod. xix. 5, 6. If you will be subject to me, and shew it by obeying my voice and observing my laws, ye shall be ' a kingdom of priests,' i. e. ye shall be both ' kings and priests,' as it is expressed, Rev. i. 6. The same thing expressed in another phrase, 1 Peter ii. 9, *βασιλεῖον ἱεράτευμα*, ' a kingly priesthood,' i. e. not only priests, but kings. Amongst all nations the greatest dignity and honour was that of kings and priests. And this honour have all that will be subjects to God ; they are not only priests to offer up spiritual sacrifice to God, but kings, and kings not only hereafter in heaven, but here on earth, Rev. v. 10, ' Hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth.' Kings, you may say ! Alas, they seem far from any such thing on earth ! Where, or how, or over what do they reign ? Why, they reign over that to which the greatest kings (that will not be subject to God) are miserably enslaved. They reign over sin, over their lusts and passions, which are the rulers and commanders of the princes of the earth. While they seem to rule all, they are in bondage and slavery to the corruptions of their hearts, they reign no otherwise but as serving divers lusts ; and this is a more woeful bondage and servitude than that of a galley slave. While they take upon them the government of others, they cannot so much as govern themselves, but are at the command and under the power of their own passions and lusts. But he that will be subject to God, sin shall not have dominion over him ; he shall subdue it, and be above the power of it, which is a royalty which few princes can glory in. He shall have power to govern himself, and

to rule his passions, and corrupt inclinations, which are too unruly for the greatest on earth.

He shall reign over the world too; he shall overcome it, 1 John v. 4; he shall be above the pleasures, and profits, and greatness, and honours of it, by which it tyranniseth over the mightiest potentates; he shall have those under his feet which rule in the very hearts of others, Rev. xii. 1. This is a royal power indeed, and peculiar to those who resign up themselves to be governed by God. Here is power, and honour, and royalty in the greatest reality: *Βασιλεία, πλοῦτος καὶ δόξα, ὀνόματα μὲν παρὰ τοῖς ἔξωθεν.* Kingdom, and riches, and glory are but names amongst those that are without, *πράγματα δὲ παρὰ Χριστιανοῖς,* but the realities are theirs who are subject to Christ.

Oh what a temptation is a kingdom to the heart of man! What will he not do, or hazard, or suffer? What blood will he not shed, what ruins will he not make, to get or keep an earthly kingdom? Why, here you may have one upon easier and better terms, and such an one as is the greatest reality. Those of the world are but nominal kingdoms in comparison of it. Give but up yourselves to the government of God, and you shall reign indeed; he makes all his subjects kings; you shall reign here in the excellent way expressed, and you shall reign for ever and ever in immortal glory.

4. Consider the excellency of it in some particulars.

(1.) The excellency of the ruler derives some dignity upon the subject. The greater and more eminent a prince is, the more honour it is to be related to him, even as a subject. What honour is it then to be so related to him, whose glory is above the heavens! It is really a greater excellency for kings to be his subjects, than it is otherwise that they are kings. The angels would not exchange their subjection to God for a dominion over the world. *Ἡγούμενος ἀρχὴν εἶναι μεγίστην ἐν ἀρχαῖς ἑαυτοῦ δυνάσθαι τὸ τοι λογισμὸν ἐν θυμῷ καὶ ταῖς ἡδοναῖς πιστῆσαι,* (Isidor. Ep. 223, lib. 3). The Queen of Sheba counted it a happiness to be a servant to such a prince as Solomon, 1 Kings x. 8; what is it then to be subjected to him, in comparison of whom Solomon, in all his glory, and wisdom, and magnificence, was but as a worm? She adds, ver. 9, 'Because the Lord loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee king.' It is for none but those whom the Lord loves, and has a particular favour for, to be in special subjection to such a sovereign as rules over all. *Μίγα γὰρ ὅτως ἀξίωμα* (says Chrysostom), *δοῦλον εἶναι τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ μὴ φαίνεσθαι:* it is a great dignity indeed to be a servant of Christ; a subject of God really, and not in appearance only.

(2.) This will make way for Christ's reign upon earth; so that all the kingdoms of the world might become the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ. If all would consent to be his subjects, there would be nothing to hinder him from reigning. There has been a great debate whether Christ shall personally appear and reign on earth in the latter days; I will determine nothing concerning that question, *pro* or *con*, only what my subject leads me to. If Christ should appear on earth in person; yet if the inhabitants of the world would no more subject themselves unto God than they do now, it cannot be expected that they should treat him better than when he was on earth before. Holiness, we see, is persecuted everywhere, the image of Christ is generally hated and scorned. And if he be thus used in effigy, in that which is but like him; if his resemblance cannot escape scorn and violence, how would he be used in person by those who are so far from affectionate subjection to him, as they shew a high antipathy to anything that is like him? The beast that has such antipathy to man, as to fly upon his picture wherever he sees it, would much more tear the man

himself. Oh, but those who hate holiness are his professed enemies. He has many that profess themselves to be his friends, and they sure would give him better entertainment; no, even from these he would have no good entertainment, further than they have before subjected themselves unto God. For some there were, when he appeared on earth formerly, who passionately longed for his appearance, professed themselves to be his people, his subjects, his own peculiarly; and yet when he came, they would not own him, John i. 11.

Nay, those who are his own indeed, and not only seem and profess to be so, and such as bear his image, and partake in some degree of his Spirit, unless they be yet further subjected unto God than now they appear to be, are in danger not to give Christ due entertainment. The most probable way that I can find, to judge how they would receive Christ, is to observe how they receive one another, Mat. x. 40. Those who agree in all essentials of Christ's doctrine, and walk by the same rules in practicals, and discern the image of Christ in one another, yet if they differ from one another in matters of less amount, this we see is enough to take down their esteem of them, to abate their affection. This is enough to cause contention and division, to occasion distances and estrangements, and to draw them to evil surmising, and evil speaking, and ill treatments of one another. And why will not these differences have the like effect on them towards Christ, as towards one another, if he be found to differ as much or more from them, as they do amongst themselves? And it is most certain that he will differ from them all, since he is the truth, and they every of them err in some, yea, in many things. So that unless there be more subjection of mind and heart unto God than is yet effected, if Christ should appear, he is like to be no better entertained by his own people than a dissenter, than one that differs from them in such things too for which their minds and hearts are much engaged; and what entertainment such a dissenter is like to have, you may judge by what you see amongst yourselves.

But some may say, Christ's appearing will be in such a way and manner as all will be ready to receive him. I answer, so did the Jews think of old concerning his first coming, and were confident of it upon the same grounds, viz., the ancient prophecies upon which others now do raise this confidence, and yet they being not duly subjected to God, that event proved quite contrary to their confident expectations; they, instead of receiving him, did oppose him to the death, and those who had the greatest expectations of him proved his greatest enemies.

Indeed, if Christ should appear in such a way as to bring all into a full and voluntary subjection to him, then he would have a due reception in the world; but the foundation of such an entertainment would be that subjection which I am calling for; this is that upon which his glorious reign so much depends. The more you subject yourselves in mind, heart, and life, to the government of God, the more you prevail with in the world to give up themselves to it, the more you promote the kingdom of Christ, and the clearer and the more open do you make the way for its coming; but without this you do nothing towards it, no, nor they who in other ways fancy they do most, without this, they rather hinder than advance it. If Christ should appear on earth, yet without this subjection to him, his kingdom would not be advanced in the world; and if he should not appear personally, yet if the inhabitants of the earth did but thus subject themselves to him, he would reign gloriously.

(8.) This tends to rectify all the disorders of the world, whereby it is

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become a place of affliction and calamity, of confusion and misery to the sons of men. So far as we can prevail for this subjection unto God, so far will all grievances be redressed, and all things reduced from the miserable posture wherein they now are, to that lovely order and happy constitution which at first they had. The Lord at first created all things in admirable order, and in a direct tendency to the use, and comfort, and happiness of man. How did they fall into such woful disorders, as they now rather tend to be his afflictions, and grievances, and calamities? Why, all this fell out by man's departing from his subjection to God; that was the first disorder, upon which all things else fell into these woful confusions; and so far as man returns to that subjection, so far will all be reduced towards their primitive serviceableness to his comfort and happiness.

The world is now like a body, all whose parts and members are broken and out of joint; the parts which served it before being disjointed, do now afflict it, and what was helpful and comfortable before, is now painful and grievous. Now, all was broken and put out of joint, as to man, by his fall from his submission to him who rules over all; and the woful issues of this misplacing and unjointing of things will continue, uselessness and painfulness will remain till they be set in joint again; and there is no setting of them further than man is brought back to his proper place, and set in due subjection to God. If this were once fully done, the world would have a new face, and those things in it which ensnare and endanger you would be your security; and those which trouble, and pain, and afflict you, would be helpful and comfortable to you; and those which are your vexation and misery would ease and relieve you, and tend to make you happy. Such would be the excellent effects of a due subjection to God and all the world.

5. Consider the danger of not resigning up yourselves to the government of God, so as to be ruled by him in all things.

Particularly, (1.) You can have no comfortable relation to God till you consent to be his subjects, and give up yourselves to be ruled by him, for this is the foundation of all that is honourable to him, and comfortable to you. You are not his servants, you are not his friends, you cannot be his children, till you be sincerely and voluntarily his subjects; till then he will never own you in any such relation as will afford you comfort in life or death. You are his creatures indeed, but some of the worst that ever he made, worse than the beasts that perish; none worse in the world, unless it be the devils. And why are they devils, but because they would not be ruled by the Lord? You are the work of his hand, but such a work as even a man may be ashamed of, such a work as throws itself out of the maker's hand, and will not be ordered by that wisdom and power that gives it a being.

You are not his servants, you can expect no comfort or advantage from any such relation. Indeed, you can lay no claim to it, for, saith the apostle, Rom. vi. 16, 'Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness.'

You are not his friends, nor will he ever so account you, or so deal with you; for what prince will count those his friends, who live under his dominion, and yet will not be subject to him? If you submit not to his government, you are enemies to it; and those that are enemies to his government, how can they pretend to be in any respect his friends? Job v. 14, 'Ye are my friends, if you do whatsoever I command you.' He admits none to be his friends upon other terms.

You are far from being his children, if you will not be subject to him.

He who enjoins children to obey their parents, Eph. vi. 1, will own none as children who would not obey him: Mal. i. 6, 'If I be a Father, where is mine honour? If I be a Master, where is my fear?' He has neither fear nor honour from those who will not subject themselves to him; they own him neither as Lord nor Father, and he will own them neither as children nor servants.

(2.) You are rebels and traitors to the sovereign Majesty of the world, if you will not give up yourselves to be ruled by him. He that is under the obligation of a subject, and will not consent and subject himself to him who is of right his ruler, is a rebel. Now, all persons whatsoever belong to the universal kingdom of God, that kingdom which rules over all. All are under the greatest obligations to be wholly ruled by him; he has all right to govern them in all things; and therefore those who hold out, and will not submit to his government, are rebels against God. Those who are stiff-necked, and will not stoop to his yoke, will not be ruled by his laws, they are rebellious, Deut. xxxi. 27; yea, he that would not submit himself to God, would not have him to rule over him; he that would not be ruled by God in all things, would not have him rule over all; and he that would not have him rule, is a traitor to him whose throne is in the heavens. He would dethrone God, and have him deprived of his universal dominion. The language of his heart and actions is, 'We will not have this God to rule over us;' or that which Pharaoh spoke out, 'Who is the Lord, that I should obey him?' or that of those traitorous conspirators against the Lord and his Christ, Ps. ii. 3, 'Let us break his bands in sunder, and cast away his cords from us.' Contrivances to sin are rebellious conspiracies against the universal Sovereign; and their acts of sin are acts of hostility, a bearing arms against him who rules the world; and, according to the apostle's style, they are 'weapons,' Rom. vi. 13, *επλά ἀδικίας*. You take up weapons, you bear arms against the great God, with a design to depose him, or cast off his government, while you stand out and will not submit to it. If you would not be guilty of such horrid treason and rebellion against the Most High, you must subject yourselves to him in all things.

(3.) If you will not be subject to God, you subject yourselves to the devil, for it is he that seduced men at first from their allegiance and subjection to the God of heaven. He prevailed with men to fall off from their rightful Sovereign, and he is ever since the head of that faction which he seduced; and hence he is called 'the god of the world,' 2 Cor. iv. 4, and their 'prince,' Eph. ii. 2. So far as any are 'children of disobedience' in respect of God, so far they are under the 'prince of the power of the air;' so far as you will not be subject to God, so far you are Satan's slaves, 'led captive by him at his will,' 2 Tim. ii. 26. And there is no hope of recovering yourselves out of the snare of the devil, no freedom from that woful slavery and captivity to that hellish tyrant, but by resigning up yourselves to be ruled by God. Christ invites you to come under his sweet and gracious government, Mat. xi. 29. If you will not be persuaded, you leave yourselves irrecoverably under the tyranny of Satan, who will continually harass you in the basest drudgery, and keep you in servitude to divers lusts. The viler any person is to whom one is enslaved, the more intolerable is the slavery. What is it then to be in bondage unto the devil? nay, that which is worse, that which has made him a devil, unto sin? This will be your state; nor can it be better, till you give up yourselves to be wholly ruled by him who rules over all, Rom. vi. 16, 17, 19.

(4.) The Lord can arm all creatures against you. He that rules over all has every thing in the world at his beck, and under his command; and

can order all, or any of them, to do what execution he pleases on any that affront his government. He could arm the angels against Sennacherib and his host; he could arm the stars against Sisera, Judges v. 20; he could arm the clouds against the old world, the winds against Jonah; he could arm the sea against Pharaoh and the Egyptians, and the fire against Sodom, Gen. xix. 21; and against King Ahaziah's soldiers, sent to apprehend the prophet, 2 Kings i. 10, 12; and the air with infection against David and his people; and the earth against Korah and his accomplices; and many creatures on earth, as the locust, the canker-worm, the palmer-worm, which he armed against Israel, Joel ii. 25.

