

THE GREAT INTEREST OF STATES AND
KINGDOMS.

TO THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF COMMONS,

ASSEMBLED IN PARLIAMENT.

I HERE present you with one piece of the counsels of God, next those of his disposing the eternal conditions of persons of all other the greatest, as which concerneth the temporal salvation or destruction of kingdoms and nations, which, next to his saints therein, are dearest to God, as his patience towards them shews ; a subject which, had it been set out according to the merit of it, would of itself have fallen at your feet, who are the representative body of this nation and kingdom, and entitled itself to no other dedication than to you. But Providence having brought it forth in the way of an ordinance of God, preaching in your ears (though rudely), and you having been pleased to own it, it is become yours by all sorts of interest.

It is certain that God did not bring that last and fatal desolation upon the Jews until all states and ranks of men amongst them had conspired against the Lord and his Anointed and his followers ; nor did he bring upon them that their first captivity, until all sorts had corrupted themselves, the great men had broken the yoke, the prophets prophesied falsely, Jer. v., the priests did bear rule by their means, and the people loved to have it so ; and then, as the prophet adds, ' What will you do in the end thereof ? ' and yet therein God did not regard so much what the people as what their rulers did. ' I said ' (speaking of the people), ' Surely these are poor, these are foolish, I will get me to the great men ; but these have all together broke the yoke, and burst the bands,' ver. 4, 5. Our comfort therefore is, we cannot be undone without you, nor you without failing in this, which is our greatest interest : an error which, if this kingdom should, after so much bleeding, err a second time, is like hereafter never to be mended. Your preservation and guidance in this is, above all other, the constant and daily prayer of,

Your most humble Servant,

THO. GOODWIN.

THE INTEREST OF ENGLAND:

A SERMON PREACHED AT THE LATE FAST BEFORE THE
COMMONS HOUSE OF PARLIAMENT.

He suffered no man to do them wrong; yea, he reprov'd kings for their sakes; saying, Touch not mine anointed.—Ps. CV. 14, 15.

THE words I have read, and those from the 10th verse, as they hold forth the first rearing of the church of the Jews in Abraham and the patriarchs, so they are intended as the first primitive instance and original pattern of God's care and protection over his people in all ages, and likewise of his proceedings with all states and kingdoms, according unto their dealings with his people, wherever cast among them, to the end of the world; exemplified in what was done for their sakes, and towards them and their families.

The story itself of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, which these words refer to, and how God reprov'd Abimelech, king of Gerar, and Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and others for their sakes, you may read in the 12th, 20th, and 26th chapters of Genesis; and of commands given forth concerning them, to 'do them no wrong,' yea, not to touch them; declaring also of Abraham, Gen. xx. 7, that he was a prophet, and so not to be injured. Only what in the story is uttered scatteredly and in several places, is by the prophet David summarily put together: 'Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.'

There is a controversy upon these words, 'Touch not mine anointed,' that they should be intended principally of kings, and of these patriarchs as under the notion of kings. I shall but clear it in a word.

Whether these patriarchs were kings or no, I will not now dispute. Abraham is called a mighty prince by the children of Heth, Gen. xxiii. 6; yet, however, here the Holy Ghost speaks of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as representing the people of Israel, and his scope is to shew God's care and protection of his people by their example; which is clear, 1, by all the current and stream of the whole psalm. All that goes before, and which follows after, is wholly to shew his care of the people of Israel from first to last. But as for kings, or God's care over them as such, we may say, as Paul in another case, Heb. vii. 14, 'Of that tribe the Holy Ghost speaks nothing;' that is, in this psalm nothing, as touching monarchy (as he there says nothing as concerning the priesthood).

And, 2, then the words in the 12th verse, which speak of the persons of these patriarchs 'when they were but a few men in number; yea, very few,' refer not to kings, nor unto these patriarchs as such; for he speaks of their whole families, their wives, children, and servants; yea, these three patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, they were all alive at once: Isaac was above seventy years old afore Abraham died, and Jacob fifteen, and but one of these could have been king at once; and yet you see he speaks of them all complexedly, and as making a company together; when they were few, and very few, he said, 'Touch not mine anointed.'

Yea, 3, it is so far from being meant of them as kings, that it is expressly said, in the words of the text, 'He reprov'd kings for their sakes;' therein speaking of them as of a sort of people distinct from kings, and yet of a higher and dearer value with God, than those kings reprov'd for them.

But it will be said, that if it should not be meant of them under the relation of kings, yet, however, as of persons extraordinary; and therefore this charge and instance cannot be drawn into a pattern of God's care and protection over all saints, and the people of God, which is the scope which I have put upon the words.

I answer, that though indeed their persons were extraordinary, yet here they are withal set forth as representing the people of God, whom they were the fathers of. It is clear by the 8th verse, 'He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations;' the performance of which covenant, to confirm the truth of it, he exemplifies by the story of God's providence over these. What, therefore, he saith of these anointed ones here, it extendeth to a thousand generations to come; and as Abraham in other things was a common person,—in faith justifying he is made such, Rom. iii.; in faith as sanctifying, James ii.; in being heir of the world, Rom. iv. 13,—so is he here also, and Isaac and Jacob with him, in their anointing.

But you will yet say, It is true they may be understood as common persons, representing indeed the nation of the Jews; but yet will what is here said be warrantably extended to the believers of Jews and Gentiles under the New Testament to the end of the world?

I answer, Yes. For the covenant that God made with Abraham was to be 'heir of the world, as well as heir of Canaan,' so Rom. xiv. 13. And accordingly in other things the analogy holds for them with these here. For as these, so the saints, they are called strangers and pilgrims, scattered and dispersed in all nations. So Peter speaks of them, even as here he calls these strangers, verse 12, when they were but few in number, and strangers in the land, as the saints in the world. To give parallel places of Scripture to strengthen this. In the Old Testament, in the 45th Psalm, you have a prophecy of the Church of the New Testament, under the type of Solomon taking Pharaoh's daughter, who was a Gentile, into his bed, as Christ, of whom he was the type, one day should do the Gentiles: which church is made that great mother that shall have such multitudes of children, Gal. iv. Now of those children of the church of the New Testament as the mother, and of Christ as the father, the 16th verse of that psalm thus speaks: 'Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth.' The meaning whereof is this, that in the stead of these great patriarchs and other the fathers of the Jews (spoken of in the text), shall succeed others, the children of the New Testament, even all the saints, as successors of them; and as they were as princes in all lands they came into here, 'so shall thy children be,' says the psalmist there. And the 7th verse of that psalm calls them anointed, and so speaks also in the language

of the text, when under that notion he commands not to touch them. That verse speaking of Christ, saith, 'He is anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows;' namely, these his fellows and children, spoken of verse 16. You have at once, as the great anointed one, Christ, so all his children called anointed ones also; and as they are his fellows, so anointed too. Thus you have all meet: Abraham and the fathers, the anointed ones of the Old Testament, Christ and his saints, the anointed ones in the New, in their stead; and both princes and strangers in all lands; and so of the one as well as the other this charge is here intended, 'Touch not mine anointed,' &c. And to this accords the language of the New Testament: the whole mystical body is called Christ, 1 Cor. xii. 12; and believers his fellows are said to have received an anointing, 2 Cor. i. 21, 1 John ii. 27; yea, and elsewhere the reason of this their preservation, and God's protection over them, is put upon this very anointing: Isa. x. 27, 'The burden shall be taken off thy shoulder (speaking of the oppression of God's people), and the yoke shall be destroyed, because of the anointing.'

Having thus explained the words, I come to those observations which I shall make out of them, and insist on at this time. I resolve the words into these three parts.

1. Here is the nearness and the dearness of the saints unto God. They are dearer to him than kings and states, simply considered; that is, otherwise than as they in their persons are also saints; for you see that for their sakes he reproveth kings, and so sheweth that he preferreth them to kings.

2. Here is the great danger to kings and states, to deal with his saints otherwise than well. Which appeareth many ways; for he doth not only in words give a charge not to touch them, but he carries it in a high way (for so God may do when he pleads their cause), Touch them not; as if he had said, Let me see if you dare so much as touch them; and it is with an intimation of the highest threatening if they should; upon your peril if you do; for that is the scope of such a speech. And accordingly in deeds he made this good, for the text saith he suffered no man to do them wrong; not that he did altogether prevent all wrong and injuries, for they received many as they went through those lands; but at no time did he put it up at their hands, or let it go unpunished. In that sense he suffered them not. You know how he plagued Pharaoh, king of Egypt, with great plagues, and all his household, for Abraham's wife's sake, Gen. xii. And so Abimelech, king of Gerar, the Lord cometh upon him with a greatness, and his first word is in Gen. xx. 3, 'Behold, thou art but a dead man,' afore he had first told him why or wherefore, though then he adds the reason; he brings him upon his knees, ver. 4, bids him look to it that he give satisfaction to Abraham, and restore his wife to him again, ver. 7; and well he escaped so; and tells him also that he must be beholden to Abraham's prayers for his life. 'He is a prophet,' saith he, 'and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live.'

3. The third is the care and protection which God had over them, set out and amplified, 1, by the number and condition of the persons whom he defended; though few men of number, that is soon reckoned, for their power and strength a few, or very small, *εἰς μίχρους*, so the Septuagint in the parallel place, 2 Chron. xvi. 19; as also, 2, by what he did for them: He suffered no man, how great soever, to do them any wrong, how small soever; not without recompence and satisfaction; not to do it, though they had a mind to it, though the people had an ill eye at them, Gen. xxvi. 11. God causeth Abimelech to make a law on purpose; Abimelech charged all his people in Isaac's behalf, and of his family (which I mention, because it gives light to the text), and speaks in the very words of the text, 'He that toucheth this

man or his wife shall be put to death,' although they envied him, ver. 14, strived with him, ver. 20, hated him, ver. 27.

I shall pass over the set handling the first of these, namely, the nearness and dearness of the saints to God; it will after come in well enough under the second, as the reason thereof.

That main thing which I have singled forth to insist upon is, the danger that is unto states to deal otherwise than well with the saints, God's anointed. And the observation is plainly this,

Obs. That the dealing well or ill with the saints of God, it is the greatest and highest interest of kings and kingdoms, on which their welfare or their ruin depends.

