

if it be not indifferent to you what becomes of them, whether they be saved, or whether they be damned, “give all diligence to “make your calling and election sure,” 2 Pet. i. 10. “Work out “your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that “worketh in you both to will and to do of his own good pleasure,” Phil. ii. 12. Remember it is *salvation* you work for, and that is no trifle, Remember, it is *your own salvation*, and not another’s. It is for thy own poor soul that thou art striving; and what hast thou more?

Remember, now God offers you his helping hand; now the Spirit waits upon you in the means, but of the continuance thereof you have no assurance; for it is of *his own good pleasure*, and not at yours. To your work, souls, to your work. Ah, strive as men that know what an inheritance in heaven is worth.

And, as for you that have solid evidence that it is yours; O, that with hands and eyes lifted up to heaven, you would adore that free grace, that hath entitled a child of wrath to a heavenly inheritance! Walk as becomes heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. Be often looking heaven-ward when wants pinch here. O look to that fair estate you have reserved in heaven for you, and say, I am hastening home; and when I come thither, all my wants shall be supplied. Consider what it cost Christ to purchase it for thee; and with a deep sense of what he hath laid out for thee, let thy soul say,

Blessed be God for Jesus Christ.

SERMON XVI.

Of the Kingly Office of Christ, as it is executed spiritually upon the Souls of the Redeemed.

2 Cor. x. 5.

Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

WE now come to the *Regal office*, by which our glorious Mediator executes and dischargeth the undertaken design of our redemption. Had he not, as our Prophet, opened the way of life and salvation to the children of men, they could never have known it; and if they had clearly known it, except, as their Priest,

he had offered up himself, to impetrate and obtain redemption for them, they could not have been redeemed virtually by his blood; and if they had been so redeemed, yet had he not lived in the capacity of a King, to apply this purchase of his blood to them, they could have had no actual, personal benefit by his death; for what he revealed as a Prophet, he purchased as a Priest; and what he so revealed and purchased as a Prophet and Priest, he applies as a King: first subduing the souls of his elect to his spiritual government; then ruling them as his subjects, and ordering all things in the kingdom of Providence for their good. So that Christ hath a twofold kingdom, the one *spiritual* and *internal*, by which he subdues and rules the hearts of his people; the other *providential* and *external*, whereby he guides, rules, and orders all things in the world, in a blessed subordination to their eternal salvation. I am to speak from this text of his spiritual and internal kingdom.

These words are considered two ways, either *relatively* or *absolutely*. Considered relatively, they are a vindication of the apostle from the unjust censures of the Corinthians, who, very unworthily, interpreted his gentleness, condescension, and winning affability, to be no better than a fawning upon them for self-ends? and the authority he exercised, no better than pride and imperiousness. But hereby he lets them know, that as Christ needs not, so he never used such carnal artifices: *The weapons of our warfare* (saith he) *are not carnal, but mighty, through God, &c.*

Absolutely considered, they hold forth the efficacy of the gospel, in the plainness and simplicity of it, for the subduing of rebellious sinners to Christ: and in them we have these three things to consider,

1. The *oppositions* made by sinners against the assaults of the gospel, *viz. imaginations*, or reasonings, as the word *λογισμους*, may be fitly rendered. He means the subtleties, slights, excuses, subterfuges, and arguings of fleshly-minded men; in which they fortify and entrench themselves against the convictions of the word*: yea, and there are not only such carnal reasonings, but many proud, high conceits with which poor creatures swell, and scorn to submit to the abasing, humble, self-denying way of the gospel. These are the fortifications erected against Christ by the carnal mind.

