

CHRIST'S KINGLY OFFICE.

Q. XXVI. *HOW doth Christ execute the office of a king?*

A. In subduing us to himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies.

Now of Christ's regal office, Rev. xix. 16. 'And he hath on his vesture, and on his thigh, a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords.'

Jesus Christ is of mighty renown, he is a king; he hath a kingly title, 'High and Mighty,' Isa. lvii. 15. 2. He hath his *insignia regalia* his ensigns of royalty, *corona est insigne regie potestatis*: His crown, Rev. vi. 2. His sword, Psalm xlv. 3. 'Gird thy sword upon thy thigh.' His sceptre, Heb. i. 8. 'A sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.' 3. His *escutcheon*, or coat-armour; he gives the lion in his arms, Rev. v. 5. 'The lion of the tribe of Judah.' And he is, the text saith, 'King of kings.' He hath a pre-eminence of all other kings, he is called, 'the Prince of the kings of the earth,' Rev. i. 5. He must needs be so, for, 'by him kings reign,' Prov. viii. 15. They hold their crowns by immediate tenure from this great king. Christ infinitely outvies all other princes; he hath the highest throne, the largest dominions, and the longest possession, Heb. i. 8. 'Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.' Christ hath many heirs, but no successors. Well may he be called King of kings, for he hath an unlimited power; the power of other kings is limited, but Christ's power is unlimited, Psal. cxxxv. 6. 'Whatsoever he pleased, that did he, in heaven and earth, and in the sea.' Christ's power is as large as his will. The angels take the oath of allegiance to him, Heb. i. 6. 'Let all the angels of God worship him.'

Q. *How Christ comes to be King?*

A. Not by usurpation, but legally? Christ holds his crown by immediate tenure from heaven. God the Father hath decreed him to be king, Psal. ii. 5, 6. 'I have set my king upon my holy hill: I will declare the decree.' God hath anointed and sealed him to his regal office, John vi. 27. 'Him hath God the Father sealed.' God hath set the crown upon his head.

Q. *In what sense is Christ king?*

A. Two ways, 1. In reference to his people. And, 2. In reference to his enemies.

1. In reference to his people: (1.) To govern them. It was prophesied of Christ before he was born, Mat. ii. 6. 'And thou, Bethlehem, art not the least among the princes of Judah;

for out of thee shall come a governor that shall rule my people Israel.' It is a vain thing for a king to have a crown on his head, unless he have a sceptre in his hand to rule.

Q. *Where doth Christ rule?*

A. His kingdom is spiritual: He rules in the hearts of men. He sets up his throne where no other king doth, he rules the will and affections, his power binds the conscience: he subdues men's lusts, Mic. vii. 19. 'He will subdue our iniquities.'

Q. *What doth Christ rule by?*

A. By law, and by love; 1. He rules by law. It is one of the *jura regalia*, the flowers of the crown to enact laws; Christ as king makes laws, and by his laws he rules: the law of faith, 'believe in the Lord Jesus;' the law of sanctity, 1 Pet. i. 15. 'Be ye holy in all manner of conversation.' Many would admit Christ to be their advocate to plead for them, but not their king to rule them.

2. He rules by love: he is a king full of mercy and clemency; as he hath a sceptre in his hand, so an olive branch of peace in his mouth. Though he be the Lion of the tribe of Judah for majesty, yet the Lamb of God for meekness. His regal rod hath honey at the end of it. He sheds abroad his love into the hearts of his subjects; he rules them with promises as well as precepts. This makes all his subjects become volunteers; they are willing to pay their allegiance to him, Psal. cx. 3. 'Thy people shall be a willing people.'

(2.) Christ is a king to defend his people: as Christ hath a sceptre to rule them, so a shield to defend them, Ps. iii. 3. 'Thou, O Lord, art a shield for me.' When Antiochus did rage furiously against the Jews, he took away the vessels of the Lord's house, set up an idol in the temple; then this great king, called Michael, did stand up for them to defend them, Dan. xii. 1. Christ preserves his church as a spark in the ocean, as a flock of sheep among wolves. That the sea should be higher than the earth, and yet not drown it, is a wonder: so, that the wicked should be so much higher than the church in power, and not devour it, is, because Christ hath this inscription on his vesture and his thigh, KING OF KINGS; Ps. cxxiv. 2. 'If it had not been the Lord, who was on our side, they had swallowed us up.' They say, lions are *insomnes*, they have little or no sleep; it is true of the Lion of the tribe of Judah, he never slumbers nor sleeps, but watcheth over his church to defend it: Isa. xxvii. 2, 3. 'Sing ye unto her, a vineyard of red wine; I the Lord do keep it, lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.' If the enemies destroy the church, it must be at a time when it is neither night nor day, for Christ keeps it day and night. Christ is said to carry his church, as the eagle her young ones upon her wings, Exod. xix. 4. The

