

THE BEAUTY OF MAGISTRACY.

By THOMAS HALL, B.D.

[*This Treatise, or Exposition, is inserted among SWINNOCK'S WORKS, because it is contained in the original edition of them, and it is desired that this reprint should not contain less than that edition contains.—ED.*]

THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

To all the pious, prudent, zealous, and magnanimous, Magistrates, Judges, Justices, and Gentry, in England, Scotland, and Ireland. Grace and peace; preservation here, and happiness for ever.

MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,—The dedication of this treatise was intended for the Parliament, but that being dissolved, it most properly falls to you, who are, under God, the pillars of the state. Such is the corruption of the times we live in, that we are put to dispute every inch of ground with the enemies of truth,—magistracy, ministry, Sabbaths, sacraments, Trinity, Scriptures, &c., all things are now questioned, nothing believed or practised by many. Formerly I have vindicated baptism, learning, and the ministry, now I am come to a vindication of the magistracy. Many are the affronts and discouragements which faithful magistrates meet with from an ungrateful world, as well as ministers.¹ You are now cried down by those levelling libertines, the fifth monarch-men, as antichristian and beasts, by those brutish men, Jude 10, as well as we. These are their words: The beast and false prophet are the wicked, bloody, antichristian magistracy, ministry, and lawyers.² We are all here shipped together in the same bottom, and must sink or swim together, when these monsters of Munster reign. One while we are troubled with church-levellers, and anon with state-levellers; but God hath, and will level all such as go about to level his ordinances, and to destroy that order which he hath set up in the world, as you may see in the treatise itself.

¹ Satan planteth his strongest batteries against the royal forts of magistracy and ministry; whoever are spared, David and Peter shall be sifted, knowing that he gains a double advantage by their miscarriage—viz., example and scandal, by which two wings it will soar higher, and fly much further.—*Swinnock*.

² *Vide* Standard of the Fifth Monarch-men, p. 20.

The sons of Belial may as soon pull the stars out of the firmament, as totally root up magistracy and ministry. They are the two great standing ordinances of God, which must stand so long as the world stands, Mat. xxviii. 20; 1 Cor. xv. 24. They are the pillars of church and state; they are like the two pillars in the porch of Solomon's temple, called Jachin and Boaz, *i.e.*, straightness and strength, 1 Kings vii. 21.¹ These are two special properties of a good pillar, it must be straight and strong; and when superiors are such, then are they supporters indeed, Ps. lxxv. 3; Gal. ii. 9. The Hebrews have a saying, that the world is upheld by three things—viz., by justice, religion, and gratitude; and when these three fail, the world, say they, decays. But a better than they hath told us, that when the judge and the prophet are taken away, then comes confusion and ruin, Isa. iii. 2, 5.² When Samson would destroy the Philistines, he took hold on the two pillars, and brought the house upon their heads, Judges xvi. 25–27. Take away these two pillars of magistracy and ministry, and you destroy both church and state.

The devil bears an inveterate hatred against these; they are the two butts that he specially shoots at, because by them God doth especially batter his kingdom.³ Where Moses and Aaron, the word and the sword, go hand in hand together, there Satan's kingdom falls like lightning from heaven, suddenly, universally, and irresistibly. I have experimentally found a greater visible reformation in one year, when we had an active, prudent, pious justice in the parish,⁴ than in twenty before, notwithstanding all my preaching and assisting of the officers.

There should, therefore, be a sweet harmony and mutual assistance between magistrates and ministers, since the one helps to uphold the other, and they are ordained by God for the mutual aid of each other. The minister wants the aid of the magistrate in temporals, and the magistrate wants the minister's aid in spiritual and eternal blessings. The minister hath need of the magistrate's sword to defend him against unreasonable men, and the magistrate hath

¹ Nec Hesperum, nec Luciferum, formosiores esse justitia, dixit Aristoteles. Non est major thesaurus, non eleemosyna opulentior, non bonum excellentius, non res hominibus utilior, post ipsum verbi ministerium, quam magistratus suum facientes officium.—*Luther*.

² Necessariæ res sunt in republica bene munitæ arces, muri, turres et arma; at nihil sunt hæc præsidia præ uno pio principe, publicæ pacis studioso.—*Luther*.

³ Pius et magnanimus magistratus est vere Gygis, qui conatibus improborum se audent opponere; hic enim non Hectorem, non Achillem, sed ipsum prosternit Satanam.—*Luther in Ps. lxxxii*.

⁴ Col. Greavis.

need of the minister's aid to maintain his authority in the consciences of men, Titus iii. 1. This made a learned magistrate to say, Were it but for ourselves, viz., for the upholding of magistracy, we had need to uphold the ministry. It is state policy and church policy so to do; for without ministers men may live commodiously, but not piously; and without magistrates men may live piously, but not peaceably and commodiously. Like stones in an arch, these two help to uphold each other. Hence good Jehoshaphat joined princes and Levites together, the better to promote and countenance religion in the land, 2 Chron. xvii. 8. It is a great mercy to magistrates when they have good ministers to assist and instruct them; it makes them prosper, as king Uzziah did when he had a good Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions of God, to counsel him, 2 Chron. xxvi. 3-5, 7, 8. Hence it is that David had his seers, Asa his Azariah, Jehoshaphat his Jehu, Hezekiah his Isaiah, Josiah his Huldah, and Zerubbabel his Joshua. These are, or at leastwise ought to be, the magistrate's best friends; by their praying, preaching, and example, they help to keep off sin and judgment from a land. Hence it is that the prophet Nathan is called the friend of David, 1 Kings iv. 5; and Jehoshaphat calls the Levites his sons, 2 Chron. xxix. 11; and King Joash calls Elisha his father, as King Joram had done before him, 2 Kings vi. 22, and xiii. 14. Such reverence did the great ones of the world of old shew to God's ambassadors. In the late troubles, we see how those places that had faithful ministers to instruct them, were ready to venture their lives and estates for the public good, when the ignorant Welsh and Irish, and those dark corners of the earth, were habitations of cruelty. An untaught people are always an untoward people. Let there be no dissension then between us, for we are brethren. *Si collidimur, frangimur*; if we dash one against another, we destroy one another. Let there be no interfering or encroaching on each other's offices; but let each keep within the bounds of that sphere and station, wherein his God hath set him. Magistracy and ministry are two distinct callings, as I have shewed in the treatise itself.¹

And since the discouragements are many which magistrates meet withal in the faithful discharge of their duty, I have therefore set before you the dignity of your calling, and shewed how sensible

¹ Magistratus est ordinatio Dei Creatoris, et ad omne genus hominum spectat; sed ministerium ecclesiasticum est donum et ordinatio Christi Mediatoris, ideoque non proprie et jure ordinario spectat nisi ad illos qui de ecclesia Christi.—*Ames. Medul.*, lib. ii. cap. 17, sec. 48.

God is of any indignities that are done unto you. Yet, lest any should be puffed up with his honours, the Holy Ghost presently adds the mortality of magistrates, and tells them, though they be earthly gods, yet they must die like men; and though they have been judges of the world, yet at last they must be judged themselves; and lest any should pretend ignorance of their duty, in this psalm, which I may fitly call the magistrates' directory, is set forth, 1. Negatively, what magistrates must not do; 2. Affirmatively, what they ought to do, with many reasons dispersed through the psalm to quicken them to their duty. So that I do not know a more lively psalm for this purpose, all things considered, in the whole Book of Psalms; so sharp and searching it is, that the bare singing of it at Westminster, the Sabbath before the judges were to vote concerning ship-money, brought the man into question that caused it to be sung; and yet the psalm was composed, as the learned conceive, that it might be sung either at the creation of new magistrates, or else before the old ones, before they went to the judgment-seat.

I have the rather been induced to this work, because I have observed that such as rulers are, such usually are the people;¹ if they be erroneous, the people will quickly follow them: Isa. iii. 12, 'O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err.'² One sinner, especially in authority, destroys much good, Eccles. ix. 18. One Rehoboam, Ahab, Jeroboam, falling from God, and setting up idolatry, will quickly draw all Israel with them, 1 Kings xii. 28, 30; 2 Chron. xii. 1. 'The wicked walk on every side, (in great numbers and swarms,) when the vilest men are exalted,' Ps. xii. 8. The more potent the sinner, the more mischief he doth;³ they have greater power and more able instruments at hand to promote their projects and wicked designs. The great red dragon that hath seven heads, and ten horns, and seven crowns, *i.e.*, that hath great potentes to act for him, draweth the third part of the stars down, and casteth them to the earth, Rev. xii. 4—*i.e.*, teachers, and such as by profession did shine like stars, yet by the tyrannical persecution of those great ones were drawn to idolatry. Great men's lives are poor men's laws; they are the looking-glasses by which inferiors oftentimes dress themselves. All their actions are examples, and their examples have a kind of compulsive power. Hence Peter is

¹ Quales in republica principes, tales reliquos solere esse cives, dixit Cicero.

² Malorum principium sunt mali principes.—*Emman. Thesaurus*. Though virtue be more amiable, yet vice is more imitable, especially in a prince.

³ Magnorum hominum medioeria non sunt peccata.—*Luther*.

said to compel them whom by his example he drew to Judaism, Gal. ii. 24. What we see sinks deeper into us than what we hear.¹ On the contrary, when great men are good men, they do much good. If Asa and Hezekiah be forward in reforming, so are the people, 2 Chron. xv. 9–12, and xxxi. 1. When certain ambassadors praised the Lacedæmonian soldiers for their good order, who before were mutinous, one of them ingenuously answered, *Nos iidem sumus ut nuper, sed alius nunc nobis est dux*, We are the same men still, but now we have another general. This is the very end why God advanceth any to honour, that so they might honour him, Esther iv. 14.

It was Vespasian's honour that his greatness became more advantageous to him in the promoting of goodness.² To encourage you, know, that if you build God's house, he will build your houses, Exod. i. 20, 21; if you advance his name, he will advance your names, and if you honour him, you shall be honoured by him. We see in all ages how reforming princes have prospered, as Moses, Joshua, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, Asa, 2 Chron. xiv. 2–8.³ What made Queen Elizabeth flourish? Why, she was happy in her counsellors, by whom she was for the most part ruled, and so grew amiable to her friends, and terrible to her foes. 'Wisdom is better than strength, or weapons of war,' Eccles. ix. 18. *Romani cedendo vincunt*. The welfare of a state is preserved, not so much by a multitude of warriors, as of wise and pious counsellors.⁴ Many soldiers think it needless to guard those who have the long sword to guard themselves; but let such know, that he is but sorrowfully guarded who hath himself only, and a few fellow-creatures, for his guardians.⁵ If God be against you, what good can your long sword do you? Ezek. iii. 3, 26. Piety and integrity are the best guardians.

2. Encourage a learned, pious, and laborious ministry. To this end improve your interest for the buying in of impropriations, that so every congregation may have an able pastor; for we see by daily experience that scandalous means breeds scandalous ministers.

¹ *Segnius irritant animos demissa per aures,
Quam quæ sunt oculis commissa.—Horat.*

² *Nec quicquam in te mutavit fortunæ amplitudo, nisi ut prodesse tantundem posses et velles.—Plin. Epis. ad Vespas.*

³ See Mr Woodward's chronicle of the good kings of Judah. *Princeps religionem roborando, ab ea roboratur.—Nazianz.*

⁴ It was a foul blot upon Chilperick, a king of France, that he was *titularis non tutelarix rex; defuit non præfuit Reipublicæ.*

⁵ *Optimum munimentum est munimento carere.*

Tithes are no burden to any but such as esteem the faithful dispensing of the gospel a burden; but for men to plough and sow for such as are truly impropiators, is a great grievance through the land. How many steal the goose and stick down a feather? swallow a hundred pound per annum, and allow the minister four pound per annum? The blood of souls cries against such men: and if the blood of Abel's body cried so loud against Cain, how loud will the blood of so many souls cry against these sacrilegious Canaanites? The abolishing also of that clause in 31 Henry VIII., 13, which exempts many great livings from paying of tithes, because they paid none in the times of abbots and friars, were a very noble work, and well beseeeming a parliament; for by this means a great part of many parishes pay nothing towards the maintenance of the gospel, and the burden lies upon a few tenants and inferior persons, who sometimes pay fifty shillings, whilst the lord of the manor pays not five pence. How many patrons of churches are latrons, robbing their ministers, whom they are bound to defend!

3. If ever the Lord shall call you to parliament again, labour to find out some expedient for an accommodation and the reconciling of God's people amongst themselves.¹ Unity and unanimity in God's worship, which some look upon as a misery, is indeed a great mercy, and is enjoined by the apostle as a special duty, 2 Cor. xiii. 11. Be of one mind,—*q.d.*, Though there have been divisions and dissensions amongst you, yet now be unanimous, and live in peace together. It is of greater consequence than many imagine. Division in the church breeds dissension in the state, and a state divided cannot long stand.² The apostle would never so earnestly have besought, and so strongly adjured God's people to unanimity, had it not been a special duty, Rom. xv. 5; 1 Cor. ii. 20; Phil. ii. 1, 2. The authors and fautors of those sad divisions and subdivisions which abound amongst us, have much to answer for before the Lord. It is easily seen at what door they come in upon us. The best means that I know to suppress exorbitances in the state, is parliaments, and to suppress disorders in the church, is synods. That synods are God's ordinance, and have been blest with success from God, is confessed by all sober men on all hands; and why an ordinance of Christ should lie so long unpractised, I know not.³

¹ See motives and directions for an accommodation in D. Bolton's Arraignment of Error, p. 340, *ad finem libri*.

² See the dangers of divisions in Mr Clark's tract against Toleration, p. 35, 40, &c.

³ *Vide* Cotton's Keys, chap. v. p. 25, and Burrough's Irenicum, chap. vii. p. 43, 44; Bolton's Arraignment of Error, p. 266, &c.

How long shall the church of God lie as a field without a fence, and a vineyard without a hedge, so that every wild beast breaks in upon it? For want of discipline, what corruption in manners, and errors in doctrine, like a flood have broken in upon us, and there is none to restrain them! for want of it young ministers begin to degenerate both in their life and doctrine, since they find the reins to lie so loose upon their own necks. The Presbyterian government is that government which by covenant we are bound to promote, it being that government which all the reformed churches of Christ do practise; and the only platform of government which carries a *Jus divinum* in the forehead of it.¹ Let those that can, produce a better platform; that model of our late dissenting anonymous—I shall not say anomalous—brethren, hath made the breach wider than ever; yea, some that wavered in that point, are now convinced of the weakness and insufficiency of their grounds for that way of independency.² We have some government in the state, yet church-government and reformation ought to be preferred before that of the state, is proved to my hand by a learned pen.³ The politicians of the world abuse rulers when they go about to prepossess them with prejudice against the kingdom and discipline of Christ, as if it were destructive to the civil government; whereas if they would but look abroad into the world, they should find that the rulers of the world have not more free, faithful, loyal subjects than those that are truly religious, and willing to submit their necks to Christ's sweet and easy yoke.

4. Restrain that spirit of error and delusion which, like wild-fire, hath spread over all the land.⁴ Nothing will please some men but a boundless toleration of all sorts and sects. No magistrate nor minister must control them; all government to such ungoverned ones is tyranny and persecution. How well this toleration agrees with our national covenant, wherein we vowed the extirpation of heresies, and whatsoever is contrary to sound doctrine, let the world judge. It was the great sin of Julian the apostate, that he granted liberty to pagans and heretics, that, by letting such weeds grow, he might the better destroy God's harvest.

¹ See my Comment. on 2 Tim. iii. 8, p. 174, 175, &c.

² *Vide* Declaration of the Faith, and Order of the Congregational Churches 1658.

³ Mr Anthony Burgess' Fast Sermon on Judges vi. 27; preached 1645.

⁴ That men should be tolerated to worship the devil, as it is easy to prove the Quakers do, if we consider the men, the matter, and the manner of their speaking, is very sad.

It is charged as a sin upon the church of Thyatira, that she tolerated Jezebel to seduce Christ's people, Rev. ii. 14, 20.¹

5. It were to be wished that some effectual course were taken for the enjoining of all governors, under a penalty, to send in their children and servants, both publicly and privately, to be catechised. The gross ignorance which still abounds in the body of our people is lamentable. Religion makes the best children, the best servants, and the best subjects; as we see in Abraham's catechised family, how promptly doth every one there perform his duty! It is just with God to suffer inferiors to rebel against their superiors, when they suffer them to rebel against God.

6. It were to be wished that some course might be taken for the better regulating of parishes. It is sad to see how unequally they are divided. In many places one parish comes to another parish church walls, and yet these people belong to another charge, it may be three or four miles off. Parochial assemblies, if they were made more uniform and compact, are best both for pastor and people.²

7. Free schools are very much wanting in many parts of the nation. Children are the seminary of the church, and if the seed be naught, the crop cannot be good.

Quest. But where is the means to maintain those schools?

Ans. Since all is devoured, I know but one way that is left, and that is by the improvement of commons and waste lands. They might, if wisely managed by commissioners from parliament—for the curmudgeons of the world will never consent to part with a turf for Christ if they can help it—be improved to ten times the value that now they are at, to the benefit of the parishioners and the advancement of many pious uses.

8. It were to be wished that all market towns that are very populous, and have men fit for government in them, were freely made corporations, and that inferior market towns had a justice of peace either in them, or planted very near them, that the people might not run seven miles to have a swearer, drunkard, or Sabbath-profaner punished. This would prevent abundance of sin which is committed in these places, at markets and fairs especially, for want of justices.

The Lord, the righteous judge of all, direct you by his Spirit, preserve you from sin and error; he fasten you as a nail in a sure place, crown your endeavours with success for the settling of truth

¹ Against toleration, see an elaborate treatise of Mr Clerk, called 'Apples of Gold.'

² *Vide* Mr Firmin against Schism, chap. ii. p. 39, &c.

and peace upon firm foundations in this distracted, distressed church and state; he make all mountains a plain before you, that you may be the repairers of out-breaches, and the raisers of the foundations for many generations, that the children unborn, in their generations, may rise up, and call you blessed. This is, and shall be the prayer of your devoted servant in the work of the Lord,

THO. HALL.

KINGSNORTON, *Sept.* 10, 1659.

TO THE READER.

CHRISTIAN READER,—Much might be said, and that deservedly, concerning the beauty of this exposition of the 82d Psalm, called by the worthy author ‘The Beauty of Magistracy;’ it discovering that ordinance of God, magistracy, in its genuine beauty and lustre. As my many occasions would permit, I have perused several parts thereof, and can assure the reader that I find the exposition solid and judicious, the method clear and perspicuous, the style terse and clean, yet grave and theological; the application warm, holy, and proper; the whole learned, gracious, and worthy the eye, love, and practice of a judicious reader who hath the encouragement to peruse it, and also that he may do it with profit, the prayers in his perusing it of his servant in our Lord’s work,

W. JENKYN.

Feb. 3, 1659–60.

THE BEAUTY OF MAGISTRACY:

AN EXPOSITION OF PSALM LXXXII.

A PSALM OF ASAPH, OR A PSALM FOR ASAPH.

Ver. 1. *God standeth in the congregation of the mighty: he judgeth among the gods.*

To speak anything in commendation of the book of Psalms were to pour water into the sea, or to set up a light to the sun. It is so fully done already by others, that I shall only refer you to them, and so pass on.¹

We read of divers psalms in the book of Psalms which bear the title of Asaph; as Ps. l., lxxiv., lxxv., lxxvi., lxxvii., lxxviii., lxxix., lxxx., lxxxi., lxxxii., lxxxiii. The question is, whether these psalms were written by Asaph, or for Asaph, since the original will bear both.² Some conceive that Asaph was the author and inditer of the Psalm, for Asaph was a seer and a prophet, and made psalms as well as David, as appears, 2 Chron. xxix. 30, 'The Levites praised God with the words of David, and Asaph the seer.' Yet the best and most interpreters do conceive that this psalm was made by David, and committed to Asaph as chief singer, or to his sons, who were singers in Israel, 1 Chron. xxv. 2, to be sung for the use of the church of God. Hence the Geneva translation renders

¹ Vide Piscator's Preface in his Comment on the Psalms, and Mr Roberts' Key to the Bible, before the Psalms. Psalterium est quædam cælestis sphaera, stellis densa micantibus; est Paradisus animarum, poma continens innumera, quibus mens humana suaviter saginata pinguescit.—*Cassiodorus*.

² Duodecim sunt Psalmi qui Asaph inscribuntur.—*A Lap.*, 13. Saith Weemse: *Le Asaph*, i.e., Asaphi vel Asapho, nam *Le* inservit tum genitivo, tum dativo. ψαλμὸς τῷ Ασαφ, Psalmus ipsi Asapho, *Sept. Versio Arabica*.—*Montan.*, *Sculctetus*, *Piscator*.

it, A Psalm committed to Asaph.¹ That some of those twelve or thirteen psalms which bear Asaph's title, yet were David's psalms, appears by the style of them, and is almost confessed on all hands. Whether this eighty-second Psalm be one of these, let the reader judge.² But since David and Asaph were both holy prophets of God, and divinely inspired; and specially since our Saviour himself hath confirmed the divine authority of this psalm, by referring us to it, John x. 36, it is needless to inquire which of them wrote it, since we are assured that it is canonical Scripture.³

This psalm may fitly be called the magistrate's psalm, or the magistrate's directory. The matter of it is didactical and doctrinal, setting forth the dignity, duty, and mortality of magistrates and judges, whom the psalmist exhorts to a faithful discharge of their places, by an impartial administration of justice, in punishing the wicked, and defending the good; and this he backs with many weighty arguments.

The first is drawn from the presence of God. He is said, in a more especial manner, to be present and president with these his vicegerents and deputies, ver. 1.

2. From the dignity of their place and calling. They represent the person of God, they bear his name, and are called his sons, and therefore they ought more especially *patrizare*, to resemble their Father in doing justice and judgment.

3. In respect of their mortality. They must die as other men, and come to judgment, and give an account for all that they have done.

4. That his words might have the greater weight, he brings in God himself, expostulating and reasoning the case with those unjust judges, for their abuse of that power which he had given them, ver. 2.

5. He exhorts them to a right performance of their duty, by an impartial dispensing of justice unto all, ver. 3, 4.

6. He aggravates their sin by their sottish ignorance and wilful negligence. They were *lucifuge*, haters of the light: ver. 5, 'They know not, neither will they understand; yea, they walk on in darkness: albeit the very foundations of the earth be moved,'—*q.d.*, Though all things be in confusion and disorder, and the

¹ It is usual in Scripture to put the head of a family for the family itself, as Aaron for his sons, 1 Chron. xii. 27. *Canticum ipsi Asaph traditum ut decantaretur.—Vatabl.*

² Who were the several penmen of the Psalms, you may see in the Exercitations of Weems, Exercit. xviii. p. 166.

³ In re tam parvi momenti liberum sit cuique judicium.

very pillars of the state shake under them, by reason of their oppression and tyranny, bribery and partiality, yet they would not see it to amend it, but made their lusts their law, to their own confusion.

7. He concludes with prayer, and by an apostrophe turns his speech to God: ver. 8, 'Arise, O God, judge thou the earth,'—*q.d.*, O Lord, I see it is in vain to expect justice from these unjust ones. Do thou therefore, O thou just judge of all the world, arise, and take the matter into thine own hands; execute justice for those that are oppressed; for all the nations of the world are thy proper possession.

Ver. 1. *God standeth in the congregation of the mighty: he judgeth among the gods.*

They are the words of the prophet, who, like a herald, proclaims the presence of God amongst the gods and judges of the earth. This preface the prophet makes, the better to excite the attention of those great ones, whose corruption, licentiousness, and pride is such, that they think they may act and speak, they may absolve or condemn at their own bar, who please themselves without control. God doth not see, say they, nor will he take notice of our actings. Stay there, saith the prophet, for he sees you, and stands by you too, though you see not him: 'God standeth in the congregation of the mighty: he judgeth among the gods.'

In these words we may observe,

1. The person ruling: God.
2. His posture: he stands.
3. The place where: 'In the congregation of the mighty.'¹
4. An exegesis or illustration of what he had said before: 'He judgeth amongst the gods.'

1. The person ruling is God, the supreme ruler of the world. Elohim; the word is plural, yet the word that answers it is singular.² This notes, say some, a plurality of persons in unity of essence.³ The Holy Ghost begins the Bible with this plural name of God, joined with a verb singular: Gen. i. 1, '*Elohim Bara, Dii creavit*,' *i.e.*, the mighty gods, or all the three persons in the Godhead, created.⁴ This is one of the most ancient names of God, and

¹ ἐν ἐγκάτω, in intimo.—*Aquila*.

² Eloah is the singular number.

³ See this point fully cleared in those elaborate annotations of Mr Ley on Gen. i. 1.

⁴ Verbum singulare simplicissimam Dei essentiam; nomen autem plurale designat tres personas.—*Bucan. loc.*, i. p. 7, ubi plura; Consule *A Lapide in Gen.* i. 1.

the first that is given him in Scripture, Gen. i. 1, 26, iii. 1, and xix. 24. The word is very significant, and notes unto us, that as God is the Creator, governor, and upholder of the world, so he is also the judge and punisher of such as do evil, and the rewarder of such as do well.

2. Here is his posture: 'He standeth;' he doth not sit. Standing is a posture of observation. He standeth to look up, in, and down, as it were, that he may see and hear what every one doth and says. He is always present and president amongst the rulers of the world:¹ 1. Teaching and directing them what they should do; 2. Observing their ways, to see what matters pass, and how they pass; 3. Keeping watch and ward for their defence whilst they rule for him and his. So much the participle of the present tense implies. It notes a continued act, signifying that God is present at all the assizes, sessions, and sittings of magistrates.² The same word is used, Isa. iii. 13; the Lord standeth up, or is standing up, to plead; yea, he standeth up to judge the people.

3. Here is the place where he stands: it is in the 'congregation of the mighty.' Some read it thus: God standeth in the assembly of God.³ Had they said in the assembly of God, the original would bear it, for the word is El, not Elohim, and therefore is rendered by the learned, in the assembly of God.⁴ Both translations are right for sense, but the words in the letter run thus: God standeth in the congregation of God, *q.d.*, God standeth in his own assembly, *i.e.*, he is present in the assembly of those judges who are constituted and ordained by him to execute justice and judgment for his people. God delights not in tumultuary routs, or seditious heaps, where there is no law, no rule, no order; but he being the God of order, delights to dwell amongst his people who delight in order, and especially amongst the rulers of his people, who are deputed by him to rule in righteousness.⁵

¹ Stat in omni consessu judicum ut ipsorum Dominus, et judiciorum author.—*Tremel.*

² Nitsab, stans, *i.e.*, commoratur ibi.—*Cald. Paraph. Vile Schools Guard*, rule 56: Participia hæc extensa sunt ut loquantur Scholastici, ideoque, actus continuos denotant, ut Micah vii. 18, Deus est condonans iniquitatem, Christus est ὁ ἀλπὼν tollens, *i.e.*, ille qui semper tollit peccata mundi.

³ In cœtu Dei fortis.—*Hieron., Calvin, Tremel.*—*i.e.*, in medio judicum quibus Deus præest, ideoque eorum cœtus cœtus Dei hic appellatur.—*Mus.*

⁴ El est nomen Dei quo significatur Deum esse sua essentia fortissimum, immo ipsam fortitudinem, a quo omnis fortitudo emanat.—*Polanus.*

⁵ Gnedah, cœtus, conventus, congregatio; significat ordinatam congregationem, qualis est populi qui regitur justis legibus.—*Moller.* Utcunque refulgeat Dei gloria

‘He judgeth (or he will judge) amongst the gods.’¹

These words are exegetical, and help to illustrate what he had said before: ‘God standeth in the congregation of God.’ What is that? Why he judgeth as supreme amongst the judges of the world. He stands not as a cipher, or a bare spectator, but he himself makes one amongst them.

1. He judgeth actively amongst them.² We look upon men, and think the judgment is theirs, but it is God that exerciseth judgment amongst them. He knows the causes, directs the judges, and executes the sentence. Judges are but deputies under God; the work of judging properly and principally belongs unto him, and therefore he is said not only to be amongst them, but in the very midst of them,³ to let them know that none of their consultations or actings are hid from him.

2. Passively, he is so in the midst of these earthly gods, that if they do unjustly, he will execute justice on them, and judge the judges of the world; for though they be great, yet there is a greater than they, to whom they must shortly give an account.⁴

Quest. Some may demand, Who are meant by gods here?

Ans. By gods here is meant judges and magistrates, as our Saviour interprets it, John x. 34, who are God’s lieutenants and vicegerents, appointed in his stead to administer justice to his people.

This title in Scripture is taken three ways:—

1. Primarily and properly.
2. Secondarily and metaphorically.
3. Catachrestically and abusively.

1. This title of God, Elohim, is given primarily, properly, and most truly to God, who is the creator and governor of the world, and in this sense there is but one God, 1 Cor. viii. 6, and besides him there is no Lord, Isa. xlv. 6, and xlv. 22.

in singulis mundi partibus, præcipuum tamen lumen hac in parte emittit, dum legitima gubernatio inter mortales viget.—*Calv.*

¹ Ishpot, judicabit, Heb., *i.e.*, sicut ab initio judicavit, ita et nunc judicat, et semper judicabit.

² Shaphat, judicavit, punivit, animadvertit, vindicavit, bonos defendendo, et malos puniendo.—*Leigh.*

³ Kereb, medium, significat quicquid est propinquissimum et intimum, Gen. xlviii. 16; Ps. v. 9, and xlix. 11.—*Pagnin.*

⁴ Elohim judicat, Elohim, *i.e.*, summus et cælestis; Elohim judicat inferiores et terrestres Elohim, quibus divinam suam potestatem regendi et judicandi communicavit.—*A Lapide.* Regum timendorum in proprios greges; Reges in ipsos imperium est Jovis.—*Seneca, Tragæd.*

2. Metaphorically and allusively, and so there are gods many, 1 Cor. viii. 5. Thus the holy angels are called Elohim, gods, 2 Sam. xxviii. 13; Zech. xii. 8; Ps. viii. 5; 'thou hast made him a little lower than Elohim,' which the apostle calls angels, Heb. ii. 6, 7; and so Ps. xcvi. 7, 'Worship him, all ye gods,' *i.e.*, all ye angels of God. Now they are called gods, because of all creatures they are the most excellent, and the fairest representations of his majesty, wisdom, and power, being always ready to do his will in defending the godly, and punishing the ungodly.

Some read the text thus: God standeth in the congregation of angels. This is a truth, but not from this text; for the context clearly confutes it: ver. 2, 'How long will ye judge unjustly?' So that it is plain he speaks not of angels, who are perfect, but of men, who may and do err and act unjustly.

(2.) The title is applied to magistrates and judges, Exod. xxi. 6, and xxii. 28; Deut. xix. 7; Ps. lxxxii. 6, and cxxxviii. 1; and lest any should think that this is an Old Testament title only, we find Christ himself making mention of it in the New, John x. 34, 35. Neither is the title given only to one or two, but it is given generally to all magistrates, be they good or bad: ver. 6, 'I have said ye are gods,' *i.e.*, ye are all gods and sons of the Most High; not by regeneration and adoption, but in respect of your profession, and the office which you bear.¹

Now they are called gods, 1. Not essentially or by nature, for we see they die as other men, but by participation, representation, and office;² because they do in a sort participate of God's dignity, authority, and power. As stars borrow their light from the sun, so do rulers their power from God. He hath set them in his place, and therefore he gives them his title, because they are deputies under him to execute justice in the world. There is *Θείον τι*, a sparkle of divine majesty, appearing in magistracy; yea, God hath engraven a special note of his own glory and image on them.³ So that by analogy they may well be called gods, as resembling God, in having the power of life and death in their hand; hence the

¹ *Gubernatio est divina quædam virtus, ideoque vocat Deus magistratus omnes, Deos, non propter creationem, sed propter administrationem, quæ est solius Dei: Qui igitur est in regimine, est quasi incarnatus Deus.—Luther.*

² *Dii dicuntur participative, nuncupative et analogice, non essentialiter et natura.*

³ *Dii vocantur homines admiratione digni, præsertim qui aliis præsumunt, ideoque metaphorice propter communicatam a Deo potentiam atque officium aliis opem ferendi, eosque defendendi, sustentandi, fovendi, mundum, regna urbesque regendi.—Polanus. Humani Joves.—Plautus.*

apostle puts an emphasis on this, that they are the ministers of God, and rule for him, Rom. xiii. 4.

(2.) This title is given them, because God is pleased to bestow many excellent and divine gifts of the Spirit on them; hence it is that Moses is called Pharaoh's god, Exod. vii. 1, because God had given him power to speak unto Pharaoh in his name, and to execute vengeance on him. Though all magistrates are not regenerate, yet they may have many excellent, heroic, moral virtues, and common gifts of the Spirit, as justice, prudence, patience, temperance, fortitude, liberality, &c., to fit them for government, Num. vi. 11, 17; 1 Sam. x. 6, 9, 10, and xvi. 13, 14; Acts xiv. 11.

(3.) By deputation from God, whose lieutenants they are, and to whom they must give an account for the maladministration of their office. They derive their power from him, as his delegates, by commission, and so bear the title.

3. The title is used catachrestically and abusively, and so is attributed, (1.) To idols,¹ Gen. xxxi. 32, and xxxv. 2; Exod. xii. 12; Judges xvii. 5; 1 Cor. viii. 5, because idolaters give divine worship to them, though by nature they are no gods, Gal. iv. 8, and therefore the apostle calls them nothing, 1 Cor. viii. 4. An idol is nothing; though materially it is wood and stone, yet formally it is nothing, *i.e.*, it is not that which the idolater conceives it is; it is not God, and there is no holiness in it. Though *κατὰ δόξαν*, in the conceit and corrupt imagination of the idolater, it is a god, yet *κατ' ἀλήθειαν*, and in truth, it is nothing.

(2.) To the devil. He is called the god of this world, 2 Cor. iv. 4, because the wicked of the world obey the devil's will before God's will, and delight to do his works, John viii. 44, and so make him their god. He rules in them, and they readily obey him as their god.²

(3.) Anything that a man adores or esteems more than God, that is his god. Thus some men make mammon and riches their god, Job xxxii. 24; others make their belly their god, Phil. iii. 19; Rom. xvi. 18; they are slaves to their epicurean pleasures and lusts, serving them instead of God.³

Obs. 1. It is requisite sometimes to preface before we speak, especially when the matter is weighty; it is good to quicken atten-

¹ *Μικτικῶς* et nomine tenus.

² Diabolus non est simpliciter Deus, sed illis est Deus qui illum anteponebat Christo. — *Erasmus*. Diabolus dicitur Deus respectu hominum, tum ratione perversæ opinionis, tum ratione vitiosæ et inordinatæ subjectionis. — *Gerhard*.

³ Amor tuus Deus tuus; illud est cuique Deus quod maxime colit, cuique totus servit, et sese suaque omnia impendit.

tion by some serious, grave, argumentative, and nervous preface. The psalmist doth so here, ver. 1. There are almost as many arguments as there are words in the verse, proclaiming the majesty, omniscience, and all-seeing eye of God, the better to prepare us for that which followeth in the psalm, wherein are matters of the greatest moment.¹ Thus when the Lord published the Ten Commandments, the better to prepare us for the hearing and obeying of them, he sets a short, but pithy, preface before them: *Exod. xx. 2*, 'I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.' Every word hath its weight. 1. I am Jehovah, by whom you live, move, and have your being; 2. Thy God, by creation and by covenant; 3. That brought Israel out of Egyptian bondage, and have delivered thee from a far viler slavery and bondage, even from the slavery of sin and Satan; from the curse of the law, the guilt of sin; from death, hell, and wrath to come. So Christ himself set a preface before the Lord's Prayer, the better to prepare our hearts for the duty, according to that of Solomon, *Eccles. v. 2*.

Obs. 2. That there is a trinity of persons in the unity of essence. The persons or substances are three, yet the divine essence is but one, being equally communicated to all; hence these three are said to be one,² *1 John v. 7*; *Mat. xxviii. 19*; *1 Cor. xii. 4-6, 11*, and *ii. 13, 14*.

Now let all the world dispute and wrangle their hearts out, yet these three or four texts, if there were no more, are sufficient to settle any gracious soul in the truth of this point.

As for those Photinian, Arian, Antitrinitarian, Socinian heretics, which are of late so rife amongst us, who list may see them fully and learnedly confuted in Dr Owen's treatise against Blasphemous Biddle, chap. vii. p. 138; Dr Cheynell in defence of the Trinity; D. Arnoldus contra Socin., cap. i. q. 32, p. 136; D. Prideaux, *Lect. xviii. p. 261, fol.*; Mr Norton's *Orthodox Evangelist*, chap. ii. and xxi.

Obs. 3. Our God is the most mighty and powerful God. He is not only El, strong, but Elohim, almighties or all-powers.³ All the weight and power that is in the creature, it is in him originally, operatively, eminently. His power is like himself, infinite and unspeakable, beyond the tongue's expression, or the heart's imagina-

¹ Quot verba, tot argumenta; quot dictiones, tot stimuli.

² Vide Rivet in Gen. i. 1, pp. 5, 6.

³ Elohim est unum e nominibus Dei, a potentia, robore et fortitudine Dei; Deus enim omnia potest.—*Ravanel.* See more, Hierom's Ser. on *Exod. xxxiv. 6*, on the word El, strong.

tion. This may comfort us in adversity, God is able to raise us and deliver us, Ps. xxxiv. 19. Though our enemies be great, yet our comfort is that there is a greater than they, Job xxxii. 14; Eccles. v. 8; Eph. vi. 9; though we be weak, yet our Redeemer is strong, Jer. l. 33, 34. This upheld those three Chaldean worthies: 'The God whom we serve is able to deliver us,' Dan. iii. 16, 17. God is not only faithful, but almighty and powerful to fulfil all his promises to his people. 2. It must keep us humble in prosperity; for as God hath power to give, so he hath power to take all from us if we abuse it to his dishonour, Hosea ii. 8-13. In his hand is our life, health, wealth, and all that we possess. Whom will we fear, if we fear not him?

Obs. 4. Magistrates must not desire to be solitary and independent. As affectation of independency is an error in the church, so also in the state; hence the Lord tells us here of a senate and assembly of judges. God hath not committed this power to one magistrate, for that would be a burden too heavy even for a Moses alone, Deut. i. 19; but, which is a great mercy, it is committed to many. One man, we say, is no man. Woe to him that is alone, and hath none to counsel him. That which ruined Julius Cæsar, was self-conceitdness, and refusing to consult with the senate.¹ What a sad condition would nations soon be in if they were subject to the will, lust, and tyranny of one single man! It is in the multitude of counsellors that there is safety, Prov. xi. 14. Hence Moses appointed many judges over the people, Exod. xviii. 21, 22; Num. vi. 11, 16, 17; and we read of a senate of seventy elders and senators, which were appointed by God himself to rule the people; and he ordered appeals from inferior courts, to which all cases of difficulty were referred, both in ecclesiastical and civil affairs,² Deut. xvii. 8-11; 2 Chron. xix. 8-11. Appeals are *de jure nature*, they are founded in nature; even reason tells us that it is unfit that any man should be a judge, witness, and accuser in his own cause; no wise or sober man will desire such independency. Solitary birds are usually birds of prey; but sheep, bees, and doves, which are congregative creatures, are most harmless and innocent.

Obs. 5. Magistracy is God's ordinance. It is no human device or politic invention to keep men in awe, but its original is from

¹ Julius Cæsar nec in dictatura, nec in consulatu consilio senatus usus est, unde se et Rempublicam perdidit. Idem fecit Nero qui senatum capitaliter oderat.—*Sucton.*

² Ne unus duntaxat judex ac forum sit, qui statim de quovis negotio ferat ultimam sententiam; a qua provocare non liceat; sed in unaquaque republica plures judiciorum gradus esse oportet, ut sit locus provocationi.—*Plato de Legibus*, lib. vi.

heaven ; it is a plant of God's own planting, which shall never be rooted up so long as the world endures, maugre the malice of all fanatic seditious levellers whatsoever. Indeed, when Christ comes to judgment at the end of the world, then, and not till then, he will put down all rule, and all authority and power ; for in heaven there will be no need of them, 1 Cor. xv. 24. God is the author, approver, and defender of magistracy ; from him they have their mission and commission ; all that rule and reign are either *missi*, or *permissi*—either sent by him, 1 Pet. ii. 14, or suffered by him. Usurpers by permission, and lawful governors by commission, from him ; the one by his providence and some kind of approbation, the other by his ordinance and appointment ; for there is no power but it is of God. The power is his, however men come by it, or however they abuse it ; though many have not only acquired it by wicked means, but administered it in a wicked manner, yet still the magistrate's authority, not only abstractly considered in itself, but concretely in the person administering it, is of God, Dan. ii. 21, and iv. 32 ; John ix. 11 ; Rom. xiii. 1. The powers that are, they are of God ; whether the persons be good or bad, yet the office is from him, and that not only permissive, ordinative, directive ; for so sin, sickness, are of God by way of permission, ordering, and directing ; but magistracy is of God, *approbative* and *mandative*, by way of approbation and command.¹ They bear his name, they wear his livery, they are employed in his work, he takes their account and rewards them ; hence it is that in the text their assembly is called God's assembly, and their throne God's throne, 1 Chron. xxix. 23, and their judgment God's judgment, Deut. i. 17 ; 2 Chron. xix. 6. The judgment is God's, *i.e.*, it is of God, and for God ; it is of God in respect of ordination, and for God in respect of administration. Hence the apostle calls the magistrate three times together in express terms, the minister of God, to defend the good, and punish the bad, Rom. xiii. 4-6. This he could not be, had he not his power and authority from God. This made the psalmist to counsel kings and judges not to cast away their office, but to submit to Christ, and serve him in their places of dignity, Ps. ii. 10. He doth not condemn them for being kings and rulers, nor doth he bid them leave their places, but he minds them of their duties ; and yet it appears that this psalm was penned for gospel-times, when Christ should have the heathen for his inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for his posses-

¹ *Permissio notat aliquod indultum, ordinatio vero mandatum ; 2. Permissio est eorum quæ displicent et improbantur ; ordinatio vero est eorum quæ cum voluntate et approbatione fiunt.—Baldwin, Oc.*

sion. So that the regulating of magistracy being here enjoined, the establishing hereof is also plainly implied.

Magistracy is very ancient. Murderers and adulterers were to die by law long ago, Gen. ix. 6, and xxxviii. 24; and we read of magistrates all along, as Joseph, Moses, Joshua, the judges, the seventy elders, Eli, Samuel, David, Solomon, Josiah, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, &c.; these godly men would never have borne rule if they had ever conceived that the office had been sinful. And lest any should object that these are Old Testament examples, we read also in the New Testament of a nobleman or viceroy that believed,¹ John iv. 46, 50; and Joseph of Arimathea, a senator and honourable counsellor, Mark xv. 43; and of a deputy, proconsul, or proprietor, that was converted to the faith, Acts xiii. 7, 12; and Cornelius, a centurion, Acts x. 1, 2; yet did they not leave their office. The eunuch that was treasurer to the queen Candace, when he became a Christian, yet we do not read that he left his place, Acts viii. 38. Erastus, the chamberlain of Corinth, did not, because he was a Christian, cast off his government, Rom. xvi. 23. So Constantine, Theodosius, and other good men, kept their magistracy still, which they would not have done had it been unlawful.²

2. In Scripture we find rules for rulers, Exod. xviii. 21; Deut. i. 16, 17, and xxv. 1; Ps. ii. 10; Rom. xiii. 3, 4. Now these would be in vain if there were no rulers to observe them.

3. God oft sends men to the magistrate for help in their distress, Exod. xxii. 9; Deut. xvii. 8. This God would not do if the office were unlawful.

Object. These are Old Testament proofs. *Ans.* Christ sends us to the magistrate in the New, Mat. v. 25; Luke xii. 58. Paul, when in danger of his life, appeals to the magistrate, which he would not have done had it been a sin.

4. We are commanded to pray for magistrates, Gen. xx. 17, and xlvii. 10; Jer. xxix. 7; 1 Tim. ii. 2; but if their office were evil, we should rather pray against them. Now, we are to pray for nothing but what is good and pleasing unto God.

5. Christ, who is the eternal wisdom of his Father, tells us that it is by him that kings reign and princes decree justice, yea, nobles and all judges of the earth, Prov. viii. 15, 16. Not only superior, but also inferior rules are appointed by Christ. He sets up not only kings, but princes and nobles also; from him they have their ordination, conservation, and qualifications. It is he that gifts them

¹ τῆς βασιλικῆς, regius quidam.—*Beza*.

² *Vide* Plura apud Suecanum de magistratu, Pars quinta, p. 594.

with wisdom to make good and just laws, for the benefit and peace of their people; it is he that pulls down one and sets up another in the throne, and none may say unto him, What dost thou? Job ix. 12, xii. 18, and xxxiv. 24.

6. The Lord commands subjects to obey magistrates, and give honour, and pay tribute to them. This certainly implies, by the rule of relatives, that there must be magistrates to whom this honour and tribute is due; and if every soul must be subject to the higher powers, then there must be higher powers, to which men must be subject. This enjoining the duty of the subject, doth establish the authority of the magistrate, for they are co-relatives and individuals.

7. That awe and dread which is in the hearts of men toward magistracy, argues that there is much of God in it.¹ To see so many thousands of men of contrary dispositions, and perverse tempers, yet to live peaceably together under the government of one man, shews plainly that the hand of God is here.

Obj. But some may object, that if God be the author of magistracy, how is it said, Hosea viii. 4, 'They set up kings, but not by me; they made princes, and I knew it not?'