2. We have here the *conquest* which the gospel obtains over sinners, thus fortified against it; it casts down and overthrows, and takes in these strong holds. Thus Christ spoils Satan of his

* He makes use of the word *strong hold*, by an elegant metaphor, to express every thing in which the enemies of the gospel trust, fortify and exalt themselves against the truth of the heavenly word; such as carnal wisdom, learning, and eloquence. *Glass.*

armour in which he trusted, by shewing the sinner that all this can be no defence to his soul against the wrath of God. But that is not all: in the next place,

3. You have here the *improvement of the victory*. Christ doth not only lead away these enemies spoiled, but brings them into obedience to himself, *i. e.* makes them, after conversion, subjects of his own kingdom, obedient, useful, and serviceable to himself; and so is more than a conqueror. They do not only lay down their arms, and fight no more against Christ with them; but repair to his camp, and fight for Christ, with those reasons of theirs that were before employed against him: as it is said of Jerom, Origen, and Tertullian, that they came into Canaan, laden with Egyptian gold; *i. e.* they came into the church full of excellent learning and abilities, with which they eminently served Jesus Christ. “* O
“blessed victory, where the conqueror, and conquered, both triumph together!” And thus enemies and rebels are subdued, and made subjects of the spiritual kingdom of Christ. Hence the doctrinal note is,

Doct. *That Jesus Christ exercises a Kingly power over the souls of all whom the gospel subdues to his obedience.*

No sooner were the Colossians delivered out of the power of darkness, but they were immediately translated into the kingdom of Christ, the dear Son, Col. i. 13.

This kingdom of Christ, which is our present subject, is the internal spiritual kingdom, which is said to be within the saints, Luke xvii. 20, 21. “The kingdom of God is within you.” Christ sits as an enthroned king in the hearts, consciences, and affections of his willing people, Psal. cx. 3. And his kingdom consists in “righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost,” Rom. xiv. 17. and it is properly monarchical, as appears in the margin †.

In the prosecution of this point, I will speak doctrinally to these three heads.

First, How Christ obtains the throne in the hearts of men.

Secondly, How he rules in it, and by what acts he exercises his kingly authority.

Thirdly, What are the privileges of those souls over whom Christ reigns. And then apply it.

First, We will open the way and manner in which Christ ob-

* *O beata victoria, ubi victi cum victoribus simul triumphant!* Meyer in loc.

† This internal government is monarchical, and it must be so; for the right of governing men's consciences belongs to none but him, who is both infinitely wise and most powerful; neither hath Christ in this government any vicegerent, to whom his power and authority are committed.

tains a throne in the hearts of men, and that is by *conquest**: for though the souls of the elect are his by donation, and right of redemption; the Father gave them to him, and he died for them; yet Satan hath the first possession: and so it fares with Christ, as it did with Abraham, to whom God gave the land of Canaan by promise and covenant, but the Canaanites, Perizites, and sons of Anak, had the actual possession of it, and Abraham's posterity must fight for it, and win it by inches, before they enjoy it. The house is conveyed to Christ by him that built it, but the strong man armed keeps the possession of it, till a stronger than he comes and ejects him, Luke xi. 20, 21, 22. Christ must fight his way into the soul, though he have a right to enter, as into his dearly purchased possession. And so he doth; for when the time of recovering them is come, he sends forth his armies to subdue them; as it is Psal. cx. 3. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." The † Hebrew may as fitly be rendered, and so is by some, "in the day of thine armies;" when the Lord Jesus sent forth his armies of prophets, apostles, evangelists, pastors, teachers, under the conduct of his Spirit, armed with that two-edged sword, the word of God, which is sharp and powerful, Heb. iv. 12. But that is not all: he causes armies of convictions, and spiritual troubles, to begird and straiten them on every side, so that they know not what to do. These convictions, like a shower of arrows, strike, point-blank, into their consciences; Acts ii. 37. "When they heard this, they were pricked to the heart, and said, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Christ's arrows are sharp in the hearts of his enemies, whereby the people fall under him, Psal. xlv. 5, 6. By these convictions he batters down all their loose vain hopes, and levels them with the earth.