Yea, he can arm a man against himself, and make any part of him to do execution upon the whole. It is grievous to have friends and children armed against him, as they were against David. What is it, then, for a man to be armed against himself, and to be made his own tormentor? But he who rules over all can give a commission to any part of man's soul or body to do execution upon himself. So he armed Judas's conscience against him, and you know what execution that did. He armed Pharaoh's will against himself, hardening his heart to his destruction; and the spirit and heart of Sihon, Dent. ii. 30. He armed the memories of the Jews against them, Lam. i. 7, and ii. 19, 20, and made the thoughts of himself afflictive to David, Ps. lxxvii. 8. The fancies of the Moabites, 2 Kings iii. 22, 23, they imagined the waters to be blood, and drew such a conclusion from that fancy as ruined them; and that wonderful change which befell Nebuchadnezzar is ascribed to the power of fancy, the Lord so over-ruling it, that he imagined himself to be a beast, and demeaned himself accordingly for so many years, Dan. iv. 33; so Asa's feet, 1 Kings xv. 23; Saul's hands, 1 Sam. xxxi. 4; and Adonijah's tongue, 1 Kings ii. 23; and the Bethshemites' eyes, 1 Sam. vi. 19; and the humors in the Egyptians' bodies, Exod. ix. 10.

Oh how dangerous is it not to subject yourselves to him who so rules over all, that he can arm all things, or any thing, against you! even yourselves against yourselves, your bodies against your souls, your souls against your bodies, or any part of either against both!

(5.) If you will not give up yourselves in subjection unto God, all creatures in heaven and earth may rise up in judgment against you, and condemn you. Your guilt will have as many aggravations as there are or have been creatures in the whole world. And how heavy will that guilt be, which has so many, so innumerable many, to burden and aggravate it! You have no associates herein through the whole world, but only the devils; all other creatures, from the highest angel to the meanest worm, to the least particle of air or earth, are in continual and absolute subjection and obedience unto God, Ps. cxlviii. 1-6. All these, as they were made at first by his command, so have they been ordered ever since by his statute. They never have, never will, transgress it in the least; but perform a perfect, a continued obedience to his orders, doing all that he would have them do, and nothing else. Thus is the superior part of the world in subjection to him; for the lower part, see vers. 7-10. All these are ever fulfilling his word, performing his pleasure, shewing themselves wholly at his command: He says to one, Go, and he goes, &c. And shall man only, of all creatures in heaven and earth, stand out against God and refuse to be at his command? There is not a hill, nor a tree, nor a beast, nor a fowl, nor a creeping thing, not a spark of fire, nor a drop of rain, nor a puff of wind, but may bear witness against your non-subjection to God, and declare against it as intolerable, and most worthy of the fiercest wrath of the great God. We (may they say) never

had such endowments, such encouragements as the children of men; we were not capable of such obligations as the Lord laid upon them; we had no fears of everlasting sufferings, nor were ever quickened with hopes of eternal rewards, and yet we never transgress his will and pleasure in the least, all our motions were conformed exactly to his orders; whereas refractory men will do what they list; let the Lord order what he pleases, they will do what is good in their own eyes, not what seems good to him. There is not any of those creatures but may bring in such a charge against you, nay, all together may form such a plea against disobedient man, and appear at God's tribunal as his accusers, and swell his charge, and burden his guilt, with the weight of the whole creation, and call for the greatest severity, and justify the heaviest sentence that can be passed against him.

When you are tempted to cross the will of God in any particular, say thus to yourselves, What am I about to do? There is not any other creatures else in the world, but the devils, would do thus. The irrational, the senseless, the lifeless creatures, do all fulfil his word; and shall I, whom the Lord has infinitely more obliged, be a transgressor of it? Shall I make myself worse than the beasts that perish, when the Lord had made me but a little lower than the angels? Shall I make myself worse than fowl, or plant, or any creeping thing? Have I no pattern to follow but that of the devils? Shall I make myself so liable to the condemnation of hell, as the whole creation may pass the sentence of such a condemnation upon me, and bear witness that nothing heavy enough can be inflicted on me? Shall I run into such guilt, against which every creature in heaven and earth will be both a witness and a condemner? Oh then, what will plead for me, when all things in the world appear against me? Who will justify what every creature condemns? What will hide me, what will secure me from the wrath of him that sits upon the throne, when the whole creation will offer me to his vengeance, and declare me most worthy of it for ever?

6. If you will not subject yourselves to him, he will ruin you. He that rules over all, will, and must have his will on you; there is no resisting, no avoiding it; all hopes of escaping, or faring better, are mere delusions: Job ix. 4, 'He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength: who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered?' If you can deal with such a God, as, ver. 5-8, which 'removeth the mountains, and they know not: which overturneth them in his anger; which shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble; which commandeth the sun, and it riseth not, and sealeth up the stars,' &c., then, though you be stiff against him, you may hope to prosper. But if this great God who rules over all, will be too hard for you, then there is no way, but either submit or perish: Ps. ii. 12, 'Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish,' &c. Kissing hand or feet is a token of subjection and homage, 1 Sam x. 1, Gen. xli. 40, *ישק כל עמי*, shall obey thee, and receive law from thee. Those who will not give up themselves in such subjection are exposed to his wrath, and so in danger to perish from the way, in danger to be trodden under foot. It is a dreadful doom which remains for those who will not have the Lord to rule over them, Luke xix. 27. If you will not have the Lord to reign over you, he will have you executed as his enemies, and he will see execution done himself.

Thus much to persuade you to be ruled by God, and to give up yourselves to be ruled by him in all things. If the Lord have made it effectual to bring you to such a happy resolution, it will be seasonable to shew how you should demean yourselves as his subjects. Particularly,

1. Know your distance from the universal Sovereign, and be sensible of

it. How far is he above you who rules over all! Earthly princes will have their subjects know their distance, and shew it by a reverence answerable thereto. Why, those that are upon thrones, in comparison of men, are but as it were upon the dunghill, in respect of him whose throne is in heaven; and the greatest empire on earth is but as a molehill, compared with that kingdom which rules over all. What high and awful apprehensions should we have of the great Majesty of heaven and earth! Jer. x. 6, 7, 'Forasmuch as there is none like unto thee, O Lord; thou art great, and thy name is great in might. Who would not fear thee, O King of nations?' Superiority challenges reverence, Mal. i. 6. Fear and honour is due even to masters of families, much more to the rulers of kingdoms and empires. What, then, do we owe to him, in comparison of whose dominion, such an empire as that of Ahasuerus, Esther i. 1, 'An hundred twenty and seven provinces,' are not so much as one family? Heb. xii. 9, 'We have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence.' And so we have kings and governors, and we give them reverence. 'Should we not much more be in subjection' to the King of kings? The highest angels are but mean subjects to him who rules over all, and the most glorious amongst them are but to his glorious majesty what glow-worms are to us; and the greatest princes in the world are but to him as crowned grasshoppers; their power, and greatness, and majesty is so little or nothing, compared with his, as they deserve not the name of potentates in comparison. He who rules over all is 'the only potentate,' 1 Tim. vi. 15. And if we should look upon ourselves as far below them, and be sensible of our distance, what sense should we have of the distance betwixt God and us! How infinitely is he above us! How inconceivably are we below him who rules over all! Let the sense hereof rest upon us, and influence heart and life, and the acts of both continually, Ps. xcvi. 9, 10.

2. Let him have the pre-eminence above all, in your thoughts, and affections, and designs. He that rules over all ought to be exalted above all, and in all, and by all. Let him have the highest place in your minds; let your thoughts advance him above that which is highest there; let him have the chief place in your hearts; let his sceptre be advanced there, and make everything stoop to it; let the Lord alone reign there; let him have the throne, and other things be made his footstool. Though his throne of glory be in heaven, yet he disdains not to own an humble heart as his throne here below, Isa. lvii. 15. That is an humble heart that stoops to God, that lies low before him, and would have everything else to do so, that he who rules over all may have the pre-eminence in all things. As he is exalted above all, in respect of his kingdom and dominion, the greatness, and power, and glory of it, so should he be answerably exalted in our souls. Those that are true and faithful to the supreme ruler of the universe will be careful to have him so exalted, 2 Sam. xxiii. 47, Neh. ix. 5, 6, Ps. lvii. 5, 11, and xcvi. 9, Isa. ii. 10, 11, and v. 15.

8. Be tender of his honour. He is counted no good subject who maintains not the honour of a righteous ruler. He that will venture to dishonour God himself, or is not troubled when he is dishonoured by others, shews no such respect as is due from a subject to the universal sovereign, Ps. lxi. 9. You should resent that which dishonours God, as if yourselves were struck at. The relation betwixt God and you requires this; he that is honoured or dishonoured is your ruler, and therefore you are concerned in it, and should be affected with it as your own concern. The more glory is due to him, the more should it be laid to heart when he is dishonoured. It is a super-eminent glory, an honour above all, which is due to him who rules over

all, therefore any dishonourable reflections upon him are and should be counted more intolerable.

To see the King in his glory is the ardent desire of every soul that is loyal to God. It will then be the affliction of such a soul to hear him reproached, to see him disregarded, and his authority slighted, Ps. cxix. 186. It is necessary, in order to the end of government, that the ruler should be in honour, otherwise he will not be in a capacity to promote the common good, to which civil government is subservient. Oh, but the common good itself must be measured by the honour of God, the supreme ruler; and that must be counted best for us, and for all, which most honours him. All things must lower to this, even that which is *suprema lex*, and has the supremacy in other well-ordered governments. That which glorifies him must be judged our happiness, and that which dishonours him our misery.

4. Be very observant of his laws, and every part thereof, commands, promises, threatenings. What subjection can we shew to the great ruler of the world, if we will not live in an observance of his laws, which are not only most righteous in themselves, but most advantageous to his subjects? Acquaint yourselves with them; let them be your study and meditation, that you may know in all particulars, upon all occasions and emergencies, 'what is the good, and perfect, and acceptable will of God.' His laws declare this to us, and we should have them always in our eye, always at hand, that they may be as light to us by day, and a lantern by night, Ps. cxix. 105; that these may give us light in all our ways, and may direct all our steps; that we may never be at a loss, never to seek concerning his will, and what he has enjoined us. Those that are careful to *obey*, will be careful to *know* the law, the rule of their obedience, in its true sense, and utmost extent, in its power and spirituality; not only in the body, but in the several branches of it, great and small. We are as much concerned as the Israelites, in that command, Deut. vi. 4-9, 'These words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children,' &c. Joshua, the great ruler of Israel, was thus to shew himself under a higher government: Joshua i. 8, 9, 'This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein,' &c. And kings are this way to declare themselves subject to the sovereign of the world: Deut. xvii. 18-20, 'When he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, he shall write him a copy of this law in a book: and it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life,' &c. And being acquainted with his laws, we must not dispute any of his commands. This is counted malapertness in other subjects, when there is no suspicion of unrighteousness in the injunctions of their superiors. How intolerable will it be in reference to the laws of God, which are the issues of infinite wisdom, goodness, and righteousness! We should pay a free, cheerful, unreserved, and present observance to all his commands, Ps. cxix. 60.

We should fear his threatenings too. These contain the penalties wherewith his laws are enforced. To make light of them is to slight him who rules over all. When he enjoins a thing under pain of his displeasure, that is as much as if it were enjoined under pain of death, for 'in his favour is life;' and therefore his displeasure should be as dreadful to us as death. It is the property of those that are his best subjects, and such in whom he most delights, to tremble at his word. Isa. lxvi. 1, 2.

His promises also should have a great influence on us in all ways of obedience, both because they are so great and wonderful. What prince would ever promise his subjects that if they should observe his laws they

should reign with him. Yet this the Lord promises those that are subject to him, Mat. xiii. 43, 2 Tim. ii. 12, Rev. iii. 21. As also because they are so free and gracious. The Lord was not in the least obliged to promise or bestow any reward for our obedience; we owe him all we do, and much more. And who will expect a reward for paying his debt, especially when he pays but a small part of what he owes? He promises all that we can desire, and all that he promises are acts of grace. He had more right to make laws, as others do, without annexing anything to them but penalties. Oh how should we value and admire the riches and freeness of his grace in those great and precious promises! What an influence should they have upon us in all acts of obedience! How free, and hearty, and affectionate, and entire should our subjection be to such a Ruler, who, when he was not in the least obliged to give us anything, hath graciously promised to give us all, and not to let the least act of subjection pass, without a recompence of reward! Mat. x. 42.

5. Promote his interest. You cannot be faithful subjects unless you be true to the interest of your sovereign Lord. This you must prefer before all particular interests of yourselves or others. This you must maintain against all, and venture all you have in the defence and for the advancement of it. He is no true friend to the government under which he lives, who will prefer his private interest before the public: this is both disloyalty and folly. As if one would let the ship sink and think to save his cabin. God's interest is the public interest; your own, and the interest of the world, is involved in it, and must swim or sink with it. Nothing should take place of it, nothing should be admitted to come in competition with it. If you will not shew yourselves true subjects to it, you are both foolish and unfaithful. Selfishness and privateness of spirit, neglecting his interest, who rules over all, for some little things of your own, will make you guilty of both.

Now the interest of God, as he is King of nations, consists in the number and quality of his subjects. It is his interest that more should be subject to him, and that they should be more subjected to him; that his kingdom should be populous, and that the people of it should be such as may prove the strength and ornament of it. You have both, Ps. cx. 3. The Psalmist gives an account here of the kingdom of the Messiah: his throne, ver. 1; his sceptre, ver. 2; his subjects, ver. 3; both the number and quality of them. They are numerous: 'From the womb of the morning thou hast the dew of thy youth; i. e. thy subjects shall be for number answerable to the drops of dew which the morning brings forth (as it were out of its womb) so plentifully as to cover the face of the whole earth. Then for the quality of them, they shall be 'a willing people,' not subdued and brought into subjection by force of arms, but resigning themselves voluntarily unto his government. עַם נְדָבָה; a people of free will offering, such as freely offer up themselves, and all they have, in and for his service, and that 'in the beauties of holiness;' holiness shining forth in its lustre, and appearing in them in all its beauties. Herein lies the interest of God in the world; if you will be true to it, faithful to your sovereign Lord, make it your business to enlarge his kingdom by bringing more under his government, and making yourselves and others such as may be an honour to his government; growing in grace more and more, and holding forth the power and beauty of holiness in a daily course, and to that end, striving to uphold and promote the gospel, that is the sceptre, the rod of his power. That is it whereby the world must be prevailed with to come under his government. When the gospel is suppressed, his sceptre is thrown to the ground. Those that oppose it and stop its course are the greatest enemies to his interest, and

those to whom the gospel in its power and liberty is not dearer than liberty or estate, or any other outward concern, they are not faithful to him who rules over all, nor true to his interest.