arrow must first hit the eagle before it can hurt the young ones, and shoot through her wings: the enemies must first strike through Christ, before they can destroy his church. Let the wind and storms be up, and the church almost covered with waves, yet Christ is in the ship of the church, and so long there is no danger of shipwreck. Nor will Christ only defend his church, as he is king, but deliver it, 2 Tim. iv. 17. 'He delivered me out of the mouth of the lion,' viz. Nero. 2 Cor. xi. 14. 'The Lord saved them by a great deliverance.' Sometimes Christ is said to command deliverance, Ps. lxiv. 4. Sometimes to create deliverance, Isa. xlv. 18. Christ as a king commands deliverance, and as a God creates it. And deliverance shall come in his time. Isa. lx. 22. 'I the Lord will hasten it in his time.'

Q. When is the time that this King will deliver his people?

A. When the hearts of his people are humblest, when their prayers are ferventest, when their faith is strongest, when their forces are weakest, when their enemies are highest, now is the usual time that Christ puts forth his kingly power in their deliverance, Isa. xxxiii. 2, 8, 9.

3. Christ is a king to reward his people, there's nothing lost by serving this king: 1. He rewards his subjects in this life: 1st, He gives them inward peace and joy; a bunch of grapes by the way; and oftentimes riches and honour. 'Godliness hath the promise of this life,' 1 Tim. iv. 8. These are, as it were, the saints vails. But besides the great reward is to come, 'An eternal weight of glory,' 2 Cor. iv. 17. Christ makes all his subjects kings, Rev. ii. 10. 'I will give thee a crown of life.' This crown will be full of jewels, and it will 'never fade,' 1 Pet. v. 5.

2. Christ is a king in reference of his enemies, in subduing and conquering them: he pulls down their pride, befools their policy, restrains their malice. That stone cut out of the mountain without hands, which smote the image, Dan. ii. 34. was an emblem, saith Austin, of Christ's monarchical power, conquering and triumphing over his enemies. Christ will make his enemies his footstool, Ps. cx. 1. He can destroy them with ease, 2 Chron. xiv. 11. 'It is nothing for thee, Lord, to help.' He can do it with weak means, without means. He can make the enemies destroy themselves; he set the Persians against the Grecians: and, 2 Chron. xx. 22. the children of Ammon helped to destroy one another. Thus Christ is king in vanquishing the enemies of his church.

This is a great ground of comfort to the church of God in the midst of all the combinations of the enemy, 'Christ is king;' and he can not only bound the enemies power, but break it. The church hath more with her, than against her,

She hath Emmanuel on her side, even that great KING to whom all knees must bend.

Christ is called 'a man of war,' Exod. xv. 3. he understands all the policy of chivalry; he is described with seven eyes and seven horns, Rev. v. 6. 'The seven eyes are to discern the conspiracies of his enemies, and the seven horns are to push and vex his enemies.

Christ is described with a crown and a bow, Rev. vi. 2. 'He that sat on the white horse had a bow, and a crown was given unto him, and he went forth conquering and to conquer.' A crown is an ensign of his kingly office, and the bow is to shoot his enemies to death.

Christ is described with a vesture dipt in blood, Rev. xix. 13. He hath a golden sceptre to rule his people, but an iron rod to break his enemies, Rev. xvii. 12, 14. 'The ten horns thou sawest are ten kings; these shall make war with the Lamb, but the Lamb shall overcome them; for he is the King of kings.' The enemies may set up their standard, but Christ will set up his trophies at last, Rev. xiv. 18, 19. 'And the angel gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great wine-press of the wrath of God, and the wine-press was trodden, and blood came out of the wine-press.' The enemies of Christ shall be but as so many clusters of ripe grapes, to be cast into the great wine-press of the wrath of God, and to be trodden by Christ till their blood came out. Christ will at last come off victor, and all his enemies shall be put under his feet; *gaudeo quod Christus Dominus est alioqui desperassem*, "I am glad Christ reigns, else I should have despaired:" said Miconius in an epistle to Calvin.

Uſe 1. Branch 1. See hence, it is no disparagement to serve Christ: he is a king, and it is no dishonour to be employed in a king's service. Some are apt to reproach the saints for their piety; they serve the Lord Christ, he who hath this inscription upon his vesture, KING OF KINGS. Theodosius thought it a greater honour to be a servant of Christ, than the head of an empire, *Servire est regnare*. Christ's servants are called vessels of honour, 2 Tim. ii. 21. and a royal nation, 1 Pet. ii. 9. Serving of Christ ennobles us with dignity: it is a greater honour to serve Christ, than to have kings serve us.