I have the story of the whole world afore me, to glean demonstrations and instances out of, to make good this truth; but I shall endeavour to present it to you under that prospect that runs through the story of the whole Bible, my observation out of the story of which, and the sum and issue of all, is this, that God from the beginning hath in his providence so ordered it, that the greatest and most flourishing kingdoms and states should still have to do with his saints and people in all ages; and either they have been broken by their ill using of them, or they have prospered by their well dealing with them. You shall find this, I say, throughout the whole Scripture. My text leads the round to all the rest, and I therefore indeed chose it, rather than any other, though otherwise, as a bottom to this point, I might have pitched upon others perhaps more full.

We will begin with the very first kings and kingdoms that you read of after the flood; how he reproved the king of Egypt and the king of the Philistines for the sake of Abraham and Isaac, that I mentioned afore. Besides those there is mention of four kings, Gen. xiv.: Amraphel, king of Shinar or Babylon, which was the first kingdom in the world after the flood, Gen. x. 10, and was one of, yea, the first great monarchy. There is likewise Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, or Persia, which afterward likewise proved a monarchy; for as Assyria and Babylon made the first, so you know Persia was the next. You have two other kings more there confederate with these. These four kings they brake in upon, and smote all the countries about. They smote the Rephaims (giants) in Ashteroth Karnaim, and the Zuzims (terrible ones) in Ham, and the Emims and the Horites in Mount Seir, Deut. ii. 10, 11, and they returned and came to En-mishpat, which is Kadesh, and smote all the country of the Amalekites and also the Amorites that dwelt in Hazezon-tamar, as you may read, verses 6-8. And all the while they overran these vast countries, where there was not one saint to be found, they found no resistance, having but to do with nations, not saints in them; but unhappily to them, when they came to fight against the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah, they light upon one saint, and but one, and that is Lot; so the 12th verse, 'They took Lot, Abraham's brother's son (who dwelt in Sodom), and his goods, and departed.' Alas to them; little thought they what a prisoner they had. They took him in the crowd amongst the wickedest people under heaven, a people so wicked, that one would have thought God should so little have considered this one saint, to save him from perishing, as that his vengeance should have taken the opportunity to ruin these, though this one poor Lot had been involved in their destruction. But you shall see how tender God is of his saints, Jer. iii. They had unawares devoured an hallowed thing, one righteous Lot, and had taken him but prisoner; they had drunk poison, and all the riches and all the goods they had taken they vomit up again, together with their own blood: the Lord in this giving demonstration of that his care and skill, which Peter

makes observation of upon the story of Lot and the Sodomites: 'The Lord knows how to preserve the righteous, and reserve the unjust,' 2 Pet. ii. 9. And whom should God use to be the instrument to do this to? God had not many more saints then in the world, but only Melchisedec we read of, and Abraham and his family, and God useth that one Abraham; and he had an army but of a few, and a very few (even as the text hath it), but three hundred and eighteen men born in his house, ver. 14; he pursues them, and smites them, ver. 17, with a great slaughter, and brought back all the goods, and his brother Lot and his goods, &c., ver. 18; and thus they were reprov'd. You see the text made good from the very first beginning of kingdoms: he reprov'd kings for their sakes indeed.

Thus he began the world at first; and this very victory is made a leading case, a standing encouragement to the sons of Abraham, the saints, for ever after. So you have it applied in Isa. xli. 2, 'Who raised up (says God, to raise up his people's hearts) the righteous man from the east?' namely, this one Abraham, and called him to his foot. Follow me, I will be thy general, said God to him, gave the nations before him, and made him rule over kings; he means these very kings you have heard the story of: 'He gave them as the dust to his sword, and as driven stubble to his bow; he pursued them, and passed safely,' &c. Did God do thus then for one or two of his saints, and will he not go on? What saith the 4th verse? 'Who hath wrought and done it, calling the generations from the beginning,' and so having ordained all the generations of Abraham to do the like exploits in their several ages. 'I the Lord am the first, and with the last, I am he.' I began to do this with Abraham, and I will go on to do so, even to the last, for the sons of Abraham. And that this is plainly his meaning appears by verse 8, where he makes a general application of it to his seed: 'But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend.' Therefore, saith he, verse 10, 'Fear thou not (thou worm Jacob, verse 14) for I am with thee: be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. Behold, all they that were incensed against thee, shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing, and they that strive with thee shall perish.' All the whole chapter is nothing else but encouragement to all the seed of Abraham, from this very instance I have now given you. And the text here confirms it, premising unto all those instances, 'He hath remembered his covenant, the word he commanded to a thousand generations.'

The next kingdom in the world that flourished in those first times, that grew to any greatness that we read of, was that of Egypt; and though Ham the founder of Egypt was cursed, yet as usually those God lays the greatest curse upon he first begins to bless with outward blessings in the world, so he did the seed of Ham, in that infancy of that new world. How renowned a kingdom that then was, both for continued succession of kings in a race (which Isaiah insinuates, chap. xix. 11), and for other greatness, the story of Moses, and Herodotus, and other profane stories, do celebrate. It was, as would seem, in those first times more flourishing than Assyria (the territories of Assyria could not then be great, when such other three kings fore-mentioned bordered about it, and when Chedorlaomer of Persia was the chief of all the four, Gen. xiv. 4, 5). Now, see how still the Lord doth follow on this his great design: he will have his saints to be cast upon this kingdom, and to live therein; and not only Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, but in the end all their posterity. It is the next story the psalmist gives instance of to the purpose in hand, and let us take it but as he relates it: saith he, verse

17, 'He sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant, whose feet they hurt with fetters' (Potiphar only did it, yet God lays it upon the nation). But, as the psalmist observes, 'the Lord was even with them for it,' ver. 21 and 22. He made this man not only Lord of Pharaoh's house, but he adds, 'to bind his princes at his pleasure,' as they before had done him. As Abraham afore, so Joseph now is another leading instance. 'To bind their kings with chains, their nobles with fetters of iron, such honour hath all his saints,' Psal. cxlix. He made this man a saviour to them (as themselves acknowledge: 'Thou hast saved our lives,' Gen. xlvii. 25), and whilst they dealt well with him and his brethren, 'as he blessed Potiphar's house for his sake,' so he blessed the prince and all Egypt also for his sake. And whilst Egypt was the nursery, or rather the granary (as it was called anciently *Horreum Romani Imperii*) to these anointed ones, the people of God, so long it greatly flourished. But, verse 25, God turned their heart 'to hate his people, and to deal subtilly with his servants' (for malice and cunning always go together in oppressing the saints), and how they oppressed them you all know. But as he had reprov'd kings for their sakes afore, and Pharaoh's progenitors among the rest, saying, 'Touch not mine anointed,' as here, so he begins with a message by Moses his ambassador, sent to that king of Egypt, and therein useth the same kind of language, Exod. iv. 22, 23, 'Thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my first-born.' There is only this difference in the expression: the psalmist here calls them his *anointed*; there, his *first-born*. And it is as if he had said, Tell Pharaoh, I, Jehovah, am a greater king than thou art, and therefore my first-born is greater than thy first-born. And let my son, my first-born go, that he may serve me; he carries all high. And if thou refuse to let him go, I will slay thy son, even thy first-born; and so indeed he did in the end. They left not oppressing the people of God (and the great quarrel was to let them go to worship) till such time as God did overthrow that nation, with so great an overthrow as no kingdom could have a greater, not totally to be destroyed; and indeed so great, as you hear no more of them till Solomon's time. There is not a word of Egypt in all the time of Joshua, and of the judges, till you read of Solomon's marrying Pharaoh's daughter. Here you see Egypt both blessed while they dealt well with the people of God, and broken when they dealt ill with them.

To let pass those petty kings of Canaan, overcome by Moses and Joshua, let us come next to Assyria, which together with Babylon is reckoned the first great monarchy. The beginning of the Assyrian monarchy being from Babylon, Gen. x. 10, and the kingdom returning again to Babel, both are justly reckoned but one, though in their several revolutions they were distinct. This monarchy, in the infancy of it, Abraham had to do with, and as you heard, overcame the king thereof. Egypt's king was also reprov'd for their sakes, and Persia, and two kings more, God ordering it, that the father and representer of the faithful should reprove and chastise those kings whom his seed should after ruin. How the people of God were oppressed, first by the Assyrian kings and then by the Babylonians, the story of the Kings and Chronicles do shew, the Assyrian often oppressing them, and at last carrying the ten tribes captive, as Babylon did the other two. Now, to make short work of both, you shall find one scripture, Jer. l., where you shall see them both put together in their ruin, and the ruin of both put upon this, their oppression of the people of God. I mention that scripture only because it summarily contains the whole: verse 17, says God, 'Israel is a scattered sheep, the lions have driven him away;' they were a scattered

people; or as Junius and Piscator hath it, they were *parva pecus*, a little flock, a few, and very small, in comparison of the nations, as the psalmist hath it here; and the lions drave them away. Who were these lions? First, saith he, 'the king of Assyria hath devoured him,' he seized as it were on the flesh (Pul, Tiglath-Pileser, and Shalmaneser, oppressing and captivating them, 2 Kings xv.); and last, this Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon (he speaks of him with scorn and indignation, *This Nebuchadnezzar*) hath broken the bones. And because that he came last, and took away all as a sweeping rain, therefore his anger riseth most against him: verse 18, 'Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, Behold, I will punish the king of Babylon and his land, as I punished the king of Assyria.' Merodach of Babylon subdued the Assyrian,* Nebuchadnezzar utterly ruins Nineveh, the head city thereof, and then Babel's time comes to be wasted also, and the whole land therewith. Here is that monarchy gone, you see, both Assyrian and Babylonian; and whosoever were the instrument, this was the cause from God's own mouth. Add unto which, that in the next chapter, Jer. li. 11, 'Because (says that text) it was the vengeance of the Lord, and of his temple.' And take in also verse 35, 'The violence done to me, and to my flesh, be upon Babylon, shall the inhabitants of Zion say, and my blood upon the inhabitants of Chaldea, shall Jerusalem say,' then when they are destroyed.

Now there are a great many other kingdoms and nations, that bordered about the Jews, whom God (as I remember) calleth his evil neighbours, for their ill-will to Zion; these all fell either by or with Babylon. Of these you shall read in the 25th, 26th, 27th, and 28th chapters of Ezekiel, and so on. God there sends the cup round to all the nations. All those nations certainly had infinite provocations of national sins of all sorts against God amongst them; but you shall see still God there lays his suit and quarrel against them only for their ill dealing with his people, to whom they were neighbours round about.