And take heed of anything which may tempt any to fall off from this government, or may hinder any from coming into it. Those who by passionate, or selfish, or froward, or rigorous, or unrighteous carriage, beget in others an ill opinion of this government, they are not friends to it, they do great disservice to the interest of God; 'it were better a mill-stone were hanged about their neck,' &c., Mat. xviii. 6. Walk so as you may win and oblige others to come in and submit to this government; let your conversation be such as may convince the world that subjection to God in all things is that which tends to the happiness of families, of kingdoms, and of the whole earth. That is the way to make them 'a willing people,' to enlarge the kingdom of our great Sovereign, and so to promote his interest. If those who profess themselves subjects of God would order themselves according to the rules of his government, there would be little need of miracles to convert infidels.

6. You must have the same friends, and the same enemies. Those that are friends to God and his government, you must not count them nor treat them as your enemies for any little differences; their relation to God must drown the sense of personal feuds and particular provocations. And those that are enemies to God and his government must not be the persons of your intimacy and delight, though you may have pity and compassion for them: Ps. cxxxix. 20-22, 'They speak evil against thee wickedly, and thine enemies take thy name in vain. Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee?' and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred; I count them mine enemies.' Though they pretended to piety, yet when their talking of God was with a design to act wickedness, their enmity to the Lord herein was hateful and grievous to him. He resented it as if it had been enmity against, injury offered to, himself.

And those who submit to the government of God, and thereby shew themselves his friends, must be embraced by them as such, though they may differ from us, and disoblige us in other particulars. We must be wary how we judge or censure them for such differences, lest we entrench upon the prerogative of him who is the Lord and Ruler of us both, Rom. xiv. 8, 4. In things that are indifferent really, and not in pretence, we are not to judge another, we have no right to do it. He is the judge of him and us, who is Lord and Ruler of both. Our common relation to our sovereign Lord, and their subjection to him, must keep up love and friendship amongst all that are the friends of God, in the midst of such differences as may tempt us to be unfriendly.

7. Submit to God in all his dispensations. In those especially which may tempt you to impatience or discontent, in wants, in losses, in disappointments, in hard measures from men, in sufferings and afflictions of all sorts. For why? The Lord rules over all; all that befalls you is ordered and disposed by him. Others are but instruments and under-causes, whom he makes use of in the administration of worldly affairs; and rules and over-rules them as he pleases. Look upon him as the sovereign ruler, and upon these dispensations as acts of his government. I know not what can be more prevalent with you, to submit and be satisfied. Not to submit, is to rise up against him who rules over all. To murmur and repine, is to quarrel with God's ruling your affairs. Not to be quiet and contented, is to shew yourselves unsatisfied with his government. And is this to demean yourselves as becomes the subjects of such a ruler? It may be you have not so well con-

sidered the heinousness of this misdemeanour, neither against whom, nor against what it is directed. Is it not against him who rules over all? and against him as ruling, against his government? As though your affairs might have been ruled and ordered with more wisdom, or more goodness, than the Lord exercises in his administrations towards you. As though you would not have the Lord to rule over all, but had rather order your affairs yourselves, than have them ruled at such a rate, and ordered in such a manner, as the great God sees fit. How does this strike at the glorious sovereignty of God! What reflections does it cast upon the Lord of heaven and earth! Those who were subject to God indeed, have expressed another temper: the sense of God's ruling hand, in the sad things that befell them, has made them silent, patient, submissive, and well satisfied with and under severe dispensations. What more grievous things have befallen you, than Eli was threatened with, 1 Sam. iii. 11-14. And what says he? How did he entertain this sad message? Ver. 18, 'It is the Lord.' It is he who has dominion over me; it is He who has all right to dispose of me and mine, as he thinks fit. And Aaron expressed as much by his silence, when his two sons were consumed by fire from God, Lev. x. 2, 3; and so did David, when he was near consumed by the stroke of God's hand, Ps. xxxix. 9.

What can you lose more than Job, who lost estate and children at once? Yet how submissively does he demean himself upon this consideration: Job i. 21, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away,' &c. He is the Lord of what I had, and gave it me; and the Lord of what I have lost, and took it. I had but the use of it, he had the right, as being Lord of all, and so might well dispose of it as he thought fit; and therefore blessed be his name, adored and admired be his government and dominion, both in giving and taking away!

What more dreadful can come upon you than Hezekiah was threatened with, 2 Kings xx. 17, 18, yet he expresses himself not only as patient, but satisfied: ver. 19, 'Good is the word of the Lord.' It is the Lord, and it is his word, his act. He is not only *maximus*, the sovereign Lord, the ruler of all, but *optimus*, the best of governors, and therefore his acts of rule must needs be good: *δύναται πάντα, βούλεται ἀρίστα*, Isidor. lib. ii.

The Lord ruling over all makes it not only our duty to be patient under, contented with, submissive to, all his administrations, but the consideration of it is a means to help us, and a motive to oblige us thereto. He is the universal ruler; he has all right to dispose and order us and ours, and all things, as he sees good. It is his due, and shall we not allow him what is due to him? Shall we not be contented that he should use his right? Must he forbear that at our pleasure? Shall he not make use of it but when and how we think fit? Does this become his subjects? Or rather, is not this to take upon us to rule, instead of God?

Those dispensations which we are apt to be unsatisfied with, they are acts of God's government; and what will we be satisfied with, if his governing will not please us? Is not his government most wise, and most gracious, and most righteous? Can anything be more prudently ordered than the wisdom of God does order it? or anything better disposed of than goodness itself does manage it? or anything less liable to exception than that which is most righteous? If we will not be satisfied with those acts of government, which are the issues of infallible wisdom, and infinite goodness, and most perfect righteousness, what will content us? If there be impatience under these, where will patience have its work? If we will not submit here, how can we, when, or wherein will we, ever shew ourselves subject?

8. Address yourselves unto God upon all occasions, and look to him for redress; hereby you will honour him as the universal governor. This will be an honourable acknowledgment, that he rules over all; when you have recourse to him in all, and apply yourselves to him for all, and rely upon him accordingly. Whatever you want, whatever you fear, whatever you feel that is grievous or afflictive to you, apply yourselves to him, who is able and willing to supply and relieve you, whatever your case be, and gives you assurance of it in that he rules over all.

He is able. For he who rules over all is the all-sufficient governor. He wants no wisdom, he wants no power, who is sufficient for the government of the whole world. He that can rule all can do all for you himself; or he can order anything else to do it, if he will make use of others; for he has all at his beck, and under his power and dominion.

And he is ready too. He is always at hand; you need not travel many miles to make your case known, you may find him everywhere; for he that rules over all is a ruler in all places, in all things. And you may have immediate access to him; you need make no friends, or bribe any courtiers, to get you audience; you may have as free and ready access to him as to any other.

Nor will it be, or will he count it any trouble to him to hear or relieve you, though millions with you should apply themselves to him at once. He that can so easily rule all can in a moment despatch the affairs of millions together, and can more easily give you and all redress, than you can seek it.

Nor need you fear to meet with a repulse. It belongs to him, as he is ruler over all, to order all your affairs for you, and dispose of all your concerns. That is his prerogative, as he is the sovereign of the world; and your privilege, as you are his subjects in a special manner; and both may make you confident that he is willing you should have access to him for these purposes at any time. You can never come unseasonably, as you may do to other rulers, for he is always actually governing all and everything, and is no more hindered by his administering of all than if he had but one thing, one person, to look after; you have a general warrant, and special encouragement to come to him at any time, and so you need not fear to come before you are called. No such danger, no such penalty, as upon Ahasuerus's subjects, to whom it was death to approach him, when they were not called, except the golden sceptre was held out to them, Esth. iv. 11. His sceptre is continually held out to you, to every subject of his. And though he have כסא הדין, a throne of judgment, yet you may always find him upon כסא רחמים, a throne of grace, as he was represented in the temple, always upon the mercy-seat, ever ready for acts of grace and mercy. He will have his throne denominated from grace. It is the special glory of his reign and government to shew himself gracious, freely merciful, to every faithful subject, how mean soever. Grace is enthroned in his government, and reigns there; and therefore we may come to him with all freedom, and the greatest confidence, that we shall obtain mercy, and find grace, whenever we come, Heb. iv. 16. Let us come, and that μετὰ παρηγορίας, 'with all freeness,' declare to him all our wants, and all our griefs. For the Lord our Sovereign offers himself to us upon a throne of grace, that so we may always obtain mercy, and find grace πρὸς εὐκαιρον βοήθειαν, 'for seasonable relief,' for supply and redress whenever we need it, when it will be best and most seasonable for us to have it. Thus to address ourselves to him is both our duty and our privilege, we honour him hereby, and acknowledge that he rules us in all things; and having such encouragement for it, let us not neglect it.

9. Commit your affairs unto him; devolve all your concerns on him; entrust him with the ordering of them; leave all to be ruled by him who rules over all: Ps. xxxvii. 5, 'Commit thy way unto him.' The word is, נָתַן, 'Roll thy way,' any, every particular wherein thou art concerned, upon God; trust him with the managing of it, and set thy heart at rest. There is no fear that anything committed to him will miscarry; trust him but with it, and he will bring it to pass, he will give it a good issue. Leave events in his hands, in whose they are; he can order them best, who admirably rules and orders all things. Thy weightiest concerns are not too heavy for him, and he thinks not the least of them below him; he takes care of all, even to a hair, Mat. x. 30. Those who thought that God did *προνοεῖ τῶν οὐρανίων μόνον*, take care only of celestial things; or if of earthly, yet *οὐ πάντων δι, ἀλλὰ τῶν ἐξόχων*, not of all, but only the greatest, the affairs of eminent persons, and princes: those who entertained such conceits did err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the universal and unlimited dominion of God. In what potentate did he more concern himself than in Lazarus? He resents the concerns of the least and meanest of his subjects, as though they were his own, Mat. xxv. Oxen and sparrows, their provisions, their motions, are ordered by his government; much more does the care of it reach his people, 1 Cor. ix. 9.

Therefore, live in a continual dependence on him, in all, and for all; in whose hands all things are, and through whose hands all things do pass. Though he rule all, yet he has not so much business on him as to neglect any, or suffer the least to miscarry; he is as sufficient for all, as if he had but one to mind. *Sic gressus meos considerans, veluti me solum consideret*; he so looks after me, as if he had none but me to look after, says Augustine. Trust him, therefore, with all, and quiet your hearts in believing that he who rules over all knows best how to rule and order all that is yours, Ps. cxviii. 8, 9. If a prince should bid you trust him with some affair of yours, and assure you, on the word of a king, he would take care of it, you would think this a great security; and yet it might miscarry, and you, for all this, might be disappointed; that is too ordinary. Oh, but you have a king to trust with your concerns, and he requires you to do it, who never disappointed any that relied on him (though he have the government of the whole world upon him), to this day, nor ever will do; he that trusts in him shall not be ashamed, Rom. x. 11. If a relation of yours that is rich, should bid you leave your child to him, he will take care of it, you would be apt to think it well provided for. May not your children be better provided for by committing them to God, when he assures you he will take care of them? Is he not infinitely richer, and wiser, and better, who has all under him, and rules all as he will, and will order all for the best? A rich friend may leave your child an estate; but whether it will be good or bad for him, it is not in his power to determine: an estate may prove his ruin, and he that gives it him cannot help it. But he who rules over all, as he knows what will be best for you and yours, so he can order all for the best. He can secure *much* from being a snare, and he can order a *little* to prove better than much. Therefore leave yourselves and yours, and all, to him who rules all.

10. Observe the Lord ruling all. Take notice of his ruling hand; acknowledge it in all, and ascribe all to it. Let not second causes and instruments be so in your eye, as to overlook him who rules them, and all they do. Look through these, upon him who is all in all. They have not only their life, their being, but their motion from him. All in the world seem on wheels, and are still in motion; but who is it that moves them? If the

hand of him who rules over all did not touch them, they would all stand still. What can the clay do to form itself into any shape, or to serve its owner for any use, if it were not ordered by his hand? What could the rod or the axe do, if there were not a hand to move them? Your enjoyments are but as such clay; your afflictions are but as such a rod. Why is your eye so much upon them, who move not of themselves to do you good or hurt? Why look you not at the hand which moves and orders them, and all things, as he pleases? Isa. x. 5, 'The staff in their hand,' *i.e.* all the power they have to smite and afflict, 'is mine indignation,' which arms them, and sets them a-work. It is as unreasonable for us to look so much at them, as for them to ascribe so much to themselves, ver. 15. Shimei seems set a-work by his own malice, or a revengeful resentment of what the house of Saul had suffered by David; but David looks farther, 2 Sam. xvi. 10-12. There was in Job's losses and calamities, a concurrence of all sorts of causes and instruments, Job i., both natural, the fire, ver. 16, and the wind, ver. 19; and voluntary, the Sabeans, ver. 15, and Chaldeans, ver. 17; yet Job overlooks them, and takes notice of God only: ver. 21, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away.'

Observe the perfections which shine forth in his governing all things, and give him the glory thereof. Observe the power of his government, overruling all things to do, not what they would, but what he will; the wisdom of it, ordering all to serve his purposes, even such as seem mere casualties, and the issues of no contrivance at all: 'This is of the Lord,' Isa. xxviii. 29, the goodness and excellency of it, in turning evil unto good. Which Joseph was so taken with, as the evil of the instruments is not taken notice of, Gen. xlv. 5, 7, 8. The universality of it is observable, not only in great, but the smallest things. The increase of the cattle, which were to fall to Jacob's share, was none of the greatest of his concerns; and he had a natural cause managed by his own prudence, to ascribe it to; but he ascribes it wholly to God, Gen. xxxi. 7-9. Not to the white-straked rods which he laid before the cattle when they conceived, nor to the operation which those had upon their fancies, but all to the Lord. Thus should we give the Lord the glory that is due to him, as ruling and governing all things, Ps. xcvi. 6-9, and xxix. 1, 2. And why so? Because his government is powerful, majestic, irresistible, universal, as from ver. 8 to the 10th.