Now all their weak pleas and defences, from the general mercy of God, the example of others, &c. prove but as paper-walls to them. These shake their hearts, even to the very foundation, and overturn every high thought there, that exalts itself against the Lord. This day, in which Christ sits down before the soul, and summons it by such messengers as these, is a day of distress within: yea, such a day of trouble, that none is like it. But though it be so, yet Satan hath so deeply entrenched himself in

* For unlimited power, even in the way of vicegerency, can be competent to no man: there is also a certain kind of union which excludes all vicegerency: such as that of Father and Son, husband and wife: for certainly here substitution cannot take place. *Maccov. loc. Com. p. 641.*

† חילך ביום *In die exercitus tui.* To wit, When having sent forth thy apostles and other teachers of the church, thou wilt, by the sound of thy gospel, gather together and constitute to thyself a kingdom. *Mollier on this place.*

the mind and will, that the soul yields not at the first summons, till its provisions within are spent, and all its towers of pride, and walls of vain confidence, be undermined by the gospel, and shaken down about its ears: and then the soul desires a parley with Christ. O now it would be glad of terms, any terms, if it may but save its life: let all go as a prey to the conqueror. Now it sends many such messengers as these to Christ, who is come now to the very gates of the soul; mercy, Lord, mercy, O were I but assured thou wouldest receive, spare, and pardon me, I would open to thee the next moment! Thus the soul is "shut up to the faith of Christ, as it is, Gal. iii. 23. and reduced now to the greatest strait and loss imaginable; and now the merciful King, whose only design is to conquer the heart, hangs forth the white flag of mercy before the soul, giving it hopes it shall be spared, pitied, and pardoned, though so long in rebellion against him, if yet it will yield itself to Christ. Many staggerings, hesitations, irresolutions, doubts, fears, scruples, half-resolves, reasonings for and against, there are at the council-table of man's own heart, at this time. Sometimes there is no hope; Christ will slay me, if I go forth to him, and then it trembles. But then, who ever found him so that tried him? Other souls have yielded, and found mercy beyond all their expectations. O but I have been a desperate enemy against him. Admit it, yet thou hast the word of a King for it; "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon him," Isa. lv. 7.

But the time of mercy is past, I have stood out too long: yet if it were so, how is it that Christ hath not made short work, and cut me off? set fire, hell fire to my soul, and withdrawn the siege? Still he waiteth that he may be gracious, and is exalted that he may have compassion. A thousand such debates there are, till, at last, the soul considering, if it abide in rebellion, it must needs perish; if it go forth to Christ, it can but perish: and being somewhat encouraged by the messages of grace sent into the soul, at this time, such as in Heb. vii. 25. "Wherefore he is able to save to the uttermost, all that come unto God by him;" and, John vi. 37. "He that cometh to me, I will in nowise cast out;" and in Matt. xi. 28. "Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." It is, at last, resolved to open to Christ; and saith, "Stand open ye everlasting gates, and be ye opened ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in." Now, the will spontaneously opens to Christ: that royal fort submits and yields; all the affections open to him. The will brings Christ the keys of all the rooms in the soul. Concerning

the triumphant entrance of Christ into the soul, we may say, as the Psalmist rhetorically speaks concerning the triumphant entrance of Israel into Canaan, Psal. cxiv. 5, 6. "The mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills like lambs; what aileth thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest? Thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back?" So here, in a like rhetorical triumph, we may say, the mountains and hills skipped like rams, and the fixed and obstinate will, starts from its own basis and centre; the rocky heart rends in twain. A poor soul comes into the word, full of ignorance, pride, self-love, desperate hardness, and fixed resolutions to go on in its way: and, by an hour's discourse, the tide turns, Jordan is driven back. What aileth thee, thou stout will, that thou surrenderest to Christ! thou hard heart, that thou relentest, and the waters gush out? And thus the soul is won to Christ; he writes down his terms, and the soul willingly subscribes them. Thus it comes in to Christ by free and hearty submission, desiring nothing more than to come under the government of Christ, for the time to come.