He begins with the Ammonites, chap. xxv. 2, and what was her sin that ruined her? Ammon was but glad at the fall of the Jews. 'Behold (saith the 3d verse) thou saidst, Aha, against my sanctuary, when it was profaned; and against the land of Israel, when it was desolate; and against the house of Judah, when they went into captivity;' they did not help it forward, only cried Aha. 'Therefore,' saith God, ver. 4, 'I will deliver thee to the men of the east for a possession'; and ver. 6, 'Because (as in speech, as afore, so in gesture they expressed the like joy at it) thou hast clapped thy hands, and stamped with the feet, and rejoiced in heart with all thy despite against the land of Israel; behold, therefore, I will stretch out mine hand upon thee, and will deliver thee for a spoil to the heathen; I will destroy thee,' &c.

The next that he mentioneth is Moab. She did but cast out a word; so verse 8, she did but only say this, 'Behold, the house of Judah is like unto all the heathen;' now laid waste as they, and there is no difference in the protection in their God over them, more than over the heathen themselves. It was but this word cast out; yet therefore saith the Lord, verse 9, 'Behold I will open the side of Moab.' He would break through and open his strong frontier cities (as the next words explain it), break his ribs, and so enter into his bowels; and verse 10, 'The Ammonites shall be no more remembered among the nations.' No other sin is mentioned, but this word about his people.

He comes next to Edom, verse 12, who was the posterity of Esau and their brother (as you shall hear anon), and of them he saith, 'Because that Edom hath dealt against the house of Judah by taking vengeance, and

* *Solianus Annales Tom. 4, An. Mund. 3333, & An. 3452*

greatly offended, and revenged himself upon him ;' therefore saith he, verse 13, 'I will cut off man and beast from it, and make it desolate.' He riseth still in his punishments proportionable to their sins, and to their dealings with his people. And I will do it, says he, 'by the hand of my own people,' verse 14, that were oppressed by them.

From Edom he carries the cup to Philistia, who, because they had an old grudge against the Israelites, 'a despiteful heart, to destroy them for the old hatred,' verse 15, 'Therefore I will execute great vengeance on them,' verses 16, 17.

In the next place, he comes to Tyre, poor Tyre ; I call her so, because as of all the nations they were the most ingenious in themselves (insomuch as Christ says, they would have repented, &c.), and most ingenious of all nations else unto the Jews, that helped them to build the temple, and were confederates with David and Solomon. And what was her fault ? A mere temptation of love to herself, such as might befall any in the like case. Read chap. xxvi. 2, 'Son of man, because Tyrus hath said against Jerusalem, Aha, she is broken that was the gates of the people ; I shall be replenished now she is laid waste.' The meaning is this, I shall now have all the trade. You know Tyre lay nigh to Jerusalem, and it was a place of the greatest trade and merchandise then in the world ; she was the mart of nations (so she is called in Isa. xxiii., and in Ezek. xxvii. 3), and though she had the greater trade of the two already, yet she rejoiced in this, that Jerusalem should be laid waste, who had been the gates of the people, whither much people came for traffic, as well as to me. Now, thinks she (and it was but a self-loving thought), all the trade will wholly come to me, and I shall be replenished and increased. No more. Yet, because it fell out to be uttered against the church, for this, and for no other sin (there mentioned), must Tyre be destroyed, as she was by Nebuchadnezzar, though, to fulfil the prophecy, he served twelve years in the siege thereof. And see how God proportioned her punishment to her sin : Wouldst thou have more customers ? Thou shalt have enow. 'Behold, I will cause many nations to come up ;' what, for traffic ? No ; 'to come up against thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come up ;' the Babylonian soldiers shall be thy merchants that shall take off thy goods off thy hands. And because that Tyre was a most glorious people, he therefore spends two or three chapters upon the description of her ruin.

In the 26th chapter he comes to Egypt. Egypt had been broken once afore (as you heard) by the people of Israel, and reproved for Abraham's sake. They were a false-hearted nation, that even Rabshakeh could aforehand prophesy so of them, in Isa. xxxvi. 6, 'Lo,' saith he, 'thou trustest on the staff of this broken reed, whereon if a man will lean, it will go into his hand and pierce it ; so is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all that trust in him.' It was the genius of that nation to all that dealt with them. And as Rabshakeh had foretold of them, so it fell out ; and therefore the prophet Ezekiel utters their sin against the church in Rabshakeh's language, chapter xxix. 7, 'Because they have been a staff of reed to the house of Israel.' It is a most elegant comparison, the similitude it looks many ways : 1, a reed was a hieroglyphic of that country. Sanctius upon those words, Ps. lxxviii. 30, 'Rebuke the company of the spearmen' (so we translate it), but look in the margins of your Bibles, and likewise the original will bear it, it is, 'Rebuke the beast of the reeds ;' and he interpreteth this to be meant of Egypt, the Chaldee paraphrase also interpreting it of that nation, it being a country of reeds. On the bank of Nilus, and so throughout the whole country (through the overflowing of that river), there were and are such reeds and

canes growing, as nowhere in the world again besides (so Pliny* saith), serving for pens, spears, arrows† (as Pliny there), so for staves, arks, Exod. ii. 3; and Egypt is called a beast of reeds, alluding further (as I take it) to the crocodile, the proper beast of that country, which is an amphibion, living both in land and water, and so usually lies amongst the reeds by the river side, and there shrouds herself against the heat, as the elephant also is said to do, Job xl. 21. And suitably we find that, Augustus having conquered Antony and Cleopatra, the queen of Egypt, caused by way of triumph to be stamped on his coin a crocodile and a reed,‡ as that which was put for the hieroglyphic of that country, as the manner of the Romans was. And the Holy Ghost here in Ezekiel long before seems to have given the same coat of arms for that country and kingdom (perhaps according to the common use), using both these apart of Egypt also. For first, in the third verse of this chapter xxix., he calleth Pharaoh king of Egypt the dragon of the rivers (which I believe hath reference to the crocodile in those rivers, which is a kind of serpent, and beast also), and in the 7th verse after, which we are now upon, to a staff of reed. Whereas in that 68th Psalm you see both are put together, the beast of reeds, here in this 29th of Ezekiel, the prophet having in his eye the common hieroglyphic of the country, turns the similitude to their being a staff of reed; that suiting his present scope, which was to express their failing that confidence the people of God reposed in them, and so becoming the fatal occasion of their misery. Because (saith he, verse 6) ‘thou hast been a staff of reed to the house of Israel, when they took hold of thee thou didst break.’ They (as Cornelius à Lapide upon the place) had provoked the Jews to rebel against Nebuchadnezzar, promising to assist them: but though thou wert *baculus in promissione*, a staff in promises, yet but *arundines in executione*, a staff of reed, vain and helpless in the performance (as he speaks). The prophet goes on. Yea, thou didst not only break, but run up, and rend all the shoulder, and madest their loins to be at a stand; didst not only hinder, but hurt and weaken them. The Lord comes upon them with his former *Therefore*; verse 8, ‘Saith the Lord, I will bring a sword upon thee, and I will cut off man and beast.’ And so he goes on in three or four chapters to set forth their punishment, and that relating, as the former had done, to this their unfaithful dealing with God’s people, as that sin that was the cause thereof, which is the point in hand.

When the prophet had thus despatched Egypt, and threatened the like to Assyria and Babylon (of which enough was touched before), he falls afresh upon mount Seir and Edom, and contents not himself to have put them into the common catalogue (which we have gone over) with the rest of the nations in the 25th chapter; but he returns again to a peculiar, special reckoning with them in the 35th chapter (the reason of it we shall see by and by, because they were their brethren§). ‘Because,’ saith he there, ver. 5, ‘thou hast had a perpetual hatred, and hast shed the blood of the children of Israel by the force of the sword in the time of their calamity, in the time that their iniquity had an end;’ that is, when they had already suffered so much for their sins that it might have been thought God had punished them enough,

* Lib. xvi. c. 36.

† Hence *arundo* for *sagitta* with the Latins, and the same word for a *reed* and a *spear* (as here) in the Scripture.

‡ And in Adrian’s coins of gold also.

§ Esau, of whom both came, was called Edom from his redness, Gen. xxv. 30, and Seir from his hairy hands. Esau dwelt in Seir, Gen. xxxiii. 14, 16, and was given as a possession to his seed by God, Deut. ii. 5; and Esau was the father of Edom, Gen. xxxvi. 43.

yet then do they begin their misery afresh: 'Therefore as I live, saith the Lord, I will prepare thee unto blood, and blood shall pursue thee,' &c.; and, ver. 10, he adds another reason, 'Because thou hast said, These two nations and these two countries shall be mine' (namely, their own, and that of Israel adjoining), 'and we will possess it.' When Nebuchadnezzar had laid it waste, they promised to themselves the possession of it, whereas the Lord was there, as the prophet adds. They thought they might as easily conquer, and enter upon the possession of it, as any of the other nations; whereas the Lord's presence was there, to keep possession for himself and his people that belonged unto it. This was their sin, then follows their punishment: 'Therefore as I live, saith the Lord, I will even do according to thine anger, and according to thine envy, which thou hast used out of hatred against them;' I will proportion my punishment accordingly. And he doth not content himself only with his bringing of them in again here, but besides he spends a whole prophecy upon them, the prophecy of Obadiah, whose message is taken up with nothing but threatenings against Edom, and resolving all into the same quarrel: 'For thy violence against thy brother Jacob'*—Edom and Seir, as was said, coming of Esau, were brethren to the Israelites, and God takes it infinitely more unkindly at their hands than at the hands of the other nations—'therefore shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever. In the day that thou stoodst on the other side' (that is, behavedst thyself as a neuter that stood aloof), 'in the day that strangers carried away captive his forces, and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, thou wast as one of them,' didst as much mischief as the Babylonians.† 'Thou shouldst not have entered into the gate of my people in the day of their calamity; yea, thou shouldst not have looked on their affliction' (that is, as idle spectators, much less rejoicers in it), 'nor have laid hands on their substance' (nor have spoiled them of their goods), 'in the day of their calamity,' &c. Therefore is their punishment to a perpetual ruin, more heavy than any of the rest. Thus now you have also seen an end of all these kingdoms that were neighbours about Jerusalem, and how they were all reprov'd, yea, destroyed, upon this quarrel of touching and meddling with his anointed, as the text hath it.