Ans. The answer is easy. They set up kings by God's permission, but not by his approbation. I knew it not, saith God—viz., so as to approve of it.² It is true, I let them go on in their own way, but I neither did, nor will take cognisance of what they do, so as to bless them in it. Many a man rules by providence, not by promise. So then God doth not here disclaim the ordinance of magistracy, but the manner of choosing him—viz., in a mutiny, and without any respect to God's will. Thus Jeroboam, of whom it is conceived the prophet Hosea speaks, was chosen king by God, 1 Kings xi. 31, 35, 37, and xii. 15, 24. But the seditious and disorderly manner of choosing him is attributed to the people.

Use. Is magistracy God's ordinance? This then, first of all, shews the vileness of papists, who exalt the pope above the civil magistrate, and give him power over princes, even to deposition, if they please not him. These must hold his basin, bring in his meat, hold his stirrup, lead his horse, yea, be his horses, I might say his asses, to carry him on their shoulders; and yet you must think he is still *Servus servorum*, or rather *Diabolus diabolorum*, the devil in

¹ See eight arguments more to prove the lawfulness of the civil magistrate, in Dr Featly, against the Anabaptists, art vi. pp. 153, 154.

² Multa dicuntur non esse a Deo, i.e., eo jubente vel approbante, quæ tamen non sunt sine Deo permittente et permittere volente.—*Rivet.*

his *pontificalibus*.¹ He takes upon him to transfer kingdoms, to excommunicate kings, to depose one and set up another in his stead, and to loose subjects from their oath of allegiance and fidelity. They look upon princes as mere laics and seculars, yea, Bellarmine sticks not to call them, *Mundanos et profanos homines*, profane men, preferring the pope and his shavelings before them.² The magistrate must not reform the church, suppress errors, call synods, nor intermeddle with religion. He may indeed defend it, but he must not judge of it, saith Bellarmine.³ Besides, he exempts his clergy from the civil yoke, when Aaron, the high priest, was obedient to Moses, the magistrate, Exod. iv. 15, and xxxii. 21, and Christ himself paid tribute to Cæsar, and yielded obedience to him in civil things. Besides, the injunction is universal: Rom. xiii. 1, 'Let every soul be subject to the higher powers,' i.e., every man, even all that have rational souls, must obey. And it is worth observing, that the more holy any have been, the more respectful they have been to magistrates, as we see in Joseph, Nehemiah, David, Jeremiah, Daniel, Christ himself, Mat. xvii. 27; John xix. 11; Paul, Acts xxiii. 5; 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2; yea, and Peter himself, 1 Pet. ii. 13. It is true, the papists do not in words deny the office of the civil magistrate, as some fanatics do, yet in their works they do very much abuse and abase him, by their distinctions of spiritual and secular, as if none were holy and had the Spirit of God but the clergy, when the Scripture calls all believers spiritual, 1 Cor. ii. 15; Gal. vi. 1; besides, their setting the clergy above them, their exempting them from civil tributes and taxes, their sanctuaries⁴ to preserve murderers from the sword of justice, together with their doctrine and practice of king-killing, doth abundantly prove that popery is no friend to magistracy; and that the pope is Antichrist, 'that man of sin, who exalts himself above all that is called God,' and carries himself as God, 2 Thes. ii. 3, 4.

If any would see more against these, let him peruse Paræus in Rom. xiii. 1; Dub. 1; Gerhard, loc. com. de Magistrat, tom. vi. p.

¹ Papa regibus tanquam suis vassallis suæque potestati subiectis imperat, ut etiam possit eos instituere et destituere.—*August. de Ancona, de Ecclesiast. Potest.* q. 46.

² Vide Bellarm. de Exempt. Cler., cap. 2. Primum locum tenent episcopi, et præcipue Pontifex M. Secundum presbyteri, tertium diaconi aliique ministri ecclesiastici; ultimum laici, inter quos etiam reges et principes numerantur.—*Bellarm. de Laicis*, lib. cap. 3, 17.

³ See this confuted in Gerhard de Magistrat., tom. vi. p. 305; Rivet. in Exod., p. 1038. Siquis tentat excipere, conatur decipere; si *omnis*, quis vos exceptit ab universitate?—*Bernard.*

⁴ Against sanctuaries, see Pet. Martyr contra Asyla, Loc. Commun., Classis iv. cap. 15, sec. 33, and Gerhard. de Magistrat., p. 336.

458, 475; Moulin. de Monarchia contra Bellarm. una cum Abboto et Mortono; Willet's Synops. Controvers., vii. p. 361; D. Downam de Antichrist, lib. iv. cap. 23, p. 246; Watson's Quodlibets, p. 119, 283, &c.: Rutherford's Divine Right of Presbytery, part ii. cap. 6, sec. 5, p. 449, 352; Mr Rob. Balfon's Assize Ser. on Prov. xxix. 2, p. 14-32.

2. This cuts down, on the other hand, the Donatists, the Marcionites, the Manichees, who denied the authority of magistrates, together with the Anabaptists,¹ Socinians, Millenaries, and Fifth-Monarchy men,² who look and long for the abolishing of all magistracy, that Christ alone might reign amongst the saints for a thousand years. The better an ordinance the more are its enemies; and though some of these in words may speak honourably of magistracy, confessing that God ordained it in the Old Testament, and that it is useful now to keep men in order, and therefore we ought to pay tribute to them; yet what they build with one hand, they presently pull down with the other, affirming that magistracy is an office displeasing unto God, and unlawful for any Christian to bear; they would have a parity and equality amongst Christians; they would have no superiors nor inferiors, but all fellow-creatures well met. As that house is like to be well governed where all are governors, so that state is like to be well ruled where all are rulers; as that body is a monster which is all head, so is that which hath no head. Where all govern there is no government, and where all are head there is no order.

1. These cry down the coercive punishing power of the magistrate, and so make him a mawkin or man of straw, or like a wooden head and golden Neptune fixed on the stern only for a show, but not at all concerned in the steering of the ship.

2. They cry down all swearing before the magistrate.

3. They cry down all going to law before him.

4. They cry down all going to war under him.

5. So long as magistrates please them they will extol them, as the Arminians did in Germany; but let rulers once restrain them in their wicked practices, and then they load them with reproachful titles, as tyrants, persecutors, the powers of darkness, encroachers upon people's liberties, the antichristian beast, it will never be peace

¹ Anabaptistarum error Donatistarum hæreseos rivulus fuit.—*Daneus*.

² Novi Chiliastæ expectant seculum aliquod novissimum, quod vocant Spiritus Saneti, in quo magistratum omnem sperant abolitum iri, et sublati impiis Christum in his terris visibilem inter pios regnatum, per mille annorum decursum.—*Gerhard*.

till it be down ;¹ yea, and they rise against them, as the Anabaptists in Germany did against their princes.² These anarchical ones are men of loose lives, and this brings them to loose opinions, 2 Pet. ii. 10. These lawless ones cannot endure that any should be lords over them, Ps. xii. 4. They vote down laws, magistracy, and ministry, that they may the more freely enjoy their lusts.³ These are those dreamers that despise government, 2 Pet. ii. 10, and speak evil of dignities, Jude 8-10.⁴ It is not the person so much as the office itself that displeaseth these libertines. These overthrow foundations, Ps. xi. 3, and do what in them lies to ruin states and kingdoms. No commonwealth can long subsist without government,⁵ Prov. xi. 14. Where there is no pilot the ship miscarrieth, and where there is no counsel the people fall. Even the wiser sort of heathens have extolled government and order as an excellent and divine thing,⁶ so that these brutes sin even against natural light. There is a great necessity of order and government for the preservation of human societies ;⁷ and no man fitter to govern, all things considered, than a Christian. He that hath the knowledge and fear of God before his eyes, is fitter to govern the people of God than he that wants it.

Woe then to those seditious Quakers and profane libertines of our time, the vilest generation of railers and revilers of magistracy and ministry that ever the sun beheld.⁸ They pretend to extraordinary sanctity, when they have not ordinary manners nor common civility. If ever there were despisers of dignity and dominion, these are they. In their words and gestures what impudence, insolence, and irreverence do they show. These in God's dictionary are called blasphemers, 2 Pet. ii. 10 ;⁹ blaspheming dignities, *i.e.*, they make it their work and trade to go up and down libelling, mutter, and murmuring against those in authority. If God's Spirit calls rulers gods, we may easily guess what spirit leads those that call them devils.¹⁰ It is dangerous to speak against any of God's ser-

¹ *Vide* The seditious Standard of the Fifth-Monarch men.

² *Vide* Sleidan's Commentar., lib. x.

³ Seductores isti non dominos sed dominatum et ipsum munus a Deo constitutum convitiis incessunt. Sibelius in Judam.

⁴ *Vide* Mr Jenkyn on Jude 8, p. 301, 302, folio.

⁵ Ubi non est gubernator, corrui populus.—*Vulg.*

⁶ Ἄνευ ἀρχόντων ἀδύνατον εἶναι πόλιν.—*Aristot. Polit.*, lib. iv. cap. 4.

⁷ Ordo quid aliud est quam series quaedam superiorum et inferiorum ?

⁸ See Mr Baxter's Sheet against the Quakers, p. 4.

⁹ Βλασφημοῦντες, blasphemantes eos.

¹⁰ As Caligula was composed of impudency, so are these of turbulency. Se nihil

vants, and especially against his servant Moses, Num. xii. 8. Reviling of judges is expressly forbidden, Exod. xxii. 28, and therefore Paul takes up himself with an 'I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest,' Acts xxiii. 5. And if the angel would not revile the devil, much less may we revile magistrates, Jude 8, 9. It was a good saying of Memnon, a commander under the king of Persia, when he had hired a soldier to fight against Alexander; the man began to revile Alexander. Friend, said Memnon, I hired you to fight against Alexander, and not to rail on him.¹ These, like beasts, bite the hand that feeds them, and crop the tree that shelters them. They cannot escape the revenging hand of God. Miriam, for speaking against Moses, became a leper, Num. xii. 10. Corah and his company that rose against Moses, the earth devoured them alive, Num. xvi. Rebellious Absalom was hanged in an oak, and perfidious Ahithophel hangs himself. The end of Shimei and Sheba was miserable; and Zimri had no peace that slew his master.² The opposers of lawful magistracy shall find their calamities to arise suddenly, Prov. xxiv. 22; he that breaketh this hedge a serpent shall bite him,³ Eccles. x. 8. As God is the author, so he is the lover, preserver, and vindicator of his own ordinance, and he will not suffer the violators of government to escape unpunished, as we see by the experience of so many thousand years. How many have still been heaving at it, and yet this rock abides! They thought to have overthrown it, but they have overthrown themselves. The calling is God's ordinance, the persons are designed by his providence, and the work concerns his glory, and therefore God looks upon himself as deeply concerned in their quarrel, and takes the despite that is done to them as done to himself, Exod. xvi. 8; 1 Sam. viii. 7. He will resist those that resist his ordinance, and rise against those that rise against his vicegerents. Never yet any hardened himself against God and prospered. Let the potsherds strive with the potsherds of the earth, but woe to him that striveth with his maker, Isa. xlv. 11. Though the sons of Zeruiah may be too strong for David, yet they are not too strong for the God of David; though they be mighty, yet God is almighty, and will reward such evil-doers according to their wickedness, 2 Sam. iii. 39.

magis in natura sua laudare ac probare dixit Caligula, quam ἀδιαρπείων, i.e., impudentiam.—*Sueton.*

¹ Ego te posco ut pugnes contra Alexandrum, non ut illi maledicas.—*Plutarch in Apotheg.*

² See God's Judgments on such in the Theatre of God's Judgments, lib. ii. cap. 2, p. 158, folio. Vide Mr Jenkyn on Jude 3, p. 298, folio.

³ See the Large Annot. on Eccles. x. 8.

An answer to the cavils of Anabaptists, libertines, &c.

Obj. 1. It is against Christian liberty for Christians to be under the power of any but Christ, who is our only king, and hath made us free, John viii. 32; Gal. v. 1. It is a sore slavery to have magistrates and laws to rule over us, since in Christ all are equal, Gal. iii. 28, and there is no distinction of superiors and inferiors, of rulers and ruled.

Ans. This is the grand objection, the great Goliath, their darling; liberty, liberty, liberty. Overthrow this, and you overthrow all.

1. I answer, Civil subjection to superiors may well stand with spiritual liberty; for spiritual privileges do not abrogate, but rather confirm our obedience to them. Paul, that had so fully discoursed of Christian liberty, yet oft enjoins obedience to magistracy, Rom. xiii. 1, &c.; 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2. So doth Peter, 1 Pet. ii. 13, 16. Had this subjection been opposite to our Christian liberty, Christ would never have paid tribute to Cæsar, nor have commanded us to give unto Cæsar what is Cæsar's.¹ Gospel liberty is a liberty from sin, 2 Cor. iii. 17, not to sin; a liberty to serve God, and not to despise the ministers of God. Christ never purchased a liberty for us to live as we list, and hold what we list; to be Arians, Arminians, Socinians, &c. This is libertinism, and not spiritual liberty.

2. Though believers, as they are in Christ, are all one and equal, yet considered as they are members of a politic body, and in civil respects, so there is an inequality: and though Christ hath freed us from the curse of the law, from the traditions of men, 1 Cor. vii. 23, and from the tyranny of sin and Satan, yet he hath not freed us from subjection to men, according to those ranks and callings he hath set us in; and therefore, even in gospel times, we read of superiors and inferiors, of masters and servants, with directions how they should walk, and promises of reward to such as faithfully perform the duties of their places, 1 Cor. vii. 21, 22; Eph. vi. 5-9; so that magistracy is so far from hindering true Christian liberty, that it helps to suppress sin, and to make us free indeed. Neither is a politic inequality against a spiritual equality. Onesimus was as good a man as Philemon, yet for all that Onesimus was Philemon's servant.

¹ *Sunt tumultuosi spiritus qui regnum Christi non bene extolli credunt, nisi aboleantur omnes terrenæ potestates; nec libertate per se data frui, nisi quodvis humanæ servitutis jugum excusserint.*—*Calvin in Rom. xiii. 1.*

3. The Scripture speaks of magistracy as a great mercy, and not as a misery or burden to a people; it calls them nursing fathers, shields, shepherds, &c., and the loss of them is reckoned as a sore judgment, Isa. iii. 1-5, and the restoring of them as a great mercy, Isa. i. 26, 'I will restore thy judges as at the first;' 2 Chron. ix. 8, it is made a sign of God's love to a people. Let wicked men and sons of Belial call government bonds and burdens, Ps. ii. 3, yet believers, of all men, should be the most obedient to magistrates, whether they be good or bad, in all lawful things, of any people in the world, that so they may stop the mouths of gainsayers, and all the world may see that rulers have no better friends than such as make conscience of their ways; for none can be truly loyal but such as are truly religious.¹

4. Though Christ be the sole king of his church, yet is he not the sole king in his church; for Christ's kingdom doth not oppose, but confirm the magistrates; they are not contrary, but may well subsist together. The gospel doth not abolish, but establish the civil government of the world, and makes it better. Neither is our civil subjection to earthly kings any hindrance of our obedience to our heavenly King, but doth rather evidence and confirm it.² Christ was king of his church in the Old Testament; he was the same yesterday that he is to-day, and yet he had magistrates under him then, and why not now? Yea, he promiseth magistracy as a blessing in gospel times, Isa. xlix. 22, 23; Rev. xxi. 24.

Obj. 2. God's people are a holy, obedient, willing people, and a law to themselves; but the law is made for unholy and disordered ones, 1 Tim. i. 9.

Ans. Be you never so holy, you must obey. God will have every soul, be they never so holy or righteous in their own eyes, to be subject to the higher powers. In the church of Rome there were many saints, and yet the apostle commands them all to submit, in civil things, to the magistrates of those times, who were professed heathens and tyrants.³

2. The best are flesh as well as spirit, as we see in Noah, Lot, David; and if there were not a law without to restrain, as well as a light within, we know not how far the best may fall; for though

¹ See more in my Comment. on 2 Tim. iii. 2, pp. 31, 32.

² Subordinata non pugnant; nam in ecclesia reges Christo summo regi inserviunt, proinde Christus Deum et Cæsarem non opponit sed conjungit, Mat. xxii. 21; *Dithmar*. See more in Dr Taylor on Tit. iii. 1, p. 544.

³ Jus divinum quod est ex gratia, non tollit jus humanum quod est ex jure naturali.—*Aquinas*, 22æ, q. 10, art. 10.

the just be a law to themselves, yet they have lusts still within themselves which many times call for coercion and correction from the magistrate. A good man saith, as the martyr said once at the stake, when they went to bind him to the stake: That needs not, said the martyr; yet since I am flesh as well as spirit, you may bind me if you please. So a good man, though he hath God's law within his heart, and he delights to do his will, and so need the less binding, yet since he knows the rebellion of the flesh, and the deceit of his own heart, he desires as many restraints as may be, to hedge up his way, and keep him from sinning against God.

3. Though God's people be holy and obedient, yet they are mixed amongst the wicked, and so have great need of the magistrate's sword to defend them from the violence of unreasonable men, 1 Tim. ii. 2. So that albeit good men should do no evil themselves—though we see doves many times, and sheep, fight one with another, and have need of some to part them—yet they may quickly suffer evil, if the magistrate and his laws do not protect them.

4. Though the law be not made for the condemnation of the righteous, yet it is ordained for a rule to direct and guide him. This law he cheerfully obeys, because it confines him to live in that element where he would live, as if one should be confined to paradise where he would be, though there were no law to confine him to it. So, then, the magistrate is not a terror to him, because he doth well, and doth spontaneously obey his laws.

Obj. 3. God forbids the killing of men, and saith he that takes the sword shall perish by the sword, Mat. xxvi. 52; and hath promised that in gospel times they shall not hurt or destroy in all his holy mountain, Isa. xi. 9, and lx. 18. Hence the Socinians and gross Anabaptists gather that offenders now must not be put to death.

Ans. 1. God forbids any private person to kill, or to take up the sword by way of private revenge, without a call;¹ but what is this to the magistrate, who is a public person, and executes the judgment of God on sinners, as his vicegerent, and commissioned from him so to do? for he is the minister of God for wrath to them that do ill. It is his glory to cut off the wicked from God's city, and he hath many commands so to do, Gen. ix. 6; Exod. xxi. 14; Num. xxxv. 30–34; Mat. v. 21, 22; Rom. xiii. 4; Rev. xiii. 10. So that those who would have guilty persons spared, they dispute not

¹ Occidere hominem non semper est criminis, sed malitia non legibus occidere criminis.—*Daneus*. Magistratus non sunt homicidæ, sed malicidæ.—*Bernard*.

against us, but God, who hath commanded that blasphemous and notorious sinners should be cut off.

2. That text speaks of gospel converts, not of magistrates, and shews the sweet peace and amity that in those days shall be amongst believers.

Obj. 4. The Lord was angry with the Israelites because they asked for a king, 1 Sam. viii. 6, 7; *ergo*, kingly government is unlawful.

Ans. *Non sequitur*; for the Lord was not angry with them simply and absolutely for asking a king¹—for monarchy is not in itself displeasing to God, as we see in David, Hezekiah, Josiah, &c.—but for desiring to have a king out of an affectation of novelty, being weary of that government which God had established, and desirous to be in fashion like the Egyptians, Medes, Persians, Chaldeans, and other heathenish idolaters round about them, vers. 5 and 20, and out of ambition and confidence in a king as able to protect them, and diffidence in God as unable to defend them in his own way.² He was also angry with them for their ingratitude toward holy and industrious Samuel, who had deserved so well of them, having spent himself wholly in their service.³

2. The Lord himself elected Saul to be king over his people, and qualified him for his office, and expressly commanded Samuel to anoint him king over Israel; which he would not have done had that office in itself been displeasing to him.

3. We may retort this place on the Anabaptists themselves: seeing the Israelites here, in rejecting Samuel, are said to reject God, it hence appears that magistracy is God's ordinance, which, whosoever opposeth, that man opposeth not men, but God.

Obj. 5. We may not resist nor render evil for evil, Mat. v. 39; Rom. xii. 17.

Ans. These places condemn not ordinate and public revenge, which God hath committed to the magistrate, who for good ends, and without any hatred to the person of any, is to do justice on them. So that albeit I may not offend others, yet I may defend myself, and crave the magistrate's help, who by office is bound to execute justice on evil-doers.

2. If they stick to the letter of the text, this will take away the

¹ Est fallacia a dicto secundum quid ad dictum simpliciter.

² Peccaverunt quia petunt regem inconsulto, immo invito Deo; Deus enim instituerat judicium aristocratiam; hanc ergo ipsi in monarchiam mutare non debebant, nisi volente et mutante Deo.—*A Lapide.*

³ See more in the Large Annotations; and Weems, vol. iii., chap. iii., pp. 2, 12, &c.

power of parents and masters, for they, in their places, do resist evils and punish offenders.

Obj. 6. We are forbidden to judge, Mat. vii. 1; Rom. xiv. 4; 1 Cor. iv. 5.

Ans. These places condemn rash, private, uncharitable, and unseasonable judging;¹ they do not condemn public, political, or ecclesiastical judging.

Obj. 7. Magistracy belonged to the Jews, who were children, Gal. iv. 1, and not to Christians, who are grown to perfection.

Ans. 1. Magistracy belonged to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews, as appears by Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, Alexander, Augustus, &c.

Ans. 2. Christ himself approved of magistracy in gospel times; and the prophecies of gospel times show that kings should be servants to Christ and his church, Ps. ii. 10, 11, and lxxii. 11; Isa. xlix. 22, 23, and lx. 3, 10, 11, 16; Rev. xxi. 24. Even the holy city that comes from heaven yet shall have kings to rule in it and defend it.

Ans. 3. The world is now fuller of people, and more wicked—all circumstances of light and privileges considered—than in the Jewish times; and therefore, if they had need of magistrates to suppress sin, and preserve God's people in peace, much more have we. The devil is as busy, yea, more busy, now than ever, and his agents as active to seduce us as ever they were amongst the Jews.

Ans. 4. If man in the state of innocency should have had a paternal and lovely, not lordly, subordination and order, surely we have more need of it in this state of apostasy;² and those that talk so much of perfection, show no such perfection but that magistrates are needful to make them better. Men are more perfect sinners now, sinning against greater light and greater love than ever.³ These, under pretence of perfection, bring in confusion; and if the apostolical churches, that had such an extraordinary measure of the Spirit, had yet need of magistrates, and are oft commanded to obey them, Rom. xiii.; Titus iii. 1, 2; then it savours strongly of pride and self-conceitedness for any in our days to think themselves more perfect than those primitive Christians.

¹ Est fallacia a dicto secundum quid ad dictum simpliciter.

² Vide Rivet. in Gen. i. Exercit. 10, in fine.

³ Dum fanatici Anabaptistæ perfectionem jactant, rerum omnium confusionem inducunt, et perfectionis colore totum Christianum orbem nituntur evertere.—Zepher. de Legib. Mos., lib. ii. cap. 5.

Obj. 8. 'There is but one Lord,' Eph. iv. 5, 'and no man can serve two masters.'

Ans. 1. Though there be but one primary, principal, absolute Lord and Judge, yet there are many subordinate ones.

Ans. 2. Our Saviour doth not simply say that no man can serve two masters, but, as the context shows, he speaks of serving two contrary masters—such as God and mammon—which command contrary things, and have contrary ways, ends, and principles; no man can serve two such contrary masters. But Christ and magistracy are not contrary, but subordinate, and therefore the magistrate is called his minister for our good.

Obj. 9. Most magistrates are corrupt and wicked; of all the kings of Israel, there were not past four that were good. They are most of them tyrants and oppressors; they are briars and brambles, not olives and vines, that seek for kingdoms, Judges ix. *Ergo*, down with them all!

Ans. 1. This is like anabaptistical logic. Because some abuse meat, drink, light, money, clothes, &c., *ergo*, away with them all.¹ Who knows not that the abuse of a thing must not take away the use of it? Though the person may be bad, yet the office is good.² Judas was bad, yet the apostolical office was good. *A persona ad rem non valet argumentum. Vitium personæ non vitiat officium.*

Ans. 2. As for that place, Judges ix.: 1. It is allegorical, and so but a sorry foundation to build an argument upon. 2. It speaks not against magistracy in general, but against Abimelech, who usurped the kingdom, ver. 1.

Obj. 10. 2 Cor. x. 4, 'The weapons of our warfare are not carnal;' *ergo*, the sword of the magistrate is useless.

Ans. *Non sequitur*, for the apostle doth not speak there of magistracy, but of the ministry: *q.d.*, The weapons of our warfare who are in the ministry are spiritual, not carnal. We do not look to prevail by eloquence and fine speeches, by flattery and dissimulation, or by worldly force and power, but by the mighty power of the gospel, which is able, through the help of God, to pull down the strongest hold of flesh and blood.

Obj. 11. John viii., Our Saviour would not punish the woman taken in adultery; *ergo*, the magistrate must not punish offenders.

Ans. *Non sequitur*, It was the magistrate's duty to punish such;

¹ Est fallacia accidentis.

² Magistratus essentialiter, intrinsice, et per se bonus est; per accidens, abusive, et vitio personæ, malus.

but Christ, having no commission to meddle with the sword, let her go. But of this elsewhere.¹

Obj. 12. The magistrate is called a human' ordinance,² 1 Pet. ii. 13; *ergo*, it may be pulled down by man.

Ans. *Non sequitur*, for magistracy is called the ordinance of man,³ or an human creation, not because it was invented by man, or hath its original from him; for all power is from God. Though men may choose the man, yet it is God that confers the power, and commands us to obey him for his sake, *i.e.*, because it is his will to govern us by such. But it is called the ordinance of man, 1. *Subjectivè*, Because it is seated in man, and is managed by him; and the choice of the kinds of magistrates is, for the most part, left unto men, to choose what form of government is most commodious for them, that so they might more willingly yield obedience to them; hence some have kings, some consuls, some protectors, some emperors. Now, second causes do not exclude, but include the first: though men choose mediately, yet God orders and disposeth all by his overruling power to his own praise; so that, in respect of their original appointment and institution, they are an ordinance of God. 2. *Objectivè*, Because it handleth human affairs. 3. *Finaliter*, In respect of its end, it was ordained for the benefit of man, and for the preservation of human society.⁴

Obj. 13. Rev. iv. 10, 11, 'The twenty-four elders cast their crowns before the throne;' *ergo*, Magistrates, when they are converted to Christianity, must cast away their crowns.

Ans. 1. Anabaptistic logic still! The text is a vision, and arguments grounded on visions are very weak, and seldom demonstrative.⁵

Ans. 2. The text doth not speak of magistrates, but of the whole church triumphant, represented here by the twenty-four elders; for, as the twelve patriarchs in the Old Testament were, as it were, the root of the Israelitish church, so the twelve apostles, by their

¹ See my Commentary on 2 Tim. iii. 3, pp. 103, 104, where this text is fully vindicated.

² Ἀνθρωπίνη κτίσις, humana creatio.

³ Κτίσις appellatio ad Deum primum authorem nos revocat; etsi enim magistratus creari—*i.e.*, ordinari etiam ab hominibus dicuntur; primus tamen eorum creator proprie est solus Deus, cui primitus omnis creatio competit.—*Sibelius*. The substance of the power is of God, but the specification of the circumstances in respect of place, person, title, continuance, customs, &c., is of man.—*D. Sanderson ad Magistrat.*, p. 183. Regimen ipsum est juris divini; at determinatio ejus ad certam formam monarchiæ vel aristocratiae pertinet ad jus gentium.

⁴ See more, *Lex Rex*, pp. 8, 9.

⁵ Theologia symbolica non est argumentativa.

doctrine were, as it were, the foundation and original of the Christian church, who cast their crowns before the throne, acknowledging all they have to be of free grace and mercy, not merit.¹

Ans. 3. Suppose it did speak of the Christian magistrate, yet the sense of the place would amount but to this: That since magistrates have received their honour and dignity from Christ, therefore they lay all at his feet again, giving all the praise of what they are and have to him who was the donor of them.

Use 2. Is magistracy God's ordinance? Then it will necessarily follow that a Christian may, with a safe conscience, undertake that office when called to it. That order which is just, holy, and good, must needs be pleasing unto God, and so may safely be undertaken by good men; but magistracy, being God's ordinance, must needs be so; for all God's works and ordinances are honourable and glorious, and do ennoble, not debase the creature, Ps. cxi. 3. As the ministry is God's ordinance, and marriage is God's ordinance, so they are pure and good, and a man may live in those conditions with a pure conscience, pleasing to God: so *à pari*, for the same reason, since magistracy is God's ordinance, a Christian may lead a life pleasing to God in that office. And the examples of all those good men that, in the Old and New Testament, have borne that office, as I have showed before, and have been high in God's favour, shows plainly that the office may be undertaken by pious men.

2. That which God hath promised as a choice mercy to his people in gospel times, the administration of that cannot be unlawful; but such is magistracy, as hath been fully proved before.

3. Is magistracy God's ordinance? Then none may usurp it, or enter upon it without a call from him.² As in the ministry no man may take that honour to himself, but he that is called; so in the magistracy none may assume this office to himself, but he that is called of God, either mediately or immediately, ordinarily or extraordinarily. As no man can preach *jure* and

¹ Ad literam loquitur de primariis, immo de omnibus, sanctis utriusque Testamenti, qui jam beati in caelo vident, adorant et celebrant Deum.—*A Lapide*. Coronas suas ante thronum mittere, est certaminum suorum victorias non sibi tribuere, sed Deo, ut ad illum referant gloriam laudis, à quo se sciunt vires accepisse certaminis.—*Greg. Moral.*, lib. xxii. He that would see all cavils more fully answered, may peruse D. Featly, *Dippers Dipt*, p. 161, edit. 6.

² Cum gubernatio sit ordo divinitus institutus, atque adeo Deus ipse præsit gubernationi politice, non est ejusvis sibi arrogare illud imperium divinum; aut se judicem loco Dei constituere.—*Mollerus in Psalm lxxxii*. 1. It is not every man's work to rule, but only such as are appointed, 2 Chron. xix. 5, and have commission.

authoritatively but he that is sent, so no man can execute justice juridically and authoritatively but he that is sent. It is true, it may be, some private person may have abler gifts for magistracy than some that are in office, yet may he in nowise exercise those gifts without a call; and if he should condemn and execute a man, it is murder in him, because God never commissioned him to such a work. As God was angry with Korah, Dathan, and Abiram for opposing Moses as well as Aaron, so he is the same God to the same sinners still. As two things must concur to make a gospel minister—viz. 1. Gifts; 2. A power to execute these gifts—so these two must concur to make a magistrate.

(1.) Gifts and qualifications fit for his place.

(2.) A commission and call to execute those gifts. Skill to govern, power to manage that skill, and will to actuate both, make a complete magistrate.¹ Let a man be never so well gifted or graced, were he as holy as Job, as wise as Solomon, as learned as Moses and Daniel, yet, without a call and solemn designation to this work, he may not act as a magistrate; or, if he do, he can look for no success or blessing from God in what he doth. These fight against God, and cannot prosper; they break that rank and order which God hath set up in the world. It is *per me*, and not *per se*, that kings reign, Prov. viii. 15; it is God that hath made them magistrates as well as men, and not they themselves, Ps. c. 3. Judging and preaching are not mere acts of gifts, but office. Let every man, therefore, abide in that calling wherein he is called;² for they are oftentimes most insufficient who think themselves most sufficient for this weighty calling. Ambition is an argument of unworthiness: *Ne sit qui ambit*, let not him speed that sues; let not those be preferred that would have places, but such as places would have. It is rebellious Absalom (2 Sam. xv. 4) and tyrannical Abimelech that sue for rule. The fat olive, the fruitful vine, and pleasant fig-tree refuse preferment; but it is the scratching bramble, the tearing briar, an empty keck, a worthless and fruitless shrub, that hath no shadow to refresh, but is full of prickles, good for nothing but to stop gaps, and after to be burnt, which desires to tyrannise over people, Judges ix. 8–16. Good men are modest; they know honours are burdens, and they will not meddle with them till they be called to them. They that are worthy, must be

¹ Ἀντιτασσόμενος, resistit, Rom. xiii. 2, est verbum emphaticum, *q.d.*, qui magistratibus resistit, contra ordinem divinum se quasi ordinat.—*Dithmar. Polit.*

² *Tu supplex ora, tu protege, tuque labora*: Let ministers preach and pray, magistrates defend, husbandmen till, and others do the duties of their places.—*Luther.*

sued to ; they are sooner found in retirement than in popularity : as Moses following Jethro's flock, Gideon in the barn, David at the fold, Saul hid amongst the stuff, 1 Sam. x. 22 ; and Lucius Quintus Cincinnatus was called from the plough to be dictator.¹

4. This is matter of singular consolation to magistrates, that since their office is God's ordinance, he will defend it against all the rage of men and devils ; he is the God of order, and he will preserve it in despite of all its enemies. As he calls his to dignity, so he will keep them in it, Ps. cxxxii. 17, 18 ; Isa. xlii. 6, and xlv. 13 ; as the judgment is not yours but God's, so he will assist you in it against all opposers, be they never so great, Joshua i. 5 ; 2 Chron. xix. 6.² He that hath set the crown upon your heads, will keep it there ; if you uphold his kingdom, he will uphold yours ; if you be mindful of God's work, he will not be unmindful of your reward, Neh. xiii. 22 ; Isa. xxxviii. 3. Keep God's way, and he will keep you, as he did Moses, Joshua, Hezekiah, Josiah, David, Constantine, Theodosius and others. Though you meet with many troubles, run many hazards, and pass through many dangers and difficulties by reason of atheists, idolaters, libertines, and all the rabble of hell, yet in six troubles the Lord will be with you, and in the seventh he will not leave you ;³ he will be your assistant in your labours, your comforter in temptations, your director in straits, and your Oedipus in doubts ; he will subdue your people under you, and incline their hearts to obedience, Ps. xlvii. 3, and cxliv. 10 ; he will give you peace of conscience in the faithful discharge of your duty, and a crown of glory hereafter.

It is very necessary in these tumultuous times for magistrates to be well assured that their calling is from God ; it will wonderfully uphold their spirits in a time of trial. When Luther had written a book in defence of the civil magistrate, and proved it to be God's ordinance, and very pleasing to him, when Frederick Duke of Saxony had read it, it is said that for joy he lifted up his hands to heaven and gave thanks to God that now he knew out of the holy Scriptures that his calling was ordained of God, and that with a good conscience he might now perform the duties of it. It is an act of dignation and not of indigence that God makes use of any to be instruments of conveying his blessing to others ; *hoc agens lib-*

¹ *Vide* Florus de Gest. Rom., lib. i. cap. 11.

² *Vide* Mr Woodward's King's Chronicle of the Good Kings of Judah. A treatise worthy the serious perusal of all magistrates.

³ Omnis qui regit, est tanquam signum in quod omnia jacula Satan et mundus dirigunt.—*Luther*.

errimum, he can do his own work without us, he needs us not. It is a great honour that he is pleased to employ us either in magistracy or ministry; when he hath once invested us in those offices, and we discharge them faithfully, he takes the despite that is done to us, as done to himself, 1 Thes. iv. 8. When the Israelites rejected Samuel, God comforts him with this, 'They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me,' who set thee as a judge over them, and have gifted thee with graces for the faithful discharge of thy office, 1 Sam. viii. 7. You are God's more immediate servants, Jer. xxvii. 6; Rom. xiii. 2; the dishonour that is done to you, reflects upon your Master: and if David so sharply revenged the abuse that was done to his ambassadors by the Ammonites, 1 Sam. x. 45; let not the levelling Ammonites of our time, who vilify both magistracy and ministry, think to escape unpunished, 1 Sam. xxvi. 9; Prov. xvii. 11, and xxiv. 21, 22; Rom. xiii. 2. Magistrates are called fathers: and he that cursed his father was to die for it, Lev. xx. 9.

5. Bless God for magistracy. Every day we should be praising him for this ordinance; that we can rise in peace, and rest in peace; travel in peace, and come to God's house in peace, and sit every man under his own vine and fig-tree in peace; all this, and a thousand times more, we enjoy by the means of magistracy, 1 Kings iv. 25; Micah iv. 4. It is these Mordecais that bring wealth and peace to a people, Esther x. 3. Magistrates are the greatest servants in the world; they wake that we may sleep, they labour that we may rest in peace; by them violence is suppressed, justice executed, religion maintained, and human societies preserved,¹ Ps. lxxii. *per totum*, and lxxxv. 10-13. These are, or should be, eyes to the blind, legs to the lame, terrors to the wicked, towers to the righteous, fathers to the fatherless, widows, and oppressed.

Take away government, and what would nations be but dens of devils, and cages of unclean birds?² We see how wickedness abounds though we have magistrates to restrain it; but oh, the abominations that would be in the world if there were no government! What idolatry, witchcraft, blasphemy, heresy, murder, theft, atheism, barbarism, routs and riots, cruelty and villany would overflow in all places!³ When there was no king in Israel, then every

¹ *Omnium somnos illius vigilantia defendit, omnium otium illius labor, omnium delitias illius industria, omnium vacationem illius occupatio.—Seneca.*

² *Remota justitia quid sunt regna nisi magna latrocinia?—August. de Civitat. Dei.* lib. iv. cap. 4.

³ *Nisi rectores civitatum essent, feriozem feris viveremus vitam, non mordentes tantum, sed et vorantes alios alii.—Grotius de Jure belli.* lib. i cap. 4, sec. 1. See more Mr Jenkyn on Jude 8, Obser. 1, p. 299, folio.

man's lust was a law, and they fell to idolatry, uncleanness and much wickedness, as appears, Judges xvii. 6, and xviii. *ult.*, and xix. 1; hence the taking away of the judge and the prophet is reckoned as a sore judgment, and the very inlet to oppression and confusion; Isa. iii. 1, 2, 5, and xxiv. 1, 2; Amos ii. 3; Hosea x. 3, and xiii. 11. Amongst all those heavy curses which David calls for against his malicious enemies, this is the first; 'Let a wicked man rule over him,' Ps. cix. 6. What is an army without a general, a school without a master, a family without a governor, or a nation without rulers? they need no foreign force to destroy them, they would soon destroy themselves, Hab. i. 13, 14.¹

Stobæus tells us of a Persian law, that after the death of their king every man had five days' liberty to do what he pleased, that by beholding the wickedness and disorder of those few days, they might prize government the better all their days after.² When Moses was absent but forty days in the mount, the Israelites presently worship a calf. In the book of Judges we read of the death of Ehud, Gideon, and their governors, and presently the people change their gods, and did evil in the sight of the Lord to their own destruction; Judges ii. 19, 20, and iv. 2, and viii. 33. Take government out of the world, and then take the sun out of the firmament, and leave it no more a *κῶσμος*, a beautiful structure, but a *χαῶς*, a confused heap; without this men would be like Ishmael, wild men; every man's hand would be against his brother, Gen. xxvi. 12.

It is reported of Maximilian the emperor, that as oft as he passed by the gallows he would put off his hat and salute it, with a *salve sancta justitia!* All hail, holy justice. Of all people, Christians have most cause to bless God for it; for they are exposed more to the malice of wicked men by reason of their profession and principles, which are so opposite to the ways of the world, so that they are as lambs amongst lions, as sheep amongst wolves, as a lily amongst thorns, which would soon be devoured, did not the great Shepherd of the flock raise up shepherds under him to defend it. These are the ministers of God for our good: 1. For our natural good, for our lives. 2. Civil good, for our estate. 3. Moral, for defence of us in goodness. 4. Spiritual, to protect the gospel; and

¹ Sine imperio nec domus ulla, nec civitas, nec gens, nec hominum universum genus stare, nec ipse mundus durare potest.—*Cicero*, lib. iii. *de Legib.*

² Persis lex erat, ut a morte regis, legum et juris intermissio per quinque dies fieret, ut intelligerent subditi in quanto pretio regem ac legem haberi debeat.—*Stobæus*, Serm. 42, p. 294.

this good is reduced by the apostle to three heads, 1 Tim. ii. 2, Peace, piety, and honesty. They are a means under God to preserve the lives of us and ours; our goods, sabbaths, ordinances, and all that is near and dear to us: so that when government fails, 1. Order fails; 2. Religion fails; 3. Justice fails; 4. Strength fails; 5. Wealth fails; 6. Honour fails; 7. Peace fails: all this is abundantly proved by a learned pen.¹ As where there is no ministry, the people perish; so where there is no magistracy, the people come to ruin, Prov. ii. 14. These are shields to defend us, fathers to tender us, yea, nursing fathers to carry us in their bosoms, pillars that under God uphold the world, that it fall not into confusion, and the very life of the state, Lam. iv. 20.²

How great then is the sin of those ungrateful men who vilify magistracy, and by consequence do condemn the goodness and providence of God to the sons of men! yea, they condemn that which is the greatest glory and choice privilege of a nation. When David would set forth the glory of Jerusalem, he tells us, there sit the thrones of judgment, *i.e.*, there sit the judges who administer justice to all, and keep all in peace, Ps. cxxii. 5. Hence it is promised as a great blessing to an obedient people, that they shall have governors to rule them: 'And their eyes shall see the King in his glory,' Isa. xxxiii. 17; Jer. xvii. 24, 25, as it is reckoned for a choice mercy to have our own sons for prophets,³ Amos ii. 11. To be taught by strangers who are called to the work, is a mercy; but to be taught by our own sons raised and fitted for the work of the ministry, that heightens the mercy; 'I raised up your sons for prophets, of your young men for Nazarites;' and as good ministers are promised a special blessing, Isa. xxx. 20; Jer. iii. 15.; Rom. xv. 29, so it is promised as a special blessing that our nobles shall be of ourselves, and our governors shall proceed from the midst of us, Jer. xxx. 21. Strangers shall not rule over them, nor keep them in slavery, but they should have governors of their own, that would be tender over them. It is a sign of God's love to a people when he gives them rulers that will execute justice amongst them, 1 Kings x. 9; 2 Chron. ii. 11, and ix. 8. When a people is but

¹ Mr Nath. Ward in his Fast Sermon on Ezek. xix. 14, pp. 9-11, &c.

² Magistratus est illud vinculum per quod respublica cohaeret, est spiritus ille vitalis quem hæc tot millia trahunt, nihil ipsa per se futura nisi onus et præda, si mens illa imperii subtrahatur.—*Seneca de Clement*, lib. i. cap. 4.

³ Quis cogitando, nedum dicendo consequi potest, quam beata sit res sub bono et salutari principe vivere, qui et gloriam Dei et salutem reipublicæ quaerat, augeat et conservet? Dona sunt hæc, et ut Scriptura loquitur, benedictiones Dei opulentissimæ.—*Luther in Præf. ad Principes*.

willing to obey, violence shall no more be heard in the land, nor wasting and destruction in their borders, but he will restore their judges as at the first, and their counsellors as at the beginning, Isa. i. 25, and lx. 18, and under them shall all human abilities be improved to the highest apex and utmost excellence; all callings, laws, learning, valour, religion, arts, and faculties, thrive and flourish with much happiness and success under the wings and warmth of a godly government. Oh, then, let us bless the God of heaven, who is pleased to govern man by men; as it is a mercy in the church that he teacheth us by men like ourselves, so it is a mercy in the state that he rules us by men who are, or at leastwise ought to be, sensible of our infirmities, and to whom we may have familiar recourse in our necessities;¹ if the Lord himself, or any angel should appear, we could not endure the sight. It is a great mercy, and argues his tender love unto mankind, that he hath set his own name upon our governors, and adorned them with the gifts of his Spirit, fitting them for such noble employment.

6. Since magistrates are set up by God, it is our duty to reverence them as his vicars and deputies, and that not only for fear of his wrath,² which yet must not be slighted, Prov. xvi. 14, and xix. 20, but out of obedience to God's command, who bids us honour them, Rom. xiii. 5, and joins them with himself, Prov. xxiv. 21; 1 Pet. ii. 17.³ This reverence must be *Corde, ore, opere*.

(1.) It must not be complimentary, but cordial; we must not once harbour an evil thought against them; for God will find out a way to reveal and revenge it, Eccles. x. 8, 20. But we must pray for them. What if they be heathens and persecutors, and neglect their duty? Yet we must not neglect ours, Num. xxvii. 16; Dan. vi. 21. Nero, Decius, Dioclesian, were heathenish tyrants, yet he bids us pray for them, 1 Tim. ii. 2, and the primitive Christians prayed for such.⁴ Magistrates are encompassed with many cares, fears, dangers, and difficulties; we should, therefore, by prayer hold up Moses his hands that he faint not, and beseech the Lord to enrich them with all graces fit for their places, as knowledge, zeal,

¹ See more Caryl on Job xxix. 7, pp. 476, 477.

² Fear is of a preservative nature, and makes men keep within compass. *φόβος ἐστὶ φυλακτικόν τι.*—*Aristot.*

³ Sub honorandi verbo sinceram ac candidam existimationem complectitur, et regem cum Deo conjungens, sanctæ ejusdam venerationis ac dignitatis plenum esse ostendit.—*Calvin. Instit.*, lib. iv. cap. 20, sec. 22.