Secondly, Let us see how Christ rules in the souls of such as submit to him. And there are six things in which he exerts his kingly authority over them.

1. *He imposes a new law upon them, and enjoins them to be severe and punctual in their obedience to it**. The soul was a Belialite before, and could endure no restraint; its lusts gave it laws. "We ourselves were sometimes foolish, disobedient, serving divers lusts and pleasures," Tit. iii. 3. Whatever the flesh craved, and the sensual appetite whined after, it must have, cost what it would; if damnation were the price of it, it would have it, provided it should not be present pay. Now, it must not be any longer *ανομος Θεω, αλλ' εννομος τω Χριστω*, without law to God; but under law to Christ. Those are the articles of peace which the soul willingly subscribes in the day of its admission to mercy, Mat. xi. 29. "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me." This "law of the spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus makes them free from the law of sin and death," Rom. viii. 2. Here is much strictness, but no bondage; for the law is not only written in Christ's statute-book, the bible, but copied out by his spirit upon the hearts of his subjects, in correspondent principles; which makes obedience a pleasure, and self-denial easy. Christ's yoke is lined with love, so that it never galls the necks of his people:

* It is proper to Christ, who rules absolutely and monarchically over the souls and consciences of men, to bind them by his own authority. None but Christ can do it, 1. Because this authority of Christ is infinite. 2. Because it is the authority of a husband which cannot be communicated to any other, 1 Cor. ix. 21, 22.

1 John v. 3. "His commandments are not grievous." The soul that comes under Christ's government, must receive law from Christ; and under law every thought of the heart must come.

2. *He rebukes and chastises souls for the violations and transgressions of his law.* That is another act of Christ's regal authority: "whom he loves he rebukes and chastens," Heb. xii. 6, 7. These chastisements of Christ are either by the rod of *providence* upon their *bodies*, and outward comforts, or upon their *spirits* and inward comforts. Sometimes his rebukes are smart upon the outward man, 1 Cor. xi. 30. "for this cause, many among you are weakly and sick, and many sleep." They had not that due regard to his body that became them, and he will make their bodies to smart for it. And he had rather their flesh should smart, than their souls should perish. Sometimes he spares their outward, and afflicts their inner man, which is a much smarter rod. He withdraws peace, and takes away joy from the spirits of his people. The hidings of his face are sore rebukes. However, all is for emendation, not for destruction. And it is not the least privilege of Christ's subjects to have a seasonable and sanctified rod to reduce them from the ways of sin: Psal. xxiii. 3. "Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me." Others are suffered to go on stubbornly in the way of their own hearts; Christ will not spend a rod upon them for their good, will not call them to account for any of their transgressions, but will reckon with them for all together in hell.

3. *Another regal act of Christ, is the restraining and keeping back his servants from iniquity, and withholding them from those courses which their own hearts would incline, and lead them to;* for, even in them, there is a spirit bent to backsliding, but the Lord in tenderness over them, keeps back their souls from iniquity, and that when they are upon the very brink of sin: "My feet were almost gone, my steps were well nigh slipt," Psal. lxxiii. 2. Then doth the Lord prevent sin, by removing the occasion providentially, or by helping them to resist the temptation, graciously assisting their spirits in the trial, so that no temptation shall befall them, but a way of escape shall be opened, that they may be able to bear it, 1 Cor. x. 13. And thus his people have frequent occasions to bless his name for his preventing goodness, when they are almost in the midst of all evil. And this I take to be the meaning of Gal. v. 16. "This, I say then, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh;" tempted by them, you may be, but fulfil them ye shall not; my spirit shall cause the temptation to die, and wither away in the womb, in the embryo of it, so that it shall not come to a full birth.