11. What you offer to the Lord, be sure it be the best; the best you have, the best you can offer him. If you be to bring a present to a great ruler, you will not (unless you despise him, and have a mind to affront him), bring him the refuse of what you have, but the best and choicest of all. All your services are presents to the great God who rules over all; will you offer that to him, which you would not dare to offer to your governor? Mal. i. 8. When you tender to God dead, heartless, unaffectionate, distracted, lukewarm prayers or praises; when you draw near him carelessly, irreverently, hear as though you heard not, or do any of his works negligently; it is as if you should pick out the blind, and the lame, and the sick, for a present to your prince and governor; it is so much worse, and more provoking, as he is above all other princes and rulers, who rules over all. You would not offer a corrupt thing to an earthly prince; and shall such a thing be tendered as a present to the King of kings, whose greatness and majesty is dreadful to the whole world? ver. 14. So much as he is greater and more dreadful than other kings, so much the more careful should you be to offer nothing to him that is corrupt, nothing but the best of all you have or can offer, Ps. xlvii. 7. Praise him with all your art and skill. Let his praise be the work of your souls. Let your understandings engage heart and affections therein; for so it becomes

you, since he is King of all the earth. So consider him, when you draw near him; the best of all is due to him, and too mean for him who rules over all.

12. Prepare to be judged by him. Judgment is a principal part of his government of intelligent creatures. Here he gives us laws, and expects an observance of them; hereafter he will judge us according to them, else his laws were in vain, Eccles. xii. 13, 14. So observe what he commands, as those who are sure to be called to account, Rom. xiv. 10, 12. Here he entrusts you with many talents, gifts, parts, time, opportunities, estates, all enjoyments, encouragements, advantages; he declares how they must be employed, and will call you to an account for them. See that you improve them so, as those who expect to give an account, that you may be able to do it with joy, and not with grief. He who rules over all, is ready to judge both quick and dead, 1 Peter iv. 5. See that your account be ready, Philip. ii. 12, 1 Peter i. 17. You live not as under his government, unless you live under some effectual apprehensions of approaching judgment.

18. Rejoice in him, and in his government. Let it be your triumph that the Lord reigns. This is matter of rejoicing to the whole world, Ps. xcvi. 10-13, but more especially to his faithful subjects, Ps. cxlix. 2. If he reign, if he rule over all, he will avenge your wrongs, he will redress your grievances, he will ease you of your burdens, he will secure you from your fears, he will regard your necessities, he will be tender of your concerns, he will receive your petitions, he will break your oppressors, he will subdue your enemies, for they are his. He will order all for your advantage; he will make his government your happiness, and your subjection perfect freedom. Subjection, in other cases, is some abridgment of liberty, but he is such a ruler that the more you are subject to him, the more liberty you will enjoy. Not a liberty of free subjects only, but of sons; not a common, but a glorious liberty, Rom. viii. 21. If you have given up yourselves to be wholly ruled by the Lord, he is your friend, your father, your husband. And oh, what honour, what happiness is it! What cause of joy and triumph, to be so nearly related to so great a king; to have such interest in him who rules over all, as these most endearing and obliging relations give you!

He is your friend. If you subject yourselves to him, he is in covenant, in a league of friendship with you; he is your ally, obliged to look upon your enemies as his. Oh, if those who bear ill-will to Zion, and to you, did but well understand who it is that is allied to you, who it is that is engaged to stand by you, what a potent friend and ally you have and are sure of; they would never venture to move a hand, or a tongue, or secretly to contrive any evil against you. He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye, strikes at his eye who rules over all.

He is your husband. Your subjection to him is the condition of the marriage-covenant. And what happiness is it to have the King of kings, and Lord of lords for your husband; one so potent, so glorious! Oh how contemptible are the most noble and honourable relations on earth to this. *Ἡ γαμισταὶ συνεκλάμπουσι τοῖς τῶν συνοικούντων ἀστρίαις* (Justin. Novel. 105, c. 2), Wives shine with the beams of their husbands. The splendour and nobility of the husband is derived upon his wife. To be married to a king is one of the greatest honours in a kingdom. Oh, what is it to be in so near a relation to him to whom the greatest kings in the world are subjects and underlings, at an infinite distance below him!

He is your father. If you honour him, by subjecting yourselves to him as children should to their parents, he will own you as his children, and you

may have all from him that can be expected from such a father. And what may you not expect from such a father, who has all the powers, all the riches of the earth, all the world at his will? What will become of those who hate, and wrong, and oppress the children of such a father? What need they fear, what can they want, who have the King of nations, the great Lord of heaven and earth for their father? Oh, what cause of joy is here! Oh, how stupid and senseless must we be, if all the joys, the honours, the riches, the happiness of this world be counted comparable to what this relation affords! Rejoice in the Lord, rejoice in your King always; and shout for joy, all ye upright in heart.

Use 3. If the Lord rule over all, then here is great encouragement to his people, those who have truly subjected themselves unto him, and whom he owns as his subjects. The people of God heretofore, in the saddest circumstances wherewith they have been surrounded, have found this to be the strength of their hearts, that 'the Lord reigneth.' This has been a reviving cordial to them, even when both flesh and heart has been ready to fail. This has borne them up when the rage and violence of men has been ready to bear them down, This has been their support under sinking pressures. And it may be it should be so to us. Whatsoever our fears and dangers be, whatever our wants and necessities, whatever confusions we see about us, how low soever the interest of Christ and his people appear; whatever sufferings, troubles, calamities, are upon us, or threaten us; how violent and powerful soever our enemies be; yet, since the Lord reigns, since our God rules over all, hence we may take heart, this may refresh and revive us, this may support and encourage us. This is a ground of hope when all seems desperate, and may afford us strong consolations when everything seems to look upon us with a sad and dismal countenance.

Particularly, 1. In fears and dangers. When our dear concerns are in apparent hazard; when liberty, or estate, or life; when our religion, when the gospel, when our glory, and all our pleasant things are in danger; and when it seems unavoidable, by anything that we or others concerned with us can do, to prevent or remove it; yet here is our encouragement, he that rules over all is sufficient to do it, and can, if he please, make anything or all things concur with him to that purpose. He can secure us and our concerns from dangers, or in them, or by, or after them. For what cannot he do, to whom all things in heaven and earth are subject, and must and shall do whatever he pleases?

(1.) He can secure us *from* dangers. In this David was confident, Ps. xxxii. 7. He who rules over all has all that endangers any, all that are endangered, absolutely at his dispose; and so can secure his servants, either by keeping and removing danger from them, or them from it.

[1.] By keeping or removing danger from them: 'In the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh him,' Ps. xxxii. 6. He can either turn them back, or interpose a bank betwixt them, and those who are in danger to be overwhelmed by them. There is a gracious promise for this, grounded upon this very relation: Isa. xxxiii. 20-22, 'Thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; nor one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken: But there the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams. For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king, he will save us.' A large and deep moat or ditch is a security to a city. But the Lord would be round about his people, not only as a moat, but as a large river. Horse or foot could not approach them, thus secured; nothing could endanger them

but ship or galley, but neither should these do it, either with help of wind or oars; the stream of his protection should be of so stiff and strong a current, that no vessel of any force to annoy them should be able to stem it. This the people of God may be confident of, because he is their ruler, ver. 22. Thus the Lord promises to remove from Hezekiah and his people the danger which the rage of the Assyrian threatened them with, Isa. xxxvii. 28, 29. Thus he secured the Israelites from Pharaoh and his host; he interposed betwixt them and the danger, and kept it off, Exod. xiv. 19, 20. And in the like manner he promises to secure his people and their assemblies for worship, and to interpose as effectually between them and danger, as if they had the pillar of fire and cloud betwixt them and their enemies' violence, Isa. iv. 5. God will be the same to them, and their places of meeting for his worship, which that pillar was to the Israelites; he will be amongst them, and above, and round about them, to keep off danger from them.

[2.] By keeping or removing them from danger. So was Lot secured; the Lord made more haste to remove him from the danger than he himself, Gen. xix. 16. So when Moses was exposed to danger of perishing, the Lord so ordered as he was rescued from it by Pharaoh's daughter, Exod. ii. Yea, he sometimes makes use of death itself to convey his servants from danger, Isa. lvii. 1. 'The righteous is taken away from the evil to come.'

(2.) He can secure us *in* dangers. He who rules over all can so order it, as danger itself, that which seems most so, shall not prove dangerous: Isa. xliii. 2, 'When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.'

Fire and water we count the most unmerciful elements, and such as threaten most danger; yet they are so much at the command of God, that the fire will not burn, the rivers will not drown, when he gives them such order. He preserved Noah in the midst of the deluge which drowned the world, and made the whale prove an ark unto Jonah. Fire, in its greatest rage, could not so much as scorch the three faithful Jews, though cast into the midst of its flame, Dan. iii. 27. The fire had no power upon them, because He who rules over all over-ruled it. Moses counted it (as he might well) a wonder, to see a bush burning, and not consumed, Exod. iii. 2, 8. Hereby the Lord signified, that he can keep his people safe in such circumstances, as threaten no less their ruin, than the fire endangers the consuming of a bush, when it is all on a flame. We need not go far for instances of something like this wonder; multitudes kept unscorched, untouched, when in the midst of those who are set on fire of hell.

And as the fiercest elements, so the fiercest creatures become tame and harmless, when He who rules over all will have it so. The hungry lions durst not touch Daniel, when God had given them order not to do it: they could not open a mouth, when God will have it shut; nor stir a paw to hurt him whom the Lord would save harmless, Dan. vi. 22. 2 Tim. iv. 17, He was in the mouth of a lion, and yet safe there; in the power of a wild and cruel beast, in the shape of a man, and yet there, as good as out of danger. And so was David, when his soul was amongst lions. And so you have known many more, for many years, amongst such who have had rage and power enough to have devoured them, and yet (through the restraint of him who rules over all) have not touched them, Psa. xlvii. 9. When all the males amongst the Israelites went up, from all parts of the land, to Jerusalem, as they were enjoined thrice every year, all their concernments at home were exposed, as an easy prey, to their enemies, who did encompass them on every

side ; none were left at their dwellings able to make any defence. In such apparent danger, what was their security ? Why, the shields of the earth belong to the Lord ; he would be instead of all shields to them, when they were left destitute of anything to guard them. And one way was, that He who rules over all would so over-rule the minds and hearts of their enemies, that they should have no inclination at such a time to attempt anything upon them, Exod. xxxiv. 24. If we have had experience of the Lord's thus working in the minds and hearts of them that might endanger us when we are about his worship, let him have the glory of it, who rules over all, and can dispose of all, so as to keep us safe in the midst of disturbances and dangers.

[3.] He can secure *by* dangers. Everything is not what it seems, but what he who rules over all will have it. That which seems our safety, shall prove our danger ; and that which seems our danger, shall prove our safety, when he will so order it. Joseph, by being in Egypt, a place in all reason more dangerous than his father's house, was preserved from the malice of his brethren. And Paul was secured from the rage of his own countrymen, by appealing to Nero, by running into the mouth of that lion.

[4.] *After* dangers. When those that endanger you have done execution in inflicting what they threatened, or bereaving you of what you enjoyed, the Lord can retrieve all, and can restore you into the same or a better condition, than that which they have disturbed or spoiled. Thus when Chedorlaomer and his confederates had seized upon Lot and his goods, and carried him away captive, the Lord made use of Abraham, with a small company, to rescue him, and recover all, Gen. xiv. 16. And Melchizedek ascribes it to him whose throne is in heaven, under the notion of the 'most high God,' ver. 19, 20. So when the Amalekites had burnt Ziklag, and bereaved David and his associates of all their relations, their substance, their habitation, and reduced him to so great distress, as there was no glimpse of encouragement for him but only in the Lord, he found *that* all-sufficient ; the Lord enabled him to recover all, besides the spoils of the enemy, 1 Sam. xxx. 18, 19 ; and he gives God the honour of it, ver. 23. Joel ii. 25, he promises, by succeeding plenty, to make up the loss they sustained by the years of famine which the locust, &c., had occasioned.

When a spoiled people return unto him, he will convince them, that they have been no losers by their losses. He can as easily restore the years which the spiritual locusts and caterpillars have eaten, and can bring a plenty which will more than countervail the scarcity, wherewith the worst of vermin have afflicted souls, Psa. lxxviii. 9-11, Isa. xli. 17, 18. When the work of God, and all that he has been graciously doing for a people many years, is quite overwhelmed, and seems as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up, he that rules over all, who 'says to the north, Give up, and to the south, Keep not back,' Isa. xliii. 6, can gather it up all when he pleases, and restore every drop, when it seems all dried up and lost ; yea, instead of drops, can give floods, Isa. xlv. 3.

You see what an encouragement this affords against dangers, whatever they be. He that rules over all can prevent them from doing any hurt, or repair all the hurt they do with greater advantage ; can make them to be no dangers, or make them to prove your safety ; for all things must be and do what he would have them, who rules over all, and over-rules all at his pleasure.

In all wants and necessities, which concern inward or outward man, it is a great encouragement to consider that the Lord rules over all ; for this assures us, he is both able and willing to afford supplies, so far as they are needful to us, or good for us.

(1.) There is an all-sufficiency in the Lord, infinitely larger than all your wants and necessities. He that rules all, can order you what supplies and provisions, for soul or body, he pleases. All the treasure in the world is at his disposing, Hag. ii. 8, 9. The people complaining of the want of gold and silver to adorn the temple, and make it answerable to that of Solomon, the Lord declares, that ought to be no discouragement. If he thought fit to have it so sumptuous, he could easily furnish them; for silver and gold was all his, and all at his disposing. The woman, reduced, in the siege of Samaria, to so great extremity, as she was forced to eat her child, applies herself to the king for help, but in vain, as to the obtaining of any supply, if she had sought that, 2 Kings vi. 26, 27. Kings, who should relieve their subjects, may be at such a loss, as they can neither relieve these nor themselves. Oh, but the King of kings, he that rules over all, is never at a loss; no true subject of his ever sought to him in vain, Isa. xlv. 19. Let me shew how he is able to satisfy your wants, in some particulars.