Now, let us go on to the other monarchies, the Persian and the Grecian; you shall see still that the story of them also makes good this great point in hand. The Persian and the Grecian both had to do with the church; but the first of these, the Persian, seems rather an instance on the other hand, viz. of the welfare and of the raising up of a nation and of a state for the people of God; for God hath given some instances of blessing as well as he hath given of ruin. The very raising up of Cyrus, and of that monarchy in him, it was for his people's sake. The Scripture is express for this; read Isa. xlv. 28, 'Thus saith God of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure; even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.' And go on to chap. xlv. 1, 'Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him,' &c. He calls Cyrus his anointed; he calls Tyre an anointed covering cherub also, Ezek. xxviii.; and no other heathen princes else in all the book of God. First, Tyre an anointed cherub, because he was propitious to the Jews, even as the cherub covering the ark.‡ Then Cyrus was anointed; because, as Sanctius well saith, *Non minus studiose res curabat Judaicas quam si Judæorum esset, et non Persarum, imperator.* He took as

* Deut. ii. 4, 5. God said to the Jews, 'You are to pass through the coast of your brethren the children of Esau; meddle not with them,' &c.

† The psalmist also hath it, Ps. cxxxvii. 7.

‡ Œcolampad. in loc.

much care for the people of God, and the building of the temple, as if he had been king of Jewry himself. And God calleth him likewise his shepherd, even as he had done David, that was to look to his sheep. In the place I quoted before concerning the Assyrian and Babylonian kings, Jer. l., you heard how he called them lions, because they scattered the sheep; so the expression is there, but here he calls Cyrus his shepherd, that shall perform all his pleasure, and for that end raised him to all this greatness. For for whose sake was it he had the nations given him? Read the fourth verse: 'For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name; I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me;' not for thy sake, but for my people's only. And although for a while some of them kings made edicts to interrupt the building of the temple, yet the generality of those kings went on in that course of favour which Cyrus had begun, and were more favourable to the Jews than all of the other monarchies. Darius Histaspis, mentioned Ezra iv. 24, permitted the Jews to go on building it, as their poverty would suffer them; and, after another interruption, Darius Nothus,* Ezra vi., did put Cyrus his decree in force again, and allows the expense of the finishing of it out of his own revenues; and inserts this in his revived decree, that the Jews might pray for the life of the king and of his children, ver. 10. They also had of the seed of the Jews great men at court with them, as Daniel, Mordecai, Ezra, and Nehemiah, the two latter of whom were sent by Artaxerxes to build the city of Jerusalem; yea, and another of their kings admitted one of that nation (through the providence of God) to the royal bed. Ahasuerus married Esther, of the seed of the Jews, under whom, and under other of these kings, they had the greatest prosperity. Now, as this favour to the Jews was the cause of the erecting that monarchy at first, so surely of the continuance of it so long. Historians wonder that it should stand so long, it being so loose and dissolute a court and state,† and having so many great shocks. I can attribute it to nothing but this, the eminent favour they shewed to the Jews, the people of God. And I shall but cast in this observation more about it: when was it that it came to be ruined and destroyed, but in the time of the latter Darius, then when Cyrus (who had been God's shepherd) his seed was wholly extinct?‡ For though his seed by the male issue continued not to a grandchild, yet in the seed of Atossa, Cyrus's daughter, wife to Darius Histaspis, the kingdom was continued in his race. And to make the providence the more remarkable, whereas Darius had sons before by another wife, yet the interest of Atossa§ for Cyrus's sake,

* Thus Calvisius, and Master Mede in his account of Daniel's weeks, pages 5-7, which doth fall in the best to accord all the years of Daniel's weeks. But if (as most other chronologers) it had been Darius Histaspis that made that decree in Ezra vi. for the finishing the temple, then it affords a greater observation to my purpose in hand, namely, that God did take away Cambyases, Cyrus his son (whom they would have to be that Artaxerxes, Ezra iv., that hindered by force of arms the building the temple both in his father's days—whilst he was prince of Persia, as Daniel x. 13 he is called, or prorex in his father's absence—and in his own), and that without issue; and so Cyrus's issue male ended, being punished for recalling the favour granted. But Darius Histaspis being chosen by the princes, God established the kingdom in him and his seed, for his reviving Cyrus his edict. And, however, almost all agree in this, that this Darius he hindered it not, but gave liberty for his time; and is that Darius mentioned Ezra iv. 24 (see Mede, Daniel's Weeks, page 7, in his marginal note), whom therefore God blessed accordingly; and yet regarded Cyrus also in this, that by his daughter Atossa, wife to this Darius, his race continued.

† Therefore Daniel compares him to a slow unwieldy ram, as it were heavy with wool and flesh, chap. viii. 7.

‡ Diodo. Imitio. lib. vii.

§ Εἰς τὴν πατρὶν τὴν ἐκείνου, says Herodotus of Atossa, giving it as the reason of this succession.

carried the succession to Xerxes her son, Cyrus's grandchild. But that last Darius, in and with whom that empire was destroyed by Alexander, was of another race.* Such regard had God to Cyrus his shepherd, and his seed, that favoured the Jews. But then it was, and not afore, that God threw down that monarchy, whether for anything done against the people of God or no the Scripture is silent.

Let us come to the Grecian monarchy, for that was the third; some of the story of which you have mentioned in Zech. ix., which is an apparent prophecy of the expedition of Alexander; and as a late learned writer† rightly saith, you may better know the meaning of the first part of that chapter out of Quintus Curtius and Josephus, than out of most commentators. You read there of a prophecy of Tyre, that it must be taken again, so ver. 3. Now Zechariah writ after the Babylonish captivity, therefore it is not that former taking of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar, but that latter by Alexander. And what he says in the 5th verse of Gaza, and those other cities in Philistia, 'Askelon shall not be inhabited,' and the 'cutting off the governor of Gaza,' Quintus Curtius exactly relates the performance of it, and his cruelty therein; and it is usually noted as the first and greatest act of Alexander's degenerating to barbarous inhumanity. Now, all that his rage against all those cities that were neighbours to the Jews, was ordered by God, and foretold by the prophet, but only to set forth the wonderful care and protection of God towards his people, recorded ver. 8, that although Alexander was as much incensed against the Jews (for their answer sent him of their resolution to cleave to Darius, to whom they had sworn), yet as that 8th verse foretold, 'I will encamp about my house, says God, because of the army, because of him that passeth by, and because of him that returneth.' When Alexander went by, and when afterwards many other armies went to and fro, God still encamped about his house. And though Alexander plundered or destroyed all the cities round about, yet still Jerusalem and the temple were preserved. Yea, Alexander's heart was so changed (as Esau's), that he went in peaceably. And the high priest shewing him the prophecy of Daniel, how the king of Grecia, that is, himself, should overcome the king of Persia, he was thereby encouraged to the conquest of the king of Persia, and not only spared them, but gave many immunities to the Jews; and in that his expedition against Darius prospered accordingly.

Now that monarchy thus raised by him was divided into four parts, Dan. viii. 22, all which are accounted to make up that Grecian monarchy.‡ 'And in the latter end of their kingdom,' says the 23d verse, 'when the transgressions are come to the full,' that is, when God meant to begin to break it, and to put a period to it, and to reckon with them for their other sins. This his wonted design sets his providence a-work, that they should fall foul upon his people, and so be broken, as the former had been; and eminently, and above the rest, you have a 'little horn' arising, Antiochus, the successor of one of them (the story is clear in Dan. viii.), who 'magnified himself against the people of God,' the 'daily sacrifice,' against 'the truth,' &c. ver. 11, 12, and in this God laid the foundation not only of his ruin, but of the rest of the Grecian monarchy. This I might shew out of Dan. ver. 25, 'He shall be broken without hand,' &c.; but I will rather do it out of the 9th of Zechariah (having already begun with that, and shewed out of it the rise and proceedings of that monarchy in the 'first

* Alexander the Great, in his letters to Darius, and his speech to his soldiers against Darius, affirms it.—*Arrianus. Curtius*, lib. vi. as also *Justin*.

† D. Jackson, 8th Book of Commentaries on the Creed, sect. iii. cap. xvii.

‡ Joseph. Antiq. Jud. lib. xi.

horn' thereof, Alexander); let us see what it says of the ruin of it, in that which follows: ver. 13, 'When I have bent Judah for me, and filled the bow with Ephraim' (it is an elegant similitude), 'and raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece, and made thee as the sword of a mighty man: and the Lord shall be seen over them, and his arrow shall go forth as the lightning,' &c. Here the Grecian monarchy, in the last remainders of it (the kings of Egypt and Syria, the Longidæ and Seleucidæ, who both oppressed the Jews, being therefore called Greece,* because they were the successors of it), is ruined: and by whom? Even by the people of the Jews, or for their sakes. God raised up the 'sons of Sion' against these 'sons of Greece'; God made Judah his bow, and Ephraim his arrows (and when God himself will be the archer, weak arrows and instruments will do wonders). And besides, that for their sakes God used miraculous and wonderful ways to ruin these enemies, 'the Lord shall be seen over them,' &c., ver. 14. God used the Jews themselves, the Maccabees, to vindicate themselves against these relics of the Grecian empire, as the story in the book of the Maccabees shews plainly (as interpreters upon the text have observed), and particularly how Antiochus came to his end. And afterwards the ruin of the whole by the Romans, it was for the Jews' sake, and their quarrel, and at their prayer; it was by Ephraim being his arrow, and Judah his bow, and God himself appearing from heaven against them. So then here the Grecian monarchy is likewise broken upon the Jews. And thus we have done with the Old Testament.

Now let us come to the New Testament. There was, first, the Jewish state; and, secondly, there was the Roman empire. Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who was the eminent anointed one, he comes obscurely, and, as it were, stealing into the world, who was to be King of all the world, in the days of him who laid the first sure foundation and settlement of the Roman empire, namely, Augustus; and he comes to his own, to the people of the Jews, over whom the Romans having the power, and a president amongst them, our Saviour came to have to do at once with both these states.

And first for the Jews. Because that which befell that state for their dealing with Christ and his disciples, is the leading case of the New Testament, as what was done to these kings and nations here in the text, and in the story of Genesis, for their carriage towards Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, was the leading case of the Old, I will therefore begin therewith, and spend a little time in the opening of it, so far as it concerns the point in hand.