4. *He protects them in his ways* *, and suffers them not to relapse from him into a state of sin, and bondage to Satan any more. Indeed, Satan is restless in his endeavours to reduce them again to his obedience; he never leaves tempting and soliciting for their return; and where he finds a false professor he prevails; but Christ keeps his, that they depart not again. John xvii. 12. "All that thou hast given me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition." They are "kept by the mighty power of God, through faith unto salvation," 1 Pet. i. 5. Kept, as in a garrison, according to the importance of that word. None more solicited, none more safe than the people of God. They are "preserved in Christ Jesus," Jude i. It is not their own grace that secures them, but Christ's care, and continual watchfulness. † Our own graces left to themselves would quickly prove but "weights, sinking us to our own ruin," as one speaks. This is his covenant with them, Jer. xxxii. 4. "I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." Thus, as a king he preserves them.

5. *As a king he rewards their obedience, and encourages their sincere service.* Though all they do for Christ be duty, yet he hath united their comfort with their duty; "this I had, because I kept thy precepts," Psal. cxix. 56. They are engaged to take this encouragement with them to every duty, that he whom they seek "is a bountiful rewarder of such as diligently seek him," Heb. xi. 6. O what a good master do the saints serve! Hear how a king expostulates with his subjects, Jer. ii. 31. "Have I been a barren wilderness, or a land of darkness to you?" q. d. Have I been such a hard master to you? Have you any reason to complain of my service? To whomsoever I have been strait-handed, surely I have not been so to you. You have not found the ways or wages of sin like mine.

6. ‡ *He pacifies all inward troubles, and commands peace when their spirits are tumultuous.* This "peace of God rules in their hearts," Col. iii. 15. it doth $\beta\epsilon\alpha\beta\epsilon\upsilon\sigma\iota\nu$ act the part of an un-

* Christ and all his little ones, under his two wings, and in the compass or circle of his arms, are so sure, that cast him and them in the bottom of the sea, he shall come up again, and not lose one. An odd one cannot, nor shall be lost in the telling.

† *Perfectiones sibi relictæ, sunt pondera ad ruinam.* Gers.

‡ It acts the part of an umpire or judge among the other affections, for this is the meaning of the word $\beta\epsilon\alpha\beta\epsilon\upsilon\sigma\iota\nu$: when therefore, these tumultuous passions, anger, hatred and revenge rise in our hearts, this peace of God ought to do its office, i. e. put an end to these tumults like the judge in ancient games. *Daven.* in Col.

pire, in appeasing strife within. When the tumultuous affections are up, and in a hurry; when anger, hatred, and revenge begin to rise in the soul, this hushes and stills all. "I will hearken (saith the church) what God the Lord will speak, for he will speak peace to his people, and to his saints," Psal. lxxv. 8. He that saith to the raging sea, be still, and it obeys him; he can only pacify the disquieted spirit. They say of frogs, that if they be croaking never so much in the night, bring but a light among them, and they are all quiet: such a light is the peace of God among our disordered affections. These are Christ's regal acts. And he puts them forth upon the souls of his people, powerfully, sweetly, suitably.

(1.) Powerfully: whether he restrains from sin, or impels to duty, he doth it with a soul determining efficacy: for "his kingdom is not in word, but in power," 1 Cor. iv. 20. And those whom his Spirit leads, go bound in the spirit, to the fulfilling and discharge of their duties, Acts xx. 22. And yet,

(2.) He rules not by compulsion, but *most sweetly*. His law is a law of love, written upon their hearts. The church is the Lamb's wife, Rev. xix. 7. "a bruised reed he shall not break, and smoking flax he shall not quench," Isa. xlii. 2, 3. "I beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ," saith the apostle, 2 Cor. x. 1. For he delighteth in *free*, not in *forced* obedience. He rules *Children*, not *slaves*; and so his *kingly power* is mixed with *fatherly love*. His yoke is not made of *iron*, but *gold*.