⁴ *Vide Tertul. in Apolog. cap. 30.* Miremur charitatem Pauli, qui pro tali rege, vel potius tam impio tyranno, tamen Christianos omnes Deum vult orare, nec pro solo Nerone, sed pro omnibus illi similibus.—*Soto.*

sincerity, &c. As every one receives benefit by the magistrate, so every one should pray for him, and bear his part in this service, as those busy idolaters did in their blind way: Jer. vii. 18, 'The children gather wood, the fathers kindle a fire, and the women knead the dough,' every one doth something. Magistrates and ministers of all men have most need of our prayers; they are the common butts against which Satan and his agents shoot all their arrows; he overlooks small and great, and dischargeth principally at the kings of Israel.¹ Many can rail, but few pray for them, which makes things go so ill with us.² Besides, in praying for them we pray for ourselves; in their peace lies our peace, and the peace of the churches; hence God's people, when they were captives in Babylon, yet must pray for its peace on this very account, Jer. xxix. 7. Besides, kings' hearts are in the hand of God, and at the prayers of his people he turns them, Neh. ii. 4; Esther iv. 16, and v. 2; Job xii. 24; Prov. xxi. 1. Yea, we must not only pray, but preach for them too, Titus iii. 1; men must often be put in mind of their duty to superiors; many look upon themselves as fellow-creatures with magistrates, but God will have men know their places, and learn subjection.

(2.) We must give them reverent and respectful titles. Aaron calls Moses, my lord, Exod. xxiii. 22. The woman of Tekoa calls David an angel, 2 Sam. xiv. 17, and so doth Mephibosheth, 2 Sam. xix. 27. They are the fathers of our country; and he that curseth father or mother, must die for it, Exod. xx. 12, and xxi. 15, 17. Reviling speeches do rather exasperate than mend men. It is our duty to make the best construction of their actions, interpreting nothing sinisterly, but concealing their infirmities, and with Shem and Japhet go backward and cover them; we must not suffer them in their persons or actions to be traduced or dishonoured; but if we must, as occasion requires, lay down our lives for our brethren, then much more for the fathers and defenders of the nation, 1 John iii. 16. It is therefore made the brand of libertines and profane persons to despise government, and to speak evil of dignities, 2 Pet. ii. 10; Jude 8.

(3.) By reverent gestures, uncovering the head, bowing the knee,

¹ Quo magis est abies procera, evertitur Euris.

Culmina non valles fulmina torta petunt.—*Verinus*.

² Si tam prompti essemus ad preces pro magistratibus funderdas, quam parati sumus ad detrahendum ac maledicendum ipsis; se res nostræ melius haberent.—*Eugenhag*. See more Caryl Sermon on Ps. lxxii. 2, p. 30; Downam's Warfare, 2, P., lib. ii. cap. 12, sec. 5-8, p. 500, &c.

and making obeisance to them, as Nathan and Araunah did to David, 1 Kings i. 23; 2 Sam. xxiv. 20. So when Joseph was made viceroy and governor of Egypt, they cry before him Abreeh, bow the knee,¹ Gen. xli. 43. Our deportment before them must savour of humility, and not of insolence, Lev. xix. 32; Job xxix. 7, 8; Eccles. viii. 3. Next to the honour which we owe to God himself, we owe respect, and ought to honour magistrates, by a prompt obeying their just and lawful commands, in civil and political affairs,² 1 Sam. xxii. 14. As our obedience to God, so our obedience to the ministers of God should be made known to all men, Rom. xvi. 19. It is reported of the kings of Peru, that they were wont to use a tassel or fringe made of red wool, which they wore upon their heads, and when they sent any governor to rule as viceroy in any part of the realm, they delivered him one of the threads of their tassel, and for one of those simple threads he was as much obeyed as if he had been the king himself. Yet the laws of men do not simply and *per se* bind the conscience, but only *derivativè*, so far as they are grounded on God's law, and are agreeable thereto.³ We must so give to Cæsar his dues that we rob not God of his,⁴ Luke xx. 25, for the subject is not bound to obey in all things, but only so far as God's glory is untouched. Hence the Lord punished Ephraim for obeying the sinful commands of wicked men, Hosea v. 11; and the Israelites smarted for obeying Jeroboam's wicked command in worshipping the golden calves, 1 Kings xii. 29, 30. In this sense we may not be the servants of men, 1 Cor. vii. 23. It is true we may and must obey their hard commands, but never their sinful.⁵ We must so honour the king, that withal we fear God, Prov. xxiv. 21; 1 Pet. ii. 17, and obey them in, but not against, the Lord, Eph. vi. 1. Such flatterers as obey their wicked commands are great enemies to them, and help to bring God's judgments on them. In such cases we should answer as they did, Acts v. 29, 'Whether it be better to obey God or man, judge ye.' It is no dishonour to an earthly king to see the King of kings served

¹ Imaginem Dei rex gestat, ideoque colendus et amandus est, si non propter se, saltem vocationis et functionis suæ causa.—*Aug. de Vet. and N. Test.*

² The laws of men properly bind the outward man, the conscience God reserves for himself.—*Byfield on 1 Pet.* ii. 13, p. 430, 431.

³ *Leges regum tum demum obligant conscientiam, cum promulgant ea quæ Deus præcipit.*

⁴ See Mr Hieron on that text, after Ps. lii. p. 446.

⁵ *Vide Woodward's King's Chronicle of the Bad Kings of Judah*, p. 87. *Malo in malo non est obediendum. Etsi parendum in omnibus patri, in eo non parendum quo efficitur ne pater sit.*—*Seneca*, lib. ii., controv. 9.

before him;¹ the midwives are commended and rewarded by God for disobeying the wicked command of Pharaoh, Exod. i.; Heb. xi. 23. We must yield passive obedience where we cannot yield active, as the three Chaldean worthies submitted to the fire when they could not actively obey the king's command, Dan. iii. 18. We desire to give as much to the magistrate as the word of God gives him; and if any give him more, the more shame for them, there is more of flattery than honesty in it.

See this question, *An leges humane obligent conscientiam*,² more fully debated in D. Davenant *de Iudice ac norma fidei*, cap. 26; D. Andrews on the Fifth Commandment, chap. iv. p. 336; Ames. CC., lib. i., cap. 11, 12; Rutherford of Church Government, p. 201; Sharpus *loc. com.*, P. 2, pag. 240; Alsted's CC., p. 340, 342; and Gerhard de Magistrat. Polit. p. 355; Musculus *loc. com.*, 645 p., folio; Ames. CC., lib. v. c. 25, q. 4.

(4.) By a cheerful paying all tributes, customs, taxes to them. The godly render it as willingly, and pay it as cheerfully as if it were a free gift, Luke xx. 25; Rom. xiii. 7. So did Christ, Mat. xvii. 25. Tiberius Cæsar was a notorious wicked man, yet Christ commands that tribute be paid to him, Mat. xxii. 21. The state cannot subsist, nor peace be maintained, without great cost and charges.

Yet magistrates must take heed of increasing the taxes and burdens of their people, when no necessity compels, but only to please their own lusts and luxury. God threatens such, Ezek. xlv. 9; Micah iii. 2, 3. Nothing raiseth sedition and rebellion sooner in a nation than such overreaching practices; this cruelty lost Rehoboam ten tribes at a clap, 1 Kings xii. 14, 16, 19.

It is a scandal which wicked men in all ages have fastened on the godly, that they are rebellious, seditious, troublers of the state, enemies to Cæsar, &c., whereas there are not nobler and better subjects in the world than such as truly fear the God of heaven.³

¹ Contemne potestatem timendo majorem potestatem; ille corpus, hic animam perdere potest; ille gladium, hic minatur Gehennam.—*Aug. Hom. vi. de Verbis Domini.*

² See this more fully cleared in my Comment. on 2 Tim. iii. 2, pp. 33–43.

³ *Vide* D. Taylor on Titus iii. 1, p. 456, 547. See this cavil confuted in my Beauty of Holiness, chap. vii. obj. 11, p. 143. Solenne est ut Christianis crimina seditionis et læsæ majestatis a persecutoribus affingantur, quibus tamen non sint obnoxii.—*Cent. Magdeb. Col.*, 420. *Vide* plura apud Laurentium in 1 Pet. ii. 12, p. 147. See more in Mr Jenkyn on Jude 8, obs. 5, 6, p. 300, 301, folio. Vir bonus est optimus civis, servus, subditus. Tertullianus laudi Christianorum accenset, quod nunquam inter seditiosos inventi fuerint, licet Ethnico Magistratui subjecti.—*Tertulli.*

These pray for rulers, when others curse, swear, drink healths, and break their laws; these obey for conscience, others for fear of punishment only; these are ready to venture their lives and estates for their honour, when the wicked at a pinch will leave him and forsake him. They are sons of Belial that despite sovereignty, 1 Sam. x. 28; and seditious Shebas that rise in rebellion against it, 2 Sam. xx. 1. As for God's people, they are of those that are faithful and peaceable in the land, and so far from sedition, that they quietly bear even the cruellest tortures of the vilest tyrants. It were easy to show that none can be truly loyal but such as are truly religious. Those that are unfaithful to God, how can they be true to their sovereign? He that fears not God will never honour the king. Religion takes away that ferity and brutishness of spirit which is in men, and makes them obey out of conscience to God's command.

Obj. Were they good men, I could willingly obey them; but our rulers are wicked men and cruel tyrants; they care not what burdens and taxes they lay upon us; they do not only fleece, but flay us; they tear our flesh and suck our blood, and must we obey such?

Ans. As servants must obey not only good and gentle masters, but also the froward and perverse heathenish ones, 1 Pet. ii. 18, so far as their commands cross not God's commands; so subjects must obey not only pious and mild governors, but also harsh and cruel ones, in external and civil things, *usque ad aras*, so far as may consist with a good conscience. The power is his, whatever the persons be; the office is his, however they came by it, and so calls for our respect and observance.¹ Even tyrants are ordained of God for the punishment of an ungrateful and rebellious people; when men grow weary of Christ's easy yoke, it is just with God to put the iron yoke of tyrants on them, Deut. xxviii. 47, 48. Hence he is said not only to give kings in mercy to be nursing fathers, but also kings in wrath to be scourges to a wicked people, Hosea xiii. 11. He sent wicked Saul as well as religious David, and he is called the Lord's anointed, 1 Sam. xxiv. 7; and so is Cyrus, a heathen, Isa. xlv. 15; Nebuchadnezzar is called God's servant, Jer. xxvii. 6; Dan. ii. 37; and the king of Assyria is called God's

lib. *ad Scapulam*. Quomodo fidem Imperatori præstabant inviolatam, qui Deo sunt perjuri? dixit Constantius.—*Euseb.*, lib. i. cap. 11.

¹ Potestas est a Deo, sed non abusus potestatis. Res ipsa sæpe est a Deo, licet modus quo quis eam assequitur non sit a Deo; sic divitiæ sunt donum Dei, licet modus quo avari eas sibi comparant non sit a Deo.—*Gerhard.*

rod to chastise his people for their sins,¹ Isa. x. 5. As the wickedness of a minister doth not destroy the ministry, so the wickedness of a magistrate doth not destroy magistracy. Cruel parents are parents still; hence it is that in the New Testament we are so oft commanded to be subject to heathen magistrates, to pray for them, to pay to them, and to yield them either active or passive obedience,² Mat. xxii. 21; Rom. xiii. 1; 1 Tim. ii. 2; Titus iii. 1; 1 Pet. ii. 13, 17; and if tyrants were not ordained by God, we must exclude his providence from the greatest part of the world. But the psalmist tells us that the kingdom of his providence and power reacheth over all; Ps. ciii. 19, 'The Lord hath prepared his throne, and his kingdom ruleth over all.' All creatures are his servants; even the devils in hell do God's will, though against their own; and so do tyrants and wicked men. They oft break the will of God's command, and yet they fulfil the will of his decree. They serve his purpose and providence materially, when formally and intentionally they seek and serve their own, Acts iv. 27, 28.

We are apt to complain of governors, but who complains of his sins, which provoke the Lord to set up such governors over us?³ Judges iii. 8, and iv. 2; Job xxxiv. 30; Ps. cvii. 40; Prov. xxviii. 2; Eccles. iii. 16; Isa. x. 5, 6; Ezek. vii. 11; Hosea v. 7, and xiii. 11. Let us therefore repent of them, and judge ourselves; then will God make medicines of those poisons, and either turn or overturn such as molest his people.⁴ As in nature, so in government, nothing is permanent that is violent, so that it is hard to see an old tyrant; although for a time they may uphold their state by force and fraud, yet in the end divine justice confounds their practices, and infatuates their counsels to their own ruin. Though they be great, yet there is a greater than they, who will break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel, Ps. ii. 9, easily, suddenly, irrecoverably.⁵ Though men cannot or dare not punish them, yet God will; if king Zachariah be wicked and draw Israel to sin, God will soon cut him off, so that

¹ Qui dedit regnum Mario, ipse et Caio Cæsari; qui Augusto, ipse et Neroni; qui Vespasiano suavissimo, ipse et Domitiano crudelissimo; qui Constantino, ipse Apostate Juliano.—*Aug. de Civit. Dei.*, lib. v. cap. 21.

² Dominium temporale habet fundamentum in natura, non in gratia. Ergo cum natura maneat in impiis, dominia exercere possunt.—*Davenant. Determ. Q.* xxx. p. 136.

³ See more in my Comment. on 2 Tim. iii. 2, p. 67.

⁴ Peccatum populi tyrannorum vires.

⁵ Tollenda est culpa, ut cesset tyrannorum plaga.—*Aug.*

⁵ Vide Mr Woodward's King's Chronicle of the Wicked Kings of Judah, *per totum*.

he shall reign but six months, 2 Kings xv. 8; and Shallum that killed him, following his idolatry, reigned but one month after him, ver. 13, and Pekahiah his son continuing that idolatry, reigned but two years, ver. 23.¹ The persecuting Roman emperors were sixty-three, yet only six of them died a natural death.² Usually God cuts off tyrants suddenly, and raiseth up pious and peaceable rulers in their stead; after a wicked Ahaz comes a good Hezekiah, after idolatrous Amon a zealous Josiah. After harsh King Henry comes mild King Edward, and after furious Queen Mary, peaceable Queen Elizabeth.³ Thus after a storm usually comes a calm, and after a sharp winter a pleasant summer.

2. As for taxes, though they be great and grievous, yet the best remedy is prayer and patience. Things that cannot be remedied with patience, must be endured.⁴ In 1 Sam. viii. 11, the Lord tells them what will be the practice of their king, not as approving or allowing of what he should do; for it is the threatening of a judgment, not the imposition of a duty, *q.d.*, This people shall dearly rue the casting off that form of government which I had given them. Yet under all their pressures there must be no rising, but only in prayer; 'They shall cry unto the Lord, and acknowledge their sin,' which is the meritorious cause of all their sufferings; yet it is the wisdom of governors to fleece and not to flay the flock, for fear of insurrection. It was good counsel which King Henry IV. upon his death-bed gave to his son; he admonished him to be moderate in his taxes; for so long as Englishmen, saith he, have money and riches, so long shall you have obeisance from them; but when they be poor and in want, they be always ready to make insurrections at every turn.⁵

Obj. Magistrates are not only cruel, but careless; they neglect their duty, and therefore I may well omit my pay.

Ans. Yet this cannot excuse thee from doing thy duty; another man's sin will not excuse mine; recrimination is no purgation.

2. If they are bad, yet better have a bad one than none at all;

¹ Ad generum Cereris sine cæde et vulnere pauci

Descendunt reges, et sicca morte tyranni.—*Juven.*, Satyr. 10.

² *Vide* August de Civit. Dei. l. 3. c. 15.

³ Illud usa venit ut sceleratissimum sequatur optimus Princeps; quorum enim exitus perhorrescunt, eorum vitam imitari turpe et periculosum ducunt. Sic Neronem Galba sequutus est; Nerva, Domitianum; Alexander Severus princeps eruditus et temperatissimus, Heliogabalum non solum bipedum, sed et quadru pedum spurcissimum.—*Vide Herodian.* c. i. and *Bodin Method. Histor.* p. 301.

⁴ See more to this point in my Comment. on 2 Tim. iii. 2, page 31.

⁵ Imperantis felicitas in felicitate subditorum consistit.

it is better living under a Nero than a Nerva; where nothing is lawful, than where all things are lawful. Tyranny is better than anarchy; ¹ the one keeps things in some order, when anarchy puts all into confusion, and makes every man's lust his law, and set up as many tyrants as there are slaves to sin.² Government is *de jure nature*; no nation so barbarous, no time so dark but some footsteps of government might have been seen. The very bees, by the instinct of nature, have their king, whom they acknowledge and follow; and the cranes have a leader. Though the nature of man, being proud, loves not the superiority of others, and being licentious, loves not to be straitened by others, yet it teacheth subordination, and chooseth tyranny rather than anarchy. The most unruly know not how to subsist without a ruler; even thieves have a leader amongst them; yea, and those monsters of Munster that at first decried magistracy, yet when they were once got into the saddle, they quickly set up, such a one as he was, a tailor king of their own. Yea, in hell amongst the devils there is a government, there is a Beelzebub, a prince of devils, Mat. xii. 24; the devils, who are the authors of all disorder amongst others, yet have an order amongst themselves. It is ill with that state where men are left like the fishes of the sea, which have no ruler, but the greater devour the less, Hab. i. 14. Where all will rule, there is no rule, and where there is none to rule, there is all manner of misrule; as idolatry, murder, plunder, thefts, rapes, riots, and all uncleanness, Judges xvii. 4-6, xviii. 30, and xix. 1, 2. So that it is a very bad government that is worse than none at all; where there is magistracy, some may be oppressed and wronged, but none can be righted where there is none at all. Better poor people should sit under a scratching bramble, than have no hedge at all to shelter them from the storms of popular fury. Nebuchadnezzar was none of the best governors, yet he was a cedar under which the beasts of the field found shadow, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, Dan. iv. 9-12. And if a heathen magistrate be so useful, what is a Christian one?

Obs. 6. We may lawfully give titles of honour to magistrates. If God himself calls them gods, shields, saviours, &c., and lay upon them majesty, glory, and honour, Ps. xxi. 5, why should any man scruple the giving of them such titles? Away then with those sottish Quakers, who are afraid of being too respective (such is their breed-

¹ *Ubi ἀναρχία, ibi ἀταξία.*

² *Ea quæ vera sunt secundum tres gradus, κατὰ παντός, κατ' αὐτό, καὶ καθ' ὅλου πρῶτον, nullam admittunt disputationem.*

ing) to God's deputies ; and therefore they call them thou Richard, thou Thomas, thou John, as if they were talking to some bear-wards rather than magistrates. But the Holy Ghost hath taught them better manners, and to give titles of honour to men in authority ; as King Agrippa, most noble Festus, Acts xxvi. 25 ; most excellent Theophilus, Luke i. 3. But of this at large in another place.¹

Caution. Yet rulers must take heed of suffering flatterers to give them titles which belong not to them ;² as most holy, most unconquerable, omnipotent, omniscient, our Lord God, as Domitian and the popes of Rome are called by their parasites. Thus James Naylor had blasphemous titles given him by his adherents ; as everlasting son of righteousness, and prince of peace ; they sung before him holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth ; no more James, but Jesus, the Lamb of God, a perfect man, &c. Death is the lot of such blasphemers, Lev. xxiv. 16 ; Dan. iii. 29. It was the sin of the Persians that they honoured their kings with divine honour, as gods. Let such remember Herod, who for his pride in suffering divine honour to be given to him, was eaten up of worms or lice,³ Acts xii. 22, 23. . God is very tender of his own glory ; whatever he parts withal he will not part with that,⁴ Isa. xlii. 8. When Satan began to call for divine honour, Christ would bear no longer, but bids him begone, Satan.

Obs. 7. The calling of the magistrate is an honourable calling. God puts his own name on them ; they are earthly gods, they judge for him, they bear his image in their office, they sit on his throne, and he sits with them there.⁵ Though they be subject to infirmities, sickness, and death, as other men are, yet their calling is honourable ; for the dignity of magistracy lies not so much in the persons, who are mortal,⁶ but in their office, in that they are God's lieutenants on earth ; they sit in his place, and exercise his power by deputation ; by him they are appointed to execute justice and preserve the nations in peace and purity.⁷ Now the dignity of magistracy will the better appear if we consider those titles of honour which the Scrip-

¹ See my Commentary on 2 Tim. iii. 17, obj. 2, p. 296.

² Præstat in κορακας quam κολακας incidere, quai corvi non sæviunt nisi in mortuos, adulatores vero viventes devorant, dixit Diogenes.

³ Vide Plura apud Laurentium in 1 Pet. ii. 17, obs. 4.

⁴ Against flatterers, see Plutarch's Morals, p. 69 ; Engl. et Aretius' Problem., chap. ii. p. 50 ; Greenhill on Ezek. xxii. 28, p. 296 ; Clerk's Mirror, cap. 53 ; Jenkin on Jude 8, obs. 6.

⁵ Vide Naylor's Examination.

⁶ Vide Q. Curtius, lib. viii.

⁷ Εικων βασιλεὺς ἐστὶν ἔμψυχος Θεοῦ. Imago Dei rex est animata.—Menander.

ture graceth them withal; for whereas libertines call them pests and plagues, persecutors, burdens, and abusers of the world by tyranny and oppression, &c.

Yet the word of God calls them, 1. Gods; 2. Sons of the Most High; 3. Saviours; 4. Fathers; 5. Nursing fathers; 6. Heads of the body; 7. Eyes of a state; 8. Servants of God; 9. Shepherds of the people; 10. Healers; 11. Pillars; 12. The Lord's anointed; 13. Dignities; 14. Nails in the building; 15. Corner-stones; 16. Shields of the earth; 17. Angels; 18. Foundations; 19. Signets; 20. Captains; 21. Rocks and hiding-places.

1. The Holy Ghost calls them gods, as we have seen at large before.

2. Sons of God, not by nature or adoption, but by office, of which see more on ver. 6.

3. The saviours of the people, Judges ii. 16, and iii. 9; Neh. ix. 27. The Lord saved Israel by the hand of Jeroboam, 2 Kings xiv. 27; and of David, 2 Sam. viii. 3. Such a one was Jehoshaphat, 2 Chron. xx. These God hath ordained for saviours and shelters to his people against the rage and violence of a wicked world; hence it is that in their straits and exigencies they appeal to Cæsar for succour, Acts xxv. 11, 12, though many times the remedy is worse than the disease; and those that should be saviours become devourers and destroyers of God's people;¹ but this is the abuse of their power. God erected them to defend and save his people, that, under them, they might lead quiet, honest, and godly lives, 1 Tim. ii. 2.

4. Fathers of the people. So Joseph, who was a prince in Egypt, is called a father, Gen. xlv. 8, and Deborah is called a mother in Israel, Judges v. 7. The Philistines called their kings Abimelech, *i.e.*, the king my father,² Gen. xx. 2, and xxvi. 1; Ps. xxxiv., title. Saul was a wicked king, yet David calls him my father, 1 Sam. xxiv. 11; and Job, who was a magistrate, a judge at least, as appears, Job xxix. 7, 8, and, as some conceive, a king, though his dominions might not be so large as ours now are, yet possibly such as in those ancient times, and in those eastern parts of the world, were called kings, being a supreme governor within his own territories, though perhaps but of one single city and its suburbs, with some few neighbouring villages: hence he is called the greatest man of all the east, Job i. 3; and when he came in presence, the

¹ See D. Gouge his Arrows, on Exodus xvii. 9, sec. 40, p. 203.

² Abimelech, *i.e.*, pater-rex, est nomen pietatis, potestatis et charitatis. Bonus princeps non differt e bono patre.—*Xenoph. Cyropæd.*, lib. viii.

princes and nobles held their tongues; he sat as chief, and dwelt as a king in the army, Job xxix. 9, 25. Yet though he were thus great, he styles himself a father to the poor, Job xxix. 16; and it was a high commendation of Valentinian the emperor, that his people knew not whether they had of him *dominum an patrem*, a father or a lord.¹ In Rome of old the senators were called fathers, and it was afterwards counted among the Romans the greatest title of honour that could be bestowed upon their consuls, generals, emperors, or whoever had deserved best of the commonwealth, to have this addition to the rest of his style, *pater patriæ*, the father of his country. This title implies not only power and authority, but also tenderness, care, and pity; they should carry fatherly affections towards their people: as a good father loves, defends, and cherisheth his children, so will a good prince his subjects; he will not grind them by cruel exactions, nor drink their blood to satisfy his own lust, nor suffer them to be poisoned with heresy;² when they cry for bread, he will not give them a scorpion; but he is more tender of his people than of himself, and more sensible of their miseries than his own. In all their sufferings he suffers with them; he condoles their miseries, redresseth their wrongs, relieves their wants, reforms their errors, prevents their dangers, procures their welfare and happiness by all good means.³ Thus men of public places should be men of paternal and public spirits; such men need no guard. When King Agasicles demanded how he might be safe without a guard, it was answered, by behaving himself towards his subjects as a father to his children.⁴ Hence rulers are called the arms of a people, to bear them up, and tenderly to lead them, Job xxii. 8; Ps. lxxvii. 10; Jer. xlviii. 25; Ezek. xxxi. 17.

5. Nursing fathers, and nursing mothers: Isa. xlix. 23, 'Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and queens thy nursing mothers';⁵ a most sweet description of the loveliness of magistracy, shewing what tender care should be in them towards the church of God. No

¹ Sed Roma parentem, Roma patrem patriæ Ciceronem libera dixit.—*Juren.*, sat. 8. Homerus nihil aliud in rege desiderabat nisi ut esset fortis in hostes, bonus in cives. Cum patriæ rector dicare paterque, Utere more Dei nomen habentis idem.—*Ovid.*

² Nefaria fuit ista Neronis vox, Me mortuo terra igne misceatur. Et illud Caligulæ, Utinam Pop. Rom. unam haberet cervicem, quam semel truncare possem.

³ Tarde sibi pater membra sua abscindit, et cum abseiderit reponere cupit, et in abscindendo gemit, cunctatus multum diuque. Prope enim est ut libenter damnet, qui cito; prope est ut inique puniat, qui nimis.—*Sen. de Clement.*, cap. 14.

⁴ Presunt ut prosint.

⁵ Varium et multiplex studium denotat, quod liberali manu ab omni illustrium hominum genere impenditur in ecclesiam Dei.—*Glossius.*

father or mother shall be more tender over their children to provide for them, and to guard them and secure them from annoyance, than governors in gospel times shall be over God's poor, helpless, fatherless people; *q.d.*, Whereas kings and rulers of the world are now opposite to the church, yet in gospel times kings and queens shall gladly take upon them thy patronage and protection both in temporals and spirituals; no nurse shall be so tender over their little ones as they shall be over thee.¹ Thy queens shall be Sarahs, (so it is in the fountain;) *i.e.*, they shall be as tender over thee as Sarah was over Isaac, who gave him suck; and as the nurse, out of love, spares no cost nor pains, but gives even her own blood to her babe, so the church's rulers shall spare no cost nor care, but will venture their lives for the church's good.² As God made several of the Persian kings nursing fathers and defenders of his ancient people the Jews, at the time of their return from Babylonish captivity, as we read in Ezra and Nehemiah, so we read of the Roman emperors, as Constantine, Theodosius, &c., that were guardians to the Christians in their dominions. God would have governors to carry his people in their bosoms lovingly, carefully, mildly, and gently, Num. xi. 12. Hence it is that they are called benefactors or gracious lords,³ Luke xxii. 15, because of that bounty and beneficence which they do, or at leastwise ought to shew to their people, and are compared to a lofty tree which yields shade for beasts, nests and habitations for birds, and meat for all, Dan. iv. 20-22.

6. The heads of the body politic, and the principalities of a nation, Num. i. 16, xiv. 4, and xvii. 2; Judges xi. 8; Titus iii. 1; and that (1.) In respect of sublimity. As the head is the highest and most honourable member in man's body, so in the state the magistrate excels others in dignity and sublimity; hence he is also compared to a mountain, which stands above and overlooks the rest of the earth, Micah vi. 2.

(2.) In respect of power and profit. As the head commands the rest of the members, and directs their actions for the good of the whole, so the magistrate is set over his people, to direct and rule them for the benefit of the whole body; hence it is that Jeremiah laments the loss of Zedekiah, the last king of David's line, but none

¹ Though they be not fathers to beget thee, yet they shall be fathers to nurse thee; they shall carry thy sons and daughters in their arms, *i.e.*, they shall contribute their aid and assistance for the upholding and increasing of the church.—*Leyford*.

² Patet hinc, omnem potestatem ecclesiæ esse cumulativam, non privativam in libertatibus quas Christus tradidit ecclesiæ, &c.—*Apollon. Jus Mag. Circa Sacra*, p. 30.

³ Principes vocantur Nede bim, *i.e.*, benefici, Job xii. 21; Prov. viii. 15, quia eos decet clementia et beneficentia.

of the best, with that pathological expression, 'The breath of our nostrils is gone,' Lam. iv. 20. As a man cannot live without breath, so a commonwealth cannot long subsist without government.¹

(3.) As all the members of the body will hazard themselves for the good of the head, so should subjects for the good of their rulers.

7. The eyes of a state. As the eye of the wicked watcheth his opportunities to do mischief, so should the magistrate's eye watch to catch them in their wickedness: to this end God hath set up magistrates to oversee the manners of the people, and calls them eyes, Job xxix. 15; Isa. xxix. 10, 'The Lord hath poured on them the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed their eyes.' But who are those? The next words tell you: the prophets and rulers hath he covered. The Hebrew word which we render rulers, is heads, because rulers are the heads of a people. And what is a head without eyes, or having its eyes covered? Rulers especially, when good, are the light of Israel, and the beauty thereof, 2 Sam. i. 19, xxi. 17, and xxiii. 4; 1 Kings iii. 28. As ministers are called seers, and the eyes of the church, 1 Sam. ix. 9; 1 Cor. xii. 16, 17, so magistrates are appointed by God to be the eyes of the commonwealth, to foresee dangers, and prevent them, and to oversee the manners of people to amend them.² Now, as they should not wear the sword in vain, so they should not bear these titles in vain; they should not be glass eyes or wooden legs. As those artificial limbs stand the body natural in little stead, so do these the body politic—*stat magni nominis umbra*.

8. The servants of God, Jer. xxvii. 6; Ezek. xxix. 19, 20; Hag. ii. 23. Yea, though they be heathens, yet their power is God's, and therefore he calls them his servants and ministers, Rom. xiii. 4, 6. Neither is this title any diminution to them; but it is the honour of their honours that they are servants to so great a master, who is King of kings, and Lord of lords. The angels, those glorious spirits, count it their honour to be ministering spirits to such a Lord, Heb. i. 14; and Christ, by way of honour, is called God's servant, Isa. xlii. 1, and liii. 11. These are the great servants of the commonwealth, endowed with gifts of prudence, fortitude, clemency, &c., for the good of others. Neither are they only his servants by right of creation, for so all creatures are his servants, Ps. cxix. 91; nor, secondly, by right of redemption, for so the elect only are his; but by special delegation and commission from God; by

¹ Magistratus est velut totius populi communis anima, qua corpus ipsum reipublice sustentatur et defenditur.—*Danteus*.

² *Oculus in sceptro* was the Egyptian hieroglyphic of a prince's vigilancy.

way of eminency they are called his servants, because they are set to serve him in a more excellent place. Now the more eminent the master, the more noble is the service. No master like God; his work is wages, and such employment is high preferment. Yet this dignity calls for duty;¹ for a servant, how great soever he be, is but a living organ, as the philosopher calls him, to serve his master with all his might. He works for him, he gets for him, he lives to him, and dies to him; he is wholly at his beck and service. So must magistrates, who have received their power from God, spend themselves and all they have for his honour; for albeit they are gods amongst men, yet they are but men with God. The greatest emperor is but his minister. They are rulers over the persons, yet are but servants for the good of their people.² People must serve them, and yet they are the greatest servants. As it is the duty of all to serve them, so it is their office to serve all.

As magistrates and ministers are both *διάκονοι*, servants, and have the same title given them; so it should mind us of that harmony which ought to be between us. We both have one name, drive at one design, and serve one master, though in different spheres, and therefore we should assist each other in the promoting of God's glory in our places. It is a comely thing when the word and the sword go together.

9. Shepherds of the people, Num. xxvii. 17; Isa. xlv. 23; Ps. lxxvii. 20; Jer. vi. 3, xii. 10, and xlix. 19; Ezek. xxxiv. 23; Micah v. 4; Zech. x. 2.

They must resemble good shepherds, (1.) In industry and fortitude. As they are exposed to wind and weather, enduring summer's heat and winter's frost, for the good of their flocks, and venture their lives in their defence, Gen. xxxi. 38-40; Isa. xxxi. 4, against dogs, wolves, lions, and bears, that would worry the flock;³ so must rulers be industrious in watching over the flock, defending it from the violence of wild beasts. He must not tolerate seducers, who are called dogs, wolves, foxes, to destroy the flock of Christ, but he must drive them from the fold, and keep his sheep from the poisonous pastures of heretics. The weak lambs of Christ he must carry in his bosom, and the strong he must preserve from going astray. This is the meaning of that in Num. xxvii. 17, where Moses prays that the Lord's people be not as sheep without a shepherd, but may have a ruler to go in and out before them, *i.e.*, one

¹ Quo sublimior est gloria, eo major cura.—*Cyprian*.

² Qui imperat, servus servorum est.—*Luther*.

³ Οὐ χρὴ παννύχιον εὐδεῖν βουληφόρον ἀνδρα,—*Homer*.

that may guide and govern them both at home and abroad, in time of war and peace. Thus did Moses himself; what indefatigable pains did he take for the good of God's people! he even consumed himself till he had assistance provided for him, Exod. xviii. 18. It is said of Agesilaus, that so great was his care of the public good, that he could scarce get time to be sick. God hath set up rulers for this very end; by good laws to guard his people, and by arms valiantly to defend them in their bodies, souls, goods, and good name, from the violence of unreasonable men. They are principally ordained for the good of the church. All is theirs *finaliter*, *i.e.*, the end why God created all things was specially for the good of his church. As ministers, so Cæsars are set up by God for the benefit of his people, who are exposed to more dangers than other men. Shepherds are set for the safety of the sheep, and not of the wolves; and as for the punishment of wicked men, it is principally reserved for the judgment of the great day, 2 Pet. ii. 9. The defence of the godly is the magistrate's great work. This office will take up the whole man. It was the sin of the bishops, that they would be bishops in the church, and lord-keepers, lord-treasurers, privy counsellors, and justices of the peace too; and so, between both, they were neither good magistrates nor good ministers, but deceived the church, misled the king, and wronged the state. Of such Latimer complains, Since lording and loitering hath come up, preaching hath gone down, contrary to the apostles' times, for they preached and lorded not, but now they lord and preach not. They that be lords will ill go to plough; it is no meet office for them, it beseems not their state, and thus came up lording loiterers. And if the ploughman in the country were as negligent in his office as prelates be in theirs, we should not live long for want of food.¹ Let such consider, [1.] That magistracy and ministry are two distinct offices, to be executed by two distinct persons, 2 Chron. xix. 11, in different administrations, having different objects and ends, and therefore ought not to be confounded by us; hence the domination of the priests is reckoned as a horrid thing, Jer. v. 30, 31; Ezek. xxxiv. 4.

[2.] Christ himself tells us that his kingdom is spiritual, it is not of this world; and when they sought to make him a king, he fled from them, John vi. 15, and refused to divide inheritances, Luke xii. 14, or to sentence the woman taken in adultery, which belonged to the magistrate's office, John viii. 11; yea, he forbade his disciples

¹ Latimer's Sermon on the Plough, pp. 19, 20; *vide* Tilenum in Syntag., p. 2, Disp. 32. Thes. 33; and Amesii Medul., lib. ii. cap. 17, sec. 48.

and their successors the exercising of any lordly or political dominion,¹ Mat. xx. 25; Luke xxii. 25. And if they might not serve tables and see to the poor, because it hindered their studies, Acts vi. 2, much less may they attend seats of judicature, which are greater impediments; besides, they are expressly commanded not to entangle themselves in the things of this world, 2 Tim. ii. 4; and this drowning themselves in secular offices is condemned by many councils.²

(2.) In tenderness over the flock. A good shepherd doth fleece but not flay his sheep; so a good magistrate is moderate in his taxes and impositions on his people. Many rulers are tyrannical beasts, not shepherds; hence those four persecuting monarchs are compared to beasts for their cruelty, Dan. vii. 3, 7; when they should be angels and guardians to defend, they are devouring beasts that have teeth, great teeth, great iron teeth. So is that beast in Daniel described, to shew what spoil and havoc he would make amongst the people. Of such unnatural shepherds the Lord complains, Micah iii. 3; Zech. xi. 5. Such must know that the flock is the Lord's, not theirs; the people are the sheep of his pasture, and therefore they are called his, by a special propriety, John xxi. 15, 16, my lambs, my sheep; not thy lambs, or thy sheep. When Solomon prayed for an understanding heart, it was that he might judge thy people, 1 Kings iii. 9; not my people, to flay, slay, and destroy, but thy people, to be loved, fed, and defended by me. Princes are not set up to seek themselves, but their peoples' good.³

(3.) In excellency. As the shepherd excels his sheep, so should rulers excel their people.⁴ As Saul was taller by the head and shoulders than other men, so ought these to excel in wisdom, temperance, righteousness, and religion, that by their good example they might lead their people after them. Agesilaus said well, A prince must outgo his subjects, not in lust and pleasure, but in temperance and magnanimity. So said Cyrus, He is not worthy to govern that is no better nor more virtuous than they over whom he is to command.

10. Healers, and binders, and chirurgeons, which bind up the

¹ Stetisse lego apostolos judicandos, non sedisse judicantes.—*Bern.*, lib. i. *de Consid.*

² Concil. Eliber., can. 19; Carthag., 1, can. 6, 9; Calcedon, can. 3; Constant., 6, can. 9; Moguntin., can. 10, 12; Rhemens., can. 29, &c.

³ Reipublicæ salus suprema lex esto, et præcipuus scopus quem sibi quilibet magistratus proponat.—*Plato de Rep.*, lib. i.

⁴ Magistratu dignum non esse quenquam qui non sit melior subditis, dixit Cyrus.

wounds of their people, and labour to heal the divisions which are amongst them. Hence it is that, Job xxxiv. 17, Isa. iii. 7, rulers are called healers, or binders up, a metaphor taken from chirurgery, and the binding up of wounds and sores for the cure of them.¹ And oh that the rulers of our nation would labour to make good this blessed title, by using all good means for the healing of all these sad divisions, both in doctrine and discipline, both in principles and practice. Parliaments for the state, and synods for the church, are excellent remedies against exorbitances, both in the one and the other.

11. Pillars of a state. It cannot stand long without them. The world would soon fall into confusion, and shatter all to pieces (as to its civil capacity) if the Lord had not founded it on the pillars of government: Ps. lxxv. 3, 'I bear up the pillars of the earth.' David, a king, was a pillar, that by his wisdom and faithfulness did bear up the inferior magistrates, whom he calls the pillars of the earth in a political sense. These are the stakes in the hedge of the state, which keep up the fence that the wild beast enter not; yea, the Lord looks at any one of them as able to make up a breach against him, Exod. xxxii. 10; Ezek. xxii. 30, 31; Jer. v. 1. If the Lord could have found but a man that executed judgment, *i.e.*, but one faithful magistrate in Jerusalem, he had spared it for his sake. One Phinehas executing judgment stayed the plague, Ps. cvi. 30.

12. Christs, or the Lord's anointed. So Saul was called, 1 Sam. xii. 3, 5, and xxiv. 6; and David, 2 Sam. xix. 21; Ps. lxxxiv. 9, and cxxxii. 10; and Cyrus, though a heathen, and one that had not received the external unction of oil which the kings of Israel received at their inauguration, yet being appointed of God to do him service, this call of God was beyond all the external unction in the world, Isa. xlv. 1. It is true, the kings whose choice had somewhat extraordinary in it, were installed into their office by pouring of oil upon them,² 1 Sam. x. 1, and xvi. 12, 13; 1 Kings xix. 15, 16, and ii., ix., iii. Now, this ceremony of anointing signified that they were called by God to their office, and should receive from him all gifts and graces needful for their places. Yet this title is given to all believers,³ Ps. cv. 15; 1 Cor. i. 22; 1 John ii. 20, 27.

¹ Chobesh, *ligator vulnerum*, from Chabash, to tie fast, because it is the part of a good prince to bind up the wounds of his subjects; the light of his countenance should be as life to his people, and his favour as the latter rain, Prov. xvi. 15.

² See more fully our Large Annot. on 1 Sam. x. 1.

³ Ungere aliquem est eum tum muneri alicui præficere, tum donis ad illum obeun-

13. Dignities, glories,¹ and majesties, dominions, principalities, and powers, Rom. viii. 38; 2 Pet. ii. 10; Jude 8; all, in the abstract, put for men that are set in power and dignity, and because of that glory and excellency wherewith God is pleased eminently to adorn them. Though libertines reproach them as inglorious and fools in Israel, yet the Holy Ghost, foreseeing what spirits would arise in gospel times, calls them dignities and higher powers in respect of their superiority and pre-eminence above others, and in respect of those glorious gifts and endowments which God adorns them withal, whereby they are fitted for an honourable, fruitful, and faithful discharge of their office; as wisdom to discern between good and evil, clear apprehension, magnanimity, and zeal. Thus, even Saul, when he was made a king, was said to be another man, *i.e.*, he was adorned with prudence, clemency, magnanimity, and other princely virtues fit for his place, 1 Sam. x. 9; and so was David, 1 Sam. xvi. 13. These are the light and glory of a land, of whom we may say, as the people did of David, that he was worth ten thousand of them, 2 Sam. xviii. 3, and xxi. 17.

14. Nails and pins, upon which all the burden hangs, and therefore they have need to be fastened in a sure place, keeping close to the rule of the word; never till then will they be a glorious throne to their Father's house, Isa. xxii. 23. Now the magistrate is compared to a nail fastened in a wall,

(1.) For stability and firmness. As a nail driven into a wall sticks fast, so God will establish and confirm the power of magistracy, that it shall be no more removed than a nail that is driven up to the head; which may be matter of singular comfort to all faithful magistrates, who must look to encounter with many difficulties and indignities from an ungrateful world. But he that hath called them to their honour will keep them there, and fix them with his own hand, whilst they walk in his fear, doing justice and judgment, Prov. xxix. 14.

(2.) In respect of utility. As a nail that is fastened in a wall is fit for many uses, so a faithful magistrate is many ways beneficial to the people where God hath fixed him; and as pins do fasten tents, so these help to fix us in our places in peace, in despite of oppressors, Zech. x. 4; and as the beams of a building are fastened and

dum necessariis instruere; ita ut unctionis vox duo complectatur. 1. Destinationem seu vocationem ad aliquod munus. 2. Donorum ad munus illud exequendum necessariorum collationem.—*Ravanellus*.

¹ Δόξαι, gloriæ.

united by nails one to another, so magistracy is a means to unite people together in society and amity.

(3.) In respect of the weighty labours that lie upon him. We know every one is apt to clap somewhat upon a nail or pin. Arms, utensils, vessels, great and small, we use to hang upon the wall. So the magistrate is usually loaded with employment; every one comes to him for support, defence, and succour. They lay and leave their loads with him; all the necessary utensils of the house hang on this nail. Upon it hang vessels small as well as great; justice is, or ought to be, as large as Solomon's wisdom, which extended to the hyssop, as well as to the cedar: Isa. xxii. 24, 'They shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's house, and all the vessels of small quantity,' even little cups as well as great flagons. All affairs, great and small, and all the weight of the commonwealth shall hang on him from the highest to the lowest. The glory of a nation hangs on the nail of government.

15. Corner-stones, which laid in the foundation do uphold the building. The main stress lies on the corner-stones: Zech. x. 4, 'Out of him shall come the corner.' What is that? Why, the word is a metaphor, commonly used for governors and magistrates, 1 Sam. xiv. 38; Judges xx. 2, where the chief of the people, in the fountain, are called the corners of the people.¹ As Christ is the corner-stone on which the church stands, Isa. xxviii. 16; 1 Pet. ii. 6; so the magistrate, under God, helps to uphold the commonwealth.

(2.) These help to unite the building and keep it together that it fall not asunder. As stones laid in the corner of a building, where two walls meet, are thereby united, strengthened, and supported; so magistrates are the stay and strength of a place, Isa. xix. 13, they are the strong towers and bulwarks of a state. It is true, all the stones in the building do conduce to the upholding of it, but the main weight of all lies on the corner-stones; draw out these, and the building cannot stand.² As Samson's strength lay in his locks, so doth the strength of a state in these.

(3.) As it is an uniting, so it is also an adorning-stone; it is an ornament to the building, because there is more labour spent in polishing the corner-stone, than in the ordinary stones of the building, Ps. cxliv. 12. Magistrates are usually endowed with more choice parts and gifts than others, as I have shewed before.

¹ Phinah, angulus exterior ædificii, et per metaph. princeps qui est robur populi.—*Leigh*.

² Angulus metaphoricè vocatur princeps, qui rempublicam continet, stringit, propicit et roborat, ut angulus utrumque parietem in domo.—*Jerome*.

16. Shields of the earth, Ps. xlvii. 9; Isa. xxi. 5; Jer. li. 11, those which we call rulers, the original calls shields and bucklers,¹ Hosea iv. 18. Magistrates, like shields, should protect God's sabbaths, ordinances, and people in their lives and estates from the violence of those sons of Belial which labour to bring all into confusion that they may the better enjoy their own lusts. A shield is for preservation; it is a kind of partition-wall between a man and danger, it bears all the darts that are thrown at us.² When judgments are abroad, they should, with Moses, Joshua, and David, by prayer, wrestle with God, and lie in the breach to turn away God's anger from them; then God will be *scutorum scutum*, a shield of defence to such shields of the earth.

Government is that staff of beauty with which God protects his people, Zech. xi. 7; it is called a beautiful staff for the profit and comfort which comes to us by it. As the shepherd's staff is for direction, correction, defence, and support, even so is government. 1. It directs a man that is willing to live in order, what to do, and what to shun; 2. It corrects him that will not be ruled; 3. It defends the poor and oppressed, and is a support to him who is wearied out with hard dealing from men.