And now you shall see that nation and state, of which hitherto you have heard, that it had been for the rising or falling of all the monarchies, and also lesser kingdoms round about it, itself to be the first of all other that was broken and ruined under the New Testament, as an example to all the rest that follow; and broken not upon another whole nation like itself, but upon a few, and a very few anointed ones in that nation, namely, our Lord and his disciples: God altering now the way of his dispensation under the New Testament, using but a few saints in nations (which is the most glorious) to effect the same design he did before by that whole nation of the Jews under the Old: Rev. v. 9, 'He hath redeemed us' (say they) 'out of all nations' (who are to him a royal nation, typified out by that whole nation of Jews), whom now he maketh to be to all kingdoms (where they are found), either 'a stone of stumbling,' whereby they shall be broken, or a sure basis and foundation of their welfare, according to their usage of them.

* They are called Greece, as the king of Persia is called king of Ashur, Ezra vi. 22: and as Cyrus, Ezra v. 13, and Artaxerxes, Neh. x. 6, are called kings of Babel, because successors to these kings.

How the Jews used Christ and his disciples, we all know. The interest of that nation, wherein stood it? Not so much to have entertained Christ for their temporal king, he avoided that; but to have received him for their Messiah, and anointed Saviour. And that this was the interest of the nation and its welfare, is clear by that speech of Christ, Luke xix. 42, 'Oh that thou hadst known, in this thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace!' he therein intending as well the temporal peace of that nation, as the eternal peace of their souls. As Tyre had stood to that day if they had repented (as Christ speaks), so had Jerusalem also if they had known and kept to this their interest. But they were so far from doing this, that they clean diverted from it, and took up other worldly and politic interests of their own, to save themselves by, which were their ruin. Yea (which I beseech you mark and observe), the Lord did order it so in his providence, that even reason of state, and a worldly cross interest to this should be the chief motive to them of crucifying Christ, and so of the final desolation of that nation. For which, consult first the 11th of John, ver. 49, 50; say they (generally), 'If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation.' And what saith the great high priest further upon it? 'Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.' And although this is there said to be spoken as a prophecy (God guiding his mouth therein), yet withal, if you look into the 18th of John, ver. 14, it is charged upon him to have been a wicked counsel given (take it as it was intended by him), for there he is branded, 'This is that Caiaphas that gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.' How it might be both these, as directed by God, and intended by him, would be too long to shew. But take it as it thus came from him, and he takes on him as high priest to speak as a deep oracle of state, and to utter a state maxim, with slighting of his fellows, You know nothing, and his maxim follows, Better that one man, who is not considerable, be taken away, than a nation perish. And yet he therein had an eye to the priest's interest, that is, of himself and his fellows, to keep up their honour, as well as to the preservation of the nation, though he colours it over with that of the whole nation. For, in John xi. 50, the words are, 'It is expedient for us' (namely, priests), 'that one man should die for the people.' They were jealous of Christ getting the people from them. You shall likewise find, that when the matter was brought to Pilate, it was state interest also caused Pilate to come off to condemn him: 'The Jews cried out, If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cæsar.' And the text adds, 'When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he sat down and condemned him,' John xix. 12, 13. When I read and considered this story, it made me understand that, in 1 Cor. ii. 6, 'We speak not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that comes to nought; but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, which none of the princes of this world knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.' He speaks of these very princes, the rulers of the Jews, and of Pilate; and the Holy Ghost, you see, maketh the very same observation upon it that I have now done to you. They thought themselves wise, and they went upon axioms of state in doing of it; but had they known their interest, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory. And the apostle, you see, gives this as the greatest and most eminent instance of the folly of state policy which often princes take up against Christ, and the wisdom of the gospel, the true wisdom. And it is farther observable to this purpose, what likewise the apostle saith

in the following chap. iii. 17, applying the same in substance which he here had observed upon their crucifying Christ, unto the defiling or destroying the church of God, the saints, which is the point in hand, whom Christ hath left behind him, out of the like carnal wisdom and worldly policy : ' If any man defile or destroy the temple of God, him shall God destroy : for the temple of God is holy, which temple are ye. Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise ; for the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God ; for it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.' As God caught those Jewish princes and priests in their own craftiness against Christ, so he will for ever do those that offer violence to his saints, especially when out of state and worldly interests. That these Jews were taken in their own craftiness, if it needed, might largely be shewn ; the thing they feared and avoided was brought upon them : the Romans came and took away their place and nation to this day ; yea, and it was greatly occasioned by the same motive which in policy they embraced, whereby to avoid it.* For as the rising of many false Christs was the curse of that nation for refusing the true, and is made the sign of their destruction by our Saviour, Mat. xxiv., so it was the Jews' proneness to believe that their Messiah should come about that time, and deliver them from the Roman yoke, that the more encouraged them in their rebellion and revolt from the Romans, which occasioned their utter destruction by them. And so Tacitus, yea, and Josephus also, did thereupon interpret that Jewish prophecy, of the king of the world to come out of Jewry, of Vespasian himself, that was the destroyer of them (he coming a victor out of Jewry, who was Lord of the world), God thus retorting out of the mouths of these two witnesses, a heathen and a Jew, their former sin in rejecting their natural Lord, the true king (indeed) of all the world, his Son. Thus returning, I say, with the highest reproof upon these Jews, by this, that that emperor of Rome† (their enemy and destroyer, together with his son‡) should obtain and carry away the repute of that prophecy (they relied upon, too late), and this because they came out of Judea, from the executing that vengeance the Jews had by this brought upon their own heads ; § this having been manifestly the destruction of that nation, and being likewise the pattern of the New Testament. Give me leave to give you this further observation by the way about it : that God disposed in his providence so, that all states and sorts of men among them should have their hands in it, because God's purpose is not to destroy any nation for his people's sake, till all sorts therein

* It is the interpretation of Dr Jackson, which, because it openeth a scripture, I will give in his own words : Out of this undoubted pre-notion, that this was the very time wherein the Lord had promised to deliver this people from the hands of their enemies, they became so prone (as the event proves they were) to take arms and rebel against the Romans, partly about the time of our Saviour's birth, but especially after his resurrection. There was no man of great might or potency among them, which did not take upon him to promise this people's deliverance from the Roman yoke ; and the multitude were as prone to believe every one that would take upon him the name and title of a saviour, or deliverer. The foresight of this proneness in great ones to promise salvation to this people, and the people's proneness to believe them, did occasion our Saviour to give those admonitions to his disciples, ' Beware of false Christs,' Mat. xxiv. 4, Mark xiii. 6, Luke xxi. 6, which would arise in Jewry before the destruction of Jerusalem, with such fair enticing promises and pretences of deliverance, that if it had been possible, the very elect should have been deceived by them. (In a sermon upon Luke xxi. 25.)

† Vespasian.

‡ Titus.

§ His blood be upon us and our children, said they, who had formerly said of the greatest kingdoms in their ruins, ' My blood upon Chaldea, shall Jerusalem say,' Jer. li. 35.

concur in their ill using of them. The second Psalm prophesying of the crucifying of Christ, says, that 'the heathen, the people, the kings of the earth, the rulers, took counsel against the Lord's anointed,' which the apostles in their prayer (of which by and by), Acts iv. 27, interpret, 'That Herod, Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together against his child Jesus.' Both the ecclesiastical and the civil state among the Jews concurred in it: the Sanhedrim first, and elders of the people; and they with much ado persuade the people (the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude, Mat. xxvii. 10); and when that was with difficulty done, it was long ere Pilate did consent; he kept off and washed his hands, though the people, priests and all, sought to him; but in the end yielded. And what was the reason Pilate came in at length also? Because God would have the Roman empire (which he meant to break upon Christ and his saints as the former), to be wound in, even in the guilt of Christ's blood, and to embrue their hands in it, as Pilate the Roman governor did by his sentence, and the Roman soldiers by execution. And therefore we find, Rev. xi. 8, Rome to be called the city where our Lord was crucified, because by the power and jurisdiction of that state, that so the blood of all, yea, even of Christ himself, might be found in her at her destruction, Rev. xviii. 24.

But to proceed in this Jewish story. When our Lord was ascended, we read, Acts iv., that when 'Peter and John were preaching to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them,' ver. 1. 'And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold,' ver. 3. And then, ver. 23, 'they being let go (only with threatening to speak no more in his name) they went to their own company, and there they went to prayer.' And what do they urge to God but the second Psalm, and spread that before him, merely upon this occasion that they were fallen upon, and interrupted in his worship, and threatened to preach no more in that name, which they, being the relicts of Christ left behind him here, were to hold forth. They prayed over with one accord the second Psalm, 'Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven and earth, who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, (and now anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows), both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together,' &c. These his disciples, being his fellows in his anointing, did accordingly, as you here see, interest their cause in his, by putting God in mind what they did unto their Lord, in crucifying him, to provoke him thereby to consider what was now done to themselves by the rulers, scribes, and elders, priests, and band of the temple, ver. 1-5.

Well, still the Jews go on, and follow the same trade as our Saviour Christ, in Luke xxi. 10, 11, foretold his disciples that they should; and withal, he foretold them that there should be wars upon this, and commotions, nation rising against nation, &c. 'Before all these (says Christ) they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prison, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake:' our Saviour therein shewing that this persecution of the saints should be the cause of all these wars, and so of that nation's ruin, as well as his own death, so involving his cause and theirs together. But they, as afore the wars, so after the wars, and during the time of them, Christ

says, should go on, and take no warning; this you find in Mat. xxiv. 7-9 verses compared, 'And this (says Christ there) shall be a testimony unto you.'

Now that second Psalm, whither the apostles have brought us, and which the apostles in the beginning of the gospel prayed thus over against the Jews, was by the Holy Ghost intended against all nations and kingdoms that should in like manner deal injuriously with the saints, as the Jews had done with Christ, to the end of the world, so making this instance the pattern and example to the rest. In the next words, if you read on, you find a solemn inauguration of Christ as king now when ascended into heaven, 'I have set my King on my holy hill,' with a proclamation and declaration of God's decree, and great design under the New Testament, to be effected and accomplished by this his new king set up: 'I will declare the decree,' &c., ver. 7, which, as a preface, refers to all that follows, and is in effect no other than the same you have all this while heard out of the Old. He gives Christ as a boon, upon his inauguration, all the kingdoms of the world: 'I will give thee (saith he) the heathen for thine inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession.' What to do? Either to break them, or convert them. 'Thou shalt bruise them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.' And this drift the apostles well knew, and therefore pertinently urged it in their prayer to God against the Jews, which prayer of theirs had a concurrent influence into their ruin. Now, as the destruction of Jerusalem is made by Christ the fore-running type of the end of the world, so the destruction of that nation for these their doings to Christ and his apostles, and their followers, is an example to all kingdoms that shall do the like afterwards unto the saints; for which Christ hath and will break them also. Therefore, how ends the Psalm? 'Be wise, O ye kings, and instructed, ye judges of the earth,' &c. That is in effect, All ye states and princes of the world, learn to know this your interest. Although this might be enough in the general for the whole New Testament,

Yet come we to the Roman empire. The book of the Revelation is a prophecy of the destruction of that empire, either as heathenish in the whole, or else when Christian (yet persecuting then) in both the parts of it, east and west. That book is a tragi-comedy, which begins with a kingdom given to be won by conquest,* and ends with the coronation of a king, and the marriage of his bride; and all between is but the removing of all such lets and impediments, namely, of the Roman monarchy, and all other kingdoms which that was broken into, so far as they stand in his way, and possess the room of that kingdom which he is to set up. That this is one main argument of that book, I refer you to what that great and learned interpreter, Master Mede, hath largely opened.