Branch 2. If Christ be king, it informs us, that all matters of fact must one day be brought before him. Christ hath *Jus vitæ et necis*, the power of life and death in his hand, John v. 22. 'The Father hath committed all judgment to the Son.' He who once hung upon the cross, shall sit upon the bench of judicature: kings must come before him to be judged; they who once sat upon the throne, must appear at the bar. God hath committed all judgment to the Son, and Christ is the high-

est court of judicature ; if this king once condemns men, there is no appeal to any other court.

Branch 3. See whither we are to go, when we are foiled by corruption ; go to Christ, he is king ; desire him, by his kingly power, to subdue thy corruptions, to bind these kings with chains, Pl. cxlix. 8. We are apt to say of our sins, ' These sons of Zeruiah will be strong for us : ' we shall never overcome this pride and infidelity : ay, but go to Christ, he is king ; though our lusts are too strong for us, yet not for Christ to conquer : he can by his Spirit break the power of sin. Joshua, when he had conquered five kings, caused his servants to set their feet on the necks of those kings ; so Christ can and will set his feet on the necks of our lusts.

2d Use, of caution : Is Christ King of kings ? Let all great ones take heed how they employ their power against Christ : Christ gives them their power, and if this power shall be made use of for the suppressing of his kingdom, and ordinances, their account will be heavy. God hath laid the key of Government upon Christ's shoulders, Isa. ix. 7. and to go to oppose Christ in his kingly office, it is as if the thorns should set themselves in battalia against the fire, or a child fight with an archangel. Christ's sword on his thigh is able to avenge all his quarrels : it is not good to stir a lion ; let no man provoke the ' Lion of the tribe of Judah, whose eyes are as a lamp of fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him,' Nah. i. 6. ' He shall cut off the spirit of princes,' Psal. lxxvi. 12.

Use 3. If Christ be a great king, submit to him. Say not, as those Jews, ' We have no king but Cæsar,' no king but our lusts. This is to chuse the bramble to rule over you, and ' out of the bramble will come forth a fire,' Judg. ix. Submit to Christ willingly : all the devils in hell submit to Christ, but it is against their will ; they are his slaves, not his subjects. Submit cheerfully to Christ's person and his laws. Many would have Christ their Saviour, but not their Prince : such as will not have Christ to be their king to rule them, shall never have his blood to save them. Obey all Christ's princely commands ; if he commands love, humility, good works, be as the needle which points which way soever the loadstone draws.

Branch 2. Let such admire God's free grace, who were once under the power and tyranny of Satan, and now Christ hath made them, of slaves, to become the subjects of his kingdom. Christ did not need subjects, he hath legions of angels ministering to him ; but in his love, he hath honoured you to make you his subjects. O how long was it ere Christ could prevail with you to come under his banner ! how much opposition did he meet with, ere you would wear this Prince's colours ? But at last omnipotent grace overcame you. When Peter was sleep-

ing between two soldiers, an angel came and beat off his chains, Acts xii. 7. so, when thou wert sleeping in the devil's arms, that Christ should, by his Spirit, smite thy heart, and cause the chains of sin to fall off, and make thee a subject of his kingdom: O admire free grace! Thou who art a subject of Christ, art sure to reign with Christ for ever.



CHRIST'S HUMILIATION IN HIS INCARNATION.

1 TIM. iii. 16. *Great is the mystery of Godliness, God manifest in the flesh.*

Q. XXVII. *WHEREIN did Christ's humiliation consist?*

Ans. In his being born, and that in a low condition, made under the law, undergoing the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, and the cursed death of the cross.

Christ's humiliation consisted in his incarnation, his taking flesh, and being born. It was real flesh Christ took: not the image of a body (as the Manichees erroneously held) but a true body; therefore Christ is said to be 'made of a woman,' Gal. iv. 4. As the bread is made of the wheat, and the wine is made of the grape; so Christ is made of a woman, his body was part of the flesh and substance of the virgin. This is a glorious mystery, 'God manifest in the flesh.' In the creation, man was made in God's image; in the incarnation, God was made in man's image.

Q. *How came it about that Christ was made flesh?*

Ans. It was by his Father's special designation, Gal. iv. 4. 'God sent forth his Son made of a woman.' God the Father did, in a special manner, appoint Christ to be incarnate; which shews how needful a call is, to any business of weight and importance: to act without a call, is to act without a blessing. Christ himself would not be incarnate, and take upon him the work of a Mediator till he had a call. 'God sent forth his Son made of a woman.'

Q. *But was there no other way for the restoring of fallen man but this, that God should take flesh?*

Ans. We must not ask a reason of God's will; it is dangerous to pry into God's ark: we are not to dispute but adore. The wise God saw this the best way for our redemption, that Christ should be incarnate; it was not fit for any to satisfy God's justice, but man; none could do it but God; therefore, Christ being both God and man, he is the fittest to undertake this work of redemption.

Q. *Why was Christ born of a woman?*