17. Angels, for wisdom, purity, righteousness, and majesty. As the angels are God's messengers, always ready to execute his will, so magistrates must be prompt and ready to defend the good, and punish the wicked according to God's commandment, 2 Sam. iv. 17, 20, and xix. 27.

18. The foundations of the earth, Ps. xi. 3, and lxxxii. 5; Micah vi. 2, 'If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?' When there is no law for lewd and loose men, what can the righteous do but glorify God by mourning for the things which they cannot mend, and yet comforting themselves with this: ver. 5, 'That the Lord is still in his holy temple, and hath his throne in heaven,' *q.d.*, though all be in confusion, and we can see no help on earth, yet we will look unto God for aid, who sees and considers the sorrows of his people, and who can and will help them, when men will not. Magistrates, under God, are a special means to uphold the world, and keep it from running into confusion; hence they are called Adonai, from Eden, basis,³ Gen. xlv. 8; Isa. xxii. 18, because like a foundation they uphold the building. Hence rulers and valiant men are called bars, Hosea xi. 6—we read it branches, the original

¹ Sit princeps clypeus, non malleus.

² See more in Dr Reynold's Assize Sermon on Ps. xlvii. *ult.*

³ Βασίλειος quasi βάσις τοῦ λαοῦ, fulcrum et fundamentum populi.

will bear both—which help to fasten our gates ; and as the ark was carried with bars, so the weight of the commonwealth lieth on these.¹

19. Signets or sealing-rings, which are near and dear to us, being continually worn by us, Jer. xxii. 24 ; Hag. ii. 23. With these we seal our choicest secrets, and ratify what we would keep safe, wearing them as an ornament on our right hand, and giving them as monuments to our intimate friends. Thus Pharaoh gives Joseph his ring, Gen. xli. 42, and Ahasuerus gives Haman, his darling, a ring, Esther iii. 10. So the prodigal, when he was restored to honour and freedom from his swinish kind of life, had a ring given him by his father as a testimony of his intimate love to him, Luke xv. 22. In these also the Jews did inscribe some name or character of that which they held most precious ; hence the spouse desires of Christ, that he would set her as a seal on his heart, *i.e.*, that he would further assure her of his love and confirm it to her, that she might be kept safe from her enemies, and never be forgotten by him,² Cant. viii. 6. By all this we see God's tender care over magistrates, and how he accounts himself honoured by them ; they are as a signet on his right hand to him when they build his house, promote his worship, and defend his people. Though they may be contemptible in the eyes of the sons of Belial, yet they are precious and lovely in God's eye.

20. Captains, guides, overseers, and watchmen,³ 1 Sam. ix. 17 ; Ps. cxxvii. 1 ; Prov. vi. 7 ; Mat. x. 18 ; Acts vii. 10 ; 1 Pet. ii. 14. As ministers are guides and bishops in an ecclesiastical sense, because they must see to the flock that is committed to their charge, Acts xx. 28 ; Heb. xiii. 7, 17, and lead them both by their light and lives ; so magistrates are bishops and overseers of the people in a political sense, and must use all means that their people under them may live in peace and piety.⁴

21. A rock, a covert and hiding-place from storms and tempests, Isa. xxxii. 2 ; Ezek. xxviii. 16 ; Nahum ii. 5. A man, *i.e.*, a king, shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment, ver. 1. viz., Hezekiah and his princes, yea, all employed under any

¹ Badim proprie rami sunt arborum densiores et crassiores, parandis vectibus idonei, unde quidam vertunt Vectes ejus.—*Rivet*.

² Ponere aliquem ut sigillum brachio vel cordi suo, est eum summe in pretio habere, vehementissime amare, arctissime sibi adjungere, studiosissime curare, fovere, custodire ac tueri.—*Ravanellus*.

³ Ἡγούμενοι, duces et præsides.

⁴ Vos estis episcopi in ecclesia ; ego extra ecclesiam sum constitutus, dixit Constantinus Imper.

of these ;¹ for the meanest in places of authority participate, according to their measure, of that which is here said of the highest ; every one that is set above others may, and must some way, be a shelter and refreshing to the afflicted. This the four ensuing metaphors do excellently imply, setting forth the beauty and benefit of government. 1. Rulers shall be a hiding-place and covert ; these are words of latitude, implying any kind of shelter. By the first we may understand a wall, a high bank, a thick hedge, or great tree, to any of which we creep in a windy day ; by the latter may be meant a house or haven to save us from storms either upon land or sea. Wind imports lesser evil, annoying us ; tempests, greater mischiefs, quite overwhelming us.² Both these metaphors shew that protection is part of good government. In the other two there is a further thing. 1. Refreshment in inward drought, by rivers of waters, which are very precious in deserts ; 2. In outward scorching heat, by the shadow of a great rock, both most comfortable and reviving to the languishing and tired traveller, almost ready to die for thirst, or melted with the burning heat of the sun, in those spacious plains and uninhabitable deserts. This text alludes to gospel times, and is fitly applied to Christ, but in the letter it relates to rulers and magistrates, as Hezekiah and his under-officers.³

Now all these titles of honour God hath given to magistrates to encourage them against those discouragements which they are sure to meet withal in the faithful discharge of their duty.

2. It should teach us to lament the loss of good magistrates. If he that hath lost a good father, friend, guardian, &c., cannot but mourn ; how great then should our mourning be for the loss of a gracious prince, in whom all those titles of love and respect do centre and meet. When good Josiah was dead, what bitter lamentation did the people make, 2 Chron. xxxv. 24, 25. 1. All Judah and Jerusalem mourn for him ; 2. It is with a great mourning ; the lamentation for him is put as the highest precedent of mourning, Zech. xii. 11. Great losses call for great lamentation. The loss of godly magistrates and godly ministers are great losses, and therefore the saints lay them deeply to heart. When Moses was dead, the people mourned for him thirty days, Deut. xxxiv. 8 ; when Samuel died, all Israel mourned for him, 1 Sam. xxv. 1 ; yea, when

¹ Hezekias erit ut latebra, rivus, umbra.

² Rex pius est murus a vento, Portus in tempestate, Rivus in siti, Umbraculum in æstu ; hæc multo abundantius præstitit Christus, cujus typus erat Hezekias populo suo graviter afflicto atque jactato a vento vehementiori, a graviore siti, ab ardentiori æstu.—*Sanctius in locum.*

³ Hæc historice de Hezekia, allegorice de Christo dicuntur.—*Aquinas.*

a Saul, a wicked king, and David's enemy too, was dead, yet see how he laments his fall, and makes a panegyric or funeral oration in his praise, 2 Sam. i. 17, &c. So good ministers are spiritual fathers, the chariots and horsemen of Israel, and therefore we should lay to heart their deaths, Num. xx. 19; 2 Kings xiii. 14; Acts viii. 2; and the rather because it is the sins of the people that provoke the Lord in wrath many times to remove godly magistrates and ministers from amongst us.

3. Those titles of dignity do shew magistrates their duty. Let no man glory in empty titles, but labour to answer them in obedience.¹ Let your lives and your names answer each other. Remember that God hath given you magistratical gifts, not for yourselves, but for the good of others, and to him you must shortly give an account of all the talents which he hath intrusted you withal. Harken not then to flatterers, who would puff you up by telling you that you are gods, and sons of the Most High, and therefore you may do what you please, you are to account to none but God: 'Where the word of a king is, there is power; and none may say unto him, What doest thou?' Eccles. viii. 4; and Samuel tells the people, say these court parasites, that kings have absolute power over the lives and estates of their subjects, 1 Sam. viii. 11-18. Thus they make kings glad with their lies, Hosea vii. 3, and are the worst sort of beasts; for whereas other beasts prey upon dead carcases, those devour men alive.

As for that text, Eccles. viii. 4, the meaning is, that where the word of a king is, there is power—viz., to punish such as do evil—and none can call him to an account for so doing; and in this sense none may say unto him, What dost thou? else the wicked actions of kings may be, yea, and have been, reprov'd. Nathan reprov'd David, saying, What hast thou done? Elijah reprov'd Ahab for his murder, saying, What hast thou done? It is only God's prerogative royal to do whatsoever pleaseth him, and to be accountable to none: none may say unto him, What dost thou? Dan. iv. 35. The greatest men in the world are, or should be, under law. It is not for any man to say, *Sic volo, sic jubeo, stat pro ratione voluntas*, My will's my law. No, kings themselves must read and rule by law,² Deut. xvii.

2. As for that text in Samuel, it is the threatening of a judg-

¹ Ut inveniantur in opere, quod signantur in nomine. Non sunt hic inanum figmentorum, sed rerum verissimarum tituli.—*Musculus*.

² Nulla potentia fida est, si sit nimia.—*Sen.* Tyrannus dicitur ἀνεπένθυρος—i.e., liber et immuvis a reddendis rationibus.—*Arist. Polit.*, lib. iv.

ment, and not the imposition of a duty—*q.d.*, This people shall dearly rue the casting off that form of government which I have given them;¹ for I will give them a king in my wrath that shall deal like a tyrant with them, taking away their goods and cattle from them by violence, and making slaves of them and theirs, as the kings of the nations whom they desire to be like have done to their subjects, ver. 9, 11. Samuel tells them, this will be the manner of your king. The court bishops render it, *jus regis*, the right of the king, and thereupon inferred that all the subject had was in the power of the king, and lay at his mercy.² But *Misphat hammelech* doth not here signify right, or what kings *de jure* ought to do, but what *de facto* they would do, to satisfy their lusts of ambition and covetousness.³ This will be their custom; (for so the word is rendered, Gen. xl. 23; Exod. xxi. 9; 1 Sam. ii. 13; yet that did not justify the wickedness of the priests) not right; for if kings might lawfully do all that is here set down, then Ahab had not sinned in taking away Naboth's vineyard by violence from him:⁴ but this is expressly forbidden, Ezek. xlv. 18, and God punished Ahab for it, 2 Kings xxi. 18; but the Lord commands the king to study his law, and to rule according to it,⁵ Deut. xvii. 16-18, and xxii. 37, which is directly contrary to this *jus regis*; for there the Lord commands the king not to multiply horses, ver. 16; but here it is said he will do it, ver. 11. The Lord commands that he should not covet riches, Deut. xvii. 17; but here it is said, ver. 14, that he will get their fields and vineyards from them, and take their cattle and children from them, ver. 14-17.

Caution.—Yet this doth not debar rulers from a legal right over the persons and estates of men, both in times of war and peace, provided they exercise it in a lawful manner—viz., for the promoting of the public good, and the defence of the laws, religion, and peace of the land.⁶

¹ Deus hoc jus nec saneit, nec approbat, sed tantum prædicat, ejusque acerbiterat graphice depingit, ut eos a petitione regis avellat.—*A Lapide*.

² Jus regis dicitur quod a rege non pro suo officio, sed per suo arbitrio; non pro æquitate, sed pro voluntate institutum est.—*Mendoza in locum*.

³ Non hic depingitur quid reges jure possint, sed quid audeant, et pro suprema potestate quam habere se putant, contra naturæ leges et omnem humanitatem tyrannice decernant.—*Sanctius*.

⁴ Cum leges præscripsisti aliis, præscripsisti et tibi; siquidem naturalis æquitas postulat ut idem jus omnibus ex æquo reddatur.—*Ambrosius ad Valentin.*, Epist. 32.

⁵ Princeps dependet a lege naturæ, divina et fundamentali; quatenus homo est, dicitur observare legem naturæ; quatenus Christianus, legem divinam; quatenus princeps, legem fundamentalem.—*Maccovius*.

⁶ Distinguendum est inter temerariam regis cupiditatem et reipublicæ utilitatem ac necessitatem. Si rex privatâ libidine et habendi cupiditate impulsus talia sibi

Now, as the magistrate must take heed of Anabaptists on the one hand, who offend in defect, and give him too little; so he must take heed of court clawbacks, who offend in excess, and give him too much.¹ They make a god and an idol of him for their own ends, obeying his commands against God's commands, and preferring great men's wills before God's holy word.² Those cry up kings as gods, calling them omnipotent, unlimited, independent, not to be questioned by any authority, &c. Thus the Arminians,³ to curry favour with great ones, and the better to suppress synods, super-superlatively extolled the power of the magistrate in ecclesiastical affairs; and this is the policy of many sectaries in our days to cry up magistracy, that they may the better cry down presbytery, which they know would curb their errors and profaneness. Thus Erastus, a physician, but a rotten divine, puts all church censures into the hand of the magistrate, and so confounds magistracy and ministry together, which are two distinct offices, having distinct bounds and duties belonging to them, which they may not transgress, upon pain of God's displeasure. If Uzziah the king will be so bold as to offer sacrifice, which belonged to the priest, let him expect a leprosy for his pains, 2 Chron. xxvi. 18-22.

See the Erastian tenets fully confuted by the learned Rutherford's *Divine Right of Church Government*, chap. vi. q. 2, pp. 257-647, and in his *Due Right of Presbytery*, *in fine*, chap. vi. p. 387, &c.; Gillespy's *Aaron's Rod Blossoming*, *per totum*; *The Vindication of the Presbyterian Government*, by the Province of London, pp. 8, 9, &c.; Walæus's *Loc. Com.*, pp. 2, 3, and 73; Apollonius's *Jus Magistratus circa sacra*.

4. Magistrates must take heed of dishonouring their honourable calling by profane practices. Their lives should be an epitome of their laws. They are apt to call for duty and reverence; but let them do their duty to God, and honour him, and then he hath

vendicat, injuste ac tyrannice agit; sed si reipublicæ salute et utilitate id exigente, talia postulat, regia sua potestate merito utitur. 2. Distinguendum inter rem et rei modum. Si rex in hisce exigendis modum justum ac legitimum servet, et absque violentia operas, decimas et tributa pro regni sui statu ac necessitate exigat, non potest dici tyrannus; si vero modum necessarium et legitimum fuerit egressus, et ex subditorum incommodo sum duntaxat quaerat commodum, potestate sua abutitur. —*Gerhard de Magistr.*

¹ Dum vitant stulti vitia, in contraria currunt.—*Horat.*

² Domitianus jubebat de se scribi, Dominus et Deus noster sic fieri jubet.—*Suetonius.*

³ Errores Arminii qui coram suprema curia detecti essent, ne ecclesiis patefierent, omnibus modis allaboravit.—*Pezel. Melif. Hist.*, pp. 1196, 1203; *Walæus Loc. Com.* tom. ii. p. 17.

promised to honour them; but if they suffer God's name to be blasphemed, and his worship, day, and servants to be despised, he will cause them to be despised, he will pour contempt on such princes,¹ Job xii. 21; Ps. lxxvi. 12. If Eli's sons be vile, it is because they made themselves so by their wickedness, 1 Sam. iii. 13. The loose lives of rulers doth detract from their authority. As a wicked minister cannot, with comfort and confidence, reprove another for those crimes of which he himself is notoriously guilty, so a wicked, swearing, drunken magistrate cannot with comfort punish another for those sins which reign in himself. We princes, said Queen Elizabeth,² are set, as it were, upon stages in the sight and view of all the world; the least spot is soon spied in our garments, a blemish quickly noted in our doings: it behoves us, therefore, to be careful that our proceedings be just and honourable. As ministers in their calling, so magistrates in theirs, are God's ambassadors, and represent his person; and therefore they must do nothing unbecoming their great Lord and Master. Since God condescends so far as to gift them and grace them with his own name, they must walk like gods on earth. As Alexander said to one of his name, *Aut fortiter pugna, aut nomen depone*: Either fight like Alexander, or never bear his name;³ so say I, either act like God, or never bear his name. Rule as God would rule, judge as God would judge, punish as God would punish, and reward as he would reward. As he hath given you more power and opportunities of honouring him than he hath done to others, so he expects more from you than he hath done from others; for men to be called gods, and yet fight against God, to make laws against his laws, to use, or rather to abuse, their power against that God that gave it, this is to be gods in name, but devils indeed.⁴ What! gods, and be drunken? gods, and take bribes? gods, and be cruel and covetous? &c. Hell is full of such gods. To such we may say, as Naomi said sometimes in another case, Ruth i. 20, 'Call me no more Naomi'—*i.e.*, beautiful—'but call me Marah,' bitter.

¹ How men abuse their authority, see Downam's Warfare, lib. ii. cap. 11, pp. 486, 487.

² *Vide* Camden's Queen Elisabeth, English, p. 325.

³ *Nomen inane crimen immane*, An empty name is a great shame. *Loco ignominie est dignitas in indigno, tanquam simia in tecto.—Seneca.*

⁴ *Qua fiducia iniquitatem in tribunal suum admittent quod Dei viventis thronum esse audiunt? qua audacia injustam sententiam eo ore pronuntiabant quod divinæ veritati designatum esse organum intelligunt? Qua conscientia in impia decreta subscriberent ea manu quam ad perscribenda Dei acta sciunt ordinatum?—Cuvin. Instit., lib. iv. cap. 20, sec. 6.*

So say I, call those no more gods and governors, but call them beasts and devils.

Quest. But what must magistrates do that they may resemble God, whose name they bear?

Ans. They must labour to resemble him in nine particulars:

1. In wisdom; 2. Simplicity; 3. Impartiality; 4. Clemency; 5. Patience; 6. Tenderness to the poor, God's name and worship, and God's ministers; 7. In searching into causes; 8. Judging justly; 9. Doing good to all.

1. They must get wisdom and dexterity in their calling. As ministers, Mal. ii. 7, so magistrates should be men of knowledge, Deut. i. 13; Ps. lxxviii. 12, able to discern between good and evil, that they may rightly time and circumstantiate their actions, Eccles. viii. 5, and thereby uphold the state,¹ Prov. xxix. 2. David was wise as an angel of the Lord, 2 Sam. xiv. 17. Ezra must appoint none for judges but such as know the law, Ezra vii. 25. It is an art of arts, and a science of sciences, even one of the hardest works in the world, rightly to rule men.² He had need be an Argus, or like the ring in Ezekiel's wheels, full of eyes, Ezek. i. 18; another Janus, to look forward and backward, that he be not surprised.³ Men are witty in wickedness, and subtle to smooth over bad causes with fair pretences;⁴ so that, if the magistrate be not a very wise, judicious, experimental man, they will easily escape the sword of justice: hence Solomon is commended for asking wisdom, 1 Kings iii. 9. It is well observed, that Rome saw her best days under her most learned kings and emperors, as Numa, Augustus, Titus, Constantine, Theodosius, &c. An ignorant ruler is like a blind pilot, that lets the vessel be ruined on rocks and sands.⁵ Hence it is set down as a sore judgment when princes are children, and babes rule over men, Isa. iii. 4, 5; not children in years, but children in discretion: then men fall to oppressing and wronging one another. As bodily physicians, so state physicians should have

¹ *Superiores sint qui superiores esse sciunt.*—*Bern.* See Dr Seaman's Ser. on 1 Kings iii. 9, preached 1644, p. 22.

² *Ars est difficillima recte gubernare rempublicam; nullum enim animal homine morosius.*

³ *Quantum prudentiæ, integritatis, mansuetudinis, continentiæ et innocentæ studium debet esse in iis, qui divinæ justitiæ ministros se esse norunt?*—*Calvin.*

⁴ Ps. lviii. 2, and xciv. 20; Job xiii. 4; Jer. v. 26. Sinners are impudent, and innocency is modest, and oftentimes uneloquent. Quo honestior conscientia, iis plerumque frons imbecillior.—*Jerome.*

⁵ Plato could say, *Felices fore republicas, si vel studia sapientiæ consecretur reges, vel sapientes imperent. Illas republicas beatas fore in qua juvenum hastæ, senum consilia pollent, dixit Plutarch.*

an eagle's eye, a lion's heart, and a lady's hand.¹ Such as rule others, had need to be well instructed themselves, that so they may see with their own eyes. It is dangerous for church and state when the governors of it are ignorantly led by others, and cannot judge of the things which are propounded to them.² Hence it is that the Lord would have them to write, read, and study his word, that they might be able to rule according to it, Deut. xvii. 18 which made Jehoiada, the high priest, at the inauguration of king Joash, to deliver the testimony or book of the law unto him, 2 Kings xi. 12, that by observing the precepts and precedents there recorded, he might rule accordingly. He must know God's law, and he had need to know the laws of the land too; else how will he be able to determine according to law if he do not know the law? The Scripture is the best counsellor for the greatest statesman in the world. This is the way to make him prosper,³ Joshua i. 8. To this end they should get godly and learned counsellors about them, that they may be able to resolve their doubts, and direct them in God's paths. It is of great consequence for princes to have a Joseph, a Nehemiah, a Nathan, a Daniel about them. Whilst Jehoiada the priest lived, who was a pious and a learned man, it went well with king Joash and all his kingdom, 2 Kings xii. 2; but when that good man was dead, all went to ruin. As a minister must not be a novice, lest he fall into temptations, so a magistrate had need to be an experimental, well-seasoned piece, that he fall not into snares; and as a minister should have somewhat in him more than an ordinary man,—*ex quovis ligno non fit Mercurius*,⁴—ignorant logs become not thrones and pulpits; so a magistrate should have something in him that is eminent and exemplary, and something of an orator,⁵ whereby he may persuade to goodness, recall men from wickedness, commend the virtuous, disgrace the vicious, comfort the comfortless, and exhort men to virtue. Julius Cæsar got the empire, and held it, by arms and letters. Hence he is painted standing upon the globe of the world, holding

¹ *Justitia sit cæca in exequendo, oculata in dijudicando.*

² *Debet magistratus summus religionem quam defendendam suscipit, etiam cognoscere, in eam inquirere, de ea judicare, eamque prius judicio suo non tantum apprehensivo, sed etiam discretivo comprobare, &c.—Horus, Disput. 30, 156; ubi plura.*

³ See Mr Strong, 31 Ser., p. 617.

⁴ See more on ver. 5.

⁵ *Vide* Langii Polyanth. de Magistratu, q. 10, 11, *mihî*, pp. 1666, 1667. *Vide* D. Hall's Solomon's Politics, vol. i. p. 211, folio. *Vide* Moll. Histor. Observat., chap. ii.

in his left hand a book, and in his right a sword, with this motto : *Ex utroque Cæsar*, Emperor by both.

2. In simplicity. God mingles with nothing; he is free from the mixture of a private or passionate spirit.¹ So should rulers be pure gold without any dross, as much as in them lies, of sinful anger, malice, fear, or hatred, Isa. i. 25, 26; he that cannot rule himself is unfit to rule others.

3. Impartially. As God is no respecter of persons, but punisheth sin wherever he finds it, be it in rich or poor, 2 Chron. xix. 7; Job xxxiv. 19; Acts x. 34; Rom. ii. 11; Gal. ii. 6, so rulers must imitate and follow him in their measure and degree. Thus Amaziah did justice on those that killed his father; he did not protect them by his prerogative, 2 Kings xiv. 5; and Asa deposed his own mother for her idolatry.²

4. In clemency, pity, and mercy. God is pitiful even to the rebellious, and loath, if by any means it might be prevented, to destroy them, Ps. lxxviii. 18; Hosea xi. 8. He is not extreme to mark what we do amiss, but is slow to anger, though he be great in power.

In this the gods on earth must imitate the God of heaven.³ They must not oppress their brethren, Ezek. xlv. 8, nor rule over them with rigour, Lev. xxv. 43. They must not be like roaring lions and evening wolves, which leave not the bones till the morning,⁴ Zeph. iii. 3, but they must consider that they rule over men and not beasts, and therefore they must deal tenderly and mercifully with them, that they may get the affections of their people, which is the best upholder of the throne, Prov. xx. 28. David by loving compellations wins the people's hearts,⁵ 2 Chron. x. 7. 'Hear, my brethren and my people.' So Theodosius, by his loveliness and clemency, gained many kingdoms. The Goths, after the death of their own king, beholding his temperance, patience, and virtue, gave themselves up to his government.⁶ When Cicero would claw

¹ Nec timidi, nec tumidi. Male irato ferrum committitur; debet omni perturbatione liber accedere ad rem summa diligentia tractandam, potestatem vitæ necisque. — *Seneca, lib. de Ira*, cap. 16.

² Of this see more in ver 2.

³ Sic piger ad pœnas princeps, ad præmia velox :

Nam virtus magnos hæc facit una Deos.

⁴ Ideoque, Scipio laudatur, qui malle se unum servare civem, quam mille occidere dixit.

⁵ Benevolentia populi erga principem est tutissimum illius munimentum. — *Gerhard. Vide Taffyn of Amendment*, lib. iii. sec. 51, p. 378. Diligi princeps, nisi ipse diligat, non potest. — *Pliny. Joshua* vii. 19.

⁶ *Vide Aug. de Civit. Dei*, lib. v. cap. 26, and *Orosius*, lib. vii. cap. 34. Duo sunt

Cæsar, he tells him that his valour and victories were common with the rest of his soldiers, but his clemency and goodness were wholly his own. Nero, in the beginning of his reign, when he was to set his hand to the sentence of condemnation, would say, *Utinam nescirem literas!* I wish my hand could not now write!¹

Rigour breeds rebellion. Rehoboam, by his cruelty, lost ten tribes in one day, 1 Kings xii. 16. Choose, then, rather to offend on the merciful hand, since it is much safer to account for mercy than for cruelty.² Let the sword of justice be furbished with the oil of mercy, though there be cases wherein severity must be used; for we must beware of foolish pity, which oftentimes is mere cruelty, both to thyself, it may cost thee thy life to spare the lives of those whom God hath sentenced unto death; we must not be more merciful than the rule which God sets us,³ 1 Sam. xv. 9; 1 Kings xxi. 19.

And secondly, To the party offending. Impunity breeds impenitency; it hardens men in their sin, and oftentimes brings them to a second murder, which the indulgent magistrate becomes accessory to. When one told the king of France that such a one had committed a third murder, No, said one, he hath committed but one murder, the other two are the king's; for if he had not pardoned him he had killed but one.

Thirdly, It is injurious to the state to spare murderers, witches, and blasphemers; the guilt of those crimes lies on the whole land, and cannot be set off but by doing justice on the offenders, Num. xxxv. 33.

5. In patience. God bears long with the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction, Rom. ix. 22; he doth not presently cut off rebellious sinners, but waits long for their amendment.

So magistrates had need to be men of much patience, to undergo those burdens, affronts, and injuries which they must expect, if they be faithful, from an ungrateful world; as we see in Moses, though a holy, meek, wise man, and one that had brought the people nomina, homo et peccator.—*Aug.* As a malefactor, punish him; as a man, pity him.

¹ Vide Pezelii Melefic. Hist., p. 336, folio. Plura clementiæ exempla invenies apud Valer Max., lib. v. cap. 1, p. 417, edit. ult. et opt. Multos timere debet, quem multi timent.—*Sen.*

² Prima principis dos clementia.—*Calvin.*

³ Rex apum aculeum non habet, vel certe eo non utitur; exemplar hoc magnis regibus ingens.—*Plin. Nat. Hist.*, cap. 17. Caveat magistratus ne aut nimia severitate vulneret magis quam medeatur, aut superstitiosa clementiæ affectatione in crudelissimam incidat humanitatem.—*Calv.* Maxima peccandi est illecebra impunitatis spes.—*Cicero.*

through many straits; yet, when any new trouble came, they were ready to murmur and fly upon him. It was a good saying of Theodosius, If any man speak evil of the emperor, if it be of lightness, it is to be contemned; if of madness, to be pitied; if of injury, to be remitted.¹ As he must in some cases use the sword,² so in some cases, especially in his own, it is his glory to bear and forbear, Prov. xix. 11.

6. In tenderness. (1.) To the poor. As God takes care of the poor, the fatherless, and the widow, who have none to take care for them, Ps. lxxviii. 5, so the magistrate, who hath power, must be a defence to those who have no power to defend themselves. But of this more, ver. 3, 4.

(2.) God is very tender over his people; they are the apple of his eye, which is *oculus oculi*, tender, and the glory of the eye; the signet on his right hand, his jewels, his portion, his pleasant portion, &c.; so magistrates must be very tender over them. The world is apt to wrong them, and trample upon them by reason of the church's weakness; and therefore she is compared to a vine, a dove, a widow, a sheep, which cannot subsist long without a defence and support; and if magistrates neglect their duty, yet God will never fail his people, but will reprove kings for their sakes; and though his church be weak, yet her enemies shall know that her Redeemer is strong, Jer. l. 34.

(3.) God is very tender over his own name, day, worship, ordinances, and ministers, &c.

So magistrates, as they are God's deputies, must especially look to the things of God.³ As God hath exalted them, so he expects they should exalt his name and worship. It will be the honour of their honours so to do. This was the glory of those godly kings of Israel, that they made it their chief care to promote God's worship, and to abolish all the monuments of idolatry. David saw to the ordering of God's worship, that it might be kept from confusion, 1 Chron. xxiii. 24, 25, 29. Jehoshaphat sent his princes with the priests to see idolatry abolished, and the truth settled, 2 Chron. xvii. 7-9. Hezekiah purgeth the temple, 2 Kings xviii. Josiah and Asa cast down idols, and restored the worship of God, 2 Kings xxxiv.

¹ Magni est animi in summa potentia injurias pati, nec quicquam est gloriosius principe impune læso.—*Seneca de Clement.*, lib. i.

² Aut fer aut feri; ne feriare feri.

³ Prima magistratus cura debet esse religionem veram promovere, et impietatem prohibere.—*Ames. C. Confes.*, lib. v. cap. 25, q. 2.

Many would have the magistrate to defend men in their temporals, and see to the backs and bellies of people, as if he were some butcher or ox-herd, some Turk and Tartar that never heard of God; but as for religion, saith the revived Donatist of these times, that concerns not the magistrate, he must not once meddle with that, whereas this should be his chiefest care.¹ That which we must chiefly pray for, that should be his chiefest care; but the great request of God's people is, that they may lead godly as well as peaceable lives under magistrates, 1 Tim. ii. 2; hence it is that they are commanded to kiss the Son, obey his commands, advance his kingdom, and promote his worship.² Even Aristotle could say that, among other things, the magistrate ought to see to the worship of the gods, and that their holy things be kept from violation.³ Mr Perkins speaks well to this point. The magistrates, saith he, look to peace and civil order; it is well done, and it is their duty, yet not the principal; and they do commonly fail in this, that they use not the sword for this end, to urge men to the keeping of the commandments of the first table, to a practice of pure religion, and to the keeping of the Sabbath-day. This is the main duty of the magistrate, who bears the sword especially for the good of men's souls. Thus that worthy and eminent light of England.⁴

That magistrates ought to have a special care of religion, see Davenant de Judice fidei, p. 91, &c.; Musculus Loc. Com. de Mag. mihi, p. 630, folio; D. Gouge, his Arrows, on Exod. xvii. 15, sec. 74, p. 323; Mr Marshal's Sermon on 1 Tim. ii. 2; Taffyn on Amendment of Life, lib. iii. cap. 6, p. 327; Gerhard de Magistrat., pp. 298, &c., 312, &c.; Στερέωμα, pp. 24, 25; Burrough's Irenicum, cap. 7; Cotton's Keys, pp. 25, 53; D. Bolton's Arraignment of Error, p. 312-348.

2. If men be obstinate, the magistrate may, and must compel them to keep the Sabbath, and to frequent the worship of God; though he cannot make them believe, yet he may make them hear.⁵ Parents may and ought to do thus much, and why not magistrates

¹ Nec princeps corpora tantum hominum curabit, et negliget animos; non enim armentarium aut subulcum principem fingimus, cui tantummodo venter, caro et cutis subditorum curæ sint.—*Apollon. Jus. Mag. Circa Sacra*, p. 106. Quid imperatori eum ecclesia? dixit Donatus.

² See seven reasons why magistrates should more especially promote religion, in Mr Ant. Burgess's Sermon on Judges vi. 27, 28, p. 5, &c., preached 1645.

³ See five reasons for this in Mr Jenkyn's Ser. on Ps. ii. 12, pp. 6, 7, preached 1656, and on Jude 8, obs. 4, p. 300, folio. *Vide Arist. Polit.*, lib. vi. cap. 8.

⁴ Perkin's Treatise of Callings, vol. i. p. 764.

⁵ See Mr Rutherford's Due Rights of Presbyt., p. 352, *in fine libri*.

then? Exod. xx. 10. Though they cannot compel them to grace, yet they may to the means of grace.¹ The magistrate is *ensifer Dei*, God's sword-bearer; he must not bear or wear it for a show, Rom. xiii. 4, but draw it out, and use it according as God directs him in his word, bringing the wheel of justice over the heads of the wicked, Prov. xx. 8, 26. He must not be like a cypher, of no use but to fill a place; like St George on horseback, who sits with a drawn sword, but never stirs nor strikes. Nor like that log of wood which Jupiter threw amongst the frogs to be their king, which they soon trampled on with contempt. A magistrate couchant makes offenders rampant; sin and error lose nothing by indulgence; such ill weeds, if tolerated, grow apace.

3. If they be seducing heretics, he must punish them according to their demerits. Evil-doers are to be punished, that is confessed on all hands; but seducing heretics are evil-doers, Phil. iii. 2; 2 Pet. ii. 14. 2. Murder, adultery, theft, and suchlike works of the flesh must be punished, but heresy is spiritual murder, adultery, theft, and expressly called a work of the flesh, Gal. v. 19–21; and lest any should think that this was legal, it is plain that such ought to be punished even in gospel times, Zech. xiii. 3. The prophet there speaking of gospel times, tells us that he who speaks lies in the name of the Lord, shall die for it. 2. If they be idolaters or blasphemers, then it is *de jure nature*, agreeable even to natural light, and founded on reasons of immutable equity, as the glory of God, the good of his people, &c., that they should be punished, and so binds for ever. Job tells us that idolatry is a sin to be punished by the judges, Job xxxi. 27, 28. The Arminians and Socinians would have no heretics punished, or once molested by the magistrate,² that so themselves might escape in that crowd. But what mischief and confusion this would bring to church and state, I have elsewhere shewed at large.³ Indulgence breeds insolence and impudence, as we have seen by sad experience. When judgment is not speedily executed on evil-doers, they are hardened and heightened in sin,⁴ Eccles. viii. 11. Execution is the life of the law; it is the same in policy which elocution is in oratory, the first, second, third thing, it is all in all. When the woman came to Philip, king of Macedon, for justice, he answered, *Nolo*, I will

¹ *Formido pœnæ licet non reddat justos, utilis tamen est et servit tranquillitati publicæ; dum conatus reproborum per illum coercentur.*—*Musculus*.

² *Vide* Pezelii Harmon. Remonstr. et Socinian, art. 21, p. 252.

³ See my Commentary on 2 Tim. iii. 8, pp. 168, 169.

⁴ *Impunitas incuriæ soboles, insolentiæ mater, radix impudentiæ, transgressionum nutritrix.*—*Bern. de Consid.*, lib. iv.

not ; but she well replied, *Noli ergo regnare*, Lay aside your kingship then. So say I, will you not punish blasphemers and soul-murderers, then never bear the sword of justice. Either act like magistrates, or never bear the office ; either discharge the duties of your place, or leave it to such as will ; for shame let not blasphemy escape better than felony, let not a cut-purse die, and a blasphemer live. Do not punish him that speaks a word against you, and let him escape scot-free that speaks two against Christ. It is a sin to be calm and cold when God is blasphemed. When Servetus, that blasphemous heretic, charged Melancthon with harshness in a dispute against him, he answered, *In aliis mitis sum ; cum blasphematur nomen Christi, non ita*. I can be calm, said Melancthon, in other cases, but not in blasphemy. And whereas many plead conscience for what they hold, it is against their conscience to renounce such errors and such heresies, Mr Burroughs shall answer them.¹

1. An erroneous conscience doth not bind ; you sin, notwithstanding your conscience bids you do it.

2. Whatsoever you hold, though conscience be never so much taken with it, if it destroy the power of godliness, if this man be in Christian society, after all means used to reduce him, if he still persevere in it, he is, notwithstanding his conscience, to be cast out. If poison be got into a glass, and you cannot wash it out, the poison and glass too is to be thrown into the sink.

3. If the error, with the profession of it, be destructive to the state, and he cannot be reclaimed, he may likewise be cut off from it, or at least be deprived of the privileges of it, and benefits by it, notwithstanding his plea of conscience. Thus he, who yet allows too much liberty in some cases.

Obj. This is persecution.

Ans. Not at all. It is justice, not persecution, to punish thieves and murderers. These spiritual thieves and murderers are the worst of sinners ; others destroy but the estate or body, these kill souls.

2. It is Christian wisdom to kill serpents, wolves, foxes, bears, Cant. ii. 15.

3. It is love and compassion to the souls of the wicked, and may be a means to convert, or at least to restrain them, and so they may be the ministers of God for their good, not only civil, but spiritual ; hence the magistrate is called an heir of restraint, Judges xviii. 7 ;

¹ *Vide* Burroughs' *Irenicum*, chap. 6, p. 34. *Vide* D. Bolton, *Arraignment of Error*, p. 337, &c.

there was no magistrate, or, as it is in the fountain, *joresch gnetzer*, there was no heir of restraint to repress sin, and restrain men from wickedness.¹ Thus Saul's reigning was called restraining, 1 Sam. ix. 17, because by his authority he restrained men from their licentious practices. When these curbs are gone, horses run wild, and people are like sons of Belial without a yoke.

4. It is an act of mercy to others, to keep them from infection; it is cruelty to the good to spare the bad.

5. Had these seducers and their followers power, they would be the greatest tyrants and persecutors in the world; witness John à Leyden and his fraternity.

6. I would have all mild and gentle means used before men proceed to judgment.² Care should be taken to inform their judgments, and convince them of their evil ways. The apostle is for two admonitions before church censure, Titus iii. 10, and the censure of the magistrate should not precede that of the church. And if they be heathens and infidels, the gentler we must deal with them, to win them to the faith, Titus iii. 2, 3. Abominable, then, is that cruelty of the papists, who by inhuman tortures would force the poor Indians to baptize their infants, and say as they say, and hold what they hold. All this is but a nullity; for as a forced marriage is no marriage, a forced profession is no profession.³

7. We must distinguish of persons and their errors: 1. Some are seducers, and offend through wilfulness; though they be convinced, yet they will not be convinced, but walk turbulently and disorderly, disquieting both church and state. These must be most sharply dealt withal.

2. Others are seduced and misled through weakness; these would be pitied.

Next we must distinguish of errors. 1. Some are about circum-

¹ Nemo pereat, nisi quem perire etiam pereuntis intersit.—*Seneca*. Hæreticis obstinatis beneficium est morte multari; nam quo diutius vivunt, eo plures errores excogitant, plures pervertunt, et majorem sibi damnationem acquirunt.—*Musculus*. Hæres interdicti vel prohibitionis.—*Piscat*. He must restrain, 1. Idolaters; 2. Seducing sect-makers; 3. Vicious livers. Vide Mr Lyford's Ser. on Dan. iii. 14, pp. 7, 8, &c.

² Cuncta prius tentanda, &c. Vide Dr Bolton's Arraignment of Error, p. 334, &c.

³ Ad fidem nullus infidelis cogendus est; nam ea suadenda, non imperanda; doctores non tortores adhibendi: monendo plus proficitur quam minando, docendo quam cædendo.—*Tilenus Syntag.*, p. 634. Quod cor non facit, non fit. See this question largely debated by Gerhard de Magist., p. 385, &c. Mr Cebbett of Magistracy. Mr Leigh in his prolegomena to his Body of Divinity, in fine. The author of the *Bloody Tenent* would have none punished. See him confuted by Mr Bedford against Antinom., p. 78, and Mr Cotton against Williams. Davenant de Judice, p. 72, and Tactica Sacra, lib. ii. cap. 2, sect. 11, p. 123, &c.

stantials and lesser matters, making no rent in church or state, and here the strong must bear with the weak, Rom. xv. 1; Eph. iv. 2; Gal. vi. 1. That friends might differ about the same things without breach of friendship, a very heathen affirms.¹

2. Some errors are fundamental, and overthrow the very substantials and foundation of religion directly or indirectly, mediately or immediately. Thus Arians, Socinians, Antinomians, papists, publishing blasphemy to the disturbance of church and state; such turbulent idolaters and gross heretics,² as well as other gross offenders, may be punished with death, as appears, Exod. xxii. 20; Lev. xxiv. 16; Num. xv. 30, 31; Deut. xiii. 1-10; 1 Kings xviii. 40; 2 Kings xxiii. 20; Ezra vi. 11, and vii. 26; Dan. iii. 29. So saith Mr Perkins: The magistrate, who is the vicegerent of the Lord, is the keeper of both tables, and therefore is to maintain religion with the sword, and so may put to death atheists, which hold there is no God, of which sort there are many in these days; and heretics, which maliciously maintain and hold anything that overthrows the foundation of religion in the churches whereof they are members.³ Had this good man lived in our days, he would have been censured by some for Perkins the persecutor; but wisdom is justified of her own children.

4. God is very tender over his ministers. None must touch his prophets to hurt them;⁴ he takes the injuries done to them as done to himself. As they are subject to greater tentations, so they are under more special protection: he holds these stars in his right hand, Rev. ii. 1.

So magistrates should be very tender over the messengers of Christ, who are the best friends, if they be faithful, that princes have in the world. Magistracy and ministry, the word and the sword, should go together. The pulpit guards the throne; hence Nathan is called the friend of David, 1 Kings iv. 5; king Joram calls Elijah his father, 2 Kings vi. 21; and Jehoshaphat calls the

¹ Non eadem sentire duos de rebus iisdem, incolumi licuit semper amicitia. Magistratus propter solum hæreseos crimen non quenquam occidat, nisi forte horrendæ atque intolerandæ in Deum blasphemiæ, vel manifestæ seditionis crimen accedat.—*Hommius*, Disp. 31, sec. iv. p. 163.

² Poena capitali puniri potest non qua erro, sed qua turbo.—*Prideaux*. Hæreticos, blasphemos et seductores capite mulcandos esse, multis argumentis probat doctis.—*Altingius*, problem 19, 20, and Zepper. de Lege Mosaica, lib. iv. cap. 3, p. 244.

³ Perkins on the Creed, p. 194, vol. i. Vide Synopsis Purior. Theolog., Disp. 50, sec. 56. Willet's Synopsis, Controvers. 7, q. 2, p. 373, edit. ult., and Mr Prin's Treatise of the Power of Magistracy, an excellent piece to this purpose, where all the Anabaptistic cavils are answered.

⁴ Neque tactu oris, neque tactu cordis.

Levites his sons, 2 Chron. xxix. 11; and Hezekiah spake comfortable, delightful, pleasing words to the hearts of the Levites, 2 Chron. xxx. 22. The magistrate must protect their persons from violence, and their maintenance from the encroachment of cruel cormorants, lest, by famishing them, he bring a famine of the word upon the people. He must plant the word where it is wanting, and continue it where it is planted. It was well observed by Queen Elizabeth, when the justices of peace in the county of Suffolk met her Majesty in progress, every one of them having a minister by him, I see the reason now, saith the queen, why the county of Suffolk is better governed than other counties; it is because the word and the sword go together.¹ Then church and state are like to flourish when Moses and Aaron, Zerubbabel and Joshua, Zech. iv. 14, go hand in hand together. When the minister reproves sin, and the magistrate punisheth it; when the magistrate makes use of the minister's direction, and the minister enjoys the magistrate's protection; when Joshua joins with Eleazer, and David consults with Nathan and Gad, the prophets of the Lord; and Josiah with Huldah, and Uzziah with Zechariah the priest, then, and never till then, can we look to prosper, 2 Chron. xxvi. 5. It is Aaron's office to speak, but it is Moses's rod that works the wonders. Ministers must preach, and magistrates must punish offenders.

7. As God searcheth and inquireth into men's causes before he punish, and though he be the supreme and absolute judge of all the world, yet we find that he first cited Adam, and gave him a fair trial before ever he turned him out of paradise, Gen. iii. 9-20. He never proceeds to judgment till the fact be clear; though he had a cry come up to him concerning the blood of Abel and the wickedness of Sodom, yet he searcheth and examines the matter, to see if it be according to the report,² Gen. iv. 9-11, and xviii. 21; so the magistrate must be well advised what he doth, and ponder all circumstances, before he pass sentence. So did Job: chap. xxix. 16, 'The cause that I knew not, I searched out.' *Oyer* must go before *terminer*. First hear, and then determine. Nothing must be done rashly and unadvisedly, but upon serious and mature deliberation must they proceed to judgment, else the judge's temerity will prove the innocent person's calamity. As the physician, before

¹ O beatum populum in quo uno ore et uno animo utraque administratio ad sanctam communionem cum civili societate continendam et augendam conspiraverit! Non minuit illam hæc administratio, sed altera alteram stantem confirmat, labantem statuminat, collapsam erigit.—*Junius Eccles.*, lib. iii. cap. 5.

² Licet Deo omnia sint aperta, non tamen puenit audita sed visa.

he prescribes a receipt or diet to his patient, will first feel the pulse, view the urine, observe the temper and changes in the body, and inquire into the causes of the disease, that so he may apply a fit remedy suitable to the malady, so ought every magistrate, in causes of justice, to hear both parties with equal patience fully and fairly, to examine witnesses thoroughly, and to lay together all allegations, and give judgment accordingly.¹ Reports and probabilities are no sufficient ground; there must be a proof, and that by men approved, else a Jezebel may get false witnesses to accuse an innocent Naboth.