(3.) He rules them suitably to their natures in a rational way; Hos. xi. 4. "I drew them with the cords of a man, with bands of love;" i. e. in a way proper to convince their reason, and work upon their ingenuity. And thus his eternal kingdom is administered by his Spirit, who is his *prorex*, or vicegerent in our hearts.

Thirdly, and lastly, we will open the privileges pertaining to all the subjects of this spiritual kingdom. And they are such as follow.

1. *These souls, over whom Christ reigns, are certainly and fully set free from the curse of the law.* "If the Son makes you free, then are you free indeed," John viii. 36. I say not, they are free from the law as a rule of life; such a freedom were no privilege to them at all: but free from the rigorous exactions, and terrible maledictions of it; to hear our liberty proclaimed from this bondage, is the joyful sound indeed, the most blessed voice that ever our ears heard. And this all that are in Christ shall hear; "If we be led by the Spirit, we are not under the law," Gal. v. 18. "Blessed are the people that hear this joyful sound," Psal. lxxxix. 15.

2. Another privilege of Christ's subjects, is, *freedom from the dominion of sin*. Rom. vi. 14. "Sin shall not reign over them; for they are not under the law, but under grace." One heaven cannot bear two suns; nor one soul two kings: when Christ takes the throne, sin quits it. It is true, the being of sin is there still; its defiling and troubling power remains still; but its dominion is abolished. O joyful tidings! O welcome day!

3. Another privilege of Christ's subjects, is, *protection in all the troubles and dangers to which their souls or bodies are exposed*. "This man shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land, and when he shall tread in our palaces," Mic. v. 5. Kings owe protection to their subjects: none so able, so faithful in that work as Christ; all "thou gavest me, I have kept, and none is lost," John xvii. 12.

4. Another privilege of Christ's subjects, is, *a merciful and tender bearing of their burdens and infirmities*. They have a meek and patient king; "Tell the daughters of Sion, thy king cometh meek and lowly;" Mat. xxi. 5. Mat. xi. 29. "Take my yoke, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly." The meek Moses could not bear the provocations of the people, Numb. xi. 12. but Christ bears them all: "He carries the lambs in his arms, and gently leads them that be with young," Isa. xlii. 11. He is one that can have compassion upon the ignorant, and them that are out of the way.

5. Again, *Sweet peace, and tranquillity of soul, is the privilege of the subjects of this kingdom*: for this kingdom "consisteth in peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," Rom. xiv. 17. And till souls come under his sceptre, they shall never find peace: "Come unto me, ye that are weary, I will give you rest." Yet do not mistake, I say not, they have all actual peace, at all times: no, they often break that peace by sin; but they have the root of peace, the ground-work and cause of peace. If they have not peace, yet they have that which is convertible into peace at any time. They also are in a state of peace, Rom. v. 11. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God." This is a feast every day, a mercy which they only can duly value, that are in the depths of trouble for sin.

6. And lastly, *everlasting salvation is the privilege of all over whom Christ reigns*. Prince and Saviour are joined together, Acts v. 31. He that can say, "thou shalt guide me with thy counsels," may add what follows, "and afterwards bring me to glory," Psal. lxxiii. 24. Indeed, the kingdom of grace doth but breed up children for the kingdom of glory. And to speak as the thing is, it is the kingdom of heaven here begun. The difference

betwixt them is not *specifical*, but only *gradual*: and therefore this, as well as that, bears the name of the kingdom of heaven. The king is the same, and the subjects the same. The subjects of this are shortly to be translated to that kingdom. Thus I have named, and indeed but named, some few of those inestimable privileges of Christ's subjects. We next apply it:

Inference 1. How great is their sin and misery who continue in bondage to sin and Satan, and refuse the government of Christ! Who had rather sit under the shadow of that bramble, than under the sweet and powerful government of Christ. Satan writes his laws in the blood of his subjects, grinds them with cruel oppression, wears them out with bondage to divers lusts, and rewards their service with everlasting misery. And yet how few are weary of it, and willing to come over to Christ! "Behold (saith one of Christ's "heralds) Christ is in the field, sent of God to recover his right "and your liberty. His royal standard is pitched in the gospel, "and proclamation made, that if any poor sinners, weary of the "Devil's government, and laden with the miserable chains of his "spiritual bondage, (so as these irons of his sins enter into his "very soul, to afflict it with the sense of them) shall thus come "and repair to Christ, he shall have protection from God's justice, "the Devil's wrath, and sin's dominion; in a word, he shall have "rest, and that glorious," Isa. xi. 10.*

And yet how few stir a foot towards Christ, but are willing to have their ears bored, and be perpetual slaves to that cruel tyrant? O when will sinners be weary of their bondage, and sigh after deliverance! If any such poor soul shall read these lines, let them know, and I do proclaim it in the name of my royal Master, and give him the word of a King for it, he shall not be rejected by Christ, John vi. 37. Come, poor sinners, come, the Lord Jesus is a merciful King, and never did, nor will hang up that poor penitent, that puts the rope about his own neck, and submits to mercy.

Inf. 2. How much doth it concern us to enquire and know whose government we are under, and who is king over our souls; whether Christ or Satan be in the throne, and sways the sceptre over our souls?

Reader, the work I would now engage thy soul in, is the same that Jesus Christ will thoroughly and effectually do in the great day. Then will he gather out of his kingdom every thing that offends, separate the tares and wheat, divide the whole world into two ranks or grand divisions, how many divisions and subdivisions soever there be in it now. It nearly concerns thee therefore to know who is Lord and King in thy soul. To help thee in this great

* Gurnal's Christian armour, p. 218.

work, make use of the following hints; for I cannot fully prosecute these things as I would.

1. * "To whom do you yield your obedience? His subjects and servants ye are to whom ye obey," Rom. vi. 16. It is but a mockery to give Christ the empty titles of Lord and King, whilst ye give your real service to sin and Satan. What is this but like the Jews, to bow the knee to him, and say, Hail master, and crucify him? "Then are ye his disciples, if ye do whatsoever he commands you," John xv. 14. He that is Christ's servant in *jest*, shall be damned in *earnest*. Christ doth not compliment with you; his pardons, promises, and salvation are real; O let your obedience be so too! Let it be sincere and universal obedience; this will evidence your unfeigned subjection to Christ. Do not dare to enterprize any thing, till you know Christ's pleasure and will, Rom. xii. 2. Enquire of Christ, as David did of the Lord, 1 Sam. xxiii. 9, 10, 11. Lord, may I do this or that? or shall I forbear? I beseech thee tell thy servant.

2. *Have you the power of godliness, or a form of it only?* There be many that do but trifle in religion, and play about the skirts and borders of it; spending their time about jejune and barren controversies: but as to the power of religion, and the life of godliness, which consist in communion with God in duties and ordinances, which promote holiness, and mortify their lusts, they concern not themselves about these things. But surely "the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power," 1 Cor. iv. 20. It is not meat and drink, (*i. e.* dry disputes about meats and drinks) "but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; for he that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God, and approved of men," Rom. xiv. 17, 18. O I am afraid when the great host of professors shall be tried by these rules, they will shrink up into a little handful, as Gideon's host did.

3. *Have ye the special saving knowledge of Christ?* All his subjects are translated out of the kingdom of darkness, Col. i. 13. The devil, that ruleth over you in the days of your ignorance, is called *the ruler of the darkness of this world*; his subjects are all blind, else he could never rule them. As soon as their eyes be opened, they run out of his kingdom, and there is no retaining them in subjection to him any longer. O enquire then whether you are brought out of darkness into this marvellous light! do you see your condi-

* O how many of us would have Christ divided into halves, that we might take the half of him only; his office, Jesus, and salvation? But *Lord* is a cumbersome word, and to obey, and work out our own salvation, and perfect holiness, is the cumbersome and stormy north side of Christ, and that we eschew and shift off.

tion, how sad, miserable, wretched it is by nature? do you see your remedy, as it lies only in Christ, and his precious blood? Do you see the true way of obtaining interest in that blood by faith? doth this knowledge run into practice, and put you upon lamenting heartily your misery by sin? thirsting vehemently after Christ and his righteousness? striving continually for a heart to believe and close with Christ? This will evidence you indeed to be translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of Christ.