And herein Christ, when he first began (the whole world then worshipping idols) had work enough to do. He sets first upon conquering the whole Roman empire, as it was heathenish, and the worship of Satan and idols in it, and in three hundred years he despatcheth that, and throws down all both idol worship, and princes that did uphold it. This the first six seals do shew, chapter vi.; and then when the whole empire was turned Christian, yet (as one well said) the devil did not turn Christian; but under the name and profession of Christ, he stirreth up the Arian Christian world to persecute the orthodox Christians as much as heathenish Rome had done. But Christ takes farther vengeance for this persecution under both these,

* Rev. vi. 8, when the seals begin to be opened, Christ goes forth conquering and to conquer.

heathenish and Arian Rome.* The empire having been divided afore into two parts, the eastern (all which now the Turk possesseth) and the western, this in Europe, he falls first upon the western European part, breaking that by the incursion of those barbarous nations the Goths and Vandals, and this the four first trumpets do sound forth, chapter viii. Then for the eastern part of the empire (although his revenge was slower), yet he reserved them to the sorest vengeance that could befall the Christian world, chapter ix., the conquest and tyranny of the Saracens first, and afterwards the Turks, and these the fifth and sixth trumpets successively held forth. Thus here is an end of the Roman monarchy under the emperors, in the whole, and in the parts of it. The western part in Europe was, by occasion of the Goths' invasion, broken into ten kingdoms, chapter xii, which though helping the woman against the flood of Arian persecution, yet (through Satan's seducing of them) they set up the beast, or antichristian Rome, and these altogether did join together to make as great a war against the saints in the 13th chapter, as the heathens and Arians had done. And so Christ was in a manner as far off his kingdom as at the first. What then is the next great counter-plot of Jesus Christ? It is to overcome these ten kingdoms; so you find, Rev. xvii. 14, 'They shall' (saith he) 'make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings; and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.' The world, though turned Christian, yet in all the variations of it goes on still to persecute the saints. For why? The world will be the world still, and the devil, who is the prince of the world, is the same still, and so he still follows that trade he had formerly practised, the same which you read of chapter xii. verse 17, even to make war with the remnant of the woman's seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus. This is his design; and let the world turn never so much, and refine as much as it will, Satan endeavours still to form a party up amongst them, whom he turns against the saints (or some of the saints), for that is the great interest of his kingdom (as that place shews); it is more to persecute the saints, than to carry men on to sin. And he will be content to fall but upon a few sometimes, rather than be put out of this his trade. And therefore now besides plain popery, which is prophesied of in 1 Tim. iv., to arise in the latter days, you have in 2 Tim. iii. 1 another prophecy of a sort of men that shall arise in the last days (popery is prophesied of to be in the latter days), who shall have a form of godliness, and be despisers of them that are good. Thus the devil hath carried on his design age after age, and Jesus Christ pursues more closely his great design also, and will never leave till he hath overcome; and he shall overcome, for he is the King of kings, and those that are with him are called chosen and faithful. And all this (if it were not the scope of that book of the Revelation) yet story would make good. Why should I instance in more? You know the little stone, Christ and his saints, shall dash all in pieces, Dan. ii. But enough.

You have heard the truth of this point exemplified by all these instances. As for reasons of it, the Scripture affords a far greater plenty than of instances, and in many of the instances given you may find reasons adjoined by God himself: as here in the text, they are God's anointed; in that example of Egypt's overthrow, God's first-born; in that of Babel's, it was the vengeance of God's temple, and so on. The time will give me leave to single out but a very few of many. The doctrine was this, that the greatest

* It was the cry of the blood of the saints slain under both, that brought on them the vengeance that followed. See chapter vi. 10, 11.

interest of all states and princes lies in their usage of the saints ; to deal ill or well with them is that whereon their misery or welfare doth depend.

Reason 1. One reason of it is (that which should indeed have been my first observation out of the text, viz.), the nearness and dearness of the saints to God. You see how tender he is of them, Touch them not. If you would understand the tenderness of God's heart expressed in that word, parallel it with that, 'He that toucheth them toucheth the apple of mine eye,' and you have the expression twice, Ps. xvii. 8 and Zech. ii. 8. There is nothing more dear than the eye,—you would have pulled out your eyes, says Paul,—and of the eye the *pupa*, the black of the eye most. When the Ammonites required of the men of Jabesh-Gilead that they should thrust out all their right eyes, 1 Sam. xi. 2, the text saith, ver. 6, that when Saul heard of it, 'the Spirit of God came upon him, and his anger was greatly kindled,' and he went and cut them off and scattered them, so that 'not two of them were left together.' If Saul, their king, a tyrannical king, was thus moved for this offer of an injury to the eyes of his subjects, much more God for those who are to him as his own eye, yea, as the apple of it ; or if you will have this reason in an expression more nearly akin to the doctrine itself, they are dearer to God than nations simply considered. The reason is strong, that therefore the interest of all nations must needs lie in these saints : Isa. xliii. 3, 4, 'I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee : therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.' Thus he valued them under the Old Testament. But did he give nations for them then ? They have cost him more since, they have cost him the blood of his Son. 'He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us, how shall he not with him freely give us all things?' Rom. viii. 32. All things are theirs, the world, &c., because they are Christ's. Look what reasons the Old Testament gives of this point in hand from their nearness to God, the New Testament useth the same. 'They are my first-born,' said God to the kingdom of Egypt, and therefore 'I will take away thy first-born.' The New Testament speaks the same ; they are the 'church of the first-born, written in heaven,' Heb. xii. 23. Was it the vengeance of the temple was Babel's overthrow ? The New Testament utters the same, and to the same purpose, 'If any man destroys the temple of God, him shall God destroy : for the temple of God is holy, which temple are ye,' 1 Cor. iii. 17. Again, 'Israel is holiness to the Lord, the first-fruits of his increase : and therefore all that devour him shall offend' (offend greatly) ; 'and evil shall come upon them, saith the Lord,' Jer. ii. 3. Thus speaks the Old Testament. The same reason and expressions are given, you see, in the New : 'The temple of God is holy,' and they are 'the first-fruits of all his creatures,' James i. 18 ; 'These are the redeemed from among men, and the first-fruits to God and the Lamb,' and therefore prevail, Rev. xiv. 4.

And as because they are thus dear to God, therefore if they be dealt ill withal, it is the cause of the ruin of a nation ; so on the contrary likewise, if a nation deal well with them, it is a cause of his blessing upon them, yea, he doth give nations and states their being for their sakes. 'They are a blessing in the midst of the land,' Isa. xix. 24, insomuch as God spareth the tree for a small bunch of grapes (so he compareth his people in respect of the rest of a nation) ; 'Destroy it not, for there is a blessing in it,' Isa. lxxv. 8, or rather as the same Isaiah ; they are to the whole tree (the nation they live in) what the pith, the heart, the substance is. 'As an oak whose substance is in them when they cast their leaves, so the holy seed (the saints) shall be the substance of it,' Isa. vi. 13 ; that preserves life in a

nation when the branches of it are hewn, or it casts its leaves. These things are spoken in relation to their being the cause of the preservation of a nation in both these places. Saints that are as strangers to a nation, and only make it their refuge, yet their presence is in such a case a preservation to them. 'Moab' (says God), 'let mine outcasts dwell with thee, and be thou a covert to them,' Isa. xvi. 4; and ver. 5, 'And in mercy shall the throne be established.' But much more native saints procure this blessing, their relation being nearer and dearer. 'Of Sion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her;' and what follows? 'The Highest himself shall establish her,' Ps. lxxxvii. 3.

Reason 2. Secondly, Another reason is taken from the great interest the saints have in God the governor, and the privilege which themselves have vouchsafed them by God in ruling and governing this world, and the providences of God therein. They are privy councillors to the great King of kings, who governs all the states and kingdoms in the world, and God doth give these his saints a commission to set up and pull down by their prayers and intercessions. The Old Testament speaks in a high language in Isaiah xlv. 11 (I might have quoted it before, for it comes in as the reason of God's setting up Cyrus for his people's sake), 'Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me.' Who speaks this? The words afore are, 'Thus saith the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker.' It would have been blasphemy for us to have said it, but that the Lord himself first hath said it, and given them this privilege, 'Concerning the work of my hands command ye me;' and which makes it the more observable, before he doth in this place mentioned confer this honour and privilege upon them, he first (as on purpose) minds them of that infinite distance and disproportion betwixt himself and them (so to put the more wonder upon it); he tells them, ver. 9, 10, that they were but the clay, he the potter, that could not (therefore of right) say so much unto him about his matters as, Why madest thou me thus? Yet behold, I that am thus your maker, give you leave to dispose by your prayers the great works of my hands, which concern my children, my sons, the affairs of kingdoms, even so far as they relate to their good. And he speaks it upon this occasion, that for their sakes he had raised up Cyrus, and pulled down the Babylonian monarchy, because they by their prayers had sought this. They are said elsewhere to 'decree a thing,' so Job, chap. xxii. 28, and 'to bring it to pass;' and God is said to 'fulfil their counsels,' Ps. xx. And this interest they have either for good or evil to the nations they live in: first, for evil; thus, Rev. xi. 6, the 'two witnesses have power to smite the earth with plagues as oft as they will;' and if any man will hurt them in this manner, he shall be killed, that is, with the highest and sorest vengeance, and God avengeth them speedily, Luke xviii. 8. And so for blessing, 'the innocent delivers the island through the pureness of his hands,' Job xx. 30. Thus one righteous Lot was (for the present) the cause of the rescue of the Sodomites, the wickedest people in the world, and afterwards ordained to the greatest judgment.