Judges must not first hang a man, and try him after; the law condemns no man till it have first heard what he can say for himself, John vii. 5; Acts xxv. 16. It is worth observing what a heap of words the Holy Ghost useth to make magistrates cautious in this kind. 1. They must search; 2. Inquire; 3. Diligently; 4. They must see that it be true and certain that such an abomination is wrought; 5. Then, and not till then, must they proceed to judgment, Deut. xiii. 14, xvii. 2, 4, and xix. 18; Judges xix. 30. Many cases are dark and difficult, and so cunningly contrived, that it is the king's honour to search it out, Prov. xxv. 2, as we see in Solomon, in that difficult case of the two mothers, 1 Kings iii. 16, 28. And if in lesser matters it be folly to answer a matter before it be heard, how much more in such weighty cases, Prov. xviii. 13. Judges especially must take heed what they do, 2 Chron. xix. 6, and therefore it was a great oversight in David to give away good Mephibosheth's land before he had heard him speak for himself, 2 Sam. xix. 29.

8. As God judgeth by law, though he be Lord-paramount of all the world, and being absolute in himself, might make his will his law, and none may say unto him, What doest thou? yet he judgeth according to the law of nature; 2. By the moral law; 3. By the gospel.² So rulers must rule by law, and not by lust, Deut. xvii. 11; then their words have power with them, Eccles. viii. 4; then they are the higher powers indeed, whom none may resist but at his own peril, Rom. xiii. 2; whereas a ruler and his will or lust is the higher weakness rather than the higher power. The strength of

¹ Qui statuit aliquid parte inaudita altera, æquum licet statuerit, haud æquus erit.—*Seneca in Medea*.

² Jubetur rex legum compendium propria manu describere, quo magis ea præcepta inhaereant animo; nam legentibus elabuntur sententiæ, quod lectio moras non patitur; qui autem scribit per otium imprimit et infigit menti singula fideliter.—*Philo de Creat. Princip.* Non aliud potest rex quam quod de jure potest.—*See Lex Rex*, p. 179–255, an excellent piece to this purpose, by Mr Rutherford. Rex est lex animata.—*Philo*.

princes lieth in the law, as Samson's strength lay in his locks, and these are the people's security. Laws are the best walls of a city;¹ without them, even walled cities want defence. They are as physic to the body, both for preventing and removing of diseases; yea, they are as the soul to the body; without them, the commonwealth would neither have beauty nor being. Where the magistrate obeys the laws, and the people obey the magistrate, there is both beauty, strength, and safety.² Such magistrates as practise their own laws, may the more boldly punish the transgressors of them. David, that went before his people in a holy example, threatens judgment against the workers of iniquity, Ps. ci. It was Lyncurgus's honour that he never made a law which himself did not practise.³

9. God doth communicate his goodness to all; he causeth his sun to shine upon the just and unjust. So public persons should have public spirits; their gifts and goodness should diffuse themselves for the good of the whole. Their great care should be to promote the public interest more than their own.⁴ So did Moses, Exod. xxxii. 10, 11, 32; Nehemiah, chap. v. 6-19; and David, Ps. cxxxvii. 5, 6; Acts xiii. 36,⁵ who served God and not himself in his generation. It was Cæsar's high commendation, that he never had himself, after the world had him for a governor; his mind was so set on the public that he forgot his own private affairs.⁶ The stars have their brightness, not for themselves, but for the use of others. It is for tyrants to seek themselves; it becomes good governors to seek the good of their people.⁷ It is, therefore, made one special qualification and property of a magistrate, that he be not covetous nor self-seeking, Exod. xviii. 22,⁸ he must not only be

¹ Vide Plura apud Gerhard. de Magistrat., p. 325, &c., tom. vi.

² Justum est principem legibus obtemperare suis; tunc enim jura ab omnibus custodienda existimet, quando et ipse illis reverentiam præbet.—*Isidor.*

³ Lyncurgus nihil lege ulla sanxit in alios, ejus non ipse primus in se documenta daret.—*Justin. Hist.*, lib. iii. sec. 2.

⁴ Vide Mr. Ant. Burges' Ser. on Num. xi, xii, p. 34, preached 1645.

⁵ See Mr Jacomb's Ser. on Acts xiii. 36.

⁶ Ipse se non habuit, postquam mundus eum principem habere cepit. Non præes ut de subditis creascas, sed ut ipsi de te.—*Bern.*

⁷ Tyrannus suum spectat commodum, rex vero subditorum.—*Arist. Polit.*, lib. viii. cap. 10, and *Philo.* lib. ii. *Allegor.* pp. 108, 109.

Tu civem patremque geras, tu consule cunctis.

Non tibi; nec tua te movean, sed publica damna.—*Claudian.*

Vide Plura in Polyanthea, de liberalitate, p. 1567.

⁸ See that text fully opened in my Comment on 2 Tim. iii. 2, pp. 26, 27; and Gerhard. de Magistr., p. 270; and Mr. Rob. Bolton's Assize Ser., p. 59, &c. Nihil est tam angusti animi, tamque parvi quam amare divitias.—*Cicero*, lib. i. *Offic.*

an able, wise, religious, just man, but he must be one especially that hates covetousness, that bitter root of bribery, partiality, simony, perjury, sacrilege and pusillanimity. A magistrate should be a magnanimous, valiant man; but this sin dispirits a man, and makes him cold and cowardly in the cause of God.

Now all those governors that are thus qualified, and do resemble God in the particulars mentioned, shall have God's protection, the blessing of their people, the comfort of a good conscience when they come to die—as Moses, Samuel, Hezekiah, Nehemiah—and at the day of judgment, when the wicked shall cry to be hid, they shall appear with comfort and confidence before Christ's tribunal.

See nine properties of a good magistrate in Mr Frost's Ser., folio, pp. 288, 289; Dr Hall's Solomon's Politics, vol. i., folio, p. 209; see eight qualifications in Mr Gurnal's Ser. on Isa. iii. 26, p. 29, &c.; Mr Livesy's Jehoshaphat's Charge, p. 135, &c.; Mr Baxter's Sheet of Directions to Justices of the Peace.

Young gentlemen that are towards the law, may do well, in their minority, thoroughly to peruse Plutarch's Lives, and especially his Morals, Seneca, Xenophon's Cyropædia, and Mr Peacham's Complete Gentleman; they are full of excellent notions, both for speculation and practice, and are all translated into English for common use.

Quest. Will not this discourage inferior people, when they hear great ones called gods, and see them exalted, when they are made to serve in inferior callings?

Ans. Not at all; for there is much of God may be seen even in their callings. The husbandman's calling is looked upon as a mean employment, yet the Lord tells us that it is he who teacheth him to plough, sow, and harrow, Isa. xxviii. 24–26. As he teacheth the warrior to fight, Ps. xviii. 34, and the ruler how to sway the sceptre, and Bezalcel his curious works, Exod. xxxv. 22, so he giveth wisdom to the husbandman how to order his affairs with discretion. It is reported of Heraclitus, that when his scholars had found him in a tradesman's shop, whither they were ashamed to enter, he encouraged them, saying, *Quod neque tali loco dii desunt immortales*; That the gods were as well present in such places as in others; intimating that a divine power and wisdom might be discerned even in those common arts which are so much despised. Hence Tarentinus persuaded his friends to go with him to a forge, and he would shew them God's handiwork there, *introite, inquit, sunt hic etiam dii*. So may we say of other artificers, Come in and

see God's handiwork here.¹ There is no calling so mean but some footsteps of a deity may be seen there, and though thou be not the head—thou hast the less to account for—yet the hands, feet, and toes are useful in their places : and if thou walk humbly with thy God in them, thou mayest come to heaven before princes, who oftentimes are gods in name, but devils indeed. It is the glory of a land when ministers preach, magistrates protect, people obey, and each in their places help to preserve human society.

Obs. 8. God is not only present, but president and chief ruler amongst the rulers of the world ; he is 'King of kings and Lord of lords,' 1 Tim. vi. 15 ; Rev. xvii. 14 ; his eye is with them on the throne, Job xxxvi. 7. He sits on the bench amongst them, and is in their assemblies ; hence their seat is called the holy place, Eccles. viii. 10. God is Lord chief-justice on the bench with them. He doth not only look on them, but he stands in the midst of them, and erects his throne in their thrones ; he eyes their affections, takes notice of their actions, attends their charges, and passeth a censure upon their censures. As he hath a more especial interest in them, so he hath a more especial eye upon them. Seneca would have men to do all *tanquam spectet Cato* ; but judges should do all *tanquam spectet Deus*, remembering God's all-seeing eye is still upon them. Jehoshaphat could not ride circuit with his judges, but God doth. He is with them, not only by way of assistance and protection, but also by way of observation ; he takes notice of every sentence that passeth, and will bring it again to judgment : for one special end of that great day is, *Judicare non judicata et male judicata*, To punish those sinners which have escaped unpunished here, and to rectify the unrighteous judgments of the world. This made a wicked judge on his death-bed to weep, and being asked why ? To think, said he, that I who have judged others am going now to be judged myself.² As masters on earth must remember that they have a master in heaven, Col. iv. 1, so judges on earth must remember that they also have a judge in heaven, to whom they must shortly give an account. Let judges, then, remember that excellent counsel of Jehoshaphat to his judges, 2 Chron. xix. 6, 7, 'Take heed what ye do ; for ye judge not for men, but for the Lord, who is with you in the judgment.'³

¹ Nihil in natura rerum tam minutum, tamque vile et aliectionum, quod non aliquid admirationis hominibus adferat.—*Aristot. de Anima.*, lib. i. cap. 5.

² Nuper eram judex, jam iudicis ante tribunal subsistens paveo, iudicor ipse modo.

³ See this text more fully opened in Sibelius, 3 Tom., Concio 10, p. 382 ; and Mr Blackwell's Ser. on the same text, preached 1644 ; and also Mr Case's, preached 1644.

1. Here is a duty enjoined, and that is circumspection and accurate walking.¹ Take heed what you do, which is again repeated ; here is caution upon caution, ver. 7, to make the deeper impression in them—*q.d.*, the execution of justice is curious work, you had need, therefore, of open eyes, steady hands, and upright hearts.

Here is the means to attain this, let the fear of God be upon you, ver. 7. He that fears not God, will little regard the distresses of men, Luke xviii. 4, and will make but a sorry defender of such as do fear him ; whereas he that truly fears God, dares not wrong man, Gen. xlii. 18 ; Neh. v. 15. Piety advanceth magistracy ; it is the honour of their honours,² as we see in Constantine the Great,³ and therefore it is made a chief qualification of a magistrate, that he be one that fears God, Exod. xviii. 21,⁴ 2 Sam. xxiii. 3, and keeps his commandments, Joshua i. 8 ; Ps. ii. 10-12. The lives of rulers are the looking-glass by which inferiors dress themselves, and the rule by which they walk ; they had need, therefore, to see how they walk ; for such magistrates, usually such people. This fear of the Lord is the foundation of all other graces ; and where this is wanting, all is wanting ; all virtues without this are but empty shells, shows, shadows.

2. They must not respect persons in judgment, Prov. xviii. 5 ; be they old or young, rich or poor, citizens or strangers, Christians or heathens, friends or foes, he must not look at the greatness of their persons, but the goodness of their cause. As God respects not any outward things in man to move him to do so and so, so rulers must resemble him. Partiality staineth justice, and cuts in pieces the very nerves of a state.

3. Take no gifts.⁵ Bribes blind the eyes of the wise, and make them to pervert judgment. Judges anciently were pictured without hands and without eyes. 1. Without hands, to note that judges must not take gifts. 2. Without eyes, because they were to administer justice according to every man's cause, without re-

¹ See ten reasons for this in Mr Livesy's Ser. on this text, p. 93. *Officium geritis magni momenti ; multum potestis prodesse et obesse ; considerate igitur diligenter, &c.—Lavater in locum.*

² *Vide* Beauty of Holiness, p. 152.

³ *Vide* Aug. de Civit. Dei, lib. v. cap. 25.

⁴ *Vide* Frost's Ser. on Magistr., p. 288, folio. *Decorum est ut qui dignitate, probitate emineat. Deet id quod optimum est, ab optimo coli.—Stobæus.* *Qualis rex, talis grex. Ubi Preses Philosophus (Pius) ibi felix civitas.—Aristot., vide Plura apud Langium in Polyanth. de Magistrat., q. 12, p. 1670, edit. ult.*

⁵ See my Comment. on 2 Tim. iii. 2, p. 27. Judges are called gods, and God is known by giving, not by receiving.

spect to any man's relation, whether friend or foe; as Christ, so those that rule under him must not judge by outward appearance, but they must judge righteous judgment, Isa. xi. 3. There are four great perverters of judgment—viz., fear, favour, hatred, bribery;¹ this last is not the least of the four, and therefore is so frequently condemned in Scripture, Exod. xxiii. 8; Deut. xvi. 17, 19, and xxvii. 26; Job xv. 34; Prov. xv. 27, xvii. 23, xxviii. 21, and xxix. 4; Ps. xxvi. 10; Isa. v. 23; Amos v. 12; Micah iii. 10; Acts xxiv. 26. They must imitate Moses and Samuel, who cleared themselves from this sin, Num. xvi. 15; 1 Sam. xii. 3. For he that taketh a gift selleth himself, and is bound to do somewhat for the bribe he hath received. It is therefore made one note of a citizen of heaven, that he despiseth bribes, and takes no rewards to condemn the innocent, Ps. xv. 5; Isa. xxxiii. 15. There is no difference in God's dictionary between bribery and thievery, Isa. i. 23. There is little difference between *give ye*, and *deliver ye*, unless it be this, that the one goes in chains of gold, when others lie in fetters of iron. If any would see the question stated how and when a man may take a gift, let him peruse Rivet on Hosea iv. 19, p. 617, folio; Brochmand, C. Conse. vol. ii. p. 506.

4. Since we are backward to the best things, Jehoshaphat useth motives to encourage and excite judges to a careful and conscientious discharge of their duty. (1.) They judge not for man, *i.e.*, not simply in the name and authority of men, but for the Lord, who is the supreme ruler, to whom they must account; and therefore it greatly concerns them to take heed what they do. Kings' causes call for great care and consideration; he that will manage them well, must take heed what he doth.

(2.) They must consider that God is with them; which serves, first, For caution. If they do ill, he is with them to punish them; for though they be mighty, yet God is almighty, and there is a greater than they, Job xxxiii. 12, who stands in their assemblies, not as a bare spectator, but as a witness, judge, and avenger of such as act unrighteously, Job xii. 18–21. Secondly, It serves for comfort; he is with them to defend them if they do well. The devil throws his darts principally at them. They destroy his kingdom, and therefore he useth all means to destroy them; he saith to his agents, as Aram the king of Syria said to his followers, 1 Kings xxii. 31, 'Fight neither with small nor great, but against the king of Israel;' for when the commander is conquered, the soldiers fly.

¹ Quatuor ista, timor, odium, dilectio, census,
Sæpe solent hominum rectos pervertere sensus.

(3.) 'There is no iniquity in the Lord;' there is no injustice in him, and therefore let there be none in you. But of this see more ver. 2, 3, of this psalm.

How great then is the sin of those who are not afraid, in the very eye of the all-seeing God, to favour wickedness and act unrighteously. It is true they will formally and in words confess that they reign *Dei gratia et providentia Dei*; yet they are so blinded with their pomp, and infatuated with their greatness, that God is not in all their thoughts, nor must he, his laws, or people have any room amongst them. These the psalmist tacitly reproves, by telling them that God stands in their assemblies, and takes notice of all their ways.¹

Obs. 9. The judgment of judges is the Lord's judgment, Deut. i. 17; 2 Chron. xix. 6; they have their power from him, John xix. 11; and therefore such as stand before judges are said to stand before the Lord, because the judgment is his, Deut. xix. 17; yea, though they be wicked men, yet he judgeth amongst them; though not always by consenting and approving of what they do, for they oft err and do unjustly, yet always by observing and overruling their counsels to his own praise;² and though they have self ends and plots, yet God hath a plot above their plots, which they effect when they mind nothing less, as we see in Pilate, Judas, Satan, in putting Christ to death, Acts ii. 23, and iv. 28.

Be patient, therefore, and silent under the unrighteous censures and judgments of men; for God can and will turn them to his people's good, as we see in Joseph's selling and imprisonment, in the three young men that were cast into the fiery furnace, and Daniel into the lion's den, yet all advanced to honour by their sufferings.

Obs. 10. Going to law, when just occasion requires, is lawful. To what end hath God ordained judges, Deut. xvi. 18, and commanded men to bring their causes and controversies before them, Deut. xix. 17, and xxv. 1, if they might not hear them? Would God, think we, stand in their assemblies, and judge amongst them, if such judgments were unlawful? or would Christ have approved, or not rather reproved men, for going before the magistrate? Luke xii. 58, and xviii. 3.

It is true indeed, 1. A man should not go to law for every trifle;

¹ See four good lessons from God's all-seeing eye in my Commentary on 2 Tim. iv. 1, obs. 3, p. 306.

² *Judicium est ipsius Dei originaliter, authoritative et principaliter; at magistratus ministerialiter et instrumentaliter. Judicium Dei est; proinde judex in tribus Deo debet conformari; in potestate, bonitate, et veritate.*

for every vain, hasty word, or petty trespass, to disquiet a man's self, and molest his neighbour, argues a turbulent, unmortified spirit. It is the glory of a man to pass by such petty offences. Men should not for a sixpenny damage spend six pound; it is a shame that our law is not rectified in this particular.

2. He must not go to law in malice, or with a revengeful mind to destroy his neighbour, but he must do all in a spirit of love and meekness, defending himself from wrong by law, and seeking peace, truth, and righteousness.¹

3. A man must make law, as men do war, their last refuge. He must use all wise means to prevent it, by offering peace and reconciliation, referring it, and putting it off as long as may be; and when nothing will do, we may safely fly to the law.²

The Anabaptists hold it unlawful, whatever the injury or abuse be, to go to law, or seek to the magistrate for aid. But their folly will easily appear if we consider, 1. That God hath ordained magistracy for this very end, to succour us in our distress; 2. We have examples of those who have pleaded their cause, and that before heathen judges, as Christ before Pilate, John xviii. 23; and Paul, when he was in danger, did plead the law, and appeal to Cæsar, Acts xxiii. 3, and xxv. 10, 12.

Obj. Mat. v. 39, 40, Christ forbids us any resisting of evil, &c.

Ans. Christ speaks there against private and inordinate revenge, proceeding from wrath and passion, and not against lawful ordinate public defence before a magistrate.³

2. The words are not positive, but comparative—*q.d.*, rather than thou shouldst be provoked to reward evil for evil, suffer a double injury; and if by thy bearing and forbearing, peace may be preserved, the gospel honoured, thy profession adorned, and thy brother bettered, then thou must suffer two injuries rather than revenge one.

Obj. 2. 1 Cor. vi. 1-8. Here, say the Anabaptists, the apostle speaks against men's going to law.

Ans. There is no such thing in the text, as will easily appear to such as read it at large.

1. The apostle doth not simply condemn men's going to law, but he condemns their bitterness and cruelty in lawing, not bearing one with another, but vexing one another for trifles, when Chris-

¹ Sic certent causæ, ut non certent pectora.

² Sapientem omnia prius experiri, quam armis decet.—*Terent.*

³ See this text more fully vindicated from all Socinian cavils, by Gerhard de Magistrat., p. 360.

tians should be patient, ready to forgive injuries, according to that of our Saviour, 'Forgive, and it shall be forgiven you,'¹ Luke vi. 37.

2. He blames them, for that they being Christians yet went to law before heathenish judges, to the reproach of Christianity; for they, being Christians, should have had Christians to have heard and ended their controversies. So that he doth not condemn their going to law, but tells them how they should do it.

See what Anabaptistic logic here is. Because Christ forbids lawing before heathens, therefore we may not go to law before Christians. The argument is cogent thus: The apostle condemns Christians for going to law before heathen judges, therefore he allows of it before Christian judges.

3. If the apostle should absolutely condemn all suing to the magistrate in case of wrong, then he should contradict his own practice; for he being in distress, did more than once appeal to Cæsar.

See this case fully cleared by Mr John Downam on the Sacrament, chap. xii.; Perkins' Cases of Conscience, lib. iii. cap. 3, q. 1, p. 118, folio; and Treatise of Christian Equity, pp. 446, 447, vol. ii.; and Zepper. de Legibus Mosaic., lib. v. cap. 6, p. 693.

Ver. 2. *How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked? Selah.*

These words are a prosopopœical speech, where the Lord is brought in reasoning, reproof, and expostulating the case with the unrighteous judges of those times. Such is the pride of great ones, that they cannot bear a reproof from men; and therefore the prophet, to procure the more authority to what should be spoken, brings in God himself reproofing them:² hence some interpreters conceive that for explanation sake the word *saying* may fitly be added to the end of this first verse: 'God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth amongst the gods, saying, How long will ye judge unjustly?' *q. d.*, Since I am present and president amongst you, how long will ye favour the wicked, and plead their cause against the innocent?

In this verse we have, 1. The sin reproved in general, and that

¹ Est fallacia a dicto secundum quid ad dictum simpliciter: nam simpliciter non reprehendit judicia, sed temeritatem in litigando, quod nihil privatim transigere voluerunt, sed in re sæpe levicula alter alterum ad tribunal ethnici judicis protraherebat, non sine injuria et contemptu Christianitatis.—*Baldwin in locum.*

² Ut majorem efficaciam habeat objurgatio, inducitur Deus summus iudex increpans judices minores.—*Bellarmin.*

is unjust judgment—a sin most proper and peculiar to judges. To be covetous, envious, passionate, and proud, is evil; but to judge unjustly, to justify the wicked, and condemn the just, is not only abominable, but an abomination in the abstract,¹ Prov. xvii. 15. This is iniquity and perverseness with a witness.²

2. Here is the duration of their sin, implied in the word *usque quo*,³ how long? It implies that they had for a long time persevered in this practice, and therefore he doth not simply say, ye do unjustly, but how long will ye do unjustly? How long will ye favour the wicked in his wickedness, and condemn the just? The interrogation is a vehement negation,⁴ *q.d.*, ye ought in no wise to continue so long in your injustice as you have done.

3. Here is the generality of the sinners implied in the word, ye; how long will ye, *i.e.*, all of ye, judge unjustly? There might be some few, some gleanings, as the prophet speaks, Micah vii. 1, 2, of just judges, but the generality was very corrupt.

4. Here is an exegesis, an illustration, or, if you will, an aggravation of what went before. Ye judge unjustly. What is that? Why, ye accept the persons of the wicked—*q.d.*, ye admire their persons, ye favour their faces, ye plead their causes; but the cause of the poor and the righteous man cannot be heard.⁵ In the original it is, Ye accept the face of the wicked. Now, to accept the face of a man is a Hebrew phrase, and signifies a shewing favour and respect to a man, Gen. xix. 22. The angel tells Lot that he had respected his face, *q.d.*, I have shewed favour to thee, and have given thee thy request.⁶ The words seem to be an aggravation of their sin; they did not sin through weakness, but through wilfulness; not through simple ignorance, but presumptuously; they sought the faces and favour, not of poor men or of friends—that might savour of some humanity, though it may not be practised in judgment; yea, they sought the faces, not simply of sinners, but of

¹ How abstracts increase the sense, see my Schools' Guard, rule 36.

² *Gnarel*, the word in the text, which signifieth iniquity or perverseness, comes from *gnaval*, to deal perversely and wickedly.

³ *Usque quo judicabit iniquitatem?* Heb., *i.e.*, quamdiu perseverabitis in hoc peccato inique judicandi?—*Piscat.*

⁴ See my Schools' Guard, rule 30.

⁵ See this phrase more fully explained in Mr Caryl on Job xiii. 8, p. 377. *Nasha*, est personam respicere, honorare, admirari, et in gratiam alicujus aliquid facere.—*Leigh.*

⁶ Non dicit impios suscipitis, sed facies impiorum suscipitis; ut intelligas eum non de quibusvis impiis, sed de iis loqui qui spectabiles sunt, vel propter generis prærogativam, vel propter opum splendorem.—*Musculus.*

wicked, potent, turbulent, notorious sinners.¹ To get the favour of these who could bribe them, or some way gratify them, they perverted judgment, and instead of punishing the wicked they acquitted them, and instead of defending the poor they contemned them and trampled on them.

Selah. Where we find this word (sometimes) there is in that verse some remarkable thing; as in this verse it signifies as much in English as if David had said, Oh how great and grievous an offence is it before God, for favour and affection, for gifts and greatness, to pervert justice and judgment! ² It comes from *Salal*, which signifies to raise or elevate; and so it may signify the elevation of the mind in marking, or of the voice in singing. It sometimes signifies an asseveration of a thing so to be, and an admiration at it.³ It is used seventy-four times in Scripture.

Obs. 1. Even great men, when they go astray, must be sharply reprov'd. God doth not here barely say, Do not unjustly, do not respect persons, &c., but as one that is angry with them, he sharply and severely expostulates the case with them, saying, 'How long will ye judge unjustly, and respect the persons of the mighty?' And as God, so his ambassadors according to their places, must not fear the face of man; but as occasion requires, they must tell the greatest of their sins, yet with a prudential consideration of all circumstances; ⁴ for if we must respect elders for their age, 1 Tim. v. 1, then much more rulers who are set in public place of dignity; and therefore, as in the reprov'g of all men, so especially of great men, great wisdom and prudence is required; as we see in Nathan, who wisely catcheth David in a parable, 2 Sam. xii. 1, &c., and that prophet which caught Ahab in his own words, and made him pass sentence upon himself, 1 Kings xx. 39, 40. It is not for every one to say unto kings, Ye are wicked, Job xxxiv. 18. It is ministers, and such as are called to the work, that may with Elijah tell Ahab of his wickedness. It is a Samuel that must reprove a Saul, 1 Sam. xv. 19. Isaiah reproves Hezekiah, Isa. xxxix. 6; Jeremiah, king Zedekiah, Jer. xxxii. 4; and John Baptist, Herod. If great men do amiss, we must not stick to say to kings and queens, 'Humble

¹ Reshagnaim, improbi, inquieti, turbulenti.

² Selah hic adscriptum monet malum hoc quo nihil magis execrandum, passim et apud eos quoque qui admodum justi videntur, plane regnare.—*Ut Scultetus e Buccro.*

³ Cantor ubi ad hanc vocem pervenerat, attollebat vocem suam; et hoc signum erat gravem ibi sententiam contineri, in quam animus intendendus erat; redditur a doctis per plane, summe, vehementer.—*Ravanellus.* See more in such as comment on Ps. iii. 2; and Rivet. in Ps. xxiv. 6, p. 170, folio.

⁴ See Mr Reyner's Government of the Tongue, p. 178.

yourselves,' Jer. xiii. 19. We are set to watch not only for poor men's souls, but also for the souls of rulers; yea, rather for them than for others, because by their example they do much hurt or good. Many think it no sin to do what they see great ones do. As like priest, like people, Jer. i. 6; Hosea iv. 9; so usually like magistrate, like people; if they be good, the people will be the better, Judges ii. 7; Joshua xxiv. 24. David's bounty in building the temple encouraged the people to follow him,¹ 1 Chron. xxix. 6, 7. If the king of Nineveh humble himself, so will the people, Jonah iii. 6. Rulers are like looking-glasses, by which most men dress themselves. If they be bad, like great cedars when they fall, they bring many branches down with them, and crush the shrubs that are under them. If Jeroboam sin, he will quickly draw all Israel to sin with him, 1 Kings xiv. 16; if a ruler hearken to lies, his servants will be like him,² Prov. xxix. 12. This made the pharisees to reject Christ, because none of the rulers believed in him, John vii. 48, which made Luther to say, *Principum delicta sunt plane diabolica*: great men's sins are the greatest sins, because they sin against great means of grace, and by their example do much mischief. When the head is unsound, the body must needs miscarry:³ no error so dangerous as that which proceeds from the ruler, Eccles. x. 5. Jerusalem was full of abominations; what is the cause? Why, the prophets were profane, and the princes were as roaring lions, and the judges wolves, Zeph. iii. 3. Subjects study the lives of their princes more than their laws; they should therefore be great reformers, as Asa, Josiah, and Hezekiah were, who drew the people with them, 2 Chron. xv. and xxxi. 1, &c. Greatness, accompanied with goodness, is like a ring with a rich diamond, which enhanceth the price. Now the prophets, seeing that the public enormities of rulers have such an influence on people, have inveighed sharply against their sins, Isa. i. 23, and x. 1-3; Hosea v. 1; Micah iii. 1, 2; and the command is general, without any limitation to high or low, 1 Tim. v. 20, 'Such as sin before all, rebuke before all, that others may fear.' Indeed, if their sins be private and mere infirmities, we must with the mantle of love cover them, lest we exasperate instead of healing them.

Obj. Such plain preachers are counted the troublers of Israel, Jer. xxxvii. 13, 15; Amos vii. 12.

Ans. It is true they have been so accounted; but it hath been

¹ Great men should be good men.—*Vide Burroughs' Gracious Spirit*, p. 204.

² Mobile mutatur semper cum principe vulgus.—*Claudian*.

³ A capite primum computrescunt pisces.—*Prov.*

by wicked men, who have themselves been the troublers of Israel, as Elijah told Ahab, 1 Kings xviii. 18.

2. If great men would but hearken to the pious counsel of God's faithful messengers, it would prevent seditions, tumults, and troublers in their territories.

Obs. 2. That continuance in evil is a great evil. How long, saith God, will ye judge unjustly? And when will you make an end of your unrighteous practices? To do an unjust act is ill, but to persevere for many years in acting unrighteousness is the height of evil. As perseverance in goodness is the crown of goodness, Job ii. 3, so perseverance in sin is sin in grain; it is of a deep dye, it is hardly if ever set out again.¹

Obs. 3. It is no wonder to see judges judge unjustly. They did so here, and God complains of such elsewhere, Isa. i. 23; Jer. v. 1; Micah iii. 9; there are some such now, and there will be such to the end of the world, even till he who is Judge of judges shall come to judgment, and shall abolish all rule and dominion. Wicked men in all ages have the same corrupt natures and principles within them, and when temptations come they discover themselves. Besides, the world ever did, and ever will, love her own; wicked magistrates will favour wicked men; yea, if there were no bribery nor flattery in the world, yet wicked great ones would favour such as are like themselves.

Obs. 4. Few great men are good men. Some there are, but they are thin sown. Not many wise men, not many mighty, not many noble, *i.e.*, some few are called, 1 Cor. i. 26.² They are subject to great temptations, and so to great corruptions. Such rank ground is fertile in weeds; hence wicked men are put in the text for rich men: 'How long will ye accept the persons of the wicked?' That is, the persons of rich and potent men; that is the meaning, for judges would never accept the persons of the wicked men if they were poor and equal in respect of outward things. This the opposition implies, defend the poor and fatherless, implying that the rich were defended by them, but the poor had no helper.

Obs. 5. That perverting of judgment is a great sin. It is a crying sin; it cries for vengeance on such as practise it. This was one of those sins which caused the day of Jerusalem's misery to draw nearer, Ezek. xxii. 6, 7, and for which the Lord threatens to visit, Isa. v. 6, 7; Jer. v. 28, 29; Amos ii. 6, and v. 6, 7, 11; Mal. iii. 5. If he be cursed that shall remove the landmark, what shall be

¹ Humanum est errare, at diabolicum perseverare in errore.—*Gerson*.

² See Mr Robert Bolton on that text, and Mr Francis Taylor.

done to him who takes away house, land, and all? Deut. xxvii. 17. Solomon tells us, 'He that justifieth the wicked, him shall the people curse,' Prov. xxiv. 24; for judges to turn aside in judgment to the right hand or the left, is to abuse their deputation, and as much as in them lies to ungod themselves and God too. An unjust judge, as one well observes, is a cold fire, a dark sun, a dry sea, a *mare mortuum*, an ungood god, *contradictio in adjecto*, monsters, not men, much less gods.¹ A false teacher that poisons souls, and a corrupt judge that perverts justice, are two pestilent evils; the one destroys the fountain of piety, and the other the fountain of righteousness. If a man be oppressed, he flies to the law for refuge; but if the law be wrested and abused, where shall we find a remedy?² It is sad with the flock when the shepherd is a wolf. *Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?*

Obs. 6. Magistrates must judge impartially. They must not respect persons but causes. They must look more on the face of the cause, than the face of the man. This respecting of persons is not good, saith Solomon, that is, it is very bad,³ Prov. xxiv. 23. It is a sin oft forbidden, Deut. i. 17, and xvi. 19; Job xiii. 8, 10; 2 Chron. xix. 6, 7; Prov. xviii. 5, and xxviii. 21; James ii. 9; Jude 16. Men must not judge according to any outward appearance or quality of the person that appears before them, but according to the equity of the cause, John vii. 24. As God respects not persons, Deut. x. 17; Job xxxiv. 19; Acts x. 34; Gal. ii. 6; Eph. vi. 9; Col. iii. 25; 1 Pet. i. 17; so judges, who are earthly gods, must imitate their Lord and Master, whose person they represent, in whose seat they sit, and by whose command they act. So that if they will do anything in favour of the mighty, let them do it in favour of the mighty God; and this they do, when they execute justice and judgment in the gate. As they must not respect the rich for his riches, so neither the poor for his poverty,⁴ so as in pity to him to wrong the rich, nor out of fear or honour to the rich comply with them to oppress the poor, Exod. xxiii. 3; Lev. xix. 15. In charity we must have respect to a poor man's necessity; but in point of justice neither the power of the rich, nor the penury of the poor, but right only must be regarded, Ps. lxxii. 7. If a man might strain

¹ Quænam potest perniciosior esse perversitas quam si apud medicum invenias mortem, apud doctorem mendacium, apud judicem injustitiam?—*Musculus*.

² *Vide* Comforts Against Oppression, Mr Ash's Sermon on Ps. ix. 9, preached 1642, and Mr Caryll, Sermon on Ps. cxix. 134, preached 1651.

³ Meiosis. *Vide* Schools' Guard on that figure.

⁴ Pressa est paupertas, opulentia splendida regnat;
Dives ubique valet, pauper ubique jacet.

the law for any, it is for the poor ; and yet the Lord himself, who is most tender over the poor, will not have their persons, but their causes looked upon. A respecter of person is a kind of idolater ;¹ the respect which he owes to God and right, he gives to riches. Petty thieves shall wear chains of iron, when grand robbers and murderers sit on the bench with chains of gold. As God knows no honour, royalty, or greatness in the matter of sin, so neither must his deputies. I see no reason, said the woman, why I should be punished for breaking one commandment, when King Richard breaks all ten, and yet goes unpunished. The judges in Egypt were painted without hands, and blind, and the Areopagites, who were judges in Athens, passed their sentence in the night, and had their judicatories in dark rooms, that they might not be biassed by prejudice or affection to pass wrong judgment upon the person. Out of judgment to shew favour to our friends is not unlawful ; but in point of judgment they must be blind, not knowing friend or foe, but look soberly on the cause which is before them. When public right is in question, the poor person must be laid aside, and we must eye his cause ; for though it be seldom seen that a poor man is preferred before a rich man in his cause, yet sometimes it may so fall out that at the tears and cries of the poor, and to get a name for a merciful man amongst men, there may be offending on that hand. It is true we must shew mercy, but yet with judgment and discretion. In other cases we may shew respect to men for their age, gifts, graces, affinity, dignity, calling, &c., but not in judgment. The court must know no kinsmen. Judges must with David do justice to all the people, without distinction of rich or poor, 2 Sam. viii. 15 ; they must dispense justice with an equal hand and an even balance. As the law itself is equal to all, so should the judge, who is a living law, be the same to all that fly unto him for succour. So that this makes nothing for the sottish, uncivil Quakers, who cry down all outward respect and reverence to men in authority under pretence of respect to no man's person. Whereas the Scripture doth not condemn civil but sinful respect of persons ; the servant must reverence his master, and the child his father, and the subject his sovereign.² Besides, there is a sacred respect of persons used both by God and man. Thus God had respect to Abel and his offering, but not to Cain. He had respect to Lot, and saved him out of Sodom, Gen. xix. 21. Thus the saints may

¹ ProsopolatRIA est idololatRIA.

² See more on this point in my Comment. on 2 Tim. iv. 19, p. 468.

and must love the saints with a spiritual and more intimate love, Ps. xvi. 3.

Obs. 7. Wicked men and turbulent men, they are the great *reshagnins* of the world. They disquiet and trouble themselves; like the troubled sea, they are always casting up the dirt and filth of sin, Prov. xi. 17; Isa. lvii. 20, 21. They trouble their own houses, Prov. xv. 27; yea, these Achans and Ahabs trouble all Israel; they are the pests and plagues, the ulcers and botches of the places where they live. As good men are a public good, and make the places where they live the better for them, Gen. xii. 2, so wicked men are public evils, and make the places where they dwell the worse for them. As grace meekens men and makes them quiet, Isa. xi. 6, so sin, where it reigns and is not subdued, disquiets men and makes them turbulent.

Ver. 3. Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy.

Ver. 4. Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked.

Having finished the reprehension, and shewed negatively what judges must not do, viz., they must not judge unjustly, nor respect persons; now we come to the direction, where the Lord teacheth them, and tells them affirmatively what they must do, viz., they must defend the poor and fatherless, and succour such as are in distress. So that having dehorted them from the vices which are more especially incident to rulers, he now exhorts them to the contrary virtues. So that here we have a clear description of the magistrate's duty, which consists principally of two parts: 1. To defend the good; 2. To punish the bad; both which are also mentioned by the apostle, Rom. xiii. 3.

This counsel of God, saith Luther, is worthy to be written in letters of gold on the walls of all judicatories. It may fitly be termed God's charge to magistrates. They give charges to men, and here God gives four things in charge to them—viz., 1. To defend; 2. To do justice; 3. To deliver; 4. To rescue.

2. The object, or the persons whom they must thus protect: 1. The poor; 2. The fatherless; 3. The afflicted; 4. The needy.

As if the Lord had said, This is your main business, and therefore let it be your great care, to defend the poor, succour the afflicted, and support the fatherless, and to help him who hath no helper. As the proper work of the physician is to cure the sick, and of a minister to comfort the weak, so of a magistrate to defend the

poor, and vindicate the oppressed from the violence of the oppressor.

Quest. Must not the magistrate defend the rich man in a righteous cause as well as the poor? Must he not execute justice for him as well as for the needy? Why then doth the Lord here only mention the poor?

Ans. It is true, magistrates must execute justice for rich men as well as for the poor; yet, since the poor are most subject to injury, therefore the magistrate must be more careful to defend them. The poor are low in condition, and are often laid lower by oppression: now, God hath raised up magistrates for this very end, to protect them in their low condition, and to lift them up when they are laid lower by oppression.

2. As for rich men, the world loves her own, especially her white sons, her great and prosperous children, so that their causes are sure to be heard, and their right improved to the utmost who have so many *angels* to appear for them.¹ Rich men have many friends, Prov. xiv. 20. Where money is stirring, let the cause be never so unjust, yet oftentimes might overcomes right, so great an influence hath riches upon the rulers of this world; so that it is needless to bid rulers plead for rich and mighty men. Besides, men are afraid of wronging great ones, because they have great power and many friends to vindicate them against the wrongs of any.

3. There is an averseness and backwardness in our natures to help the poor, who have no gifts nor friends to side with them, who have nothing to plead but only the justness of their cause. Men that are in poverty and adversity find few friends, hence it is that the poor is oft hated even of his own neighbours, Prov. xiv. 20, and xix. 7; but the lovers of the rich are many. The poor prodigal is called 'this thy son,' not this my brother, Luke xv. 30.

4. Where the hedge is low, men are apt to get over. When men are poor, then great men especially are apt to trample on them,² 1 Sam. xviii. 23; hence it is that God lays such special injunctions on the magistrate to see to them. The birds of prey can shift for themselves, but it is the poor dove that is made a prey. Hence the fatherless, the widow, the poor, the stranger, and the oppressed are yoked together in Scripture, because in respect of their weakness they are more liable to wrong, Deut. xiv. 29; Ps. x. 18; Mal. iii. 5; James i. 27. It is not the ass of the rich, or the ox

¹ Auro loquente quis tacebit?

² Dente timentur apri, defendunt cornua cervos;

Imbellēs damæ, quid nisi præda sumus?—*Martial Epigr.*, lib. xiii. cap. 95.

of the mighty, but it is the ass of the fatherless, and the ox of the widow, that is taken away, Job vi. 27, and xxiv. 3.

5. The Lord speaks here to unrighteous judges, who sided with the rich and turbulent oppressors of the poor; and to make his exhortation take the deeper impression, he multiplies words, and doth, as it were, bid them defend, defend, defend. Whom? The poor, the poor, the poor. As the Lord said of Jerusalem, 'I will overturn, overturn, overturn it,' *i.e.*, I will speedily and certainly overturn it, Ezek. xxi. 27; so the doubling and trebling of the duty and persons here is very emphatical, and notes God's earnest affection and desire to have the poor and fatherless speedily and certainly defended against the oppressions of the mighty.¹

Defend the poor, *i.e.*, defend the cause of the poor, since he cannot defend himself; or, judge for the poor and fatherless² (as it is in the fountain), *i.e.*, in your judgment vindicate them and their just causes from the sons of violence. They are God's clients, and therefore they should be the judge's care: for this end God hath set them in his stead, that they might defend those who cannot defend themselves, and use their power for the good of those who have no power, Job xxvi. 2. The Hebrew word *Dal*, which we render poor,³ comes from *Dalal* to spend or consume, and is applied to the weak and sickly, whose health is spent, Gen. xli. 19, 2 Sam. xiii. 4; and to the poor, whose wealth is wasted, Ps. xli. 1, lxxii. 12, 13, and cxlii. 7; and they fallen into decay, Lev. xxv. 35. The word is opposed to rich men, who in Scripture are called great men, full and fat, Ps. lxxviii. 31, and only men of wealth, Ruth ii. 1; Jer. xlix. 32. Now, it is not these full and fat ones, who have many friends, but it is the lean and weak man, that is poor in purse, sickly in person, and many other ways brought low; it is these poor hopeless, helpless ones that rulers must have a care of. It is not only their duty, but their glory so to do, Job xxix. 11-18.

And fatherless,⁴ or the orphan, that hath no father or friend to help him, but is forsaken of all. The word signifies one that hath lost his sight;⁵ because he that hath lost his parents is deprived of the light of counsel and direction how to carry himself in the world. As God delights to help those who cannot help themselves, Prov. xxiii. 10, 11, so must earthly gods. The word is rendered

¹ Vide Schools' Guard, rule 43.

² *Shiptu dal*; judicate pro tenui.—*Mont.*

³ The word poor is a comprehensive word, including in it all sorts of poor.

⁴ *Fatom*, pupillus orphanus, Lam. v. 3.

Ορφανος ab ἐρρηὸς tenebrosus, quod liberi quodammodo amittunt lucem et pupillas oculorum, amissis parentibus.—*Minsheu.*

by the Septuagint, poor; indeed, the poor and fatherless are oft joined in Scripture, and are synonymes, being put for one and the same person; as, Ps. x. 14, 'The poor committeth himself to thee; thou art a father to the fatherless.' He that is called poor in the beginning of the verse, is called fatherless in the end. The word is taken, sometimes properly, for one that hath lost his father. 2. Metaphorically, for such as are in deep distress and have no helper. Now, we are not to restrain the sense here only to orphans; for he that is a father may be called fatherless, and the child that hath a father yet may be called fatherless, when he extremely needs the help either of God or man, Hosea xiv. 3.

Do justice to the afflicted and the needy; or, as the original runs, justify the afflicted, *q. d.*, if his cause be just, fear not to justify him, and pronounce him judicially just and innocent. Many unjust judges will hear the causes of the poor;¹ but when they have heard them, and found them to be right, yet they do not justify them, but the wicked. The afflicted and the poor are joined in Scripture, Zeph. iii. 12, because poverty is usually accompanied with many afflictions. The word *gnani*, which we render *afflicted*, signifies also to be humble and meek,² Zech. ix. 9, for as riches make men cruel and proud, so affliction makes men humble and lowly.

'And needy.'³ Properly the word signifies a poor man that hath lost his goods, and so is brought to poverty and misery, whether by oppression or otherwise. These are called the poor of this world, Jas. ii. 5, and the poor of the earth, Job xxiv. 4, Amos viii. 4.

Ver. 4. 'Deliver the poor and needy'⁴ from the violence of the mighty; the same is again repeated to make the deeper impression, and to shew how earnest God is to have judges put it in execution. God drives this nail to the head with one exhortation upon the neck of another, to fasten it the better in our hearts and memories.

'Rid them out of the hand of the wicked,' *i. e.*, free and rescue him from the paws and power of turbulent men, who, like their father the devil, delight in vexing others. The words seem to be a gradation, and not a bare repetition. 1. Judges must hear the cause of the poor. 2. Having found them innocent, they must justify them and declare their innocency. 3. They must not rest there, but

¹ *Hitsdiku*, justify, absolve, et justum pronunciate.

² *Humilem et pauperem* justify. — *Vulg. Lat.*

³ *Rash, pauper*, from *rash, depauperari*, to be impoverished or made poor.

⁴ *Ebion, egenus*, a poor, indigent, needy creature, from *Ahab desideravit*, because the poor that have nothing desire food, raiment, money, and such things as they want.

they must rescue and deliver them as lambs out of the paws and jaws of the lion.¹ By this variety of words and multiplication of expressions the Holy Ghost denotes unto us all kind of misery which we are exposed to in this world by reason of potent and politic enemies. Whatever the misery be, whether in body, goods, or name, (such is God's goodness,) that he would have magistrates, who are his vicegerents, to take notice of it, and deliver his people out of it.