[1.] He can make want to be in effect no want, for he so rules all as everything must be what he orders it to be. If he will have plenty to be as bad as want, it will be no better; and if he will have want to be as good as plenty, it will be no worse, it will be as good to all effects and purposes. He can make you not to need what you have not; he can serve the uses of what you cannot have another way, and can make you as contented and well satisfied without it as those that have it, and better too; and so can order it that you shall neither need it nor think you need it, and so can take away all need, both real and in opinion also, which is often the more troublesome need of the two. He can make a little to be as good or better than much; better for the soul, and as good for all exigencies of the body: Ps. xxxvii. 16, 'A little that the righteous hath is better than the riches of many wicked.' His smallest pittance is better than all the rich and great possessions of all wicked wordlings; so he can make up the defects of grace in its weakness, in its infancy, by his own actual influence, so that holiness, when it is weak, shall do more by virtue of this than holiness in greater strength without it, so that even in this sense that paradox of the apostle holds true, 2 Cor. xii. 10, 'When I am weak, then I am strong.'

[2.] He can make your expenses increase your estate. When you lay out what you have as he would have you, he can make it, like the widow's oil, to multiply and increase as you pour it out, 2 Kings iv. You have his word for it, 2 Cor. ix. 9, 10. The apostle is exhorting them to be free and bountiful, for the relief of those in want. And whereas it might be objected that such liberalness might bring themselves to straits and necessities, he tells them the Lord can make them the richer for and by relieving the poor. That is the way to have all-sufficiency in all things, both for themselves and others; so as to abound in every act of bounty is the way to be enriched in everything, so as to be able to express all bountifulness, the way to increase, not to prejudice, their estates. And so in spirituals: the more is communicated to others, the more is the stock increased, whether of grace or knowledge.

[3.] He can order all creatures (if need be) to bring you in provisions; for he who rules over all has all things subject to him, at his command, ready to fulfil his word and observe his orders: Hosea ii. 18, 'I will make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field,' &c. A covenant with them, not only not to hurt his people, but to help, relieve, supply them. And this is founded in the Lord's dominion over them, 'I will make.' By virtue of this they are as sure of all this from the creatures as if there were an express covenant for that purpose, ver. 21, 22. Heaven and earth and all creatures

shall be so forward to supply the wants of Israel (now returned unto her subjection unto God) that they shall, as it were, seek the Lord to be employed for that end, seek him to enable them to supply her needs; and he will hear them, and employ and empower them, from the highest to the lowest, to furnish her with what she wants.

So he can order all things to relieve spiritual wants and weaknesses. Not only his ordinances but their outward enjoyments, their afflictions, yea, their falls and miscarriages, he can make all these work, singly or together, for the increase of holiness, the embittering of sin, the crucifying of them to the world, the advancing of mind and heart towards heaven. He can raise them higher by their falls, as he did Peter, and teach them to profit by worldly objects and enjoyments, and cause the rod to bud and bring forth the peaceable fruits of righteousness, Heb. xii.

[4.] He can single out any of the creatures, and give them effectual order to supply you. Such, from whom you expect no such thing, those that are never wont to do it, those that are most unlikely to serve you herein, yea, or those that are most opposite to it.

First, He can supply you by unexpected means or instruments. He can order those to do it from whom you could not look for it. So the Lord moved the barbarous people in Melita to shew great kindness to Paul and his company, after they had suffered shipwreck, Acts xxviii. 2, 10, and the wise men to supply Joseph and Mary.

Those who want supplies expect them from relations, friends, acquaintance, but the Lord can stir up strangers to do it. A remarkable instance hereof I have had from a credible author. A faithful woman being brought, in a strange place, to great extremities by the extravagancy of her husband, her children crying for bread, and she having nothing to satisfy them, gets out of doors, as not able longer to bear the cries of her little ones, whom she could not relieve; and while she was lifting up an afflicted heart to God, she spies a horse laden with provisions, the sight whereof makes her say within herself, 'Oh, what a mercy would it be if this were brought to my distressed family!' And even so the Lord had ordered it, stirring up the heart of a stranger, who had some notice of her necessities, to send that provision to her house. And some of you have heard of a godly minister who sent his maid to the market, but could not furnish her with money to buy necessities. She meets with one she knew not, who unexpectedly gives her money for her master, enough for her occasions. And others have had experience of provisions made for their souls in a way wherein they could never have expected it. He that rules over all can do exceeding abundantly, both for soul and body, above all that we can think or look for.

Secondly, He can supply you by unusual means and ways. Our eyes are upon the means which usually help us to supplies; when these are out of sight, our hearts fail us, we sink into discouragement and despondency. But this becomes not those who believe and acknowledge that the Lord rules over all. He is not confined to usual and ordinary ways; he has all subject to him; both ordinary and extraordinary are at his command; and he can supply us, or do whatever he pleases, by whatsoever he will: Mat. iv. 4, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.'

Bread, or ordinary nourishment, is not of necessity to the life of man; God can sustain or nourish him by any other means; whatsoever he pleases to order for that purpose will do it. His word is sufficient of itself to sustain him, or sufficient to provide for him in an unusual way, or sufficient to empower anything to feed him, even that which is not used for such a pur-

pose. The text to which this refers is Deut. viii. 3, 'He fed thee with manna, that he might make thee to know that man doth not live by bread alone.' He fed them so many years by a means so unusual, that neither they nor their fathers knew it, that they might understand what dominion the Lord has over all things for our sustentation; that his word is enough for us, able to procure us anything, able to sustain and nourish us by anything whatsoever.

And the Lord has not left these latter times destitute of some experiments that he can provide for his people in unusual ways. When the protestants in Rochelle were greatly distressed by a long and close siege, multitudes of small fishes were daily brought up to them by the tide, such as had not been seen in that haven before, nor continued after the siege was raised.

Thirdly, He can supply you by improbable instruments, and such as are most unlikely to do it. It was improbable that the prophet Elijah should be sustained by a widow woman who had not enough to sustain herself and her child, 1 Kings xvii. 12, and she was a heathen too, and so might have an averseness to shew any kindness to a Hebrew. But the Lord so ordered it, and there was no resistance to his order, ver. 9. But it was more unlikely, which we meet with in the same chapter, that the ravens should feed him; for the raven is a voracious creature, and more like to devour what was brought him, than to bring him anything. And, which is more, it is *μισοεισικός*, an unnatural creature, unmerciful to her own brood; is so far from feeding any other, that she will not so much as feed her own young ones: for that is her character, *ρίκνους μὲν οὐ τρέφοντες δὲ*, she brings them forth, but forsakes them, and will not feed them. The Lord hereby shewed his absolute dominion over the creatures: he can overrule them to do whatsoever he will; he can make them act for the relief of his people even against their own natures; he could make the ravens kind to and diligent for the prophet, though they have no care, no kindness for the fruit of their own womb; he did but command it, and it was done, vers. 4-6. They provided him his dinner and supper daily and constantly while he stayed there. Though all probable means for the sustaining of soul or body should fail, yet is there enough in the Lord to encourage us. He who rules over all can provide for both, any way he pleases, even by the most improbable means, as well as any; in the most unlikely ways, as well as the best.

Fourthly. He can supply you by the most opposite instruments, such as would far rather starve soul or body, than afford the least relief to either. Thus he enriched the Israelites by the Egyptians when they had enslaved them, and designed nothing better for them than to keep them poor and miserable in hard bondage, Ps. lxxviii. 30, and lxxii. 6. When Samaria, besieged by the Assyrians, was reduced to such extremity, as, 2 Kings vii. 25, an ass's head was sold for eighty pieces of silver, ten pounds, when the whole ass at other times was but counted worth a tenth part of it; and a fourth part of a pint, a cab of doves' dung at five shekels (a cab was as much of that dung as would serve a man for a day) went at above twelve shillings and sixpence; the Lord takes order that they should be plentifully supplied out of the stores of their enemies, who had designed to starve them, chap. vii. 16. Ps. lxxviii. 30, 'Rebuke the multitude of spearmen, the company of bulls,' &c. The bulls, *i. e.* such proud and powerful men as demean themselves towards those under them, as bulls do towards the lesser and weaker cattle. The Lord can bring them under, and make them glad to buy their peace, and to enrich those with their own stores, whom they had exhausted and impoverished, Ps. lxxii. 8-10. He that commands his servants, when their enemy is hungry, to feed him, can command their enemies to feed

them, and can make them do it, whether they will or no. When they are bereaved of refreshments for soul or body, he can make the hands which spoiled them to repair them, and to restore what they violently took away.

Thus, when the Philistines looked upon their taking away the ark, as the greatest advantage that ever they had over Israel, and most matter of triumph, that being the pledge of God's presence with the Israelites, and so their strength, their glory, their happiness above all people on earth, one would have thought they would as soon have given them their country as restored this, yet the Lord forces them to do it, and so orders it, that the Philistines, of their own accord, send back the ark to the Israelites.

What cannot he do for the restoring of the gospel, and making provision for souls, even by the enemies of it, who could bring back the ark to his people by such means, in such desperate circumstances?

2. *Obj.* I do not doubt but he is able to afford me all supplies for soul and body, but is he willing to do it?

Ans. There is no more occasion to doubt of that, so far as it will be good for you, and that is all you can desire, Ps. xxxiv. 10, and lxxiv. 11, and lxxv. 12. He will supply you in all your wants with whatever is good: Philip. iv. 19, 'My God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.' There are glorious riches treasured up in Christ for this purpose, and out of that treasury he will supply all your needs, even as [to] the things of this life: Mat. vi. 33, 'Seek first the kingdom of God, and all other things shall be added unto you.' Seek to get into the kingdom of God, subject yourselves to him in all righteousness, and then he that rules this kingdom will provide all these things for you, so that you need be no further careful or solicitous about it. And you have sufficient assurance of it, in that he rules over all, and over you in special, having given up yourselves to be ruled by him.

[1.] Consider, a ruler who is mindful of his office will not suffer those who are ruled by him to want what is needful if he can easily help it. Even Pharaoh took care that his subjects should have necessaries in the years of famine, Exod. xli. Good rulers mind that as the end of government, that those who are under them *sint beatissimi*, as the orator expresses it, may live happily. And he is justly counted a tyrant, who, regarding only his own pleasure or profit, minds not the necessary concerns of his subjects. How far is the Lord of heaven and earth from this, whose goodness and mercy is as large as his dominion, even over all his works? Ps. cxlv. 9.

[2.] He makes provision for those whom he less regards; he is ready to supply all creatures; and can we think him unwilling to do it for those who are peculiarly his subjects, to whom he is more specially related, and for whom he has a more particular affection? Ps. cxlvii. 5, 8, 9. It is one of the glories of his kingdom, that he provides for all that belongs to it, Ps. cxlv. 10-16. It is an argument of very little faith to doubt, that he who is willing to provide for all, is not much more willing to supply his own. Our Lord Jesus himself tells us so, Mat. vi. 26, 28-30.

[3.] The greater any ruler is, the more may reasonably be expected from him, unless where greatness is but a large cypher, or an empty flourish. What then may be expected from him who rules over all, to whom the greatest on earth are as nothing, less than nothing and vanity; from him 'who only does great wonders, Ps. cxxxvi. 4, and is still willing to do them, as what follows shews, 'For his mercy endures for ever'?

It is a great dishonour to the glorious Majesty of heaven and earth to doubt that he is not willing to act like himself, and to supply you, so much more, so much better than any, as he is incomparably above all: 2 Sam.

xxiv. 28, 'All these things did Araunah as a king give unto the king.' He acted magnificently, more like a king than a private person.

The Lord shews his magnificence, by providing continually for those who depend on him; it is his glory, and therefore there can be no question of his willingness, no more than of his power, to relieve his people in all their necessities, outward or inward; he that rules over all, is ready and able to do it above all.

8. Against the power and violence of enemies. How great soever it be, how terrible soever it seem, how much soever heightened with successes, however enforced with malice and rage, how little soever you see to resist or oppose it, yet need you not be discouraged, you will see no cause for it, if you do but duly consider that the Lord rules over all. This power and rage, whatever it be, is subject to him; he can manage, and order it, and dispose of it as he pleases; he can make it less, or make it useless, or make use of it far otherwise than they intend, or make it nothing, when or however he will.

(1.) He can make it less. He can abate the power and assuage the wrath of man, and bring it down to what degree he pleases; for it is wholly under his dominion and power who rules over all. He can with greatest ease prick the bladder, and make the tumour fall, how much soever it swell. When the wicked are like the raging sea in a storm, foaming out wrath and rage, threatening wrecks and ruin to this or that person or party, he that 'ruleth the raging of the sea,' Ps. lxxxix. 9, let him but speak the word, and that will be enough to hush the storm, and still the waves, and make all as calm as you can wish. It is the greatness of their power that makes it formidable; but how great soever it seem, it is nothing to his who rules over all, and has the ruling of it. It is little or nothing to him, and he can easily and suddenly make it so to you.

(2.) He can make it useless. And be it never so great, if it be rendered useless, it is as good as none. He that rules over all can effectually forbid and hinder the use of any power. Let the arm of flesh be never so big, and strong, and sinewy, if the Lord lay hold on it, it cannot stir, nor move in the least, no more than the arm of a dead man. If the mastiff be never so fierce, yet if he be muzzled, there is no fear of him. Thus can the Lord deal with the fiercest of those you fear: Ps. cxxxviii. 7, מָנַע לָם. He can put a muzzle upon their nose, or put a hook into it, so that they cannot bite, nor be able to stir, but as he pleases. When the Philistines dreaded Samson's strength, to render it useless, and not to be feared, they put out his eyes; so can the Lord render the greatest power useless, by binding those that have it, so as they shall not see that they have it, or see how to use it, or see how to take or improve any advantage by it. How useless was the power of the Sodomites when blinded! The whole city could do nothing against one family. The Lord can as easily, and does more ordinarily, blind the mind, and take away a spirit of discerning, Job xii. 24, 25 and v. 12; how, see verse 14, Isa. lix. 10. Or if they have their eyes, he can take order they shall not find their hands; and what can they do, how useless is their power, who cannot find their hands! Ps. lxxvi. 5. When they come to do their work, they have their hands to seek; the Lord can take them away when he pleases, and so render their designs and undertakings ridiculous, and all their force and power useless.