Reason 3. A third reason is the interest of Jesus Christ himself. And to shew that he is King, even King of kings, and hath a kingdom ordained to him and his saints, supreme to all theirs in the mean while, his design and practice is, and hath been, to break all kingdoms that do oppose him or oppress his saints. This reason I might enlarge out of Daniel: 'The God of heaven shall set up a kingdom, which shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, but it shall stand for ever,' chap. ii. 44 and chap. vii.; but I shall insist (in this head of reasons) only upon that eminent title of Christ's (which

holds forth this his interest), that he is entitled King of saints, Rev. xv. 3 ; which title is there given him, as in relation to the setting up his worship, so to the overthrowing and overcoming the nations that do oppose his saints, and this by the seven vials which their prayers have filled. And at that time (it is likewise there said) he doth marvellous works, being King of saints. In the Old Testament he is called the King of nations (though he was King of saints also then), so Jer. x. 7 ; and he gave demonstration of it to purpose, by setting up that one nation of the Jews which he had chosen of all nations, that that one nation should ruin all the nations round about them : for he was peculiarly their king, and the king of all those other nations also. But now he hath scattered his saints in and through all nations ('Thou hast redeemed us out of all nations,' that is the language of the New Testament), he is therefore therein called King of saints ; he carrying on the same design by those saints which he did before, and is as able to make it good, he being no less King of nations still, or Lord Almighty (as you have it in that fore-cited place). And he being thus peculiarly their King, his interest is to maintain, defend, and take part with them against all those that do malign them, as he did the nation of the Jews. It is his title, and his most royal title, and the greatest title, that he is King of saints ; he preferreth it to his title of being King of nations ; that vanisheth, and is not mentioned in comparison. This, therefore, answerably must be his greatest interest, which of all other he now pursueth. And therefore, if all those nations in which his saints are do not bow to it, and comply with it, he will shew himself that he is King of saints, and of nations also, by ruining of them. As the greatest interest of the devil's kingdom is to persecute those that keep the commandments of Jesus, so it is the greatest interest of the kingdom of Jesus Christ to preserve his saints, and to confound those that injure them, for he is the King of saints. And further, in the Old Testament, when this his kingdom was farther off and longer to come, and yet you have seen how strongly he drove on this design then ; but in the New Testament he is ascended, and personally as man invested into it : ' We see Jesus crowned with glory and honour ' (saith the apostle, Heb. ii., whose faith was as real in this as our sight can be), and he sits there expecting, as thinking the time long, ' till all his enemies are subdued,' Heb. x. 13 ; which the same apostle elsewhere interpreteth (and therein speaks home to the point in hand), the putting down ' all rule and dominion ' that are opposite to his saints, 1 Cor. xv., 24th and 25th verses compared. And accordingly in all those psalms, wherever his ascension and investiture into his kingdom at God's right hand is prophesied of, there the ruin or conversion of kings and kingdoms are also spoken and prophesied of. Read Ps. ii., Ps. lxxviii., and Ps. cx. And let me add this to all : that as the shorter time Satan hath, the more is his rage, so the shorter time Christ hath, and the nearer he is to the possession of his kingdom, the more is his zeal for his saints, and indignation against his enemies. His heart is set upon it, and the more eager doth his desire become every day to attain his long-expected kingdom, and to throw down all that oppose it ; and therefore it is that we see in this latter age he hath made such changes in the world. We have seen him do that in a few years that he hath not done in an hundred years before ; for he being King of nations, and King of saints, he pursues his interest ; and being more near his kingdom, he takes it with violence. We are now within the whirl of it, therefore his motions are rapt. Hence, therefore, all states and kingdoms had need now (of all times else) to be instructed ; and accordingly comply with this interest of Christ, it is more especially now than ever their greatest interest. It is well

for us that Jesus Christ is our king, who is the King of kings and King of saints ; and withal, that he is so near the enjoyment of his kingdom.

Application. I shall now come to a word of application, which I shall despatch exceeding briefly. In those fore-rehearsed instances I have carried you over, and given you a prospect of all kingdoms throughout the story of the Bible, and at last I brought you and set you down, and left you in the times of these ten kingdoms of Europe, of which the Holy Ghost hath prophesied, Rev. xvii. 14 : ‘ These (saith he) shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them : for he is the Lord of hosts, and King of kings ; and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.’ And, it is certain, we are in the last times of these kingdoms, and we all here live in one of them. But a word of encouragement and direction to those of this kingdom.

1. *Encouragement.* You have heard in those words I last read, the greatest security that any kingdoms can have in these times : for first, in the general, this text holds forth plainly that Jesus Christ by virtue of his being King of kings, and being King of saints (as you heard even now), he will overcome and subdue these kingdoms to himself, and yet (for our encouragement) not so as to destroy them. Why ? Because these kingdoms, as such, shall destroy the whore ; and therefore shall not be overcome by way of desolation, but by way of a more happy conquest of reformation and conversion. Thus the text seems clearly to speak : ‘ For the ten horns (which are these ten kingdoms) shall hate the whore, and make her desolate, and burn her with fire,’ verse 16. As I have therefore thought this text to be a bar to the projected Spanish monarchy, over them, even then when it was in the greatest height, and in most probability to have carried it ; so the greatest security for continuance and preservation of these kingdoms, because they must remain ten kings or supreme states and kingdoms, until the whore is burnt, for they must destroy her. And first, for their number, ten : it is true, they have indeed been more, yet never fewer, since the breaking of the Roman empire. And when it is said ten kings, it is not necessarily to be understood there should be so many monarchs always (in a strict sense as we use the phrase), for in the language of this book kings is put for supreme states. Thus Rome is said to have had seven kings, and yet five of those governments were not monarchical. These kingdoms may fall one upon another ; there may be civil broils, and divisions, and distractions, and thereby they may be sorely punished, as we have been, for dealing ill with the saints. Likewise, two may be joined into one, and one may be broken into two, so they have varied in several times and ages, yet still they have stood, and at the least the number of ten hath been kept up ; and though they have made war against the Lamb, and have been punished for so doing, yet the Lamb shall overcome them another way than by destroying them, even by winning ground upon them : so as where you see Jesus Christ hath took footing in any one of these kingdoms by such a way of conquest (as in ours he hath done a second time for double security), stand that kingdom shall till you see Rome down.

Now the next thing I desire you to take notice of in the words is, the reason why that Christ will thus overcome them, and preserve them. For (says the Holy Ghost) ‘ those that are with him’ (namely, in these ten kingdoms, and so members thereof), are ‘ called, and faithful, and chosen.’ Therefore it is that the Lamb shall work these kingdoms about, and win ground upon them, and shall cause them at length to hate the whore, and therefore they shall stand till the whore be ruined, and how long after, he only knows that hath set them up.

It hath been one great outward evidence to my faith, of the truth of the New Testament, that what was in particular foretold in this book so distinctly, should so come to pass as we see it hath done. When John wrote this prophecy, there were none of all these kingdoms set up, the empire was not broken. You see the empire hath been broken into these kingdoms, and they have given their power to the beast; and we know how rooted the power of the beast once was in all these kingdoms, so as, who could make war with the beast? Yet we have likewise seen the Lamb hath overcome many of them, especially these northern kingdoms, where he hath set up his temple. He hath overcome them, and he wins ground upon us every day, and works us up age after age to a farther reformation, to more light and holiness, and so he will do till he hath perfectly overcome every popish principle out of them. We see all this done; we see likewise all these kingdoms stand, and not subdued to any one civil monarchy over them all. We see Rome prophesied of in this book, Rev. xvii. 18, yet standing and possessing some of these kingdoms. We see likewise multitudes of faithful called and chosen, whom God hath raised up in these kingdoms to oppose the whore. All these things we have seen fulfilled; therefore I believe this shall be fulfilled too, that these kingdoms shall still continue, where God hath faithful, called, and chosen, and that they shall be the ruin of the whore in the end. Having seen and believed so far, we may very well trust him for the rest. This for the general.

More particularly, to you of this kingdom we live in. If you would yet know and be confirmed in what is your greatest interest, this text speaks more punctually to the point, and it holds forth, by way of prophecy, thus much to you, that your interest lies (as you are one of these ten kingdoms) in what I have hitherto told you, even in your faithful, called, and chosen. And let me speak this for your peculiar encouragement farther: that look as where God doth give a command with a reason, upon whom the reason falls most strongly, there is the greatest obligation; so where God gives a promise, and gives it with a reason, where most of the reason is found true, there certainly the promise will take place most in the fulfilling of it. Now, upon what hath he put the standing of these kingdoms, and their being thus 'overcome by the Lamb,' and that they shall 'hate the whore,' so as to destroy her in the end? It lieth, you see, in this, that they that 'are with the Lamb are faithful, called, and chosen.' He puts the very reason of it upon this, 'The Lamb shall overcome them: for' (saith he) 'they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.' Now, look upon this isle in which we live, and it is the richest ship, that hath the most of the precious jewels of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in it, and the greatest treasure of any kingdom in the world, I had well-nigh said, as all the world besides. Now, where there are most of called, chosen, and faithful, certainly there (towards the time of Rome's ruin) the promise will take the most effect. Here, then, lies your interest. You have it not only confirmed from the general truth of that great point I have all this while been giving demonstrations of, but further, you have it confirmed by a more special charter of promise and prophecy (which you may well believe, having seen so much of it fulfilled), granted forth to these kingdoms long before their erection. And as for this kingdom, give me leave, upon this so just and solemn an occasion, to take the boldness to utter this in the same expression, which now well-nigh twenty years ago I used in public, that if we had stood at God's elbow when he bounded out the nations, and appointed the times and seasons that men should live in (as the apostle speaks), we should not have known (unless when Christ himself was alive, and the apostles, in those primitive times,

unless in Judea itself, where all the apostles were together), in what age or in what place, in what nation or kingdom we should have chosen to have lived in, in respect of the enjoyment of the gospel, and the communion of saints, more than in this kingdom wherein we live. Other churches they have had the glory of reformation, and have had the honour in the first age of reformation; but we, though in that respect we have been like to blear-eyed Leah, yet have since been abundantly the more fruitful of 'saints, faithful, called, and chosen.' This is, therefore, our great security; and it is the more special interest of this kingdom in which we live, the *magna charta* of it.