Obs. 1. Magistrates must be a defence to the poor and fatherless, to the afflicted and the needy. They are that great tree which must shelter such as are under them from storms, Dan. iv. 20-22. They are called gods, and in this they must act like him whose name they bear. Now, (1.) Sometimes the poor lie in deep distress, and then the Lord is a refuge to them, Isa. xxv. 4. He hears their cry, Ps. xxxiv. 6, and lxix. 33, whether it be vocal or virtual; for sometimes the poor man's afflicted condition cries, though he say nothing, and God hears this cry: Ps. xii. 5, 'For the oppression of the poor will I arise.' Though the oppressed should not vocally cry, yet their very oppression virtually cries for help, James v. 4.

2. Sometimes they lie in the dust, and then he raiseth them, Ps. cxiii. 7; they lie amongst the pots, and are sullied with affliction, yet then he makes them beautiful like a dove, Ps. lxxviii. 13.

3. Sometimes they are environed with mighty enemies, and then he rescues them, Job v. 15, 16, by cutting off their oppressors, and comforting the oppressed, Job xxxvi. 6, 15.

4. But specially the godly poor, God is very tender over these: he that toucheth them to hurt them, toucheth the apple of his eye. These are his jewels, his glory, his portion, his pleasant portion, his inheritance, his dove, his spouse, his anointed ones; and if kings wrong them, he will rebuke even kings, for their sakes, saying, 'Touch not mine anointed,' Ps. cv. 15; Amos ii. 6. God visits for such sins.

5. As for the fatherless, who are exposed to much sorrow—and therefore Christ promiseth his disciples that he will not leave them orphans, or fatherless, John xiv. 18—God hath styled himself a father to them, Ps. lxxviii. 5; Hosea xiv. 3. 2. He hath made many laws for them, Exod. xxii. 22; Deut. xvi. 11, 14, xxiv. 17, and xxvi. 12, 13, and curseth those that wrong them,

¹ 1. Judicate. 2. Justificate. 3. Eripite. Eripere pauperem de manu potentis est sententiam adversus potentem pro paupere juste pronuntiatam executioni mandare, et reipsa efficere ut pauper nihil detrimenti a potentiore inimico patiat. — *Bellarmin.*

Deut. xxvii. 19. 3. He chargeth magistrates, in the text, to be tender over them; so Isa. i. 17; Job xxix. 12, and xxxi. 17, 18, 21. 4. When magistrates are negligent in defending them, he hears their cry, and threatens to visit for that sin, Isa. i. 23, 24; Jer. v. 28, 29, and xxi. 12; Mal. iii. 5. 5. If magistrates will not plead their cause, yet God will, Deut. x. 18; Ps. x. *ult.*, and cxlvi. 9; Prov. xxiii. 11.

6. St James sums up all religion, as it were, into this one duty. It is not enough that we hear, pray, and worship God; but we must also love our neighbours, and show pity to the poor and fatherless, without which all our profession is vain, James i. 27. Now magistrates, in their capacity and calling, must resemble God, they must be a refuge to the poor, a father to the fatherless, and a comfort to the comfortless. Job, who was an eminent magistrate in his time, how tender was he over the poor and fatherless! He was eyes to the blind, feet to the lame, a father to the poor, and the blessing of him who was ready to perish came upon him, and he made the widow's heart to sing for joy, Job xxix. 12, &c., xxx. 15, and xxxi. 17, 21:¹ especially he must defend the godly poor, who are oft contemned by the high and haughty of the world for their poverty, and hated for their piety. These commit themselves and their cause to God, Ps. x. 14, and therefore they are called his poor, by a special propriety, Ps. lxxii. 2. 'He,' speaking of Solomon, 'shall judge thy people with equity.' God's deputies must be tender over those whom God so tenders, that he prizeth them above all the world besides.

'Do Justice.'—*Obs.* 2. As magistrates must administer justice unto all, so especially to the afflicted and distressed. These are most liable to injury; and therefore, if justice incline to any side with favour, it should be towards the poor. This is the very end why rulers are set up—viz., to execute judgment, and do justice amongst the people, Isa. lvi. 1; Hosea xii. 6; Amos v. 24; Zech. vii. 9. Therefore it is that David prayed for his son Solomon that God would give him a clear understanding and right judgment to discern between good and evil, and an upright heart to walk answerable to light received, that so he might 'judge the people with righteousness, and the poor with judgment,' Ps. lxxii. 1, 2; and Solomon himself makes the like prayer, 1 Kings iii. 9; and

¹ Men's necessities are many, but most of them spring from ignorance and want of skill, or impotency and want of power, both noted here by blindness and lameness. Job was a guide to the blind and a staff to the lame, leading the one and supporting the other.—*D. Sanderson, 1 Ser. ad Magistr., p. 162.*

the queen of Sheba tells him that God had raised him for this end, 1 Kings x. 9. It was the honour of the kings of Egypt that they bound their judges by oath not to act unjustly, no, though they themselves should command them so to do. Clothing is an ornament, and a diadem is a glory: all magistrates, like Job, should 'put on righteousness as a robe, and judgment as a diadem,' Job xxix. 14: so did Christ, Isa. xi. 5.¹ This was David's honour, that he executed justice and judgment to all his people, 2 Chron. xviii. 14. This is so lovely a thing, that Absalom, when he would entice the people from David, tells them that if he were made judge in the land, though David did not, yet he would do them justice, 2 Sam. xv. 4. As injustice is all vice, so justice comprehends all virtue,² so excellent a thing is justice. This is our duty, Micah vi. 8; as every man in his place must do justly, so specially the magistrate.³

2. It is our security, Isa. xxxiii. 15, 16; it establisheth thrones, Prov. xvi. 12, and xxix. 14; Jer. xxii. 3, 4, and preserves a people from ruin, Amos v. 15. There is no one thing, religion excepted, that doth more secure and adorn a nation than justice doth.³ It is both *columna et corona reipublicæ*; it is a prop to make it subsist firm in itself, and, as a crown, to render it glorious in the eyes of others. It is as the cement in the building, which holds all together. Take this away, and nations will quickly run to ruin, Jer. v. 1, and xxi. 12.⁴ Gall is bitter, and hemlock is poisonous; now, when judgment is turned into gall, and righteousness into hemlock, judgment is not far from that people, Hosea x. 4; Amos vi. 12. The law thunders out curses against such as pervert judgment, specially the judgment of the fatherless and the widow, Deut. xxvii. 19; Prov. xxiv. 24.

3. It is our glory. Righteousness exalts a nation, Prov. xiv. 34, and brings a blessing on it. 'The Lord bless thee, O habitation of justice,' Jer. xxxi. 23; so that, what Solomon saith of wisdom is most true of justice: 'Exalt her, and she shall exalt thee to honour; she shall be to thee an ornament of grace, and a crown of

¹ The first thing we do in a morning is to put on our clothes: before we eat or drink, we do this. So should every good magistrate prefer public justice before his own private affairs, much more before his jades, his kites, his curs, and pleasures.—*D. Sanderson*, 1 *Ser. ad Magistratum*, p. 155.

² οὐ μένος ἀπερῆς, ἀλλ' ἔλη ἀπερῆ.—*Arist. Ethic.*, lib. v.

³ *Vide* Mr Ant. Burgess' *Ser.* on Psalm cvi. 30, p. 2, preached 1644; and Dr Sanderson's *Ser.* on the same text, p. 238; Mr Greenhil on Ezek. i. 14, p. 74.

⁴ *Eæ reipublicæ ad interitum inclinant in quibus boni à malis nihil differunt.*—*Antisthenes.*

glory shall she deliver to thee,' Prov. iv. 8, 9. Justice and judgment is more acceptable to God than sacrifice,¹ Prov. xxi. 3; without it, all duties are an abomination, Isa. i. 15; Amos v. 21, 24, and our prayers in vain, Josh. vii. 20.

A heathen could say, that the choicest gift that ever God gave to man, considering what miseries he is subject to, was government by justice, which bridled and restraineth the presumption of the furious, preserveth the innocent in his honesty, and yieldeth equally to every man his due.²

Now that justice may be rightly dispensed to all, seven rules must be observed:

Do justice, 1. Discreetly; 2. Speedily; 3. Impartially and universally; 4. Resolutely and courageously; 5. Righteously and exactly; 6. Soberly; 7. Diligently.

1. A good magistrate will execute justice discreetly: he is not rash nor heady; but he ponders all circumstances of person, time, and place, and judgeth accordingly. Now, as a word spoken in season—or as it is in the fountain—a word set upon its wheels,³ having a due concurrence of all circumstances—is like apples of gold in pictures of silver, not only delightful to the eye, but profitable to the possessor, Prov. xxv. 11; so an act of justice rightly circumstantiated, is both pleasant and profitable. He must not regard bare accusations; for who then should be innocent?⁴ Christ himself was accused for a blasphemer and an enemy to Cæsar, and the apostles were called deceivers, and yet they were true men, 2 Cor. vi. 8. Besides, wicked men are very subtle in concealing, forging, and wrapping up their sinful practices, Micah vii. 3; but a prudent magistrate will sift and search out the truth of a matter, Deut. xvii. 4; Job xxix. 16. For want of this, wise David was overseen, and gave away good Mephibosheth's estate unheard, upon the bare accusation of a self-seeking Ziba, 2 Sam. xix. 29; and it was hard to censure Queen Vashti before she was heard speak for herself, Esth. i. 19. It was good counsel, and he did practise it himself, which Alexander gave to his judges, that when they had heard one party speak, they should stop one ear to hear what the

¹ *Pinguior victima mactari Deo non potest quam homo sceleratus.* See six motives to quicken magistrates to do justice, in Mr Taffyn on Amendment, pp. 122, 354, and ten more in Mr Levisy's Jehoshaphat's Charge, p. 75, 80, &c.; Clerk's Mirror, chap. 74, 75.

² Plato de Repub., lib. iv.

³ *Beophnau*, super rotis suis.

⁴ In capital causes especially deliberation must be used.—*Goodwin's Jewish Antiq.*, lib. v. cap. 6, p. 195.

other party could say for himself. It is folly to speak before we know the depth of the matter before us, Prov. xviii. 13. God will have both parties heard, Exod. xxii. 9.¹

2. Speedily. He must expedite causes, and not make a long harvest of a little crop. Delay oft makes the remedy worse than the disease. To tire out the poor, the fatherless, and the widow, with tedious suits and dilatory courses till they have no means left to prosecute their righteous cause, is an act of great unrighteousness. Christ is described (and a magistrate cannot follow a better copy) to be one that seeketh judgment and executeth justice speedily, Isa. xvi. 5. So did David, Ps. ci. 8. As it is ill to do right rashly, so it is wrong to do it delayingly; and as they do a double courtesy who do it speedily, so they do double right who do it, though discreetly and deliberately, yet quickly. When the poor woman petitioned Philip king of Macedon to hear her cause, he answered that he was not at leisure. Then, said she, be not king. The king, laying to heart her speech, gave speedy audience, not only to her, but to all men from that day forward. And the emperor Trajan on horseback, ready to go to battle, alighted to hear the complaint of a poor woman.

3. Impartially and universally to all, without fear of foes or favour to friends. As God's justice knows no relations,² Isa. xxxvii. 11; Jer. xxii. 4, 24, so magistrates in point of justice must know none. Levi, in this case, did know neither father nor mother, brethren nor children, Deut. xxxiii. 9. David punished his Absalom with a three years' banishment for his fratricide, 1 Kings xiii. 38. King Asa deposed his own mother for her idolatry, 1 Kings xv. 13. And that resolution of Saul was heroic, if it had been well grounded: 'Though the fault be found in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die,' 1 Sam. xiv. 39. It is excellent, but hard, to censure those we love. It is the cause's equity, and not the person's intimacy, that must sway us. If the person be wicked, though he be never so nearly related to thee, punish him; as that noble Roman did his son for siding with Cataline, *Te patriæ genui, non Catalinæ*. And as that man who pleaded kindred, My lord, I am your kinsman, said the prisoner. Are you so? said the judge; why then you shall have a higher gibbet erected,³ that all the world may see that I will do justice to a kinsman. When Zaleucus had made a law against adulterers, that whosoever should be found guilty thereof, *Exocula-*

¹ See more directions in Mr Lawson's Body of Divinity, on the Ninth Commandment, p. 221, &c.

² *Exuit personam judicis, quisquis amici induit.*—*Cicero*.

³ *Altiorum erigite crucem.*

retur, he should have his eyes put out. It so fell out, that his son was the first offender; whereupon sentence was pronounced, and execution ready to be done. The people entreating the judge his father to pardon the fault, upon deliberation he put out one of his own eyes and one of his son's, and so shewed himself *pium patrem, et justum judicem*, a good father, and a just judge. As Aristotle said sometimes, *Amicus Socrates, &c.*, Socrates I love, and Plato I love, but I love the truth above them all; so say you, My friends I love, my kindred I love, my children I love, but justice and judgment I love above them all. Justice is pictured blind, with a sword in one hand and a balance in the other.¹ It cannot see a rich man from a poor, nor a friend from a foe. It makes not the law like a spider's web, which catcheth little flies whilst the great ones break through. It knows that one sinner, one Achan, one Saul, one Ahab, unpunished destroys much good, Eccles. ix. 18.

4. Resolutely and courageously. Judges must not fear the faces or the frowns of any; for the judgment is the Lord's which they execute, who will defend them in it,² Exod. xviii. 21; Deut. i. 17. Nehemiah (chap. vi. 11) will not fear nor fly, but stands it out against all the plots and power of Sanballat and his confederates. God's Joshuas and Zerubbabels must be strong and of good courage,³ Josh. i. 9; Hag. ii. 4. Hence Constantine is styled a man-child for his courage in venturing for the Church's weal. The Lord himself is a shield and sanctuary to the shields of the earth; he is on their side, and therefore they should not fear what man can do unto them, Ps. lvi. 5, and cxviii. 6. Inferior creatures, when backed by a superior, are full of spirit. A little dog will venture on a creature far stronger than himself, when his master stands by to back him. Do justice faithfully, and then let the world fall on thee, it shall never hurt thee.⁴ If any dare to do injustice, do not thou fear to do justice on him. Solomon's throne was upheld by lions, not by fearful harts and hares,⁵ 2 Kings x. 20; 2 Chron. ix. 18, 19, intimating that magistrates should be such for magnanimity and courage. The pillars of a house had need to be heart of oak. Magistrates are the pillars of a land, and therefore had need to be solid, seasoned, resolute, undaunted men, that will not warp for fear or

¹ Vide Plutarch de Iside.

² Magistrates must be *anschei chajil, viri virtutis*, valiant men.

³ *Judex neminem timeat nisi seipsum*. See many reasons why magistrates should be courageous, in Dr Sanderson's 1 Ser. ad Magistratum, p. 176, &c.

⁴ *Fiat justitia, et ruat mundus*.

⁵ See how magistrates must be like lions in seven particulars, in M. John Carter's Ser. at Norwich on Rev. v. 5, p. 120, styled the Lion.

favour, for threats or gifts. These shields of the earth must look for darts sometimes from superiors, anon from inferiors, and, if they be not well steeled, to flatter the one or please the other, they will fail in duty. None but noble raised spirits can hold out in doing well, though they hear ill for their pains.¹ There are three dogs which Luther would not have ministers to bring into the pulpit with them,—viz., Envy; Pride; Covetousness. And there are three sins which no magistrate should bring to the seat of justice with him,—viz., Pusillanimity; Malice and anger; Covetousness.

(1.) A pusillanimous man dares not say nay to an unrighteous motion, for fear of the displeasure of the people, or of some great man. It was their sin that condemned Naboth for fear of displeasing Jezebel; and Pilate for fear of Cæsar condemned Christ, though he found him innocent, and knew that he was delivered to him of envy.² Paul's cause was good, yet Felix will not free him because of the people. Darius, to please his princes, sends Daniel to the lions' den, though with some regret. So king Zedekiah, overawed by his princes, delivers Jeremiah into their hands, Jer. xxxviii. 5. Inordinate fears are very prejudicial to men in public places. Such fear slays a man whilst he lives, and buries him before he is dead, Isa. xxii. 2. It enfeebles and dispirits a man, so that he cannot act so freely as becomes him. The fear of man is a snare, Prov. xxix. 25; and every coward, saith Aristotle, is a murderer.³ As all Christians, so magistrates, then, especially had need to be men of good courage; and the rather because they must oppose the torrent and current of the sins of the times they live in.⁴

(2.) Malice and anger become not a judge. Spite will never do right. Malice puts men upon revenge. Micaiah must to prison though he prophesy nothing but truth. And why so? For I hate him, said Ahab.⁵ Aristides, though a heathen, said well. When sitting as judge between two persons, the one charged his adversary with great wrongs done to Aristides. He answered, Friend, tell me only what he hath done to thee, for I sit here to do right to thee, and not to myself.

(3.) Covetousness. A magistrate must not only be free from it,

¹ Bene facere, et male audire, regium est.—*Seneca*.

² It is a good clause which I have read in Minshew, that in the oaths of the king's justices they shall swear to do right, notwithstanding the king's letters.—An. 18, Edw. 3, 4.

³ πάντα δειλὸν φοβικόν.—*Aristot.*

⁴ See Mr Ash's Ser. on Ps. xxxi. 24, preached 1642.

⁵ Affectus ubi judicat, ibi ratio claudicat; et ubi est fervida vindicta, ibi non temperata justitia.

but he must hate it, Exod. xviii. 21; a man that is greedy of gain, will transgress for a morsel of bread, Prov. xxviii. 21; a poor reward will put him out of his way. This sin is the root of all evil, bribery, simony, sacrilege, partiality, tyranny, time-serving, and turning of judgment backward, Isa. lix. 14; these are some of those fruits of this bitter root. Such will sell their wit, parts, power, conscience, religion, and all for money. I have read of many sales, as sale-winds, by witches,¹ sale-churches, by patrons, or rather latrons, sale-hands, by mercenary soldiers; but sale-justice and a sale-sentence is one of the worst sales, for it makes the just man a sinner, and takes away the righteousness of the righteous from him. This Solomon looked upon as a great evil:² Eccles. iii. 16, 'He saw the place of judgment, and lo, wickedness was there.' To find wickedness in taverns, theatres, or mountains of prey, is no wonder; but for seats of justice to be full of injustice, this is gall and hemlock indeed, Amos vi. 12. These love *dialectum Doricam*,³ the Dorick dialect, as one phraseth it, they are all for gifts, like those in Hosea's time, Hosea iv. 18; her rulers with shame love Give ye, *i.e.*, in a shameful, sordid manner they call for gifts and presents, crying, Give, give; bring, bring; like the insatiable horse-leech, they cry, *Hab, hab*, give, give, Prov. xxx. 15; but will you see the end of such bribers? why, 'fire shall consume their tabernacles,'⁴ Job xv. 34.

5. Righteously and exactly. A magistrate must not only be *justus*, but he must do *justa*, yea, and he must do them *juste*. He must hear both parties speak, and then judge righteously between them. They must not wrest nor rack the law, to make it speak what it never meant, but with just judgment must they judge the people, Lev. xix. 15; Zech. viii. 16. He must dispense justice carefully, constantly, and conscientiously. Justice justice he must do, *i.e.*, pure justice,⁵ Deut. xvi. 20, not seeming, but real justice; not justice in part, but entire justice in measure and degree, without passion, corruption, or delay. He must not do an act or two of justice, but it must be his constant work; it is his clothing

¹ Vide Heyling's Geogra. in Lapland.

² Non in homines debent imperium habere, sed in belluas, qui publicorum officiorum functionibus, non quid ex usu sit publico, sed quid rei privatæ serviat, quærunt.—Luther.

³ They love δῶρα, *dona*.

⁴ Siquis honorem verum amet, ab omni suspitione captandorum munerum sedulo cavebit, præsertim in eo constitutus loco, in quo maxime cavendum ne iniquitas venalis fiat.—Rivet.

⁵ Justitiam justitiam, *i.e.*, justissimam et puram justitiam.—Piscator. See Schools Guard, rule 43.

which he must put on every day.¹ His head, and heart, and hands must be covered with it, Job xxviii. 14. Rulers must not free ravens and censure doves, nor loose Barabbas and bind Christ. This is not execution of justice, but persecution of the just. They must proportion the punishment according to the offence, and not barely shave the head, which for its enormities ought to be cut off.² There must be an accurate, arithmetical, and geometrical proportion observed, *i.e.*, the fact with all its circumstances must be considered, and there must be a retaliation rendered accordingly. Great sins must have great punishment, and lesser sins lesser punishment. Life must for life, and eye for eye, Gen. ix. 6; Exod. xxi. 24.

6. Soberly. He must be a temperate man, else how will he govern others, that cannot govern himself, or reform others, who is unreformed himself? What the apostle saith of ministers is true of magistrates; if a man cannot rule himself and his own house, how shall he govern the house of God? 1 Tim. iii. 5. He is not like to help another, who hath lost himself. Wine and strong drink make men forget the law, and pervert judgment. It is not for princes to be eating in the morning when they should be judging the people,³ Eccles. x. 16, 17; Jer. xxi. 12. Judges must be wise and prudent; but when temperance is gone, where is the prudence? He that is luxurious and riotous, is not wise, saith the wisest of men, Prov. xx. 1; and therefore Solon made a law, that whatever ruler was found drunk should be put to death.

7. Diligently. It is God's work, and he is cursed that doth it negligently. Justice must diffuse itself; it must run down as a mighty stream, fully, freely, commonly, and universally,⁴ Amos v. 24. Rivers run by the poor man's door as well as the rich. It must be their delight to do judgment, Prov. xxi. 15. Rulers were not made for pleasure, but for labour. They were not born for themselves, but for the people's good; hence those titles of nursing fathers, shepherds, stewards, &c., all which imply a great deal of care and pains.

¹ *Judex nihil aliud est quam, δικαίον ἐμψυχον, i.e., jus quoddam animatum.*—*Arist.*

² Distinguendum est inter pœnam scelerum jure divino definitam, et arbitrio magistratus relictam. Quoad illam servanda est æqualitas arithmetica, quoad hanc geometrica.—*Gerhard.*

³ In sicco habitat sapientia, non in humido; fundamentum ejus est temperantia.—*Socrates.*

⁴ Sudandum est iis qui magistratum gerunt; adeundæ inimicitiae, subeundæ sæpe pro republica tempestates, cum multis audacibus, improbis, nonnunquam etiam potentibus dimicandum est.—*Cicero pro Sestert.*

Obs. 3. Good duties need much pressing. Such is the dulness and indisposition of our natures to the best things, that without much pressing they take little or no impression upon us: hence it is that the Lord here calls on judges again and again to defend the poor and fatherless, and to deliver the needy out of trouble. So in Rev. ii. iii., Christ calls again and again to those that have ears to hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. We must have line upon line, and precept upon precept, and all little enough to make the word effectual. It is not sufficient to say, I know this and that, but you must love to hear it pressed upon you again and again, for your more spiritual improvement of it. He that loves the truth in truth, the more he hears it the more he loves it still.¹ It is but an adulterous love to virgin truth, to be weary of her when you are best acquainted with her, and to cast her off with contempt, as Amnon did Tamar, when you have had your fill of her.

Obs. 4. Magistrates must administer justice orderly. They must not go preposterously to work, and condemn a man before he is heard. But 1. They must fully, freely, patiently, with a sedate, quiet, composed spirit, free from passion, prejudice, and precipitancy, hear both parties speak for themselves, for the law doth not use to condemn men till their cause be heard, John vii. 51; Acts xxv. 15, 16. 2. When, upon hearing, he hath found out the depth and truth of the cause, then he must justify and absolve the innocent, and rescue him out of the jaws of the wicked, by executing justice on him according to his demerits.

Obs. 5. God is very tender over his poor afflicted people. This makes him here once and again to charge his vicegerents to have a special care over them. None must touch them to hurt them; or if they do, the magistrate must rescue them; and if they will not, yet God himself will, Ps. xii. 5; he takes the wrongs that are done to them as done to himself: Prov. xiv. 31, and xvii. 5, He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his maker, and contemns the wise dispensation of God, who will have poor intermingled with the rich, as the valleys are amongst the hills, for his own praise. God would have no man oppressed, be he never so rich; but specially he hates the oppressing of the poor, because low and weak, and cannot help themselves as rich men can. The more unable they are to help themselves, the sooner will God arise to help them; though they be weak, yet their Redeemer is strong, Prov. xxiii. 10, 11. Though they be little, yet their protector is mighty, You may be able to contend with the poor, but can you contend with the Almighty, who

¹ Veritas quo notior, eo charior.

is their guardian?¹ No wise man will contend with a mightier than himself, nor oppress the servants and sons of a prince that can easily suppress and crush him. The poor and fatherless, when believers, are the sons and servants of God, and they cannot escape that wrong them; he hath more than once proclaimed himself their patron and protector, Ps. x. 14, and lxviii. 5; Hosea xiv. 3; Deut. x. 17, 18, and hath denounced woes against those that hurt them, Isa. x. 1-3; Mal. iii. 5, and punished Jerusalem amongst other sins for this, Ezek. xxii. 7. Many think they may abuse the poor, because they are impotent and cannot help themselves, but see how Solomon counsels these men most excellently, Prov. xxii. 22, 23, 'Rob not the poor because he is poor, neither oppress the afflicted in the gate; for the Lord will plead their cause, and spoil the soul of those that spoiled them;' *q.d.*, let not his poverty and inability to withstand thee, encourage thee to abuse him; yea, though thou be one of the magistrates, a man of power that sittest in the gate, yet know that there is a greater than thou, who will help the helpless, will plead their cause, and spoil the soul of those that spoiled them; *i.e.*, he will take away the life of those that take away the estate of the afflicted.

Obs. 6. Oppressors of the poor are cruel beasts. They get the poor in their clutches, and as the wolf feeds on his prey, so do they on them, Ps. xvii. 12, till the magistrate by his power do rescue them. Hence for their ferity they are compared to lions, Job iv. 10; wolves, Hab. i. 8; bears, Prov. xvii. 12; dogs, Mat. vii. 6; wild boars, Ps. lxxx. 13; to millers, that grind the poor by their cruelty, Isa. iii. 15; to thrashers, which bruise and oppress the people, Amos i. 3; to butchers, that do not fleece but flay the sheep, Micah iii. 2, 3; hence their teeth are called swords, and their jaw-teeth knives, that they may at once devour the poor from off the earth, Prov. xxx. 14; Ps. lvii. 4. The fourth beast in Daniel's vision had great iron teeth, Dan. vii. 7; he had teeth, great teeth, iron teeth; and all to note what spoil that beast should make amongst the nations.

Obs. 7. Magistrates must improve their power in rescuing the poor out of the paws of the oppressor. To this end they have their power given them, not to oppress the oppressed, or to add affliction to the afflictions of the afflicted, but that they might resemble God, who is a father to the fatherless, and the poor man's refuge. Hence

¹ Gobel, *i.e.*, assertor, vindex, propinquus, consanguineus, redemptor.—*A Lapidē in locum.* See more on this point in Mr Gataker's Ser. on Ps. lxxxii. 7, p. 103, 104, part ii., folio.

they are called shepherds. As the shepherd defends the flock, and rescues his lambs from lions and wolves, so must the magistrate by his power defend the lambs of Christ from the sons of violence. So did Job, chap. xxix. 17, he brake the jaws of the wicked, and pulled the spoil out of his teeth.

Obs. 8. Merciless men are wicked men. Those that oppress the poor have this brand set upon them, that they are *reshaganim*, wicked men. As tenderness, pity, and mercifulness are signs of election, Col. iii. 12, so ferity, cruelty and harshness are signs of reprobation, as we see in Nabal and Dives. See how Job describes the wicked, by enumerating their unmerciful practices, chap. xxiv. 2-12.

Obs. 9. Rich men oftentimes are oppressive men. These wicked men that the prophet speaks of, were not poor men, for they have not the power that rich men have to oppress their brethren; neither do judges use to respect the persons of the poor, as they did these, ver. 2. Riches accidentally make men cruel and insolent. The rich, saith Solomon, rules over the poor, viz., with insolence and violence, Prov. xxii. 7. It were rich men that oppressed the poor, and drew them violently before judgment-seats, James ii. 6; so as when these wicked ones arise, especially to be rulers, the poor, especially the godly poor, hide themselves, Prov. xxviii. 28.

Ver. 5. *They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in the darkness; all the foundations of the earth are out of course.*

This verse is a kind of parenthesis, and contains the Lord's pathetic complaint of that ignorance, stupidity, and obstinacy which he found in the judges of those times; together with the sad effects of it in the commonwealth; the foundations of the earth were out of course.

In this verse the person is changed; God speaks not here to the magistrates themselves, as he did ver. 2. He says not, 'Ye do not know, ye do not understand;' but as one troubled in mind, and mourning within himself to see their desperate malice, and the confusions that attended it, he cries out, 'They have not known, they have no understanding,'¹ *i.e.*, they do not know nor understand. It is frequent in that language to put the præterperfect tense for the present tense; as Ps. i. 1, 'Blessed is the man who hath not walked,' *i.e.*, who doth not walk in the counsel of the ungodly. It notes a continued act, and implies their perseverance in ignorance;² *q.d.*, But what do I mean? Why go I about to

¹ Lo jadegnu, non cognoverunt.—*Præterit in Kal.*

² Præterita ponuntur pro præsentibus, et notant actum continuum.—*Piscator.*

make a blackamoor white? It is in vain to reprove this kind of men, or to exhort them to the study of righteousness; for they grow worse and worse; they are so blinded, stupefied and hardened in their sin, that they will go on in their dark and sinful courses, though they ruin themselves, and the commonwealth to boot.

In the words we have all the degrees of comparison, and in them the character of evil judges: 1. These corrupt judges were blind: they know not, that is bad. 2. They will not understand, that is worse. 3. They will walk on in their own dark courses, that is worst of all. 4. Though the whole world be in confusion, and the very foundations of the earth shake under them, partly through their own misgovernment, and partly by the just judgment of God, yet they were stupid and senseless, they took no notice of it, so as to amend what was amiss, but went on still in their perverse practices, till all came to confusion. And this is super-superlative wickedness.

1. Their first degree of evil is ignorance, 'they know not.' They were wise enough to do evil, but to do good they had no knowledge.

Quest. But here a question may arise; since these men were judges in Israel, and had parts, with answerable breeding, no doubt, to fit them for such weighty employment, how then is it said, 'they know not, neither do they understand'?

Ans. The answer is easy. Knowledge is twofold—speculative, or practical. These judges were not fools and ignorant of their duty, they had a theoretical, notional, speculative knowledge of it; they knew that they were God's vicegerents and deputies appointed by him to execute justice and judgment amongst his people impartially, and that they ought to have a tender respect to the poor and the afflicted; and if they did not thus, they knew that God would punish them. All this no doubt, and much more, they had in the theory, having so many prophets as the people of Israel had to instruct them.

2. But if we look upon their practice, so it may be said they have no knowledge; ¹ viz., so as to love, affect, and practise what they know. In Scripture, knowledge without practice is counted no knowledge, and hypocritical false things are esteemed as no things.² Thus graceless men are accounted as no men, Jer. v. 1, 'Run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see if ye can find a man.' Why, the streets were full of men; yea, but because they were not good men, God accounts them as no men. Thus

¹ Verbanotitiae apud Hebræos, affectus comprehendunt.—*See School's Guard*, Rule 11.

² The word *jadang*, in the text, implies both knowledge with the mind, and acknowledging and regarding with the affections.

the wicked are said to have no heart, Hos. vii. 11; *i.e.*, no heart to goodness, and then as good have no heart at all. Thus the wicked are said not to hear the law, because they do not hear it rightly, and obedientially. Thus Saul is said to reign but two years over Israel, when he reigned many years: but because in his two first years he reigned well, and after did degenerate, therefore his last reigning was accounted as no reigning. So these judges, though they knew they should judge righteously, without respect of persons, yet they did judge unrighteously, with respect to persons, and therefore God accounted their knowledge as no knowledge; 'they know not.'

'Neither do they understand.' They were stupid, and incapable of good counsel. They did not understand or consider (so much the word imports in the original)¹ the duties of their places, so as to practise them for the good of God's poor, afflicted, oppressed people. The word is frequently used for consideration, as 1 Kings iii. 21, 'When I had considered it in the morning.' So Isa. xiv. 16, and xliii. 18. Consider the things of old, Jer. ii. 10, xxiii. 20. In the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly. So Job xxiii. 15, and xxxvii. 14. Consider the wondrous works of God, so as to be affected with them.

'They walk on in darkness.' The words in the fountain are very emphatical. 'They will walk on continually in darkness.'² They take not a turn or two in this dark alley, but *indēsinenter ambulānt*, they are always at it, it is their work, their way, their trade, and no man nor means can put them out of it. They will walk on and continue in their wilful ignorance, and sinful perverting of judgment, in despite of God and man. Now to walk in darkness, in Scripture phrase notes, 1. A living in ignorance, ³ Eccles. ii. 14, when men care not to know the will of God, but say as those wicked in Job xxi. 14, 'Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.' These corrupt judges walked in ways of darkness, and therefore they loved darkness more than light. This made them err in judgment, as blind men stumble at everything that lies in their way; and hence came that sedition, tumult, and confusion in the state. 2. To walk in darkness, is to lie in a natural condition, and live in a state of sin

¹ Jabinu, from Bīnah intellexit, consideravit.—*Pagnin*.

² It is not hallacu, ambulabunt, but lithhallacu, ambulabunt indēsinenter. Nam verba in conjugatione Hithpael significationem intendunt, immo habitum, vehementiam et frequentiam denotant.—*Pagnin*.

³ Ostendit ignorantiam istorum judicium fuisse voluntariam, ut qui noluerint ex lege Dei discere quid sui esset officii.—*Piscator*.

and ignorance, without any saving knowledge of God, John viii. 12, and xii. 46; Prov. ii. 13; 1 John i. 6, and ii. 11. By nature these men were blind, but being drunken with pleasures, and besotted with the lusts of covetousness, bribery, private affection, and puffed up with the greatness of their power, they had contracted a habitual blindness, so that they could not discern right from wrong, darkness from light, nor truth from error. Their lusts had blinded them, and put out their eyes, so that they could not see the duties of their places, nor remember the great account which they must one day give unto God of their stewardship: but as Samson when he had lost his eyes was abused and put to grind in a mill, so these being blinded by Satan, were made to grind in the mill of every sin and error.

‘All the foundations of the earth are out of course.’ These words have almost as many interpretations as there be interpreters:—1. Some add the word, albeit or although, to the text; they walk on in darkness, albeit the foundations of the earth be moved; and so they make these words an aggravation of that prodigious stupidity which had possessed those great ones of the world, *q.d.*, Such is their sottishness and senselessness, that though all the world be in confusion, and heaven and earth be ready to come together, yet do they snort in their security, and will by no means be quickened to the execution of justice, that they might prevent destruction.

This sense is good, but with submission to better judgments, I conceive the words may be taken as they are in themselves, without any addition, for the sad effect and consequent of that ignorance, unrighteousness, cruelty, and stupidity which reigned in their rulers,—viz., that by reason of it all the foundations of the earth were out of course,¹ *i.e.*, all laws were broken, all orders violated, the wicked were encouraged, the godly discountenanced, the public peace disturbed, and the state of all things turned upside down; nothing but murder, rapes, rapine, violence, and all outrage to be found. No man knows where to have right, or by whom to be protected from wrong. Yet they know not, neither will they understand, they will walk on in darkness; and what is the issue of all this? Why, the very foundations of the earth will move. So it is in the original, *i.e.*, all things will run into confusion and disorder by reason of the stupidity and wilful disobedience of the rulers of this people, Ps. lx. 2; Isa. xxiv. 19, 20. Others make

¹ Jimmotu, a mot., nutabunt, declinabunt omnia fundamenta terræ.—*Mercer apud Pagnin.* Fundamenta terræ videtur nominare ea quibus salus publica nititur; ea vero sunt recta administratio juris, conservatio disciplinæ et pacis, defensio innocentium, et pœnæ scelerum.—*Moller.*

the words a commination of some destruction at hand, the foundations of the earth shall be moved, they read the word passively, *q.d.*, God will destroy that nation where such ill magistrates bear sway;¹ as a house whose foundation is taken away cannot stand; so since the rulers of my people who should be the upholders of the land, by executing justice, are become the destroyers of it, I will destroy them altogether. But the former sense is most genuine; for although the Septuagint do frequently render the verb passively, yet why we should forsake the original, as the vulgar Latin frequently doth, to follow the Septuagint, I see no reason, especially if we consider the corruptness of the Septuagint which now we have. Take but one place for instance; Isa. ix. 6, speaking of Christ, the Septuagint put ἀγγελος, for *Deus*, and leave out many of Christ's titles there which prove his deity. I speak not in the least to disparage that princely work of that reverend and learned man,² whose labours praise him in the gates, and for which I desire to bless the God of heaven, and have long since received it with a χάρις φῶς. But I speak it to this end, to caution young men not to lay too much stress upon the Septuagint, considering what the learned have said of it. *Ista Græca Versio quam nunc habemus, in plurimis locis dissentit ab Hebræo; multa habet quæ non sunt in Hebræo, ut omnes noverunt qui in ea versati sunt.*—Philo.

Licet non ignorem nonnullos in ea sententia esse, ut existiment interpretationem LXX. seniorum penitus interiisse; multo probabilius censeo illam adhuc superesse: sed adeo corruptam et vitiatam, ut omnino alia esse videatur. Bellarmin., lib. ii. de Verbo Dei., cap. 6. *Nos summo studio, cura et diligentia LXX. interpretationem cum Hebræo contulimus, et tot invenimus addita, dempta, depravata, immutata, et ab Hebraico prorsus aliena, ut mihi persuadere nequeam illam esse LXX. interpretum.*—Pagan.

Periodos integras omisere, nec non capita integra.—Capellus.

But this point is so excellently cleared by the learned Dr Walton in his Apparatus, Prolegom. 9, that I shall only refer you thither for better satisfaction.³

In the words is set forth to us:—1. What it is that is out of course: The earth,⁴ *i.e.*, the inhabitants of the earth.

2. What part of the earth? Not the superficies or surface, but the very foundation of the earth,⁵ by which metaphorically is meant

¹ Manifeste dicitur de principibus a justitia et pietate declinantibus, qui moveri, *i.e.*, non consistere in vera via et statione, dicuntur; ideo illis graves minatur penas. —*Illyricus.*

² Dr Walton.

³ See Mr Leigh his Body of Divinity, lib. i., cap. 7, p. 72.

⁴ Met. subjecti.

⁵ It is a hyperbolical proverbial metaphor.

the due administration of justice in punishing the wicked and defending the good. These be the pillars that uphold the world, and upon these commonwealths are chiefly founded.

3. Here is the extent of this confusion ; not some but all the foundations of the earth are out of course. Those that should be the pillars of the earth, they are rotten posts that deceive the building and let all run to ruin.

Obs. 1. All reprehensions and admonitions that are bestowed on wilfully blind and obstinate sinners, are lost, and in vain, as to the parties reprov'd, though our labour be not vain in the Lord,¹ Isa. xlix. 4 ; 2 Cor. ii. 15, we do but wash a blackamoor, or wash a tile ;² the more rain is poured on it, the blacker it grows. When men are set, given up and wedded to their sins, it is time to let them alone, Hosea iv. 14, 17. This made the Lord here leave off complaining to these judges, and to turn his complaint to himself and to his people. 'They know not, they will not understand.' God will not honour them now so far as to reprove them. Thus did the prophets when men were obstinate, past counsel and instruction, they turned to the earth and called upon the inanimate creatures to hear : Isa. i. 2, 'Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth : ' so Micah vi. 2, 'Hear, O mountains, the Lord's controversy : ' so Deut. iv. 26, and xxxii. 1 ; Jer. vi. 19, and xxii. 29. That preacher thinks his people very bad indeed, who directs his speech to the seats they sit on, and the pillars they lean to, *q.d.*, Hear, O ye seats, and hearken, O ye pillars, what the Lord hath done for an ungrateful and rebellious people. These are scorers that do but jeer at such as call on them to live soberly, righteously, and religiously. Solomon bids us not reprove such, lest they hate us, Prov. ix. 8. These are dogs that fly in the face of such as go about to stop them in their sinful practices, Mat. vii. 6.

Quest. But is not this a sufficient excuse to make us cease from reprov'g sinners ?

Ans. No ; for the Holy Ghost before in this psalm, though he knew those he spake to were incorrigible and incurable, yet reproveth them first, and admonisheth them to do their duty, ver. 2-4, for though such wicked men be not amended, yet we have discharged our duty, and they will be left without excuse in the day of the Lord, when they shall see and say they had a prophet amongst them to warn them, Ezek. ii. 9.

2. We must be very cautious that we do not presently cast off

¹ See Mr Lyford's Ser. on 2 Cor. ii. 15.

² Laterem lavare. Proverb.

every wicked man as a dog, that frets at reproof;¹ for a good Asa may do so, 2 Chron. xvi. 9, 10. The Lord himself is patient and bears long, and loath he is to cast off his people, Hosea vi. 4. Now when the Lord bears, we may well bear; but he 'bears with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath who are fitted to destruction,' Rom. ix. 22.

Obs. 2. Ignorance is the mother of mischief. These judges judge unjustly, respect persons, neglect their duties, oppress the poor, &c.; but what was the cause of all this? He tells you, 'They know not, neither will they understand.' This in Scripture is oft set forth as the root of all sin, Hosea iv. 1, 2, there is no mercy, no truth; nothing but killing, lying, stealing, and outrage; and why so? Why, there is no knowledge of God in the land, so Isa. i. 3, 4; 1 Pet. i. 14; Rev. iii. 17; one great cause of the church of Laodicea's misery was this, that she knew not her misery. Ignorance, and working uncleanness with greediness, are joined together, Eph. iv. 18, 19. 'This made the Jews to crucify Christ: Acts iii. 17, 'I wot, brethren, that through ignorance ye did it;' and Paul to blaspheme and persecute God's people, 1 Tim. i. 13. I did it ignorantly. When the Gentiles knew not God, then they served idols, Gal. iv. 8. Why is not God loved, feared, obeyed? Why, because he is not known; for as *incognitum non amatur*, so *non timetur*. Children that know not the strength and terror of a lion, fear him not. This made the Sadducees to err: Mat. xxii. 29, 'Ye err, not knowing the Scriptures.' All sins and errors are radically, seminally, and fundamentally in ignorance.² When the apostle had said, There is none that understands, see what a black guard of sins do follow, Rom. i. 28-32, and iii. 11-19; when the eyes of the Jews were blinded, then all wickedness like a flood broke in upon them, and there abides even to this day,³ Rom. xi. 8.

Ignorance is evil in any, but specially in such as are designed for public service. A magistrate that is ignorant of the law, and a minister of the gospel, are two sore judgments; the one destroys many a soul, and the other mars many a good cause: 'A prince that wanteth understanding is a great oppressor,' saith Solomon, Prov. xxviii. 16. It is a great misery to a nation when the rulers are children in understanding, Eccles. x. 16; Isa. iii. 4. Magis-

¹ See this point fully stated by Mr Reyner in his *Government of the Tongue*, p. 170, &c. And Mr Cudworth on Gal. vi. 1, p. 351, &c.

² *Omnis malus cæcus et ignorans.*—*Aristot.*

³ See more in Mr Pemble's *Ser. on Hosea iv. 6*, *The Mischief of Ignorance*, and Mr Clerk's *Mirror*, chap. liv.

trates had need of abundance of wisdom and prudence ; sinners are subtle to contrive wickedness, and magistrates had need of serpentine wisdom to search it out. For as truth, so wickedness lieth *in profundo*, it is buried deep, Isa. xxix. 15.

It is not for kings, say flatterers, to read, pray, study ; they must hawk and hunt, and game and take their pleasure, as if God had made them for no other end in the world ; but as he hath done the leviathan in the sea, to take his pleasure therein, Ps. civ. 26. No, God commands kings to write, read, and study his law, Deut. xvii. 18, 19. It must be their *vade mecum*, their constant companion, which they must study as well as the laws of the land. It is necessary that rulers should see with their own eyes, that they be not seduced by flatterers and parasites. We read how Moses, the chief magistrate, was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians before he was called to government. Tongues, arts, sciences, philosophy, history, law, divinity, are all requisite to make a complete magistrate.¹ They must not only be honest men, but able men, Exod. xviii. 21, men of parts, gifts, and understanding, Deut. i. 13 ; men, as we say, cut out for the work ; for as every one that is godly is not fit to teach others ; so every one that hath grace is not fit to rule others. They must be men dexterous in the law, else how shall they direct others according to law ? When rulers are children in gifts, though men in years, and babes for understanding, being weak as women, then follows oppression and confusion, Isa. iii. 4, 5, 12. As no wise man will go to an unskilful physician for physic ; nor venture himself in that ship that hath an unskilful pilot ; so no man that is well in his wits will venture his cause in the hands of an ignorant judge. As unsavoury salt is good for nothing ; so raw and rude rulers are the pests of their places.

Obs. 3. Knowledge without practice is no knowledge in God's esteem. In divinity we know no more then we practise.² To the Jews were committed the oracles of God, and they had great skill in the letter of the law ; but because they did not practise it, God complains of them as ignorant, Isa. v. 13 ; Hosea iv. 6. Yea, the priests are said not to know the law, 1 Sam. ii. 12 ; Jer. ii. 8, and iv. 22 ; they were priests, and so could not be totally ignorant ;³ but because their knowledge was merely notional and speculative, with-

¹ How necessary all kind of knowledge is, see à Lapide, *Encomium Sapientiæ Ethicæ, Naturalis, et Divinæ* ; in *Prefat. ad Ecclesiasticum*, p. 1, 2, &c.