(8.) He can make them use it otherwise than they intend. If it be not rendered useless, yet shall they not be able to use it as they will, but as he pleases who rules over them and all. He can overrule them, so as it shall

no way hurt you, and then you need not fear it; or so as it shall be for your advantage, and then you may rejoice in it.

He can turn it upon others whom you are little concerned in, or think not of. He can find them other work than their power is prepared for; he can interpose another object betwixt you and their fury, and make that a screen to you; he can raise them another enemy, where their power and rage shall spend itself, and never reach you. When Sennacherib had struck a great terror into Hezekiah and his people, by this does the Lord encourage them: Isa. xxxvii. 7, 'He shall hear a rumour,' that shall divert them; and what that was, see verse 9, 'He heard say concerning Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, He is come forth to make war with thee.'

He can turn it against a common enemy. Such were the Philistines to David; and the Lord turns the force of Saul, which had encompassed David, against them, against David's enemies, 1 Sam. xxiii. 27, 28. You think the power and rage you fear will fall upon you, but the Lord can order it to fall upon those whom you are concerned should fall by it. And so the greatness of it, which is formidable to you, will be your advantage; the greater it is, the better it will be for you.

He can turn it against themselves. They bend their bow, and make ready their arrows, and are going to shoot with all their might; but where the arrows will fall they know not. He has the ordering of that who rules all things, and he can order them to fall upon their own heads instead of yours, Ezek. ix. 10, Ps. vii. 16. Little did the children of Ammon, and Moab, and mount Seir, think that the great force they raised for the ruin of Jehoshaphat should be made use of to destroy themselves; but so he ordered it who rules over all, and so it came to pass, 2 Chron. iv. 23.

He can turn it for you, and make it serve you and your interest, though it was raised and levelled directly against you. Saul's power and preparations made use of against David, when Saul was taken away, came into David's hands; the greater the power of his enemy was, the more was it for his advantage. The Lord, by turning the hearts of your enemies, can engage all the power which you now dread for you; and that is as easy a turn to him as any other, who rules the heart of man as easily as anything else, Prov. xxi. 1. Those who get power, and increase it, to become thereby dreadful unto others, know not for whom they get it, or for whom it shall be used; that must be as he who rules over all will order; and he can, and often does, dispose of it against those who have it, and for those against whom it is designed and levelled. He ordinarily will have it used quite otherwise than those who are in power would have it.

(4.) He can break it, and can easily and suddenly (how great and formidable soever it is) bring it to nothing, and that many ways.

[1.] He can break them himself. He that can rule all things needs no help, no power of men to do it: Ps. lxxxix. 10, 'Thou hast broken Rahab in pieces: thou hast scattered thine enemies.' He can deal with all that oppose him and his people, as he did with Pharaoh, called Rahab. It is no more to him to crush the mightiest of them all, than it is for you to crush the snail that is under your foot. He shews how he will deal with those who combine against him and his interest, Ps. ii. They look big now, like rocks or mountains, and seem to threaten heaven with their lofty aspiring tops; but when he takes them in hand, they will prove but like potter's vessels, and shiver all in pieces, like an earthen pot under the weighty stroke of an iron mace: 'Whosoever shall fall on him shall be broken; but on whomsoever he shall fall, he will grind them to powder,' Mat. xxi. 44. All their force against

him, as that of the waves against a rock, shall serve only to dash themselves in pieces.

[2.] He can raise the whole power of the world against them, for he who rules over all can muster up all the forces of heaven and earth with a word; and what is that which disturbs you to all this? How many did he arm against Pharaoh, when he would not let his people go to serve him? Yet those which plagued Pharaoh were but as it were a few stragglers in comparison of what the great Ruler of the world can raise in a moment. How many does he threaten to array against Israel, in case they would not be ruled by him! Lev. xxvi. 21, 'Seven times more, and yet seven times more.' But indeed they are past all numbering, beyond all computation; the greatest volumes in the world would not be a sufficient muster-roll for the forces of him who rules over all. The angels are but a small part of his army, as it were his own company or regiment; they are spoken of but as making up one chariot, Ps. lxxviii. 17; yet they are myriads and thousands, infinite numbers. And these, with all the rest, fully under command; let him but give the word, and all would be ready together to what execution he pleases. Oh what are all the oppressing powers on earth to the Lord and his hosts! How soon, how easily, can he break them!

[3.] He can break them and their power by the least and weakest thing. He need not raise his whole force to do it; any one thing will serve, if he give it a commission. Such is his power and dominion over all, that anything will be able to do whatever he would have it. A tile, a gnat, a fly, a worm, any disease, will lay the most potent in the dust when he gives order for that purpose. It will fall without hand when he pleases, as that great oppressor did, Dan. viii. 28-25. The little vermin could soon make an end of Herod's power, when he put it forth to vex certain of the church, Acts xii. 1, 28.

[4.] He can break them by themselves; make them tumble with their own weight, crush them with their own force; and employ themselves, or those whom they count their own, to hew down the bough they stand upon, or cut off the arm wherein their strength and power lies. He that rules over all, can overrule everything to act as he would have it, though it be against itself. He can break them,

First, By their own relations; can bring their destruction out of their own bowels. Thus fell the great terror and oppressor of Judea, Sennacherib, when Hezekiah and his people had no strength against him, 2 Kings xix. 37. When the child is come so near the birth, there is the greatest and sharpest pain, and when the woman's strength is quite spent, and the child so feeble it cannot help itself, there is the greatest danger. And this was their condition; though the blasphemy, cruelty, insolency of the enemy had made him ripe for ruin, yet the people distressed by him had no power to effect it. What, then, shall the oppressor escape? No; what they could not do against him, the Lord employs his own sons to do. After he had seen the deliverance of God's people, and the destruction of his own, they bereaved him of life who had received life from him, ver. 37.

Secondly, By their own party; by those which raised them and were their support. He can make one leg strike up another, and that which slipped first to break the other in the fall. Thus, when the men of Shechem conspired with Abimelech in a tyrannical design, the Lord so orders it that he first breaks them; and those of them which were left brake him, according to the imprecation of Jotham, Judges ix. 20. He that rules over all, thus disposed of it, vers. 56, 57.

Thirdly, By their own attempts. He can make the blows of the violent to

rebound upon themselves, and push them into the pit which they had prepared to bury others in. Thus Haman's attempts upon Mordecai and the Jews proved his ruin, and the instrument of death he had erected does execution upon himself. And Pharaoh's violence against Israel, which would pursue them even into the sea, overwhelmed him and his people, and made an end of them at once. He who rules over all, can cause any engines of violence to recoil upon those who manage them, and hit themselves instead of those they aim at.

Fourthly, By their own hands. He needs no hand at all to break them; but if he will employ any, he can make their own hands as well as any other serve to ruin them, Ps. ix. 6. There was no need that David should lay hands upon Saul, the Lord could take order that he should lay violent hands upon himself. He can overrule their hand to work them into such entanglements, as they shall find no easier way out, than by letting out their own souls, and opening the passage by their own hands.

Fifthly, Their own counsels. When they say, Come, let us work wisely, the Lord can order it to prove no wiser, than the contrivement of a subtle head against itself, Job v. 13. He makes their craftiness become a snare to themselves, and gives such wheels to their counsels as carry them headlong as from a precipice; and the more violent they are, the more fiercely they drive, with the more force do they fall to the breaking of themselves: Ps. x. 2, 'Let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined.' The event will answer the prayer, for the prayer of faith is in such a 'person a prediction. The web that he weaves to catch the poor fly, the Lord can make use of to entangle the spider, whose fine and subtle device it is.

Sixthly, By their own fears: Prov. xxviii. 1, 'The wicked flee when no man pursueth.' There needs no other to rout them, but their own fears. The Lord can order this, both to pursue and do execution, Lev. xxvi. 36, 37. Their fear shall put them to flight, and pursue them when there is none to follow them, and make them do execution upon themselves, when there is none else to do it. The Lord promises Israel, by these means, to discomfit and destroy the Canaanites, Exod. xxiii. 27. He who has the command of all, and so can raise what passion he pleases in the heart, will raise and arm their own fears against them, and thereby put them to flight, and bring destruction upon them, 2 Chron. xiv. 14. Their own fears made those who had aided the Ethiopians and their cities, and all they had, an easy prey to Asa and his people.

Seventhly, By their own fancy. The Lord needs no other force to rout and break the greatest powers on earth, than the power of their imagination. Thus were the Syrians broken, when there was not a hand lift up against them, 2 Kings vii. 6, 7. The Lord made such impression upon their imagination, that they fancied they heard such a terrible noise (if it had been really audible, the besieged might have heard it as well as they), and upon this fancy they are all in confusion, run away as for life, and leave all they had to their enemies. Let but the Lord arm the fancy of the mightiest on earth against them, and that will be enough to ruin them.

Eighthly, By their own mistakes. When they think they are in Dothan, he can set them in the midst of Samaria, and so leave them in the power, and at the mercy of those whom they have most injured, as he did the Syrians, 2 Kings vi. So the Moabites' mistake of the waters for blood, drew them out of their strength, engaged them on a great disadvantage, and so was the occasion of their ruin, 2 Kings iii. 22, &c.

You see what encouragement we have from the Lord's ruling over all, against all opposite power and violence. He can assuage it or render it

useless ; he can divert it, or break it, and that by anything, even by themselves, by anything of them, either by their power or their weakness.

Here is encouragement as to the lowness of the interest of God and his people in the world, and in these parts of it that we are acquainted with.

The interest of God seems to be at a very low ebb amongst the inhabitants of the earth. The kingdoms of the world seem to be the kingdoms of Satan ; he rules them and keeps them in subjection to him, and his will and laws have more observance than the will and laws of God. The rod of his strength doth not reach the greatest part of the earth ; the gospel, which is his sceptre, has little or no place left in many regions where it once prevailed ; and where it yet has any entertainment, it meets with great opposition, is under much restraint, and in danger to be suppressed. Many there are that rise up against it, few in comparison that own it by any due subjection to it ; and these hated, oppressed, persecuted, kept under hatches, and in danger to be rooted out ; and the special interest of God, which lies in his true and real subjects, like to suffer in and with them.

This is matter of great discouragement to those who truly honour the great sovereign of the world, and tender his interest ; but for all this the Lord reigns, and will do ; he still rules over all ; and this duly considered, is enough to strengthen the weak hands and the feeble knees, to inspire the dejected with courage and spirit, and make them bear up cheerfully under the sad apprehensions of the declining or sinking of that interest which is due to them. For,

1. The greatest part of the world does still continue in subjection to God, and gives him the honour due to the universal sovereign ; all creatures do it but apostate men and devils, and these are but a very small part of the whole creation, and little or nothing compared with the whole fabric of heaven and earth, which continues absolutely subject to their sovereign.

2. He rules as much over wicked men and spirits, as over those who voluntarily subject themselves to him, though not in the same manner. The power, and wisdom, and justice of his government, is as much honoured upon them, though not the mercy of it. And how far it is his interest to extend the mercy of his government, we must leave it to him to judge, who is the only competent judge of it ; it is above our capacity, and beyond our measures.

3. As to his interest which is concerned in his peculiar people, it shall never be quite suppressed, never extinguished in the world. So long as God rules, he will maintain it, he will uphold it ; but in what places, in what degree and manner, and by what means, must be left to him, the *arcana* of whose empire, and the mysteries of his governing are incomprehensible.

This is plain. (1.) When it is weak, he can strengthen it ; when it seems falling, he can uphold it. It was weak, indeed, amongst the Israelites when the prophet complains, 1 Kings xix. 10, 'I, even I, only am left.' But the Lord better upheld it, and kept it up in more strength than he apprehended, ver. 18, 'I have left me seven thousand in Israel which have not bowed the knee to Baal.' The interest of God may be many thousand times stronger than it visibly appears or we see ground to conceive it. It was weak in Zerubabel's time, lying in a few contemptible restored captives, and these in the midst of raging enemies, ready and resolved to crush them ; and yet when they had no strength of themselves, nor any arm of flesh, nor any worldly prop to support them, he who rules over all was their strength and upheld them, and his interest in and by them, Zech. iv. 9, 10. How weak and despicable soever they and their undertakings for God might seem, the Lord would make it appear they were not to be despised ; his work should

prosper in their hands, they should effectually carry on his interest in building his temple. For these seven, the eyes of the Lord, i. e. his governing providence reaching over the whole earth, was engaged with them.

(2.) When it is straitened and pent up in a narrow compass, he can enlarge it; when it is but as a cloud like a man's hand, he can extend it so as to cover the face of the heavens, and make it spread far and wide. Time was when it seemed confined to Abraham's family, but the Lord promised it should reach all the families of the earth, and be diffused through many nations; and he that rules all those families and nations made it good. And this our Lord Jesus holds forth to us in divers parables or resemblances, Mat. xiii. 31-33. The Lord can make his kingdom, when it is but like a 'little leaven,' to diffuse its virtue to every part of the world; when it is but like 'a grain of mustard-seed,' to grow up into a vast tree; he hath done it, and can do it again.