2. *Direction.* And, therefore, that which I shall make further bold with your leave and patience, is but only this, to add a word of exhortation and direction to maintain this interest, and to preserve it. To this end, consider it is not simply having saints, and multitudes of saints, 'called, faithful, and chosen,' but it is the using them kindly, and dealing well with them, that is the interest of a nation. Judea itself had the best of saints; it had Christ and his apostles, and multitudes of others also in that country (which were afterwards dispersed into all nations), yet, though they had these multitudes, because they dealt unkindly with them, it was their ruin, and God provided a safety for those his saints, by dispersing them into all nations, through their persecution of them.

That worthy duke of Rohan, that writ that book of the *Civil Interest of the States of Europe*, in his preface to it, says, that according as the proper interest of each hath been well or ill followed, it hath caused the ruin of some, the greatness of others. That which that worthy duke thus speaketh of the civil interest, give me leave, from all the grounds fore-mentioned, to press upon you concerning that which is your greatest interest; an interest most divine, most general, and fundamental. THE SAINTS OF ENGLAND ARE THE INTEREST OF ENGLAND; look to, and keep to this your interest, namely, maintain and preserve the saints among you, and make provision for them, as you would preserve the kingdom. When afterwards the same author particularly comes to speak of the proper interest of England, he hath a saying (and he seems to speak it as if it had been an aphorism of the late queen's), that England is a mighty animal, which can never die except it kill itself. To follow his maxim in that also, we may apply it to this interest in hand. There is a mighty body, and a company of saints in this kingdom. Now if they could all be united in one, and their divisions and animosities allayed, and all reconciled and made one, I am confident we need not fear if all the nations of the world were gathered together round about us. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed ye be not consumed one of another. It is a state maxim as well as a church rule, there is nothing else can destroy us.

If any man think I am a-pleading for a liberty of all opinions, of what nature and how gross soever, I humbly desire them to remember that I only plead for saints, and I answer plainly, the saints they need it not. The apostle tells us that there are damnable heresies, so 2 Pet. ii. 1, 2, and they will soon unsaint men; there are errors that are capital, not holding the head, so Col. ii. Do but distinguish these from others, and let this be one foundation laid for this union. And when I say saints, I mean no one party of men. Do we not know that the new creature is found in circumcision and in uncircumcision, and as eminent in the one as in the other; and it were the highest sacrilege in the world to engross that title of saints and the godly party to any one. Characters of saints I need not give you; it hath been the main subject of the preaching in this kingdom for these

forty years and upwards to describe them to you, and distinguish men from men.

As there are multitudes of faithful, called, and chosen ones in this kingdom, so you, honourable and worthy senators, are the called and chosen out of all these to this great work, and have obtained mercy from our God to be in a great measure faithful. Consider the trust God hath committed to you. You have the richest treasury that I know God hath above ground elsewhere on earth. The saints of England are the interest of England. Write this upon your walls, to have it in your eye in all your consultations, never to swerve from it for any other interest whatsoever.

And have respect to the saints, and to the whole lump of them. If you will maintain your interest whole and entire, have regard to the saints, small and great. You shall often find that expression, as in Rev. xi. 18, 'When the kingdoms of the world became the kingdoms of Christ;' and Rev. xix., when the whore is judged, ver. 2, it is said that 'all the saints, small and great, rejoiced,' ver. 5, 7. What vow doth David make when he should obtain the kingdom? 'Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me,' Ps. ci. 6. Let yours be so.

You are the shields of the earth, under God, and for his saints, as in Ps. xlvii. The shield should defend the whole body, and all the parts and members of it. You are covering cherubims unto the ark of God (so the prince of Tyre is called, Ezek. xxviii. 16); stretch your wings from one end of the holy of holies to the other, so as to cover all. You are the nails of the temple, and for the vessels thereof, as Eliakim, Isa. xxii. 24, is called a nail, on which all the vessels should be hung, and by whom alike supported, the vessels of small quantity as well as great, from the vessels of cups even to all the vessels of flagons; so the prophet there speaks, comparing the people of God to the vessels of the sanctuary, and small weak saints to the vessels of smaller quantity, and the stronger to the greater; and Eliakim to a nail, and a like support to all. Shebna, his predecessor, had been an oppressor of the saints, and therefore God says of him that he should be driven from his station, and cut or sawn off from the wall, so as the wall should stand; and he would put Eliakim in his room, and hang all the saints upon him. You are Mordecais, and it is said of him in Esther x. 3, that he was accepted of the multitude of his brethren, seeking the wealth of his people, and speaking peace to all his seed. You are likewise called shepherds; now the shepherds are to take care of all the sheep. Oh see that all the sheep be folded, and have pastures to lie down in; not only a staff and a rod, but folds and pastures for them. Take care not of the strong only, but of the sick and the diseased, so the expression is, Ezek. xxxiv. 21, those that are sick and diseased, that men did push with their horns till they were scattered abroad, not only reduce them from their scatterings in a dark and a cloudy day, as Ezek. xxxiv. 13, 14, but feed them in a good fold, and judge betwixt them and those that would push them. You are fathers, and you should see provision made for all the children; and though they through waywardness will not eat together, yet let them not starve.

And to conclude, let me use your own word to you, unite, or (if you will the apostle's) reconcile all the saints in this kingdom together. Providence hath disposed it so, that they do and will differ in judgment. The apostles, who were oracles infallible, could not in their times wholly prevent it; and differing thus in judgment, they will hardly ever of themselves agree. But it is your work, and will be your honour, to make them and to cause them so to do, and to find out ways whereby this may be done, notwithstanding

these their differences. Thus Constantine dealt as a reconciler amongst his divines, and he did it with success.* It is of all works the happiest and most glorious, for it was Jesus Christ his eminent work: Eph. ii. 14, 'He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the partition wall between us, having abolished in his flesh the enmity;' and a greater enmity was betwixt Jews and Gentiles than among us. He did it by his blood; do you mingle his blood with faith, and mingle therewith but the rules given by the apostles by which they effected this, as in Rom. xiv., when one believed that he might eat all things, another that was weak durst not, but ate herbs, ver. 2. 'Let not him that eateth,' says he in this case, 'despise him that eateth not, and let not him that eateth not judge him that eateth.' And ver. 14, 'Let us not judge one another any more.' Certainly this rule, with such others, reduced to practice, as are found in their writings, would heal all. I shall not stand to dispute that place now. I shall only, upon occasion thereof, acquaint you with an observation which to me was strange (having considered former proceedings) when I first found it. In the late Book of Canons, that were made just afore this parliament and stirs began, when the bishops would have brought in bowing towards the communion table (the altar, as it was called), after many specious colours pre-faced thereto, they close all with this, 'In the practice or omission of this rite, we desire that the rule of charity prescribed by the apostle may be observed, which is, that they which use this rite despise not them who use it not, and that they who use it not condemn not those that use it.' Could they not have said so sooner? The observing this very rule about those other things urged by them had ended all the quarrels, prevented all the oppressions of tender consciences, that were during all their days; it had saved and prevented the silencing of how many faithful ministers by them. But God (who, afore he punisheth, usually takes evidence, or at least lays a ground of their conviction whom he punisheth), when he had once drawn this out from them (though they did it for an end, to facilitate the introduction of that which was a novelty), yet then, *ex ore tuo*, out of their own mouths he condemns them, and stays not a moment from the execution. But from that time and word uttered by them, and published to the world, began their ruin; it hastened, and hastened instantly.

I am confident of it, that Christ, that King of saints that is in heaven, he will not rest till such time as he hath made us one, if not in judgment, yet in forbearance, and that if we will not take warning, and will not agree it, that either antichrist, or Jesus Christ himself, will come in upon us, and we shall be made to do it one way or other.

But if this great design of reconciling all the saints could be brought to a full issue and perfection; and if this your interest (a regard had to all the saints in this kingdom, which to me upon all the grounds fore-mentioned is the greatest interest of this kingdom) be followed and maintained, I would not fear, though (as the prophet Zechariah saith of Jerusalem, chapter iii. verse 3) 'all the people of the earth were gathered together against us.' We fear foreign forces; certainly let us keep to our own proper interest, and then if all the nations of the world were gathered together against us, I believe they would have the hardest pull of this nation that ever was of any. The Lord is here (as the prophet speaks, Ezek. xxxv. 10), or (let me express it

* Lege Eusebium in Vita Constantini, lib. iii. c. xiii. Ipse concilio interfuit, reconciliavit eos qui dissidebant, et ad concordiam persuasit: Eos qui paulo insolentiores et ferociores fuerunt, mitigavit; nec antea desiit, quam omnes ad concordiam revocaverit, et tum hanc quasi secundam victoriam nactus, *ἡπινίκιον ἑορτήν*, Festum Triumphale celebravit.—*Whitak.* contr. 3, quæst. 4.

in those similitudes Zechariah there useth) if they should come, and think to devour us, they will find this kingdom to be a cup of poison to them, verse 2 (so it is in your margins, but we read it, a cup of trembling), which they must not only vomit up again, but will be their death and destruction; they will find it to be a burdensome stone, as verse 3, which while they go about to overturn, or stir, or meddle withal, it shall fall back upon them, and cut them to pieces: 'I will make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.' And you that are the governors of Judah (as at the 6th verse) shall be as an hearth of fire among the wood, and a torch of fire in a sheaf, and all that oppose you and rise up against you shall be but as so many straws. Take a stack of straw, great for bulk and number, and lay it upon a few coals of fire upon an hearth, and what will become of them all? Though they cover the fire awhile, yet they will soon be consumed and burnt up. Read the 6th verse: 'I will make (saith God) the governors of Judah like a hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf, and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left.'

I shall only end with what is further spoken there of these governors of Judah in the 5th verse (which is the sum of what I have said), 'The governors of Judah shall say in their hearts' (as comforting themselves thereby), 'The inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be my strength, in the Lord of hosts their God.' And so say you, the saints of this our Jerusalem are our greatest interest and security through the Lord of hosts, his being our God; and let this saying be ever in your hearts, to encourage and to guide you.

Die Mercurii, 25 Feb. 1645.

Ordered by the Commons assembled in Parliament, That Sir Robert Harley and Master Purefoy do from this House give thanks to Master Thomas Goodwin for the great pains he took in the sermon he preached this day at the entreaty of this House, at St Margaret's, Westminster (it being the day of public humiliation). and to desire him to print his sermon. And it is ordered that none shall print his sermon without licence under his handwriting.

H. ELSYNGE, Cler. Parl. Dom. Com.

I do appoint Robert Dawlman to print this sermon.

THO. GOODWIN.