² *Tantum scimus, quantum operamur.*

³ *Multi habent cognitionem salutis, sed non cognitionem salutarem.*

out obedience and practice, therefore God accounted it as no knowledge. Thus cruel, oppressing rulers, though they had some speculative knowledge, yet because they hated the good, and loved the evil, they are said not to know judgment, viz., so as to practise it, Jer. x. 21 ; Micah iii. 1, 2 ; Prov. xxix. 7.

Rest not then content with shows and shadows; let not Satan cozen thee with the leaves of speculation and external profession; but let thy knowledge be an effective, practical, obediential knowledge;¹ else knowledge without practice will but double your stripes, and increase your condemnation, Luke xii. 47 ; John ix. *ult.* ; James iv. *ult.* Where the spirit of regeneration comes, it brings a light with it, Eph. i. 17, 18, and v. 14 ; not a natural, but a divine, supernatural light ; not a cold light, like that of the moon : but a burning light, like that of the sun, John v. 35 ; it is not a fading, vanishing light, but it is an abiding, enduring light, which all the devils in hell shall never extinguish.² As the joy, so the light of God's elect, though it may be for a time eclipsed, yet shall never be totally taken from them. A natural man may have a little glimmering twilight ; but this is a soul-awaking, sin-conquering, soul-convincing, soul-commanding light ; it is effectual in the hearts of believers, and makes them grow in grace, 2 Pet. iii. 18. There may be knowledge without grace, but there can be no grace without knowledge. Knowledge is the oil in which the flame of the Spirit lives. 1. It is the saving knowledge of the truth that sanctifies us, and delivers from the bondage of sin in which by nature we are entangled, John viii. 31, 32, and xvii. 17. 2. It increaseth faith, Ps. ix. 10, ' they that know thee will trust in thee.'³ 3. It will make us love him more intensively ; the more experimentally we know God, the more we shall love him, Cant. i. 4. 4. It will make us patient under all afflictions, when we know and see that the Lord corrects us for our profit, Heb. xii. 10. 5. It will make us slight these transitory things, when we are truly convinced of the vanity of them, Eccles. i. 2 ; Heb. xi. 24-26.

Obs. 4. Want of consideration makes men neglect the duties of their callings. These judges did not consider that God sat amongst them, and considered their sentences, ends, and aims ; this made them pass such unrighteous sentences. Inconsiderateness makes

¹ *Cognitio veritatis est duplex ; pure speculativa, vel affectiva.—Aquinas. Vide Dyke on the Sacrament, chap. iv. ; Usher's Meditations, p. 1.*

² See the difference between common and saving knowledge. Dr Preston's *Saint's Infirmities*, p. 159, 160.

³ *Quantum cognoscimus, tantum diligimus ; quia dilectio sequitur cognitionem, cum ignoti nulla sit cupido.*

sin abound, Lam. i. 9. They are sinners and fools that consider not what they do, Eccles. v. 1. This ruins kings and kingdoms, Isa. i. 3, 4, and v. 12; Jer. xii. 11; Hosea vii. 2. This ruined Eve; she no sooner saw the fruit, but she presently eats of it, without any consideration of the misery that attended it,¹ Gen. iii. 6. Did the drunkard but consider the many woes that attend that sin, he would not rush into sin, as the horse into the battle, with such desperate violence. So we may say of all other sinners, Jer. viii. 6.

Obs. 5. Wicked men are wilful men. They are obstinate in sin, and will walk on, whatever come on it. Had these rulers sinned of mere simple ignorance, it might have excused them *à tanto*, though not *à toto*; it might have extenuated their sin: but their ignorance being a gross, wilful, affected, and contracted ignorance, rejecting instruction, that they might sin more freely, could neither excuse them *à tanto*, *nec à toto*, not in the least; but it did highly aggravate their wickedness.² This is made a frequent character of wicked men, that they are wilful sinners; they have necks of iron, and brows of brass; though they are persuaded, yet they are unpersuadable. They will not hearken to the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely. They say to God, as those wicked in Job xxi. 14, 'Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways;' their ignorance is a spontaneous willing ignorance, 2 Pet. iii. 5, they might know, but they will not. Like those rebellious Jews, when God commanded them to walk in his paths, they peremptorily answer, We will not walk in them, Jer. vi. 16, and xlv. 16, 17; 'let favour be showed to the wicked, yet he will not learn righteousness: in a land of uprightness they will do unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord: yea, though his hand be lifted up in judgment, yet they will not see,'³ Isa. xxvi. 10, 11. Here are four *will-nots* that aggravate their sin. Let strangers devour their strength, and gray hairs (the symptoms of feebleness, old age, and death approaching) be upon them, yet so stupid are they, that they perceive it not, Hosea vii. 9; let God be a tender nurse to lead and love them, yet so sottish are they that they neither know nor acknowledge it, Hosea xi. 1, 3, 4; Zeph. iii. 7. These are wedded to their lusts, and there is no parting of them, Hosea iv. 14, 17.⁴

¹ See more in my Comment on 2 Tim. iii. 4, p. 117, 118.

² Ignorantia crassa et affectata jus scire spernit, ut liberius peccet; hæc aggravat peccatum: 1. Quia fit ex socordia, ut in otiosis. 2. Quia fit ex philautia, ut in superbis. 3. Quia fit ex malitia, ut in desperatis, quorum vox est, scientiam tuarum viarum nolumus.—*Breerwood Ethic.*, lib. iii. p. 121.

³ See Fenner's Wilfull Impenitency.

⁴ See the danger of obstinacy, in Attersoll on Num., p. 622, &c., folio.

Obs. 6. To persevere in wickedness is the height of wickedness. None so wicked as the resolvedly wicked. They will walk on in darkness, and that continually; it is their trade, and they will not leave it. The best may fall through weakness, but these are wilful. As resolution and perseverance in goodness is the height of goodness, as we see in Job, chap. ii. 3, who kept his integrity in despite of all that the devil could do; and Noah, though he lived in a corrupt age, yet, in despite of them all, he sets his heart on God, and resolvedly walked with him all his days, Gen. vi. 9; and Hezekiah, when he came to die, comforts himself with this, 'Remember, O Lord, how I walked before thee (continually, or without ceasing—so it is in the fountain) with an upright heart,' Isa. xxxviii. 3, so perseverance in wickedness is the height of wickedness, 2 Chron. xxviii. 22.

Obs. 7. Wicked men lead miserable lives. They walk in darkness. We pity such prisoners as lie and live in deep dark dungeons all their days. Why, this is the state of every wicked man; though they think themselves the only wise men, and that none see but themselves, as the Pharisees did, John vii. 49, and ix. *ult.*, yet there is no prisoner that lies in the darkest dungeon, especially if he be godly, but is in a better condition than the greatest wicked man, that is spiritually blind, though he live in pompous palaces. These rulers in the text, no doubt but they thought themselves very wise men—and probably they were so in respect of natural and worldly accomplishments—yet because they abused their parts, and did not improve them for God's glory, he tells us here, 'They walk in darkness.' The princes of Zoan are called fools, *i.e.*, Pharaoh's counsellors, which were worldly-wise men, yet, for want of saving knowledge, are called fools in God's dictionary, Isa. xix. 11.

This will yet better appear if we consider the allusions between inward and outward darkness. 1. Darkness hinders us from seeing our way. A man that walks in darkness knows not whither he goes, John xii. 35; he may go into ditches, bogs, rivers, and miscarry many ways; so he that walks in spiritual darkness knows not which way to go, nor what to do: he is in perpetual danger of falling into this ditch of error, and that bog of heresy, and to plunge himself into a world of sin and sorrow. Blind men cannot judge of colours, nor can these distinguish between truth and falsehood.

2. Such catch many falls, and stumble at everything; so when men's ways are dark and slippery, they are apt to fall every way into Satan's snares, Job v. 14, and xii. 17, 25, and to stumble and take offence even at Christ himself.

3. Darkness is a dismal thing, it fills men with fear and horror, Gen. xv. 12. so that a man hath no joy of himself nor of the creature; so a man that lies in spiritual darkness, being destitute of saving knowledge, when conscience is awakened, he is filled with horror and desperation, which imbitters all creature comforts to him. Let us therefore labour for saving knowledge, and above all getting, get true understanding. Solomon prefers it before silver, gold, and pearls, Prov. ii. 2-4, because it brings grace, life, and salvation with it. Multiplicity of this knowledge will multiply grace, 2 Pet. i. 2. This will be a light unto our feet, and a lamp to our paths.¹ This light is a pleasant thing; by it we see whence we came, whither we go, how to order our steps, what dangers to shun, what enemies lie in our way, that we may resist them. Such are wise whose eyes are in their heads, but it is the fool that walks on in darkness, Eccles. ii. 14: *q. d.*, a wise man is well advised, and goeth prudently to work; but a foolish man is imprudent, and unadvised in all his ways.

Obs. 8. Justice and judgment are the foundations of a land, Ps. xi. 3. A house may as soon stand without a foundation as a commonwealth without government. When the righteous are encouraged, and the wicked punished, this upholds a throne, and establisheth a land, Prov. xvi. 12, and xxix. 4. Good laws are the foundation of a nation, but the iniquity of judges moves these foundations out of place, and makes the state like a bowing wall that belcheth out, or a tottering fence, Ps. lxxii. 3; Isa. xxx. 13. It was therefore a notable piece of policy in Absalom, when he would steal away the hearts of the people from David, he went about to persuade them that the king his father had no justice for them; but oh that he were made judge in the land, that every one that had any cause might come to him, and he would do them justice, 2 Sam. xv. 3, 4.

Let us therefore pray for those in authority, that God would give them wise and understanding hearts to know their duty, and, knowing it, to practise it, that under them we may lead pious, peaceable, and honest lives; for if these foundations once fail, and we have either no magistrate, or corrupt ones, all will run into confusion. When once wickedness comes to be established by a law, the sin becomes national, and national sins bring national judgments; and therefore you may observe in Scripture, and in all histories, that when the rulers of a people have been wicked, ruin suddenly fol-

¹ See the Excellency of Light. Culverwell, *Light of Nature*, chap. xviii, pp. 172, 175, &c.

lowed, Isa. i. 23, 24; Jer. v. 28, 29; Micah iii. 11, 12. What potent and flourishing nations have been laid in the dust by popish, tyrannical, cruel governors!

Obs. 9. Wicked men are stupid men. Let foundations be moved, and all things run into confusion by their means; yet they are senseless, sit still, and take their ease, never regarding the afflictions of God's people, Esther iii. *ult.* Let all move, yet they will not move; let the Lord bind them and beat them, yet they cry not, Job xxxvi. 13; though they lie amidst a sea of troubles, and themselves be as one that is on the top of a mast, yet there can they sleep fearlessly in the midst of the greatest dangers: though they be stricken, yet they stir not, so great is their lethargy, Prov. xxiii. 35, 36. Pharaoh had plague upon plague, yet nothing mended him, but he was Pharaoh still. Hence wicked men are called brutish, Jer. x. 21, and dead: lay all the world on a dead man, and he feels it not. Rob them, ransack them, and let the fire of God's displeasure seize on them, yet they lay it not to heart, Isa. xlii. 24, 25. It is only good men that are tender, sensible men, and mourn for the afflictions of Joseph.

Ver. 6, 7. *I have said ye are gods, and all of you are children of the Most High.*

But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.

These words are a kind of prolepsis, where the Lord meets with the pride of rulers who are puffed up with a high conceit of themselves, because these are by place exalted above others. We, say they, are styled gods; yea, God himself hath styled us so, and hath made us deputies immediately under himself.¹ To this the Spirit of God answers, 1. By way of a reprehensory concession: It is true I have said ye are gods, and I have appointed you for my vicars and deputies on earth, to judge for me amongst men, and to keep my people in peace; but you have abused your power, and ungratefully sinned against the God of your mercies, who hath exalted you from amongst your brethren to rule for him. 2. By way of correction: Yet I must tell you, you shall die like other men, and come to judgment, and therefore you have little reason to be proud of that power which is delegated to you. Or here is, 1. Their dignity and majesty, by reason of the eminency of their office—ye are gods: 2. Their frailty and mortality, common to them with other sons of

¹ His verbis usus est, non ἐπισημικῶς, aut tantum συγχωρητικῶς et concessive, sed magis ἐπιτιμητικῶς et reprehensive: ut potentiorum autoritate sua abutentium iniquitatem amplius ostenderet, evinceretque Dei ipsius verbis.—*Junius' Parallel*, 17.

Adam, in respect of their human condition—ye shall die like men. Or, if you please, here is, 1. The root of their unrighteous and exorbitant practices, viz., the pride that reigned in them, by reason of that dignity which God had honoured them withal, in communicating his own name unto them, and calling them his sons. 2. Here is the remedy, drawn from the consideration of their dying and fading condition: 1. They must die like other ordinary men; 2. They must fall from their dignity to the dust, as other great ones had done before them; so that in the words we have the excellency of magistracy set forth by two titles:—1. They are gods; 2. Sons of the Most High.

1. They are gods, not by nature, for we see they die, but by similitude, and in respect of their office, because they represent God's majesty in governing of men, and have a special character of his glory stamped upon them.¹ But of this see more at large on ver. 1.

2. Children of the Most High, or sons of the most high God. This title is homonymous, and hath many significations in Scripture.² 1. It is sometimes taken for the natural Son of God, and in this sense Christ is the only natural and proper Son of God, John i. 14, and v. 18; Mat. iii. 17; Rom. viii. 32.

2. For the sons of God by creation. So God is called the Father of angels, Job i. 6, and xxxviii. 7; Cant. ii. 3; and of wicked men, Mal. ii. 10.

3. Others are called his sons by adoption: thus all true believers are the sons of God, John i. 12; Rom. viii. 14, 16; Gal. iv. 5; 1 John iii. 2.

4. Others are called the sons of God in respect of that power, majesty, authority, and eminency which God hath conferred upon them above the ordinary sort of men; and in this respect it is that magistrates are called the sons of God; for as parents give some part of their inheritance to their children, so the Almighty hath invested magistrates with part of his power and sovereignty, and intrusted them with the administration of his earthly kingdoms, by the exercise of vindictive and remunerative justice.

Now, some conceive that magistrates are called the sons of God because they are more dear to God, and more acceptable to him than other men; but that will not hold; for in this very psalm where he calls them gods, yet he sharply reproves them for their

¹ Non participatione divinæ essentiae, sed similitudine divinæ potentiae. Non natura, sed conditione et dignitate muneris.—*Muis in locum.*

² Gnelion, filii Excelsi, viz., Dei, quia Deus est excelsus super omnem terram, et valde exaltatus super omnes deos.

unrighteous practices; and if rulers be wicked, they bring more dishonour to God, and do more mischief than inferior persons can do; and so their persons are more displeasing to God than inferior persons are, and God looks upon them as beasts rather than men, Prov. xxviii. 15. But if magistrates be truly godly, then they are the sons of God in a double sense; 1. As believers; 2. As magistrates; and so they are nearer and dearer to God than ordinary men; they are as the signet on his right hand, ever in his eye; he looks upon them as his ornaments. As the devil useth all means to get men of power and parts on his side, that he may the better advance his kingdom;¹ so God delights in gracious magistrates as the pillars and upholders of his kingdom in the world. The more of God dwells in any, the more he loves them. If magistrates who are gods in name do resemble God indeed in wisdom, justice, purity, clemency, &c., then are they the children of the Most High in a spiritual sense, and God hath a paternal care over such, even as parents have over their obedient children.

2. This implies participation, and tells us that magistrates derive all their power from God, as a son hath his from his father; and therefore it is but equity that they should employ that power, which they have received from his goodness, to the praise of him that gave it.

3. Here is the extent of this dignity; it is not given only to superior magistrates, but to inferior ones also. 'Ye are all the children of the Most High;' yea, wicked ones, when placed in authority, are called gods and sons of the Most High. Those in the psalm were none of the best, yea, they were almost as bad as bad could be, ver. 2, 5. And yet it is said here, I have said ye (in respect of your office) are gods, and children of God.

4. Here is their commission,² I have said. It is not you that can make yourselves magistrates, but it is I that say ye are gods; all the power that ye have is from me; and therefore our Saviour expounding this of the psalmist, John x. 34-36, tells us that to magistrates the word of the Lord came, or was made, *q.d.*, they have their command, commission, and power from God to discharge the duties of their places. When the prophets were sent to preach, the word of the Lord was said to come to them, Luke iii. 2, 'The word of God came to John;' and then, ver. 3, he preacheth and puts his commission in execution. So, when God hath given magistrates a word of command, then, and not till then, they may

¹ *Querit abs te ornari diabolus*, as Augustine said of a learned man.

² *Ego dixi, est vox potestatis constituentis.*

act with comfort and with confidence. Our Saviour, in John x. 34, refers us hither. When the Pharisees reproached him for blasphemy, because he made himself equal to God, by saying, 'My Father and I are one,' he clears himself from that aspersion by an argument from the less to the greater. Thus: If the title of God may be given to princes, who are but men, and many times the worst of men, then much more may that title be given to me, in whom the majesty of God doth more especially appear, and the fulness of his godhead dwell. The antecedent I have proved to you, saith Christ, out of your law, which you cannot deny, and therefore you must grant the consequent.

Ver. 7. In this verse we have the mortality of magistrates asserted in two words—1. Ye shall die ; 2. Ye shall fall.

2. The manner how—as other ordinary men, and as all other princes have done before you.

3. The certainty of this is confirmed by an asseverative particle, Verily or certainly ; as ye live like gods, so certainly ye shall die like men.

The words have some difficulty and various readings. I shall briefly explain them, and then proceed to the observations.

But ye shall die like men. Some read surely or truly ye shall die ; and this comes nearest the original, for so the word (*achen*)¹ is used in Scripture, as Gen. xxviii. 16, 'Surely (*achen*) the Lord is in the place ;' so Isa. xl. 7, 'Surely the people is grass ;' and Isa. liii. 4, 'Surely he hath borne our griefs.' It is true the vulgar Latin, that so oft leaves the fountain to follow the Septuagint, do with them render it *but*. But the most genuine signification of the word is *surely*. The sense is good either way. But, *i.e.*, for all your pomp and power you must at last lie in the dust, and say to corruption, Thou art my father ; and to the worm, Thou art my brother and sister, Job xvii. 14 ; or, Surely, *i.e.*, though you regard it not, nor make any provision for it, but flatter yourselves because you are gods, and so dream that ye shall live on earth for ever ; yet know assuredly that ye are but men, and must die as well as others. All God's words are true and sure ; but on some there is affixed a special note of certainty, because of man's (especially great men's) extraordinary sottishness and infidelity.

'Ye shall die like men.' That is, like other ordinary men ; as ye came from the earth, so to earth you must return. Death fears not

¹ *Achen*, certe, vere, profecto, sane, est adverbium affirmandi.—*Pagnin, Montanus, Calvin.*

you more than other men. Ish and Adam,¹ the noble and ignoble, are alike to that grim sergeant Death. Though men have lived like gods, yet they must die like Adam, or any other base, contemptible man ; yea, if wicked, ye shall die like beasts for all your honour, Ps. xlix. 20 ; though in respect of your dignity you have been like Saul, taller by the head and shoulders than the rest of the people, yet in your death there shall be no difference ; you must to the grave as other men, and then to judgment, for that is included in the word death. Heb. ix. 27, 'It is appointed for all men once to die, and after death comes judgment.'

'And fall like one of the princes.' These words have many glosses put upon them. 1. Some understand them of a fall by a natural death, *q.d.*, Ye rulers of the people, for all your state and pomp, shall fall by death like others of your rank that have been before you, that were as high in honour and great in power as yourselves ; and yet they died, and so must you.² Their graves amongst you read a lecture of mortality to you ; they are gone off the stage of the world, and you are come on ; it is not long, but you also must die and make room for your successors ; and thus the word fall is put for dying in Scripture, Gen. xiv. 10 ; Ps. xci. 7.

2. Others take this fall to be by a violent death. He had before said they should die as other men ; but now he riseth higher, and tells them of a more especial judgment which should befall them rather than others, and that is, 'ye shall fall ;' how is that ? Why, for your tyranny and abuse of your power against God and his people ye shall be cast out of your seats ; your pride shall have a fall, and that by a violent death ;³ for so I find the word fall taken very frequently in Scripture for perishing by a violent death, as falling by the sword, Exod. xxxii. 28 ; Hosea v. 5, and vii. 7 ; or by the pestilence, 1 Chron. xxi. 14 ; 1 Cor. x. 8. Tyrants seldom go to their graves in peace. Most of the Cæsars fell by the hands of the people, *q.d.*, If you be like tyrants⁴ in sin, expect to be like them in punishment ; as I cast them out of their thrones for their

¹ *Che Adam temutun*, sicut Adam, *i.e.*, homo terrenus, vilis, abjectus, moriemini. Adam, *i.e.*, homo plebeius, opponitur τῷ Ish, *i.e.*, vero nobili, ut videre est, Ps. iv. 3, xlix. 2, and lxii. 9.

² Aliorum funera sint vobis specula, in quibus vestra, citius fortasse quam putatis, affutura spectetis.—*Mendoza*.

³ Non tantum minatur deus ipsos morituros, sed ita morituros, ut etiam casuri sint de sedibus suis.—*Scultetus*.

⁴ Notanter dicit *Hassarim*, illorum principum.—*Muscul*. *Sar* est princeps, et *sarim* principes, Jer. iv. 9, and xvii. 25. Sicut unus principum, *i.e.*, profanarum gentium.—*Synech. Gen. Piscat*. Ye shall fall like one of the tyrants.—*Tyndal*.

insolence and violence, so will I cast you out, and you shall fall like one of these tyrannical princes.

3. Others take it for the falling as the princes of other nations, *q.d.*, though you are the princes of God's people, yet are you not thereby privileged from the arrest of death; for the most gracious saint dieth as well as the most notorious sinner. Grace is an antidote against the poison of death, but not a preservative against undergoing death.

4. Others take it for a falling from a high and flourishing condition, so as they shall be had in contempt of all.¹ This is a truth, and the word fall is oft so used in Scripture, Isa. iii. 8; Ps. cxvii. 13; Jer. li. 8. But this sense is too strait for this place. The exegesis implies a greater falling than from their estates.

5. Other learned men render the words thus: And ye shall fall like others, or ye shall fall like one of the vulgar.² But this version will not hold, and that for two reasons. 1. It hath no foundation in the original, nor in the Septuagint, nor in any of the Oriental versions. 2. It is a pure tautology; ye shall die like Adam, *i.e.*, like ordinary men, and shall fall like one of the vulgar, *i.e.*, like ordinary men. The three first senses are most genuine, as agreeing best with the original, the sense of the text, and the like Scripture phrase.³ The sum and substance of all is this, *q.d.*, It is true I have said, and I say so still, that ye are by office gods, and by commission ye are all the sons of the most high God, whom he hath intrusted with some part of his judiciary power; but yet this doth not exempt you from mortality; for though in dignity you are above others, yet death will level you, and you must to the grave as well as others who are ordinary men, and as others of your own rank have done before you; and then you who have judged others shall be judged with others; for after death comes judgment.

Obs. 1. The Scriptures of the Old Testament are the word of God. Christ cites this very text in the New Testament, John x. 34, 35, against the calumniating Pharisees; yea, Christ and his apostles, to shew the divine authority of the Old Testament even in gospel times, did fetch arguments oftentimes out of the Old Testa-

¹ De summo gradu ad imum, de magna gloria ad extremam miseriam præcipitabimini.—*Bellarmin.*

² Unus quemlibet e vulgo significat.—*Calvin.* Some there are that follow him against the letter of the text, which runs thus: *Sicut unus principum cadetis.* It is not *sicut unus vulgi, vel e vulgo.* I honour that eminent instrument of God, but the text and truth I must honour above all.

³ The metaphrase.

ment to confirm their doctrine and practice. About four hundred places are cited out of the Old Testament in the New. But of this I have spoken elsewhere at large.¹

Obs. 2. Magistrates have their power and commission from God. It is he that said, and it is his word that comes to them which makes them gods on earth. Magistracy is no fancy of man's inventing, nor plant of his planting, for then it had long since been rooted up by those sons of Belial that have so oft opposed it, yet could never prevail against it. If God had not been in this bush, (so oft set on fire,) it had been consumed long ere this; it could never have stood so many thousand years against the rage and fury of men and devils. We may use the same argument to prove the divinity of magistracy, which sometimes we do to prove the divinity of the Scriptures—viz., the strange preservation of it in all revolutions and changes, amidst those wars and confusions which have been in the world. Some indeed have thrown off their governors, but never yet could throw off a government. As soon as one is off, another is in the saddle; yea, so co-natural it is to the principles and notions of man's mind, that a government is found even amongst heathens, where no Scripture is found to teach it. But of this see more on ver. 1.

Obs. 3. It is lawful to give titles of honour even to wicked magistrates. Those in this psalm were none of the best, yea, all things considered, they were as vile as the vilest; yet you see the Holy Ghost gives them their titles of honour still, 'I have said, Ye are gods:' and as if that were not sufficient, he presently adds, and ye are *all*—mark that, not good magistrates only, but also the bad, even all (in respect of their place and office) are the children of the Most High; which may for ever silence those sots, which say, we may give titles of honour to godly magistrates, but not to the ungodly. But of this see more, ver. 1.

Obs. 4. Even wicked magistrates have their power from God, Rom. xiii. 1. All power is of God;² and yet the rulers at that time were heathenish persecutors. It is true, the abuse of the power is not from God, but the power itself is; as the abuse of the ministry and marriage are not of God, though the ministry and marriage itself be. Be the magistrates superior or inferior, wise

¹ See my Commentary on 2 Tim. iii. 15, p. 262.

² All power is from God *qua efficiens*, and unjust power *qua non impediens*. Distinguendum est inter potestatem in se, et potestatem in subjecto. Potestas in se est a Deo instituta, sed non semper in subjecto est justa et legitima propter usurpationem et abusum.—*Rivet*.

men or fools, good or bad, there is no power but it is of God. The apostle speaks not indefinitely, 'The higher powers are of God,' but he speaks universally and exclusively, There is no power, be it what it will, but is of God. Though the manner of getting into power by fraud and force may be unlawful, and of man; yet the power and office itself is of God; and that not only by permission, for so is sin and the devil's power, but by special ordination;¹ the powers that be are ordained of God, for the greater manifestation of his wisdom, power, justice, and goodness. We must therefore shew all due respect and reverence to magistrates as magistrates, be they never so vile; for though in respect of their wickedness their persons may deserve contempt, yet their calling is honourable. There is a ray and sparkle of God's sovereignty and image in authority; and in that respect, whatever the persons are, they must be honoured. We should not be too scrupulous in inquiring how men come to their power, but rather study how we may walk wisely, winningly, and religiously towards such as are in power.

Obs. 5. God is the Most High. He is King of kings, and Lord of lords, the Most High over all the earth, and to be exalted above all gods, Ps. lxxxvi. 8, xvi. 4, and cxiii. 4. This title of Most High is often given to God, Gen. xiv. 18, 22; Ps. vii. 17, and xlv. 4; Luke i. 32, 35, vi. 35, and viii. 28; Acts xvi. 17; Heb. vii. 1, and is one of those ten names which are attributed to God,² to set forth his transcendent and surpassing excellency, majesty, power, and authority over and above all.³ Though others be high, yet there is a higher than they, Eccles. v. 8, even the high and lofty One, who dwelleth in the high and holy place, and judgeth those that are high, Job xxi. 22; Ps. cxiii. 5; Isa. xxxiii. 5. No towers, pillars, places, or persons so high, but he can bring them down.⁴ It is this Most High that ruleth the kingdoms of men, and giveth them to whom he pleaseth, Dan. iv. 32, and v. 18. He is the great Jehovah, the Lord paramount of heaven and earth, there is none to be compared to him: Ps. cxxxv. 15, 'I know that

¹ *Emphasi non caret, cum non dicit, omnis potestas est a Deo, sed non est potestas nisi a Deo, q. d., nulla uspiam potest inter homines esse potestas quæ sit aliunde quam a Deo.* 2. Non simpliciter dicit a Deo sunt, sed ordinatæ sunt a Deo; alia est eorum conditio quæ permittuntur, alia eorum quæ ordinantur ac disponuntur. *Musculus in Rom.* xiii. 1, 2. Solent plerique nimis scrupulose inquirere quo quisque jure adeptus sit imperium; sed hoc solo contentos esse decet, quod videmus eos præsidere.—*Calvin in 1 Pct.* ii. 13.

² *Vide D. Gouge's Arrows*, p. 317.

³ Ad denotandam summam Dei gloriam, potentiam et majestatem; Deus dicitur altissimus.

⁴ See more in Mr Gataker's Ser. on Ps. lxxxii. 7, p. 98–100.

the Lord is great, and our Lord is above all gods;’ whether they be so deputed, as magistrates; or reputed, as idols. He is not only great, but greatness itself; not only high, but the Most High, beyond the tongue’s expression, or the heart’s imagination. It is infinite, and so unspeakable; we may as soon measure the sea with a spoon, or put it in a bushel, as comprehend with our shallow understandings his excellent greatness; it is therefore called unsearchable: Ps. cxlv. 3, ‘Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; his greatness is unsearchable.’ All the power, perfection, beauty, and excellency that is dispersed through the whole world, that and ten thousand times more is in the Lord by way of eminency and transcendency. All the glory that is in angels, men, and all creatures, compared to his, is but as a drop to the sea, a shadow to the substance, or one little sand to a great mountain; heaven, earth, and sea compared to him are *parum nihil*, mere nothing. In Isa. xl. 12, 15–17 we have a most lively expression of the power of God: ‘Who hath measured the water in the hollow of his hand, and meted out the heavens with a span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance,’ &c. He doth these great things with ease, as if it were but spanning, measuring, weighing, &c. Hence it is that greatness is truly and properly ascribed to God alone.¹ He only is great, Deut. xxxii. 3; 2 Sam. vii. 22; Ps. xvi. 4, xcix. 2, 3, and cxlv. 3; Titus ii. 13. Excellent is that doxology of David, 1 Chron. xxix. 11, 12, ‘Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in heaven and earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted above all. Both riches and honour come of thee,’ &c. He is mighty in power; there is no opposing him, Ps. cxlvii. 5: mighty in counsel; there is no out-witting him, Jer. xxxii. 13: mighty in working; there is no out-doing him, Deut. xxxii. 4: and great in judgment; there is no withstanding him, Exod. vii. 4.

1. Then trust in this great God; what though thou have great enemies, great tentations within and without? yet remember thou hast the great God to assist thee. A weak creature when backed by a stronger will venture on a stronger than itself. When the prophet Micaiah saw two kings sitting on their thrones, he was not afraid, because he saw a greater than they, 1 Kings xxii. 10, 19. Moses by an eye of faith beheld him who was invisible, and therefore did not fear the wrath of the king,² Heb. xi. 27. Did we

¹ Nihil magnum nisi Deus magnus.

² In te stas et non stas.—*Aug.*

stand by our own strength, we might well fear ; but our help standeth in the name of the Lord, Ps. cxxiv. 8. This upheld Abraham in his straits ; he doubted not, because God who had promised was able to perform, Rom. iv. 18 ; and this upheld Paul ; ‘ I know whom I have believed, and that he is faithful and able to keep what I have committed to him,’ 2 Tim. i. 12. Get a holy magnanimity of spirit ; God loves to do great things for those that greatly trust in him, as we see in those three worthies, who were giants rather than children,¹ Dan. iii. Oppose this mighty God to all the might that comes against thee. Whilst others boast of their friends, navies, confederates, strongholds, &c., do thou make thy boast of God, and say, ‘ The Lord is my light and my salvation ; whom should I fear ? ’ ‘ There is none amongst the gods to be compared to him,’ Ps. xxvii. 1-3, and lxxxvi. 8. When Charles V. in a challenge to the king of France commanded his herald to proclaim all his titles, Charles, emperor of such a place, king of such a place, duke of such a place, &c., bids defiance to the king of France ; the king of France on the other side bids his herald proclaim no more but this, The king of France, the king of France, the king of France bids defiance to Charles the emperor of Germany : intimating that one kingdom of France was of more worth than all those empty titles of the emperor. So when men cry riches, pleasures, friends, promotion, &c., do thou cry, The Lord Most High is my portion,² the Lord is my portion ; he that hath him hath all ; he hath the fountain, the mine, the ocean, and he cannot want, Ps. xxiii. 1. Get therefore propriety and interest in him ; for what comfort is it to hear of so high and great a God, if he be not ours ? That word *my* is a little word, but there is abundance of divinity and sweetness in it, when with Thomas we can truly say, ‘ My Lord and my God.’ Let us by faith hide ourselves under the wings of this most high protector, and abide under the shadow of this almighty *shadai*, and there sing care and fear away, Ps. xci. 1. In all our distresses let us cry unto God Most High, and he will hear and help us, Ps. lvii. 2.

2. In the church’s distress let us comfort ourselves in the Most High God. The church, whilst it is in this world, meets with mountains of opposition ; but the comfort is, they shall all become a plain before God’s Zerubbabels, Zech. iv. 7. The church’s enemies in their own conceits are as great mountains unpassable, unaccessible ; they proudly overlook the people of God, but God contemns

¹ Animo magno nihil est magnum.

² Habet omnia, quia habet habentem omnia.

these contemners of his people, Ps. ii. 1-6; Isa. viii. 9, 10; and though they think themselves mountains, and their flatterers call them so, and God's own people looking upon them through the spectacles of fear and unbelief, think them such, yet God here, by way of contempt, asketh them, Who art thou? *q.d.* Thou lookest high and haughty like a mountain, but thou shalt become a mole-hill, a nothing, before me and my people. I will overthrow those mountains in my wrath, Job ix. 5. I will but touch them and they shall vanish, Ps. cxliv. 5; Isa. ii. 11, 12, 14; and though my people be but as so many despicable worms, yet I will make them to thresh mountains, Isa. xli. 44. Let us not, then, fear, nor be despondent; that God which hath brought us over the mountains of popery, and the mountains of prelacy; that God will, in his due time, bring us over the mountains of heresy, libertinism, and independency, &c.

Obj. But how can this be? We see no visible means to effect this.

Ans. God is a free agent, and though he hath tied us to means, yet himself is tied to none. He hath promised to create deliverance for his people, Isa. iv. 5, and lxxv. 18: now *Creatio fit*, 1. *Ex nihilo*; 2. *In instanti*; 3. *Irresistibiliter*. 1. When the Lord created the world, he made it out of no pre-existing matter; so though we see no means how he should deliver his people, yet he being almighty, can without means, by weak means, yea, by contrary means, deliver them. 2. He can do it instantly; when the hearts of his people are prepared for reformation and deliverance, the work shall be done suddenly, 2 Chron. xxix. 36. 3. It shall be done irresistibly. The work of reformation it is the Lord's, and it shall prosper in despite of all its enemies, Hag. ii. 4. It is of God, and it shall stand, Acts v. 38, 39. Let us therefore encourage ourselves in the Lord our God. What though giants, sons of Anak, the great Zanzummims, the high and mighty of the earth, rise against the church; yet there is a higher than they, who will break them with a rod of iron; yea, if the nations, all nations should come against it, yet all their power, compared with God's power, is *parum nihil*; an empty nothing, as the prophet excellently, Isa. xl. 15. Behold the nations are counted of him as a drop that hangeth on the side of a full bucket, or that stayeth behind when the water is poured out, yet doth not diminish the measure; or like the small dust of the balance, which remains in the balance when powder or beaten spice hath been weighed in it, which is easily blown away with a little puff of wind. All the men in the world, compared with this high and

holy One, are vanity, lighter than vanity, nothing ; yea, less than nothing, Ps. lxii. 20. Many are afraid of displeasing great men. Let the great ones of the world take heed of offending this great God, or of injuring his people ; for God is not only absolutely and essentially great in himself, but he is also relatively and declaratively so to his people. The great God loves to shew his greatness on their behalf. As his greatness is superlative to all other greatness, whether they be human powers or imaginary deities ; so of his goodness he will extend it to the protection and preservation of his people, and for the confusion of their enemies.

3. Admire the great condescension of this great God towards man. Though he be the Most High, yet he dwells in the lowest hearts, Isa. lvii. 15. He hath but two thrones, the highest heavens, and the lowest heart. He overlooks the frame of heaven and earth to look on such, Isa. lxvi. 1, 2 ; nor doth he look upon them with a bare look of intuition, but with a look of approbation and delight. Barely to look on man is a condescension : Ps. cxiii. 6, 'He humbleth himself to behold the things on earth.' But to take up his dwelling with man, that is no less an act of mercy than of wonder.

4. Serve this great God with fear and reverence. The greater the person, the greater must our fear be, Mal. i. 14. We cannot worship him rightly, unless we worship him reverently, Ps. ii. 12 ; Heb. xii. 29. He looks to be greatly feared in the assembly of his saints. We should always come with self-abhorrency into his presence, out of a sense of God's exceeding greatness, and our own exceeding baseness, Job xlii. 5, 6 ; Eccles. v. 1, 2. And if the angels stand before him with reverence, covering their faces ; and Moses quaked and feared exceedingly when he was with God in the mount, Heb. xii. 21 ; yea, and the very inanimate creatures tremble before him, the mountains melt, the hills quake, and the rocks rend, Nahum i. 3-7, with what soul-abasement ought we to come into his presence, who have so many ways provoked him ?

5. Turn servants to him. You cannot serve a better master : the greater the prince, the more noble the service. Prefer his service before all the crowns and kingdoms of the world. Spend thyself and all thou hast for his honour. There is none gives better wages than he.

6. Admire and adore him for his excellent greatness. The Holy Ghost oft calls on us to this duty, Ps. xcv. 2, 3, and xvi. 4. Praise must wait for him in Zion, Ps. lxxv. 1, or praise is silent for thee.¹

¹ Tibi Domine silentium est laus.

A silent admiration of his greatness, and a humble confessing of our inability to express his praise, is the greatest praise we can give him.

7. Beware of offending this high and holy One. Better have all the world against thee, than God against thee. He is the best friend, and the saddest foe. As he is great, and greatly to be praised, so he is great, and greatly to be feared. He is a consuming fire; there is no abiding when he is angry. The Lord Most High is terrible, and it is dangerous provoking him, Ps. xlvii. 2, and lxxviii. 56.

Obs. 6. Magistrates are the sons of the Most High. If they are true believers, then they are his adopted sons; but if wicked, yet in respect of their office, they are nuncupative and nominal sons. Thus God is pleased to style them: 1. To mind them of their duty to him; 2. To mind us of our duty to them.

1. He calls them sons, to the end they might walk worthy of such a father, by loving, fearing, serving, and obeying him: ¹ Mal. i. 6, 'A son honours his father, and a servant his master;' but God is not only a father and a master, but he is a king, a creator, a counsellor, a protector and assister of magistrates; and if one of these relations call for respect and love, what reverence and respect is due to that God in whom all these relations concentre and meet? Let such, then, improve the power which they have received from God unto his praise; uphold his worship, advance his sceptre, promote his interest, defend his people, pity his poor, do justice to all.² If you thus honour God, who hath honoured and exalted you, he will be a father and a friend to you; he will be a sun for consolation, and a shield for protection; he will be your God and guide unto death.

2. Doth God call you sons? then woe to them that call you Satans, and revile the rulers of God's people. It becomes us to honour those whom God honours. This shews what spirit leads the fifth-monarchy men, and their adherents, who have so grossly, and that in print, reviled the rulers of God's people.

Obj. But they are wicked men.

Ans. Be it so: yet if a wicked man be set in power by God for the sins of a people, even that wicked man must be honoured for his place; but if a godly man rule, he is to be honoured for his person. Some kind of honour is due to a magistrate as a

¹ *Exemplata oportet conformari exemplari secundum rationem formæ.* Things exemplified ought to resemble their sampler according to the reality of the form.—*Aquinas*, P. 1, Q. 18, art 4.

² See reasons why magistrates should honour God more than others in Mr Gataker's Ser. on Ps. lxxxii. 6, p. 76, 77.

magistrate, and God's vicegerent; but all kind of honour and subjection is due from all sorts of men to good rulers.

3. As magistrates are sons by office, so all believers are sons by adoption, which is a choicer privilege, John i. 12; Gal. iii. 26, and iv. 5, 6. So that now every true believer may say with David, 'The Lord is my shepherd;' yea, the Lord is my father, 'and I shall not want,' Ps. xxiii. 1. Thou art now sure of: 1. Dilection; 2. Direction; 3. Correction; 4. Protection; 5. Provision.

1. All the children of God are sure of dilection and love. Fathers have a natural affection to their children, and love them with a paternal love. How tender was David over Absalom, Touch not the young man Absalom; and when dead, how doth he take on: O Absalom, my son, my son, that I had died for thee! O Absalom, my son! If David were thus tender over a rebellious Absalom, how tender is God over his obedient children? and though thou hast many infirmities, yet God will pity thee, and spare thee as a man that spareth his son that serveth him, Ps. ciii. 13; Mal. iii. 16, 17.

2. Direction. Fathers will teach their children the way which they should go; so will the Lord do his, Ps. xxv. 9. It is a part of the new covenant, that all believers shall be taught of God. In all their doubts his Spirit shall be as a voice behind them, saying, This is the way.

3. Correction. Fathers that love their children will correct them. God loves his, and therefore he chastiseth them for their profit, Heb. xii. 10; Rev. iii. 19.

4. Protection. Fathers will defend their children, and God will defend his; he is their shield and buckler, Ps. lxxxiv. 11; Prov. ii. 7. In six troubles he will be with them, and in the seventh he will not leave them, Job v. 19, 20, 21, 22.

5. Provision. Fathers will provide for their children; and if earthly parents, who have but a drop of goodness, will give good things to their children, how much more will God give his Spirit to them that ask it? The lions natural, the lions metaphorical, may lack and suffer hunger; but such as fear the Lord shall lack nothing that may be for their good. God hath prepared an inheritance for them, Luke xii. 32, he hath given them his Son, and with him he hath given them all things, Rom. viii. 32.

Ver. 7. *Obs.* 1. Men in high places are apt to have high conceits of themselves. It is a hard thing to be in honour without tumour and swelling thoughts. The Lord, who knows our frame better than we ourselves, foresaw this; and therefore in the precedent

verse having told them of their dignity, in this verse he tells them of their misery and mortality; that they might not have the least time to be puffed up with pride and high conceits of their high places, he presently adds a humbling and abasing *but*—but ye shall die; what is that? Why, synecdochically it includes all those miseries which are antecedent to death, as sickness, weakness, pains, aches, old age, and death, and also subsequent miseries after death; then must great ones as well as others be brought to judgment, stand at God's bar and give an account as well as the poorest son of Adam. Those that now judge others, must shortly be judged themselves.

Obs. 2. Magistrates are mortal as well as others; or, those who live like gods, yet must die like men. The most potent emperor must take his leave of this life as well as the poorest beggar. No titles of honour, nor places of honour, can privilege men from the grave. Their divine constitution cannot free them from their native condition; princes and great men must fall, and that in Israel, 2 Sam. iii. 38.¹ The truth of this is seen by daily experience. It is so decreed in the high court of heaven; the statute is universal, and admits of no exception; 'it is appointed for men'—for all men, the indefinite is equivalent to a universal—'once to die,' Heb. ix. 27. Death is the great leveller of all the world, it makes all equal.² Irus and Cræsus, Dives and Lazarus, princes and peasants, cannot be known asunder in the grave. As at a game of chess, when it is ended, not only pawns, but kings, queens, knights, are tumbled into the bag together;³ so when the race of this life is finished, noble as well as ignoble are tumbled into their graves together: hence death is called the way of all the earth, because all flesh on earth must go that way, Josh. xxiii. 14. It is the greatest road in all the world, it is never without many travellers of all sorts, ranks, and degrees. The grave is the house appointed for all the living, Job xxx. 23; Eccles. viii. 8; both the small and the great are there, even kings and counsellors, Job iii. 13, 14, 19. Death is *pambasileus*, a truly catholic universal king; it is not only *rex terrorum*, the king of fears, but *rex terrarum*, an oecumenical king, that spares no age, sex, nation, or condition. In Golgotha are skulls of all sorts and sizes: hence it is that the prophet Isaiah must not only say, but cry, so as all may hear, for most

¹ See Mr Levisy his Ser. on that text, p. 207, &c.

² *Mors sceptrâ ligonibus æquat.*—*Horat.*

³ *Æquales omnes nascimur; et imperatores et pauperes, æqualiter morimur.*—*Hieron.*

men are deaf on this ear, that not only some, but all flesh is grass, Isa. xl. 6, 7, *i.e.*, it is a feeble, empty, fading thing; it withers while we touch it, yea, and the glory of it, *i.e.*, such as have more glory bestowed on them than others, are but as fading flowers; the scythe of death knows no difference, but mows down both alike, Ps. cii. 11, and ciii. 15, 16; Job xiv. 2; 1 Pet. i. 24; James i. 10, 11. It passeth upon all men, Rom. v. 12; he doth not say, death may pass, or shall pass, but it hath passed over all men; for though it hath not *ipso facto* as yet slain all, yet death is as certain as if it were already executed upon all.

2. All are sinners, even great men as well as poor, and therefore all must die; for sin brought death into the world, Rom. v. 12, and vi. 22, 23.

3. We are all made of fading materials. Great men dwell in houses of clay, and their foundation is dust as well as others,¹ Job iv. 19; Gen. iii. 19, and xviii. 27. We are dust originally and finally; even kings, that are gods on earth, are but gods of earth, or rather clods of earth: hence the earth is called his by a special propriety, Ps. cxlvi. 4; man, *i.e.*, princely men, for of such he there speaks, returns unto his dust; he doth not say, they go to their cities, castles, kingdoms, these are now another's; but he goes to his tomb, to his dust and ashes, that is the proper possession of kings.