(3.) When it is sinking, he can bring it up again. Let the enemies of God fall never so heavy upon his interest, they will never be able quite to sink it; it will up again one where or other, either in the same place, where it seems at some desperate plunge, or in some other, where before it appeared not, or in both. When that great persecution was raised at Jerusalem, at that time the centre of Christ's interest in the world, where the great concerns of the gospel then lay principally, and in a manner only there, Acts viii. 13, the enemies thereof made account to sink it quite. But how were they disappointed! While they had it under water there it gets up, and gets head in the cities and countries round about, far and near, yea, in that place, a little after, where it had the greatest plunge. They bear it down in one town, and it breaks out almost everywhere else, and by that means, too, which they used to suppress it. So when the woman, by the violence of the great red dragon, was forced from her former state and place, and when he would have left her no place nor being on earth, the Lord prepared a place for her in the wilderness, where she should have subsistence and nourishment, Rev. xii. 6. When he poured forth a flood after her, with a design to have washed her away from the face of the earth, to have overwhelmed her utterly, ver. 15, the Lord disappoints him, ver. 16. The divisions in the empire diverted the torrent of persecution, and swallowed it up; as some.

(4.) When it seems dead, he can revive it, and give it a resurrection and life, Hosea vi. 1, 2. Much of the interest of God was involved in the people, yet how low were they brought, even to the grave; not only torn, and smitten, and wounded, but, as it were, dead and buried! Yet, though they were dead, the Lord undertakes to revive them, and so his interest with them; though they were buried, he would bring them out of the grave (the desperate condition, which seemed like their sepulchre), he would raise them from the dead, and make them live in his sight. He that rules over all is the Lord both of death and life; both civil and natural is at his disposing, he can give or restore it to whom and when he will. And death, in every sense, will resign up any under his power when the Lord gives order.

After the captivity of the ten tribes, the two remaining were the only people in the world which visibly owned God and his interest; when they were carried away captive also, and their temple burnt, and no place left for the solemn worship of God, of his institution, this might well seem a deadly blow to the interest of God on earth. Answerably, their state, in these desperate circumstances, is expressed by dry bones, when the body is not only deprived of soul and life, but buried and in the grave, quite consumed, neither skin, nor flesh, nor sinews left, nothing but the dry bones, and these

not set together, but scattered here and there in the valley, not so much as the form of an anatomy left, Ezek. xxxvii. 1, 2. Well might it be made a question, as it is, ver. 3, 'Can these dry bones live?' Is there any hope, any possibility of it? What could be more hopeless than the recovery of this people, and God's interest embarked with them in such a condition, which the Lord himself thus represents? Yet he who rules over all, who has all things absolutely at his command, and can do what he will with a word, could, with a word, cause these scattered and disordered bones to come together, bone to his bone, in that admirable order as they are placed in the body of man, and lay sinews, and bring flesh upon them, and cause breath and life to enter into them, so that they 'stood upon their feet, an exceeding great army,' as ver. 6-9, &c. Thus could the Lord revive his slain interest and the destroyed people which had owned it; and that with a breath, when all hopes of any such thing was lost, and all seemed to be cut off for ever.

The meaning of this encouraging vision is expressed, ver. 12-14, 'I will open your graves, and cause you to come out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel,' &c. So Rev. xi., when the witnesses, those who gave their testimony for the interest of God against antichristianism, are slain, *i. e.* (as is probably conceived) by persecution and violence brought into such a condition as they could scarce be numbered amongst the living, when they are, in a civil sense at least, quite dead, the Lord shews he can revive them, and raise his fallen interest with them, ver. 11, 12. He will not only restore them to their former place and station, but advance them higher than ever.

That he who rules over all is sufficient for all this, will be more evident if we consider particularly,

1. He wants no *wisdom*. He that is wise enough to rule and order all and everything in the whole world, wants no wisdom for the upholding or restoring his own interest. Those who are wisest for the managing of their interest are but fools to him. The apostle, where he styles him King, calls him also 'the only wise God,' 1 Tim. i. 17. The profoundest and most improved wisdom deserves not the name of wisdom compared with his. He is only wise, he alone. None so well understand their interest, none so apprehensive of what may endanger it, none so knowing what may promote it, or for the ordering of all things in a subserviency to it. The wisdom of angels is but folly to him.

2. He wants no *power*. He that rules over all has power to keep all in subjection, to make all things obey him, to force all to move or stand still at his beck. It is the Lord God almighty that reigns, Rev. xi. 7. It is the God 'which quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were,' and makes them to be what he calls them by so calling them. It is he who has power to rule and order all things in heaven and earth as he will. If some wise men had the power to order all things as they pleased, they would never question the securing of their interest. What fear is there, then, that the Lord will let his interest miscarry, when he has power at will, no less than infiniteness of power, as well as wisdom?

3. He wants no *instruments* to serve his interest, nor can want any, if the whole world will afford enough, for all in heaven and earth are in his hand and ready for his use, who is *κύριος καὶ παμδυνατός τῶν πάντων* (as Athanasius), Lord and absolute Sovereign of all things. The highest angels think it their chief honour to serve his interest, and to serve it in any capacity, and so, we find, are called sometimes his chariot, sometimes his warriors, sometimes the conduct of his people, sometimes their purveyors, always his ministers. And he can make the most untoward instruments to serve his

turn, whether they will or no. The crookedest tool will become straight in his hand, who overrules all things to be and do what he will have them, Isa. xlv. 11.

4. He wants no *opportunities*, through want of which many a man's interest miscarries; for times and seasons are in his hand, he has reserved them in his own power, Acts i. 7. He rules them as he does all things else. That must be a season which he will have so. He can make any part of time to be a fit season, and what we count unseasonable he can render it the fittest opportunity. He can remove when he pleases whatever in us or in others renders that unseasonable which would promote his interest. The unfitness of the subject, the incapacity of the matter, the unpreparedness of his people, cannot nonplus him who rules over all, or make him to seek or leave him at a loss for a season; he can overrule these, or anything else, into a seasonable compliance and subserviency to him in any moment.

5. He wants no *will*. For who can doubt that the great ruler of the world is not willing to secure and advance his own interest? Sure this must be pleasing to him, and 'He will do all his pleasure,' Isa. xlv. 10.

Obj. But if he be so willing and all-sufficient to maintain his own interest, why does he suffer it to decline and be borne down, and his people who only own it, and sincerely design the promoting of it, to be oppressed and kept under hatches, to be deprived of power, kept low and weak, and for the most part in an afflicted condition, and their necks under persecution? By this he seems not willing to uphold or advance his own interest in the world.

Ans. 1. We may mistake his interest, and are apt to judge that to be for it which is not. We are apt to think that if the Lord would put his people in a prosperous and plentiful condition, and give them power and greatness, and free them from the cross, and advance them in a worldly station above others, and enable them to shake off the yoke, and to keep those under who oppress and persecute them, this would be more for his interest than the low and distressed state which is commonly their portion. But it is otherwise, and the Lord, who rules and disposes of all with infinite wisdom, knows it, and he has not only said but done enough to make his people understand it. He has given experiments thereof in several ages sufficient to convince us, though we be slow to understand or believe that which does not please us. He has tried his people with outward prosperity, and sometimes with power and greatness, and this has proved more prejudicial to his interest than that low afflicted condition which we are more impatient of. There are instances enough of this; it is well if we ourselves in these nations be not an instance of it.

We have ground enough, both from Scripture and experience, to believe that his interest lies not so much in the outward prosperity of his people, as in exercising them with afflictions and sufferings, and appearing for them therein. This seems to be most for his honour, and best for them too, if they judge like themselves, and count that best which prove so to their souls. That which is most for his honour is most for his interest. Did he not get more glory, by keeping his servants untouched, unscorched, in the midst of the raging flames, than if he had kept them from being cast into the furnace? Does it not honour him more to let the world see that he can keep the bush, when it is burning, from being consumed, than if he should keep the fire from coming near it? Is it not more to keep a spark alive in the midst of the waves, than to make it flame in a chimney, and more for his honour that can do it? Why, thus does the Lord do, and thus does he honour himself, by keeping up a people for himself in the midst of the rage and fury of the world. They are like a combustible body in a fiery furnace, or like a bush

flaming, or like a spark in the midst of the sea, and yet kept alive, secured, preserved. Who can do such a thing but he who rules over all? How much is this for his honour! A thousand preservations from trouble, danger, and extremities keeping these from coming near them would not be so much, if at all taken notice of, would be in a manner lost upon them, would not be observed with any such honourable reflection upon the great God, as his upholding, maintaining, and delivering them when they find themselves in the mouth of dangers, and in the midst of extremities.

It is better for his people too; better for their souls than that condition which is more pleasing to flesh and blood. And that which is better for their souls is more for his interest. It makes more for peace and holiness. They have ordinarily more peace with God, when they meet with tribulation in the world; more peace within, when more trouble without. When affliction lies heavy, sin lies light, was the observation of a wise and holy man. And then holiness thrives more under afflictions, and corruption has less advantage against us than in a prosperous condition: 2 Cor. iv. 16, 'Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.' Though he was harassed by affliction, and brought low as to his outward state, yet his soul had great advantage by it; he lost nothing, but what the eagle loseth by moulting her old feathers; she gets fresh and more beautiful plumes, and is renewed into a better state. His inward man is hereby renewed, and refined, and holiness more revived and reinforced. He was freed more from the incumbrance of the old man, and that corruption which brings and keeps the soul in a crazy and decrepit condition. And thus it is ordinarily with the people of God. Hence Isidore, writing to one of Pelusium, from his own experience, gives him this advice, Pray earnestly (says he) that the Pelussets, *μηποτε δυνηθῆναι ἃ βούλονται*, may never be in such a condition as they desire; for they are better when they are low and oppressed, *ἢ μὲν ἀνὰ ἀναισώτως*, than when they get up, though but a little.

2. We may be mistaken about the ways and means which the Lord uses to secure and advance his interest. We may think that tends to ruin it, which he makes use of to promote it. The cutting of the vine, and making it bleed, to those who have no skill, may seem the way to kill it, whereas it tends to make it grow and flourish more, and render it more fruitful. The Lord can make his interest flourish by such ways and means as seem to threaten the destruction of it. Never did it prevail more in the world, never did it rise and spread itself with so great advantage, as in the apostles' times, and some ages after, when it met with the greatest opposition, and was destitute of all worldly advantages, and was assaulted with such violence, as did in all appearance threaten its utter overthrow. But after it got the countenance and power of Christian emperors (though that, we would think, should have a quite contrary effect) it declined and dwindled away, and all sunk in a little time into woful degeneracy, as appears by the complaints of those ancients in the fifth age, who were sensible hereof, and bitterly lamented it.

So unfit are our understandings to be the measure of these things, that what we apprehend to be best for it proves worst, and what we think destructive to it, proves its advancement, as it is ordered by him who rules over all.

8. Though his interest should decline for a time, yet would that be no argument that he is unmindful of it, or unwilling to look after it. No, though it should seem a long time to us. For that time which we think exceeding long is little or nothing to him. The woman's being in the wilderness for twelve hundred and sixty days, Rev. xii. 6, her continuance in an obscure ejected state, as it were an exile, and excluded from common

society for so many years, seems a very long time to us, but to him it is not so much as so many hours; for 'a thousand years to the Lord is but as one day;' nay, not so much, Ps. xc. 4, but as a 'watch in the night.' A watch in the night is but the eighth part of a natural day, a very little while; but yesterday, when it is past, is nothing.

5. Here is encouragement against all troubles, afflictions, and sufferings whatsoever. He who rules over all, has the ruling and ordering of these, of whatever of this nature befalls you; and being under his command, and at his disposing wholly, they must be and do what he would have them, nothing else, nothing worse than he thinks good; neither more nor less than he sees fit. They can do you no hurt, if he forbid them; they will do you good if he command them; and if they would lie heavy or long, he can relieve you when he will, or effectually order any other thing to do it.

(1.) He can hinder them from hurting you; for he has the ruling of them, as of all things, and they must be what he would have them. If he will have them to befall you without hurt, they will be no ways hurtful to you, they can do you no harm, there will be nothing in them to dismay or discourage you. He can make trouble to be as no trouble; sufferings, such as you shall not suffer by; so the apostle found it, 2 Cor. iv. 8, they were in trouble, but it did not trouble them. That befell them which would have distressed others; but the Lord ordered it so as it was no distress to them. He can make want to be as good as no want, 2 Cor. vi. 9, 10; they were poor, but as good as not poor, they could enrich others; they were in want, and yet as good as if they wanted nothing, as if they had possessed all; sorrowful, but as good as not sorrowful, always rejoicing. So he can make pain to be as easy as no pain, and heavy pressures to be as light as that which weighs nothing. If there be any snare in them, he can keep it from entangling you; if there be any malignity therein, he can expel it, so as it shall not endanger you; if there be any sting in them, he can pull it, so that it shall not touch you, you shall not smart by it. There is enough in him to encourage us, whatever troubles we may meet with. Since he who rules over all can render them altogether harmless, what is then left in them to discourage us? It is folly and weakness to be dejected at that which can do us no hurt.

(2.) He can make them an advantage to us; for he rules them as he does all things, and they must and will do what he would have them. He can make troubles do us more good than freedom from troubles will do us. He can make them heal us; for he can heal by stripes, and turn that into a sovereign antidote which we shun as poison. He can make us wise by them: Ps. xciv. 12, 'Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law.' He can enrich us by them: Heb. xii. 10, 'They chastened us for their own pleasure; he for our profit.' He can make them comforts to us: Ps. xxiii; 2 Cor. vii. 4, 'I am filled with comfort in all our tribulations.' He can prefer us by them: 2 Cor. iv. 17, 'Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding weight of glory.' He can enhappy us by them: Mat. v. 10, 'Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' He can make us safe by them, secure us from greater: Ps. xciv. 18, 'That thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity.' He can make them every way expressive of his love and delight, Heb. xii. 5, 6, Prov. iii. 11, 12. What, can the best condition you can choose do more for you than the Lord can order your troubles to do? And whatever occasion of discouragement you see in them, it will vanish if you do but duly look upon him who rules over all.