4. They are subject to the like or greater diseases, calamities, and judgments of poisoning, stabbing, stifling, surfeiting, &c., than other men.²

5. As inferior persons must die, and so make way for the arising of others, so also must superiors. God hath others to arise and succeed them in their places, that his power and glory may be seen in them also. Hence Saul dies that David may succeed him. Moses dies that Joshua may appear. Daniel dies, and then Haggai and Zechariah arise; and when John Baptist died, then Christ appeared.

6. None of those prerogatives and privileges which great men enjoy can privilege them from the arrest of death. It is not, 1. Riches; 2. Strength; 3. Parts, Policy; 4. Dignity; 5. Friends; 6. Piety.

1. Their riches cannot save them from the grave, they avail not in the day of wrath, Prov. xi. 4; Ezek. vii. 19; Zeph. i. 18: the rich man died as well as Lazarus, Luke xii. 20, and xvi. 22; those

¹ As there is *terra quam terimus, terra quam quærimus, et terra quam gerimus*; so there is *terra quæ erimus*.

² Nulla aconita bibuntur fictilibus.—*Juven.*

that spend their days in wealth, yet in a moment go down to the grave, Job xxi. 13, 32. Rich men are apt to sing a requiem to their souls, and dream of living here many years: this is called folly, Luke xii. 19, 20, and is notably confuted, Ps. xlix. 6-20. Princes that had gold, and filled their houses with silver, yet must to their graves as well as the poor, Job iii. 15. Death will not be bribed: we have a notable instance for this in the king of Tyrus, who abounded with all riches, jewels, merchandise, and lived in Eden, the garden of God; he lived as it were in paradise, insomuch that in his own conceit he was a god for power, wisdom, and majesty; but God made him quickly to know that he was a weak man, and therefore he cut him off by a violent death in his own city, Ezek. xxviii. 2-14.

2. Not strength. Samson was strong, yet death was too strong for him. Alexander and Cæsar, which conquered kingdoms, yet could not conquer death. Nero, Caligula, Domitian, Titus, &c., the terrors of their time, yet were all conquered by the king of terrors. Men of power have no power over death, Eccles. viii. 8; the captain, the mighty man, and the man of war, are all in the grave, Isa. iii. 2, 3.

3. Parts, policy, learning, wisdom cannot preserve any from the grave. Solomon the wisest of men is dead, and daily experience shews that wise men die as well as fools, Ps. xlix. 10; Eccles. ii. 16; the judge, the prudent, the prophet, the counsellor, and the eloquent orator, are all swept away by death, Isa. iii. 2, 3. Death is *nomen indeclinabile*; the greatest clerks have not been able to decline it.

4. No dignity nor honour can stave off death. Herod in the midst of his pomp was smitten dead, and devoured by vermin. Let a man be never so high in honour, yet he must die and perish, Ps. xlix. 20; Job xxi. 28, 32; such as are the staff and stay of a state, even the ancient and the honourable, yet are taken away by death,¹ Isa. iii. 2, 3.

5. Friends cannot save or shelter you from this arrest; be they never so great or good, in them is no help; they cannot help themselves, much less others, Ps. cxlvi. 3.

6. Not piety. If anything in the world could save a man from the grave, it is this: and yet we see Moses, a pious, meek, learned, self-denying servant of God, dies, Deut. xxxiv. 5. Moses, the servant of the Lord, died. David, a wise man and excellent musician,

¹ See instances for this in that elaborate Tract of Holy Love by Fonseca, chap. xxvii.

a valiant soldier, a man after God's own heart, and one that fulfilled all his will, and yet, after he had served the will of God in his generation, he fell asleep, Acts xiii. 22, 36; the holy prophets do not live for ever, Zech. i. 5, but even the righteous themselves do perish,¹ Isa. lvii. 1. Christ doth not free his from death, but from the sting of death; that which is penal is taken away; he hath made that which in itself is a curse, to become a blessing; of a poison, he hath made a medicine; and of a punishment, an advantage. So that what Agag spake vauntingly, we may speak truly, the bitterness of death is past, Hosea xiii. 14.

Use 1. Fear not great men when they are great oppressors; for there is a greater than they who will bring them to judgment; how oft doth the Lord blame his people for fearing such as must die, and then all their fury ceaseth, Isa. li. 12, 13.

2. Trust not in them. Though they be never so great, yet they must die, and then all thy projects perish. If a man might trust in any man, it is in princes, for they can do more for us than ordinary men; and yet we are expressly forbidden trusting in them, Ps. cxlvi. 3, 4, 'Trust not in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.' Where you may see, 1. They cannot help you. 2. If they could, yet they must die, and then all their projects and purposes for themselves or for thee perish and come to nought: and therefore trust not in them, nor in any of the sons of men; for they are vain, yea, vanity, yea, lighter than vanity: nothing, yea, if it be possible, less than nothing, Ps. lxii. 9. If you will trust in any, trust in the Almighty, for he never dies, Ps. xviii. 16. The prophets, they die: and our fathers do not live for ever. Ay, but the God of the prophets, and the God of our fathers, lives for ever, Ps. xc. 1. When father and mother forsake thee, he will take thee up; when all thy friends are dead, yet he is an ever-living and an ever-loving friend, who will guide thee with his counsel till he bring thee to glory.

3. This must teach great men who are in high places, oft to think on death and judgment. God no sooner tells us of their majesty, but he presently adds their mortality, to keep them humble in the midst of all their creature comforts. The sight of this death's-head will damp all carnal delights; and this verse, well thought on, would make us look with a mortified eye on all earthly enjoyments. Mortality is a very fit meditation for magistrates. Francis Borgia, a Spanish courtier, having been at the

¹ Tollitur mors, non ne sit, sed ne obsit.

funeral of the empress, and considering how little a grave had devoured all earthly greatness, *Totus mutatus est in melius*; he began to reform his life, and became another man;¹ whereupon he told his friends, *Augustæ mors mihi vitam attulit*, the death of the empress hath brought me to life. A serious consideration of death will take off the scales from our eyes, and make us see the vanity of all earthly glory, how short and transitory it is; and, therefore, when you find your hearts begin to be lifted up with the gay feathers of honour, wit, wealth, beauty, or any other fading excellency, then cast your eyes upon the black feet of your mortality, and it will humble you. It is said of Hoshea the king of Samaria, that he should ‘vanish like a bubble, the foam and froth of water,’ Hosea x. 7. We know bubbles do soon arise, and as soon vanish; and as one bubble ariseth after another till all are gone, so it is here. How many popes enjoyed not their pomp a year!² Some were cut off at eleven months, some are at ten, others at nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one month; yea, some enjoyed the chair not months but days: Leo the eleventh sat pope but twenty-seven days, Pius III. twenty-six days, another twenty-three, another twenty, yea, Pope Urbana VII. was pope but seven days, and Pope Stephen II. but four days. Oh! the madness of these popes, many of which gave their souls to the devil for fading, flying, lying vanities! As Philip, king of Macedon, commanded his page every morning when he arose to cry *Philippe, memento te esse mortalem*; remember, O king, thou art but a mortal man; so say I, *Memento te esse bullam*; remember, O ye great ones of the world, that you are but bubbles which soon vanish. I have read of St Austin,³ that when he was at Rome and saw the rotten carcass of Cæsar in his sepulchre, he brake forth into this pathological exclamation, ‘Where, oh where is the famous body of Cæsar? where are his riches and delights? where are his troops of lords and barons? where are his numerous armies, his horses, and his hounds, his ivory bed, his arras hangings, his imperial throne, his change of raiments, his curious hair, his comely face? where, oh where is he with all his pomp, that was once the terror of the world?’ The answer was; ‘All these left him when his breath left him, they left him captive in the grave,’ &c. Commendable, therefore, was the practice of Maximilian the

¹ V. Ribaden. de Vit. Borgiæ.

² V. Mendoza in i. Reg. iv. Numb. 22, Sec. 3; and 1, Reg. x. Numb. 27. Annot. 6, p. 135. *ubi plura*.

³ Aug. Serm. 48, ad fratres in eremo.

Emperor, who some years before his death commanded his coffin to be carried about with him, that by the sight of it he might be put in mind of his mortality,¹ and of the account he must shortly give of the empire, and might be quickened in the meantime to a more diligent discharge of his duty. This will be a corrosive to sin, and a curb to keep you from exorbitant courses. Great men many times are great tyrants; they make their lusts their law, and as the Donatists conceited that they could not err (though few erred more,)² so there are State-Donatists that cry *Quod statuimus justum est, stat per ratione voluntas*. Whatever they decree must pass for just, though it be never so unjust. These forget their last ends, as Jerusalem did before her ruin,³ Lam. i. 9. They remember not that they who sit on the bench now must shortly come to the bar.

2. Let it be a spur to duty: our time is short, our work is great, our reward unspeakable. Be active for God; do much in a short time; serve not nor seek yourselves, but serve God in your generation, as David did, Acts xiii. 36. As you have your places, your power, your gifts, your time and talents from God, so improve them all unto his praise. Live the life of the righteous, and you shall die their deaths. Walk in their way, and you shall attain their end.⁴ Be Israelites indeed in whom there is no reigning guile, and then when you come to die, you may comfortably say with Nehemiah and Hezekiah, 'Remember me, O my God, for good, and remember how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which was good in thy sight,' Isa. xxxviii. 3. Make it your daily exercise to keep a conscience void of offence⁵ towards God and man, and then when you come to die, this will be your rejoicing, even the testimony of your consciences, that in simplicity and godly sincerity you have had your conversation in the world.

Obs. 3. Great men must certainly die, as well as other ordinary men. But doth any one question this? It would seem so, and therefore the Lord, who knows our hearts better than we know ourselves, hath set a 'verily' on it. The pomp, prosperity, peace, and pleasures of great men do so blind and harden them, that they cannot a while to think on death, or, if they do, it is only slightly

¹ Tu mortem ut nunquam timeas, semper cogita.

² Quod volumus sanctum est.

³ Nihil sic revocat homines a peccato sicut imminentis mortis cogitatio.—*Aug.*

⁴ Non potest male mori qui bene vixit.—*Aug.*

⁵ See the singular comfort of a good conscience at death and judgment, in Dyke on Conscience, cap. 11. p. 190, &c.

and notionally; they do not realise death, and look on it as ready to arrest them; if they did, they would lead other lives than now they do. They are apt to put the evil day far from their soul, and therefore it is that they 'draw near to the seat of iniquity,' Amos vi. 3. They have made a covenant with death, and a bargain with hell; hence the Lord, to awaken them out of their vain dreams, speaks so assertively of death: Ps. xxxix. 5, 'Verily, every man in his best estate is altogether vanity, Selah.' The words are very emphatical;¹ man, every man, not only some of inferior rank, but superiors also; *Col Adam*, every son of Adam, and that not only in his low condition, but in the best and most prosperous condition; when in the height of his beauty and bravery, having all creature comforts about him, yea, even then, he is but vain, yea, vanity, and not only in some measure vain, but altogether vanity. Man at his best is the very universe of vanity;² and to put this further out of doubt, the Holy Ghost puts a double seal to it, one at the beginning of the sentence, and another at the end. 'Verily' lets it in, and 'Selah' shuts it up. Implying that it is no doubtful or probable thing, but a most certain truth.

Obs. 4. Death is a fall. It is so to all, they fall from the society of men to the company of worms; at death we fall from everything save God and godliness; our good works will follow us to heaven; 'The comfort of them will endure for ever,' Rev. xiv. 13; 1 John ii. 17.

2. Yet some shall fall more stairs and storeys than others, as princes, rulers, and the grandees of the world. The higher your standing is whilst you live, the lower ye fall when ye die; and therefore, when Abner was slain, it is said, 'A prince and a great man was fallen in Israel,' 2 Sam. iii. 38, 39. Such fall from their richest treasures, delightfulest pleasures, stately mansions, dear relations, yea, from whatsoever is called the good of this world; Job vii. 7, 'Your eyes shall no more see good,' you must now bid farewell to all your creature delights; as you brought nothing into the world, so you shall carry nothing out.

3. Some yet fall lower than others, as tyrants and wicked men who fall from earth to hell; Ps. ix. 17, 'The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the people that forget God;' he casts down the mighty from their seats in fury. Few tyrants but come

¹ Hæc omnia emphaticè dicta et observanda esse innuit, ut ostendat nihil esse in studiis mortalium, in vita ipsa mortalium, quorumcunque, qualecunque, quantumcunque, quod non sit vanum.—*Musculus*.

² *Col Adam col hebel*. Universa vanitas omnis homo.

to violent deaths and miserable ends,¹ as we see in Zachariah, Shallum, Pekahiah, and Pekah, who in a short time were cut off by violent deaths, Hosea vii. 7 and 10. If the rulers of God's people will be like the rulers of the world in pride and oppression, they must expect to be like them in punishment, and to fall as those tyrannical heathen princes have done before them; for God is no respecter of persons or privileges, but is the same in all ages to the same sinners.

Ver. 8. *Arise, O God, judge thou the earth, for thou shalt inherit all nations.*

In the first verse we had the psalmist's preface; in this last verse we have his petitory conclusion. The psalmist seeing the gross stupidity of the judges of those times, how no warnings would work upon them, no complaints stir them, no sense of their mortality affect them; by a sudden apostrophe he turns himself to God, and betakes himself to his prayers. 'Arise, O God, judge thou the earth.' Before he spake in the person of God to those rulers; he leaves them now as desperate and past cure, and betakes himself to God. 'Arise, O God.' Where we have, 1. The substance of his suit or matter of his prayer, viz., that God would arise and judge the earth. 2. A reason drawn from the dominion and universal sovereignty of God over all the world.² 'For thou inheritest all nations.'

'Arise,' *q.d.* Hitherto, O Lord, thou hast sate still and concealed thy power, though justice hath been turned into wormwood, and righteousness into hemlock;³ now therefore arise, O Lord, and take the throne, relieve the oppressed, right the wronged, and set all things in order which have been so long in confusion.⁴ This word 'arise' by an anthropopathy is given to God, when he exerts and puts forth his power (which seemed to sleep and lie dormant for a time, suffering his people to be afflicted whilst the wicked flourish) in punishing the wicked, and delivering his people out of trouble. So the word is used, Num. x. 35; Job xxxi. 14; Ps. xlv. 23, 24, lix. 5, lxxviii. 1, and lxxvi. 8, 9; Zech. ii. 13.

'O God,' *Elohim*, i.e. O thou Creator, Governor, Prince, and Judge of all the world (so much the word implies,) O thou abso-

¹ See more before on verse 1, obs. 5.

² Addit rationem a proprio Dei jure.—*Moller*.

³ Dicitur sedere Deus quando dissimulat suam potentiam neque exercet munus judicis.—*Vatablus*.

⁴ *Kumah*, surge, i.e., ad agendum te accinge, et contra hostes insurge.

lute, universal, supreme, and mighty Judge, do thou now arise and judge these unrighteous judges of the world.

‘Judge thou the earth,’¹ *i.e.*, the men of the earth; *q.d.*, since justice is perished from the earth, and men are so corrupt and careless that they will not do justice,² but abuse their power; do thou therefore, O Lord, take the power into thine own hand, and execute justice for the oppressed and the needy; ‘For thou dost inherit,’ or, ‘thou dost possess all nations,’ *q.d.*, all nations of the world, and amongst the rest these oppressed ones, are thine by a true right and inheritance;³ it concerns thee therefore to take notice of them, and to right them in their wrongs, and not to suffer unrighteous judges to oppress and slay them at their pleasure, Ps. lxxiv. 21. Or, ‘Thou shalt inherit, or thou shalt possess all nations,’⁴ *q.d.*, thou, whether they will or no, shalt have power over Jews and Gentiles,⁵ for thou art Lord paramount, and the true possessor of all nations, they are all within thy jurisdiction and dominion; and therefore, seeing that office belongs to thee, take it into thine own hand and do justice for thy people: let no tyrant take thy right and authority from thee, for thou dost, and for ever shalt possess, as thy proper peculiar, all nations whatsoever.

Quest. But how comes the world to be called God’s inheritance, when the church of God is frequently called his portion and his inheritance? Deut. xxxii. 9; Ps. cxxxv. 4; Isa. xix. 25; Mal. iii. 17.

Ans. The answer is easy. 1. All the world is God’s inheritance by right of creation and perpetual preservation; but his church is his by right of redemption and peculiar appropriation to himself. It is his portion and peculiar treasure above all people; he looks upon all the world but as lumber, dross, and refuse, in comparison of his people, Ps. cxix. 119. They are his jewels, his Segullah,⁶ his select portion, and rich treasure which he values at the highest rate.

Some would make this verse a prophecy of the kingdom of Christ, when all nations shall be subdued to him, and be given him for his inheritance, according to that Ps. ii. 8; Heb. i. 2; Rev. xi.

¹ Meton. subjecti.

² Vindica probos hujus terræ incolas ab oppressione judicum.—*Piscator*.

³ Hæreditare est dominium in gentes jure obtinere.

⁴ *Tinchal*, possidebis, hæreditabis.

⁵ *Goyim* sæpe dicitur de gentibus infidelibus et incredulis.

⁶ Ecclesia vocatur hæreditas Dei et possessio ejus, quia Deo dulcis et grata est, sicut unicuique solet esse dulcis et jucunda hæreditas quam possidet.—*Ravanella*. See more of the word Segullah in Mr Bell on the Covenant, p. 103.

15. But the prophet speaks not here of Christ, or of the last judgment, but of the general providence of God, whereby he governs the kingdoms of the world with the sceptre of righteousness, Gen. xviii. 25, Eccles. iii. 17; defending the good, punishing the bad; preserving laws, public peace, justice, and order; and though he hath committed the custody of these to magistrates, who are his deputies, yet he himself is the chief judge; and when they neglect their duty then he appears. The sum of all is this—O Lord, since the iniquity of ungodly magistrates is so exceeding great, not only amongst thy own people, but even through the whole world, righteousness is fled, and justice cannot be found, the righteous are debased, the unrighteous exalted, the nocent are countenanced, and the innocent condemned; the rich are favoured, and the afflicted trod under foot; therefore do thou, Lord, arise, bring down the proud, punish the nocent, set free the innocent, rescue the poor and fatherless from the jaws of tyrannical ones, that all the earth may know that thou only art Lord and supreme judge of all the world.

Obs. 1. God sometimes seems to sleep when his people are in trouble. He seems to be careless, and let all run into confusion, as we have seen in this psalm. Not that God doth indeed sleep or disregard the afflictions of his people, for he that keepeth his Israel doth not so much as slumber, much less sleep, Ps. cxxi. 4, 5. He hath a special eye upon his people for good, he protects them so that the sun shall not hurt them by day, nor the moon by night, *i.e.*, no time, nothing shall hurt them, neither sun nor moon, neither heat nor cold. 2. No part of them shall be hurt, thy soul shall be preserved; thy going out and coming in shall be guided and guarded; these include the whole person of man, with all his just undertakings and affairs. Thus are they kept who have the Lord for their keeper; and as if this were not sufficient, he adds, ver. 3, ‘He will not suffer thy foot to be moved,’ *i.e.*, he will not suffer thee or thine to be moved or violently cast down; the power of oppressors shall not prevail over thee, for the power of God sustains thee. Lest any should hurt his vineyard, he keeps it night and day, *i.e.*, at all times, Isa. xxvii. 3. So that, to speak properly, there is no passion in God, there is neither rest nor motion in him; but the Scripture speaks of him by an anthropopathy, according to our apprehension. Thus the Lord is said sometimes to be slack, slow, and delay his coming; and then by our prayers we must quicken him: Ps. xl. 17, ‘Make no long tarrying, O my God;’ Ps. lxxiv., ‘How long, Lord, how long wilt thou forget thy people?’ Some-

times he seems to forget his church, and then his people must put him in remembrance: Isa. lxii. 7, 'Ye that are the Lord's remembrancers give him no rest.' Sometimes he seems to sleep, and then he expects that his people by their prayers should awaken him, as in the text, 'Arise, Lord.' The Lord is a God of great patience and long-suffering; he bears long with the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction, Rom. ix. 22. He bears so long with the wicked till they rage again, and insult, thinking that God approves of their wickedness, Ps. l. 21. He seemed to sleep at Israel's troubles 430 years; but at last Pharaoh and his followers paid for all together in the sea. The Amorites, one would think, had been wicked enough to have been destroyed, for they were gross idolaters, grand oppressors, and notorious for lust, yet God bare some hundred of years with them, till they were ripe for ruin, Gen. xv. 16. Woe, then, to all the insulting, blasphemous enemies of God's people, though God seem for a time to sit still and sleep, letting the wicked oppress the righteous, who is better than he, Hab. i. 13. Yet as a man after sleep is refreshed, so God will arise like a giant refreshed with wine, and then his enemies shall be scattered, and those that hate him shall flee before him. As smoke is driven away by a mighty wind, though it seem black and formidable at first, yet it soon vanisheth; and the higher it ascends, the sooner it is scattered; and as wax melteth before the fire, so shall the wicked perish at the presence of God, Ps. lxxviii. 1, 2. If the Lord do once arise, though his enemies be never so many or mighty, yet they are soon scattered. Let the Lord but look upon the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire, and it troubles and torments them, Exod. xiv. 24. Let not then God's people be despondent, though the Lord make them wait, yea, and wait long; though the vision be yet for an appointed time, yet at the end it shall speak comfort to those that patiently wait God's appointed time; and to assure you of this, the promise is doubled and trebled—it shall speak, it will come, it will surely come, it shall not lie, it will not tarry, Hab. ii. 3.

Quest. But when will the Lord arise for his people? The harvest is past, and the summer is ended, and yet we are not saved.

Ans. Though God seldom comes at our time, yet he never fails of his own time; in his due time he will arise and save his people, only do not limit the Holy One of Israel to your time;¹ for when he sees it is most for his own glory, and his people's good, he will

¹ See ten seasons wherein God will arise for to help his people. Mr Case's Fast Sermon on Ps. lxxviii. 1, 2, p. 21, preached 1644.

certainly arise: he only waits for a fit time to be gracious, Isa. xxx. 18. Yet for your better satisfaction, know that there are two seasons more especially wherein the Lord loves to appear for his people. 1. When the enemy is most high, begins to insult and blaspheme, crying, Where is now their God? he is asleep and cannot save; then their fall is near, Job xx. 5; Ps. xciv. 2, 6-23. Violent things last not long. 2. When God's people are most low, and all seems to make against them; when the enemy seems to carry all before him, and his people's strength is gone.¹ Now, now, now will I arise, saith God, Isa. xxxiii. 9, 10; Deut. xxxii. 36. *Cum duplicantur lateres, venit Moses.* God lets things come to the mount, and then he appears, Gen. xxii. 14. When his people lie as dry dead bones, in a hopeless, helpless, fatherless, forlorn condition, then God loves to appear for their help and succour, Ezek. xxxvii. 11; Exod. iii. 9; Ps. xii. 5, x. 12, and cii. 13; Hosea xiv. 3.

Obs. 2. When God's people are in distress, they must awaken God by their prayers; so doth the psalmist here: 'Arise, Lord, and judge the earth.' When they can have no help on earth, they must go to heaven. When the gods on earth will not right us, we must appeal to the God of heaven.² It is matter of singular comfort, that when tyrants cruelly oppress us, and we can have no relief below, yet we have a God to go to, who will vindicate our wrongs, and plead our cause against our enemies; but then we must awaken the Lord by fervent and importunate prayer. He seems to rest till he be disquieted by our prayers. Though he will help us, yet he will be sought of us to do it for us; hence his people so oft cry, 'Arise, Lord, and save thy people;' and, 'Awake, why sleepest thou?' Ps. iii. 7, vii. 6, ix. 19, xvii. 13, and lxviii. 1; Hab. i., ii., iii., *per totum*.

Only remember it is not every kind of prayer that will awaken God; but it must be, 1. The prayer of a righteous man, such as Moses, Job, Samuel, Daniel, who have both imputed and imparted righteousness. He must come in the raiment of Christ, his elder brother; there is no seeing God's face unless we bring him with us. Christ only is the way; there is no coming to the Father but by him. It was death under the law for any man to offer a sacrifice himself, though it were never so good; it must be put into the priest's hand, and he must offer it: 'Every sacrifice must be seasoned with salt,' Lev. ii. 13. Christ is that true salt which seasons both our persons and performances, and makes them accept-

¹ See more in my Comment. on 2 Tim. iii. 9, p. 182.

² *Restat iter cælo.*

able to his Father. Whatever we ask it must be in Christ's name, and not in our own, John xiv. 13, 14. The person must please, before the prayer can please. God had first respect to Abel, and then to his offering. The man must be good, or his prayer will never be heard. God hears not sinners, *i.e.*, impenitent sinners, which make a trade of sin, Ps. lxvi. 18; John ix. 31; there is no standing before God in our sins, Ezra ix. 15. An earthly prince will not traffic with rebels to his crown and dignity; to such God saith, 'What hast thou to do to take my name into thy mouth?' Ps. l. 16, 17; the prayers of a proud, profane libertine are an abomination to God, Prov. xv. 8, and xxviii. 9; he esteems them as swine's blood, or the offering a dog's neck in sacrifice, Isa. lxvi. 3; as the howling of a dog, Hosea vii. 14; or as lying and dissembling, Hosea xi. 12. 'The wicked compass me with lies when they cry, My Father, my Father.' And therefore, whenever we draw nigh to God in prayer, we must wash our hearts and our hands in innocency, lifting up pure hearts and pure hands: 'All that call on the name of the Lord must depart from iniquity,' 2 Tim. ii. 19. If we be such as do his commandments, then whatsoever we ask we shall receive, 1 John iii. 22. Hence the promises run to the righteous: Prov. x. 24, 'The desire of the righteous shall be granted;' Ps. cxlv. 19, 'He will fulfil the desires of them that fear him;' 1 Pet. iii. 12, Prayer is not a work of the wit, voice, memory, but of the heart: Ps. xxv. 1, Let the words be never so excellent, if they come not from the heart, it is but lip-labour, and lost labour; Isa. xxix. 30, To pray against pride, covetousness, passion, hypocrisy, &c., when the heart doth not hate those sins, nor will they part with them at any rate, but are angry with such as would separate between them and their lusts, what is this but to mock God to his face, and to give him occasion out of our own mouths to condemn us? If ever we desire that God should hear our prayers, we must first put iniquity far from our tabernacles, Job xxii. 23, 27. Our prayers must not come from feigned lips, Ps. xvii. 1. God is nigh to all that call upon him; but then they must call upon him in truth, Ps. cxlv. 18. It is the prayers of the upright that are God's delights, Prov. xv. 8. And as all sin, so three especially there are that mar men's prayers. The first is ignorance, when men have no sense of their own misery, nor of the majesty of that God they pray to; such cannot pray: Rom. x. 14, 'How shall they call on him of whom they have not heard?' or if they do, yet their prayers are abominable, Prov. xxviii. 9. 2. Pride, when men are full of self-confidence, and think

to be heard for their own merits and righteousness. God resists such proud pharisees; but it is the prayer of the destitute and the humble which he regards, Ps. x. 17, and cii. 16, 17. 3. Oppression and cruelty; the cry of these sins outcries their prayers so as they cannot be heard. Though such should pray, yea, and make many prayers, yet God will not hear, Isa. i. 15; how can he expect mercy from God, who shews none to his brother? Prov. xxii. 13, 'He that stops his ears at the cry of the poor, shall cry himself, and shall not be heard.'

The question then will be, Whether a wicked man may pray?

Ans. Prayer considered as a duty binds all men;¹ for though wicked men cannot pray to God as to a father, yet they may as to a Creator. Prayer is good in itself, though by accident the wicked turn it into sin; now though, for want of faith, such prayers cannot please God, yet being good for matter, giving glory to God in sundry of his attributes, they may procure temporal blessings, or divert, for a time at least, some temporal judgments. The cry and moan of the creature oft moveth compassion in the Creator; he hears the cry of ravens and feeds them; and when the Israelites cried, though but hypocritically and in their trouble, yet he delivered them out of their distress, Ps. lxxviii. So Ahab and the Ninevites.

2. The prayer must be fervent; both these qualifications we have in one verse: James v. 16, 'The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.' We must awaken ourselves and cry aloud, if ever we would awaken God. So did the prophets: Isa. li. 9, 'Awake, O arm of the Lord; awake, awake, and put on strength.' There is no getting the blessing without striving; hence we are commanded to strive in prayer, Rom. xv. 30; Luke xviii. 4, 7; Rom. viii. 26; Col. iv. 2. It is only weeping, wrestling Jacobs, that become prevailing Israels, Hosea xii. 4. It is this seed of Jacob that never seek God's face in vain, Isa. lxxv. 9. We must stir up ourselves that we may lay hold on God, and use argumentative prayer, as Moses did, Exod. xxxii. 11-13, and get a holy impudence, as that widow did,² Luke xi. 8. God loves to see us fervent, when it is for his own glory and his church's good. Tell him the cause is his; had it been our own cause we had been silent, but the cause is his. And the people that are oppressed are his, and

¹ The First Commandment of the moral law requiring prayer, it obligeth universally; besides, all men have need to pray always, in all things, even for the continuance of being, because they depend on this supreme being.—*Lawson*.

² *Ἀναιδέα*, impudentia, importunitas. See Mr Love on that text. *Hæc vis grata Deo est.*—*Tertul. lib. de Orat.*

the enemies are his; they blaspheme his name daily; it is their daily practice to vent blasphemies against him and his truth, and therefore beseech him to arise. When things be out of order in church and state, prayers and tears are our best weapons. It is not for private persons in such cases to rise tumultuously and revile their rulers; this will but exasperate, and not heal our distresses. God doth not say here, O ye afflicted and wronged, arise and slay your unrighteous rulers; no, but rather slay your sins, which provoke God to set them over you; and by prayer cry to him that he would arise and help you. Thus did the primitive Christians in Tertullian's time. So the people in Saul's time, when the Lord told them how cruelly he would deal with them, he tells them what they must do, 2 Sam. viii. 18; ye shall cry in that day, because of your king. They must not rise in rebellion against him, but they must cry unto God for aid. We must spread our case and our cause before him who is the judge of all the world, and who hath promised that the rod of the wicked shall not for ever lie on the lot of the righteous, Ps. cxxv. 3.

Caution. This is spoken against private persons taking up arms, and not against the inferior magistrates defending religion and the godly, when the superior is an enemy to both; of this judgment was the learned B. Bilson,¹ a man free enough from sedition or faction. I will not rashly pronounce, saith he, all that resist to be rebels; cases may fall out, even in Christian kingdoms, where the people may plead their right against the prince, and yet not be charged with rebellion, *e.g.*, If a prince go about to subject his kingdom to a foreign realm, or change the form of the commonwealth from imperty to tyranny, or neglect the laws established by common consent of prince and people, to execute his own pleasure; in these, and other cases which might be named, if the nobles and the commons join together to defend their ancient and accustomed liberty, regiment, and laws, they may not well be accounted rebels. This, and more you may see in the place quoted, which excellently clears the justness of the late parliament wars. If any desire further satisfaction, he may see forty-four questions learnedly debated by Mr Rutherford in his *Lex Rex*, where he strongly asserts the lawfulness of defensive wars, and takes off all cavils that are brought to the contrary.² But whatever means be used, yet prayer may in no wise be neglected. It is it that blesseth all means, obtains all grace, and brings comfort to us in all our distress. So that a prayer-

¹ *Vide* Bilson's *Philander*, part 3, p. 279, &c.

² *Vide* Sharpus *Cursus Theolog.* Loc. de Magist., q. 2, p. 246, p. 2.

less man is a graceless man, useless man, cursed man, comfortless man.

1. A prayerless man is a graceless man. Grace is obtained by prayer; ask and have, Ezek. xxxvi. 37. A man of much prayer is usually a man of much grace, as we see in Daniel, and David, who was a man composed as it were of prayer; Ps. cix. 4, 'But I prayer,' or 'I give myself to prayer,' as being much in that work, and making it his only fence and refuge.¹ When Paul was converted, then he prays, Acts ix. 11. No doubt but he, being a strict pharisee, prayed before.² Ay but, says the Lord, go to him now; for behold he prays, *i.e.*, feelingly, fervently, and effectually; and not coldly, cursorily, and formally, as the pharisees did, which was no praying in God's esteem. Hence the spirit of grace and the spirit of supplication are joined together, Zech. xii. 10; and they are branded for irreligious atheists that call not upon God, Ps. xiv. 4. Let thy outside be never so civil or smooth, yet if thou be a prayerless man, certainly thou art a graceless man.

2. A useless man. Unfit for any service of God, a burden to the place he lives in; like Jeremiah's girdle, good for nothing, Jer. xiii. 7. As a praying saint is a public good, even the chariots and the horsemen of Israel; so a prayerless sot is a wen, a blemish, and burden to the church and state he lives in.

3. A cursed man. As food, rest, riches, labour, and all other things are sanctified to us by prayer; so, on the contrary, without prayer, all is cursed. You may rise early, and yet labour in vain, Ps. cxxvii. 1, 2, and get riches, but they will prove snares unto you.

4. A comfortless man. He hath no God to make his moan to in his troubles; and thence it is that wicked men, though in prosperity they be very high, yet in adversity none so despondent and amort as they.

But a man of prayer is still the same; in all his distresses he hath a God to go to, he hath hidden manna which the world knows not of. By this he gets strength from God either to overcome the temptation, or to undergo it patiently; it either removes the affliction, or else gets it sanctified. Prayer hath *Virtutem pacativam*, a settling and composing power; it stills the distempers of the soul, as sleep composeth the distempers of the body. Christ, by prayer, overcame his agony, and cheerfully goes forth to meet even those that sought to crucify him, Mat. xxvi. 44, 46. Hannah, that before

¹ *Vaani tephilla*, Ego autem oratio, *i.e.*, Vir orationis, et orationi deditus.

² *Ficta pro infectis sunt.*

was in bitterness of spirit, yet after she had been at prayer, her countenance was no more sad,¹ 1 Sam. i. 18. This made Luther call prayer the leeches of his cares, and Christ bids his pray that their joy may be full, John xvi. 24. As Moses, when he came from the mount, the people discerned that he had been with God, so a gracious soul never comes from God, but he carries away somewhat of God with him.² Prayer is a catholicon, it is a panacea, an universal remedy for every malady ; if any be afflicted, internally or externally, let him pray, James v. 13. It is a special and eminent part of God's worship, in which we draw nigh to God, and he to us. By it we glorify him in all his attributes, in his truth, wisdom, mercy, omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, &c. Hence it is oft put for the whole worship of God synecdochically, or virtually containing much of God's worship in it: So Mat. xxi. 13, 'My house shall be called the house of prayer.'³ Not that prayer should jostle out other ordinances, as some would have had it, but it is spoken by way of eminency, because prayer must accompany every ordinance. So oft in Scripture calling on God's name is put for the whole worship of God, Gen. iv. 26 ; Ps. l. 15 ; Rom. x. 12. This sets all our graces on work, as knowledge, faith, love, patience. This sets the crown on God's head, as Joab when he had taken Rabbah sent for David to take the glory of it ; so prayer gives all the glory of what it hath or doth to God, and therefore it is that God loves to do such great things for his praying people ; hence their prayers are called incense ; there is no incense so pleasing to our smell, as the prayers of the faithful are to God, clxii. 2, and sweet odours, Rev. v. 8. Insomuch that God even begs their prayers: Cant. ii. 14, 'Let me hear thy voice, for it is sweet.' This is a special preservative—1. Against sin. We live in an infectious world, and we had need to antidote ourselves against sin by prayer before we go forth of our doors. Watching and prayer is a special preservative against the power of temptations, Mat. xxvi. 41. 2. It is a special help against the concomitants of sin. Many are the miseries that attend on sin, as sword, plague, famine. Prayer helps against them all, 1 Kings viii. 33–38. The psalmist tells us of travellers, seamen, sick men, and captives that cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he

¹ Egressa fuit e tabernaculo spei plena, et animo ad omnia perferenda alacri ac prompto ; qui orationis fructus fuit præcipuus.—*Sanctius in 1 Sam.*

² Nunquam abs te absque te recedo.—*Bern.*

³ Domus orationis, i.e., divini cultus, ejus præcipua pars est oratio ; a precibus enim omnis cultus incipiendus et concludendus.—*Paræus.*

delivered them, Ps. cvii. This is—1. A sure helper ; 2. A secret helper ; 3. A speedy helper ; 4. A strong helper.

1. Prayer is a sure helper. A right qualified prayer for man, matter, manner, never misseeth ; but ever obtains either the blessing prayed for, or some better thing. God always answers his, *ad utilitatem, si non ad voluntatem* ; e.g., David prays for the life of his child ; God denies him in that thing, but gives him a Solomon, which was legitimate, and every way better for him. So Paul, he prays for deliverance from the messenger of Satan. God suffers the trial to abide, but gives him grace to improve it for good, which was better for him than if it had been removed. Though God be the principal actor, yet prayer is *causa adjuvans* : 2 Cor. i. 11, ‘ You also helping me with your prayers,’ *q.d.*, if you will but help me with your prayers, I doubt not of deliverance.

2. It is a secret helper. It secretly undetermines the plots, and reveals the projects of wicked men, and they know not who doth it. One while they curse such a man, and anon they curse such counsel, and such instruments, when it is the prayers of God’s people that do them all the mischief. David’s prayers turn Abithophel’s policy into folly, 2 Sam. xv. 31.

3. A speedy helper. It brings sudden deliverance. Esther doth but pray, and suddenly Haman comes down. This pierceth the clouds and brings us present aid. Nehemiah, chap. ii. 4, he darts a prayer to heaven, and hath present help. God gave him favour in the sight of the king.

4. It is a strong helper. Nothing like prayer for strength.¹ As David said of Goliath’s sword, there is none like that. Luther was wont to say, *Est quedam precum omnipotentia* ; Prayer hath a kind of omnipotent power. Like the sword of Saul and the bow of Jonathan, which never returned empty from the battle, 2 Sam. i. 22, it binds God, and holds his hands that he cannot destroy a people ; hence the Lord entreats Moses to let him alone,² Exod. xxxii. 10 ; and when the Lord would destroy a people, he forbids his servants praying for them, Jer. vii. 16. This commands the commander of all things, Isa. xlv. 11 ; it is stronger than any charm, Isa. xxvi. 16. In their trouble they poured out a prayer, or made a soft muttering to thee.³ You need not go to charms in your troubles ; prayer can do that which they cannot do. It is

¹ See how prayer is an eightfold helper, in Mr Green’s Fast Sermon on Nehemiah i. 3. p. 26, &c., preached 1644.

² *Ferendi licentiam petit a Mose qui fecit Mosen.*

³ *Labash, precatationem, proprie significat mussitationem, et passim accipitur pro incantatione.—Piscator.*

stronger than iron ; at the prayers of the church the iron gates fly open, and Peter's fetters fall off, Acts xii. 5-7. The prayer of one Jacob is too strong for four hundred men that come against him, Gen. xxxii. 6, 9, and xxxiii. 4. One Moses in the mount praying is too strong for all the armies in the valley fighting. Jehoshaphat, when surrounded with enemies, by prayer overcomes them. By this Hezekiah overthrew the great army of Sennacherib. By prayer Asa with a few, in comparison of those that came against him, overcame an army of a thousand thousand men, and three hundred chariots, 2 Chron. xiv. 9-11. By this Theodosius overcame the potent armies of his adversaries, and turned their darts upon their own heads.¹

The Queen of Scotland affirmed that she did more fear the prayers of Mr Knox and his assistants than an army of ten thousand men.² There are five keys in the hand of God, and prayer turns them all. There is—1. The key of the heart ; 2. The key of the womb ; 3. The key of the grave ; 4. The key of heaven ; 5. The key of hell.

1. There is the key of the heart, and prayer turns this key. Esau came against Jacob with an intent to kill him, but God so changed his heart at the prayer of Jacob, that he fell upon his neck and kissed him.

2. The key of the womb. Hannah, that was barren, prayed, and the Lord gave her a Samuel ; and Manoah prayed, and had a Samson.

3. The key of the grave. Hezekiah prays and hath his life prolonged. The prophet by prayer raised the dead child, 2 Kings iv. 32. Jonah by prayer is raised out of the whale's belly, and Christ by prayer raiseth Lazarus.

4. The key of heaven. Elias prayed and it rained ; and again he prayed that it might not rain, and it did not rain ; he could turn this key which way he pleased by his prayers, James v. 17, 18. So

¹ Theodosius robustissimum exercitum magis orando quam feriendo vicit. Milites qui nobis aderant, retulerunt, extorta sibi esse de manibus quæcunque jaculabantur, cum a Theodosi partibus in adversarios vehemens ventus iret, et non solum quæcunque in eos jaculabantur concitatissime raperet, verum etiam ipsorum tela in eorum corpora rotorqueret. Unde Claudianus, quamvis a Christi nomine alienus, in ejus tamen laudibus dixit ;

'O nimium dilecte Deo, cui militat æther,
Et conjurati veniunt ad classica venti.'

—*August. de Civit. Dei.*, lib. v. cap. 26.

² Prayers are *Christianorum bombardæ*, The Christian's best artillery.—*Luther*, *Oratio justi clavis cæli*.—*Aug.*

it is said of Luther, the Elias of his time, *Vir iste potuit quod voluit*. He could but ask and have.

5. The key of hell. By prayer and fasting the devil is cast out,¹ Mat. xvi. 21. By Luther's prayers one was recovered who had given his soul to the devil.

Thus we have seen what great encouragement we have to pray, and in all our straits to cry, Arise, O Lord, and help us.

If any would see more concerning the power of prayer, let him peruse Mr Rob. Bolton's *Comforting Afflicted Consciences*, pp. 6, 7; Dr Harris, *Peter's Enlargement*; Dyke, *Righteous Man's Tower*, p. 77, &c.; Mr Ford on James v. 13, at the end of his *Spirit of Bondage*, p. 590; and for prayer in general, Bishop Andrews' *Catechism*, chap. xi. p. 142; Perkins' *C. Conse.*, lib. ii. cap. 6, p. 63, folio; Dr Preston's *Saints' Daily Exercise* on 1 Thes. v. 17; Mr Cobbet on Prayer; *Tactica Sacra*, lib. iii. cap. 1, p. 241, &c.; Ambrose's *Media*, p. 305; D. Pet. Smith, *Fast Sermon* on Ps. cvii. 6, preached 1644; Dyke on Conscience, chap. iv. p. 53; Capel on Tentation, lib. i. cap. 6, sec. 5, p. 92; Bolton's *Comfort to Afflicted Consciences*, P. i. cap. 4, p. 375; Fenner's *Practical Catechism*; Barlow on Timothy, p. 47; Clerk's *Mirror*, chap. 100.

'Judge the earth,' *Obs.* God is judge of all the earth. All other judges are but substitutes and surrogates to this judge of judges. They are confined to their circuits, but all the world is his circuit. Hence he is called the judge of all the earth, Gen. xviii. 25; Ps. xciv. 2; Heb. xii. 23. A man may appeal from other judges; Paul appealed from Felix to Cæsar. But God is the supreme judge, there is none higher than he, and so no appeals can be made from him, but all must end in him; and therefore the saints, when they could have no justice on earth, have made their final appeals to him who judgeth righteously. So did David, 1 Sam. xxiv. 13, 14; and Jeremiah, chap. xviii. 19, and xx. 12; and Christ, 1 Pet. ii. 23. Take heed then of displeasing him who is King of kings, and Judge of judges. Men are careful to get the favour of great men, Prov. xxix. 26, but what will it avail us to have all the great ones of the world for us, if the great God be against us? Choose rather to displease all the world, than to displease him; and this concerns great ones; they must remember still that there is a greater than they, to whom they must shortly give an account of their stewardship, and at whose bar they must stand

¹ Nihil est homine probo orante potentius.—*Chrysostom.*

to be judged themselves, who here have judged others,¹ Rev. vi. 15, and xx. 12.

‘Thou shalt inherit all nations.’ *Obs.* All nations are the Lord’s inheritance, or, the Lord is the sole possessor of all the world, Dent. x. 14; Job xli. 11; Ps. xxiv. 1, 2. The earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof; he alone is the true proprietary of it. This is his universal kingdom by right of creation and preservation. God hath a special interest in all people. The rich and the poor meet together, and the Lord is the maker and great protector of both, Job xxxiv. 19; Prov. xxii. 2.

1. Let us then adore and reverence the transcendent majesty of the great God; if a man be king of one kingdom, we stand in awe of him, and reverence him as some great man; and shall not we reverence the great God, who is the king of the kingdoms of the world? Whom will we fear if we do not fear him?

2. Let great ones remember from whom they have their power, riches, kingdoms, and greatness, even from this great possessor of heaven and earth. Let them improve their power to his praise; else he that raised them can ruin them, and he that gives them kingdoms can take them away, Job xii. 17, 18, and xxxiv. 24; Dan. ii. 21. Let them not abuse their power in oppressing the poor, since as good hands have made the one as the other. All nations are God’s inheritance, and the poor are a part of it as well as the rich. Let them assure themselves that God will not suffer wrongs that are done to them to pass unpunished, because such as wrong them, wrong a part of his inheritance.

3. It may comfort such as are banished from their habitations for the testimony of Christ and the profession of his truth. You cannot want though you have lost all; for the earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof. He is the possessor of all the world; he that hath so rich a mine can never want, Ps. xxiii. 1. The lions natural, and the lions metaphorical may want, but such as fear the Lord shall lack nothing that may be for their good, Ps. xxxiv. 9, 10. Such meek ones shall inherit the earth, Mat. v. 5. In Christ their head all is theirs; the world is theirs, and all that is in it was made more especially for their service, 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22.

¹ See more in my Comment. on 2 Tim. iv. 1, pp. 313, 321.