(8.) If they lie too heavy, or stay too long; if they be ready to do you hurt, or not like to do you good: he can relieve you, or can command anything else to bring you relief and deliverance. To instance in some particulars:

[1.] He can relieve you from heaven or from earth; for he is the Ruler of both, and has all things in either wholly at his command. He can order the angels to do it; we have many examples in Scripture, and warrant there to expect it now. The angels relieved Lot, Gen. xix. 9, 10; an angel stopped the mouths of the lions, Dan. vi. 22; so an angel delivered Peter, Acts xii. 7-11; so an angel relieved Hezekiah and his country by destroying the host of the Assyrians, which I instance in (passing by others) to clear that obscure text, where it is promised, Isa. xxxi. 8, 'They shall fall by the sword,' neither of the strong nor of the weak. Should they fall by neither, why then by no sword at all. It seems a contradiction; by a sword, and yet by no sword. But all is clear if we understand it of the sword of an angel; for that was no sword of man, either strong or weak.

Nor ought we to confine this relief by angels to Scripture times; they may and do relieve and deliver the people of God now, and have done in all ages. The ministry of angels for our relief is held forth in general expressions, without limitation to special times or extraordinary persons: Ps. xci. 11, 12, 'He shall give his angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways,' &c.; and Ps. xxiv. 7, 'The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.' (And he prays not for a miracle: Ps. xxxv. 5, 6, 'Let the angel of the Lord chase them. Let their way be dark and slippery, and let the angel of the Lord prosecute them.') Mat. xviii. 10, 'Their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.' Heb. i. 14, 'Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?' They continue still ministering for the relief of the heirs of salvation, only we take not notice of them, because they appear not in a visible shape, as they did some time heretofore, and we have no such way to know what is done by angels for us as they had. There is no Scripture now to declare and record what is done by them, since the canon of the Scripture was finished. And if the Scripture had not ascribed something there mentioned unto angels, they might have been (as they are now) referred to other causes. *Ex. gr.*, if the Holy Ghost, Acts xii., had not told us that an angel smote Herod, and so put an end to his persecution, we might have looked no further for his death than such a disease as Josephus ascribes it to, and calls *διακάρδιον ὀδύνην*, and *ἄθρον τῆς καλίας ἀλγῆμα* (Ant. lib. xix. c. 8); and the owl which he says Herod saw sitting over his head would scarce have been taken for an angel.

So the mortality in David's time might have been ascribed to the pestilence without looking farther, if the Scripture had not mentioned an angel as the instrument, 2 Sam. xxiv. We need not sink into discouragement when we see no relief to be had on earth, we may lift up our eyes above the mountains; he whose throne is in heaven can from thence bring salvation.

And he is not a God of the hills only, and not of the valleys. He can raise relief out of the earth when he pleases: Rev. xii. 16, 'The earth helped the woman,' &c. So Paul and Silas were delivered by an earthquake, Acts xvi. 26; so Ps. xviii. 6, for David's relief, you may see a concurrence of heaven and earth, angels and clouds, thunder and hail, wind and rain, fire and water, darkness and lightnings. He who is the Ruler of all these, and all things, interposed as effectually for the deliverance of his servant as if he had made all these conspire to effect it.

[2.] He can do it by things great or small. Sometimes the Lord is repre-

sented as acting for a distressed people 'with a high hand and a stretched-out arm,' Exod. vi. 6; sometimes as bringing relief with a word, Ps. xlv. 4, '*Command deliverance for Jacob.*' He that rules over all is a King of such power, has all things so much at his command, that he can bring deliverance with a word; he can with one word bring *יְשׁוּעוֹת*, many deliverances. With a breath, Ps. xviii. 15, 'the channels of waters were seen, and the foundations of the world were discovered; at thy rebuke, O Lord, at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils.' This was one way whereby he relieved David against his enemies overpowering him, ver. 17. With a smile: Dan. ix. 17, the shine of his face, his smile, was enough to restore his desolate sanctuary into a flourish. He can make the highest and strongest stoop to the meanest offices for his people: Ps. lxxviii., 'Moab is my wash-pot, over Edom will I cast out my shoe.' The washing-pot is the vilest part of household stuff, for the washing of the feet, the lowest part of the body; and the shoe is held forth to be untied or taken off by the meanest servant. The Lord made Moab and Edom, those stout nations, subject themselves to Israel, in such a way, for the meanest services. So Rev. iii. 8, 9, 'I will make them come and worship before thy feet.' And he can order the least things to make way for their deliverance. So the frogs, and the lice, and the swarms of flies, Exod. viii., and the hail, Exod. ix., and the locusts, Exod. x., are made use of by the Lord to make his people's way out of the house of bondage. Small and great are at his command, who rules over all; strong or weak are all one to him. The strongest shall do the meanest work, and the weakest shall do the work of the strong, if he order it.

[8.] He can relieve you by motion or rest, either by action or sitting still. He can make his people active, or any others active for them, if that be the way he likes to bring relief; if not, he can order it to be done though they act not at all, contribute nothing toward it, stir neither hand, nor foot, nor tongue for it: Exod. xiv. 13, 'Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord.' One would have thought, if ever there was need to bestir themselves it was now, when Pharaoh and all his host was at their heels, ready to fall upon them, and cut them off utterly if they did not make a stout resistance.

Was this a time to stand still? Yes; this is the best way, when the Lord so will order it. He can bring salvation when they move not at all, act nothing towards it, when they both hold their hands, and hold their peace. So 2 Chron. xx. 17, 'Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord.' Isa. xxx. 7, 'The Egyptians shall help in vain: therefore have I cried concerning this, Their strength is to sit still; your strength, Heb. *Rahab* (as the Egyptians are called for their power), is not to busy yourselves, to get assistance from the Egyptians or others; this course which he prescribes will be a greater strength, a better security to them than any Egyptian could afford them.

[4.] He can do it either by friends or enemies; either by those who would, but cannot, by making them able. So he enabled Abraham, with a small inconsiderable company, to rescue Lot from the joint forces of many kings, in the height of their successes and triumphs, Gen. xiv. 14; or by those who can, but will not, by making them willing: Prov. xvi. 7, 'When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.' He can overrule those whose designs and intentions are nothing but wrath and ruin, to entertain thoughts of peace and amity.

When the great council amongst the Jews were engaged against the apostles, and intended to slay them; when they were, as the word *discepulo*

signifies, Acts v. 33, furious like wild beasts, ready to tear and devour what is next them : Gamaliel, a leading man amongst the Pharisees (and so one that had enmity enough against Christ and his followers), is stirred up to give moderate counsels, and the hearts of the rest are on a sudden inclined to agree with him ; so the storm is laid, and the apostles escape, vers. 40, 41.

So Paul, being in extreme danger, takes occasion to declare that the doctrine of the resurrection, for which he was questioned, was that which the Pharisees embraced in opposition to the Sadducees ; and hereupon the Pharisees, instead of seeking his death on a sudden strove for him, Acts xxiii. 9, whereas he might have expected, and at other times found, that they were his fiercest enemies. As the Jesuits, they hate all protestants, but if one fall off to them, who was before a Jesuit, him they abhor above all ; he shall not live, if they can any ways compass his death. Of such a temper were the Pharisees, enemies to all Christians, but more enraged against Paul, because he was once of their way ; yet the Lord so overrules them, that when he was in their hands, instead of seeking his death they strive for his life, declare him innocent, and insinuate that his persecutors are ' fighters against God,' ver. 9.

[5.] He can do it either by good or evil. That which is good is of itself of such a tendency, and he can overrule and dispose of that which is evil to serve the same purpose. What the midwives told Pharaoh is suspected for untruth ; yet thereby the Lord preserved the children of the Israelites, Exod. i. 19, 20. It is a horrible thing for a people to arrive at the full measure of their wickedness ; yet this, in the Amorites, made way for the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, and their possession of the land of Canaan, Gen. xv. 16.

It was a malicious suggestion of the princes of the Philistines against David, 1 Sam. xxix. 4, 5. But the Lord so ordered it, as hereby David was freed from great distress, and his way made out of such a strait as his own wisdom could otherwise have never discovered ; for hereupon he was dismissed the army, where, if he had stayed, he must either have been treacherous to the Philistines who had obliged him, or a traitor to his own country and people, in fighting against them ; but by this means he comes off untainted either way, and very seasonably too, for the rescue of all that he had, then seized on by the Amalekites. If they had not thus and then impeached him, and called in question his loyalty, he was like to lose both a good conscience, and all that he had besides. So can the Lord dispose of the malice of enemies, as it shall serve his servants for the greatest advantages.

It was very grievous to Hezekiah, if not his sin, to part with not only so much of his own treasure, and that of the house of God, but to spoil the temple also of so much gold, as was forced from him for the satisfying of Sennacherib, 2 Kings xviii. 13-16. But hereby he got one advantage which countervailed all, and made him capable of the great and wonderful deliverance which the Lord afterward wrought for him and his people ; for his father having made an agreement with the Assyrian to pay tribute, if he had not paid it, the breach had been on his part ; but having given what was demanded, and the Assyrians after this invading them, the breach and unfaithfulness was on their part, and so his cause was good, and the Lord accordingly owned it, appearing wonderfully for his relief.

[6.] He can do it by things natural, or supernatural, or artificial. So he delivered Jonah from the destruction wherewith the sea threatened him by a whale. The means that relieved him was natural ; but that he should

be relieved by such a creature was supernatural, being otherwise such as was more likely to destroy than preserve him. But he who rules over all can order the most unruly things in nature to act as he will, even against or above what is natural to them. The whale was absolutely subject to the command of this great ruler: he 'prepared' it, Jonah i. 17; it was ready at his order to follow his instructions; received him into his mouth without any hurt to him from its teeth; swallowed him down, though the throat of the whale is said by naturalists to be so narrow, as it cannot let down anything of such a bulk. He was, as the word is, in the bowels of the fish, and there kept safe three days, neither choked for want of breath, nor digested into the substance of the fish; and then, at his word, delivers him safe on shore, Jonah ii. 10.

Noah and his family were delivered by the ark, an artificial expedient of God's own contriving, the Lord both of nature and art. This might seem as strange as the former to those who had never seen any such thing on the waters before. That a vessel of such a form and bulk, with so vast a lading, so many creatures, and provisions for a year sufficient for them all, should live so long on the waters, was a signal instance that the Lord hath nature and art at his command for the relief of his people. Thus was Paul delivered from death by a basket, Acts ix. 23. Those trumpets, pitchers, and lamps were by the Lord made effectual to relieve Israel and ruin their enemies, Judges vii.

[7.] He can do it by that which is real or imaginary. He can work real impressions by that which is merely imaginary. Accordingly some understand that in Isaiah xxxi. 9, 'afraid of the ensign,' if they spied but an ensign on some watch-tower, though in their own country, they should fancy it to be some banner of their enemies, and so fly, as though their enemy were at hand, though there was none near them. Such a course did the Lord take to deliver his people from the Assyrians. And so were the fancies of the Philistines disturbed, that they imagined their friends to be enemies; and so saved the Israelites a labour of doing execution upon them, they themselves destroying one another, 1 Sam. xiv. 16. The Lord can make a fancy do as much for his people as the greatest reality.

[8.] He can do it by things necessary or contingent. That the sea should keep its channel, and the clouds their place, and the years their seasons, is according to the course of nature, necessary; yet all was so overruled in the flood, that the earth became a sea, and the clouds met the lower waters, and the seasons of that year lost in the deluge; yet all contributed to Noah's deliverance, and made it more wonderful, he was saved by water, 1 Peter iii. 20.

How contingent was it that Ahasuerus could not sleep one night, that he should have a mind to read when he could not sleep, that he who read to him should light upon that place which mentioned the good service of Mordecai! Yet so the Lord disposed of those contingencies, in order to the Jews' deliverance, Esther vi. 1, 2. How contingent was it that the Jews' conspiracy against Paul's life should come to the knowledge of Paul's kinsman; that the chief captain should admit him, hearken to him, believe him, that he should take such order to secure him; but that the Lord overruled all for the deliverance of his servant, Acts xxiii.

[9.] He can do it by that which is deliberate or casual. Esther asked deliberately, and upon advice, for the preservation of her people; but the casualty of the *purim*, or lots, in order hereto, was purely of his disposing who rules and overrules all, Esther iii. 6, 7. Haman designed to massacre all the Jews; but, according to the superstition of the heathen, he would

have a lucky day to execute his bloody project; and to find such a day he makes use of lots, and this he did some time the first month. But the Lord so ordered the lots, as the day they directed him to fall not out till the twelvemonth after; so that the Jews, and their friends at court, had a year's time to counterwork this cruel project. And in that time, all was so overruled by him who rules over all, that the plot was quite defeated, the mine discovered, and fired upon those that laid it, Esther ix. 1. Their supposed lucky day proved a dismal day to them; and they found the Lord had so ordered the lot, as it led them to the day of their ruin instead of the day of destruction to the Jews.

[10.] He can do it by well-grounded actings or mistakes. Not only by such actings as are undertaken and pursued upon right grounds and true apprehensions, but by such as proceed upon mistakes and misapprehensions. So was Jehoshaphat delivered, and all in confederacy against him ruined, 2 Chron. xx. 22. He set ambushes against them; he employed his angels invisibly to destroy some of them; and the rest seeing them slain, but not seeing by whom, supposed it done by some of their own troops; and so concluding them treacherous, upon this mistake fall one upon another, till all were destroyed, and so Jehoshaphat and his people delivered from their fears and great distress.

Sometimes he works deliverance for them by their own mistake. That which Possidonius relates, in the Life of Augustine, is remarkable for this purpose. He being to preach at a town some miles off, as he was going missed his way; and, as he understood afterwards, that mistake was ordered for the securing of his life, his enemies lying in wait for him in the way which he should have gone (if his guide had not misled him) with a design to have killed him—*atque per hunc, quem postea cognovit, errorem, manus impias evasit*—and so by this mistake he escaped their wicked hands.

[11.] He can do it not only *by* means, but *without* or *against* means. *Without* means, Deut. xxxii. When there are no means left within or without, none to be had at home or abroad, then will the Lord compassionately resent their distresses and relieve them. *Against* means, Acts xxvii. When Paul and his companions were in great extremity, the mariners are ready to betake themselves to the boat as the only means to escape, but the apostle tells them unless they stayed in the ship they could not be saved; and following his advice they were delivered, in a way repugnant to that which the seamen judged their only safety.

So was Jacob's family preserved and relieved by that means which many of the chief in it thought it their interest to destroy. Gen. xlv. 5, 7, 'Be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you to preserve life. God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.'