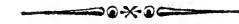
4. *With whom do you delightfully associate yourselves? Who are your chosen companions?* You may see to whom you belong by the company you join yourselves to. What do the subjects of Christ among the slaves of Satan? If the subjects of one kingdom be in another king's dominion, they love to be together with their own countrymen, rather than the natives of the place; so do the servants of Christ. They are a company of themselves, as it is said, Acts iv. 23. "They went to their own company." I know the subjects of both kingdoms are here mingled, and we cannot avoid the company of sinners except we go out of the world, 1 Cor. v. 10. but yet all your delights should be in the saints and in the excellent of the earth, Psal. xvi. 3.

5. *Do you live holy and righteous lives?* If not, you may claim interest in Christ as your King, but he will never allow your claim. "The sceptre of his kingdom is a sceptre of righteousness," Psal. xlv. 6. If ye oppress, go beyond, and cheat your brethren, and yet call yourselves Christ's subjects, what greater reproach can ye study to cast upon him? What is Christ the King of cheats? Doth he patronize such things as these? No, no, pull off your vizards, and fall into your own places; you belong to another prince, and not to Christ.

Inf. 3. Doth Christ exercise such a kingly power over the souls of all them that are subdued by the gospel to him? *O then let all that are under Christ's government walk as the subjects of such a King**. Imitate your King; the examples of kings are very influential upon their subjects. Your King hath commanded you not only to take his yoke upon you, but also to learn of him, Matth. xi. 29. Yea, and "if any man say that he is Christ's, let him walk even "as Christ walked," 1 John ii. 6. Your King is meek and patient, Isa. liii. 7. as a lamb for meekness: shall his subjects be lions for fierceness? Your King was humble and lowly; Matth. xxi. 5. "Behold thy King cometh meek and lowly." Will you be proud and lofty? Doth this become the kingdom of Christ? Your

* *Regis ad exemplum omnis componitur orbis.* The whole world follow the example of the Prince.

King was a self-denying King; he could deny his outward comforts, ease, honour, life, to serve his Father's design, and accomplish your salvation, 2 Cor. viii. 9. Phil. ii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. Shall his servants be self-ended, and self-seeking persons, that will expose his honour, and hazard their own souls for the trifles of time? God forbid. Your king was painful, laborious, and diligent in fulfilling his work, John ix. 3. Let not his servants be lazy and slothful. O imitate your King, follow the pattern of your King: this will give you comfort now, and boldness in the day of judgment, if as he was, so ye are in this world, 1 John iv. 17.



SERMON XVII.

Of the Kingly Office of Christ, as it is providentially executed in the World, for the Redeemed.

EPH. i. 22.

And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church.

THE foregoing verses are spent in a thankful and humble adoration of the grace of God, in bringing the Ephesians to believe in Christ. This effect of that power that raised their hearts to believe in Christ, is here compared with that other glorious effect of it, even the raising of Christ himself from the dead: both these owe themselves to the same efficient cause. It raised Christ from a low estate, even from the dead, to a high, a very high and glorious state; to be the head both of the *world*, and of the *church*; the head of the world by way of dominion, the head of the church by way of union, and special influence, ruling the world for the good of his people in it. "He gave him to be the head over all things to the church."

In this scripture let these four things be seriously regarded.

1. The dignity and authority committed to Christ; "He hath put all things under his feet;" which implies, full, ample and absolute *dominion* in him, and *subjection* in them over whom he reigns. This power is delegated to him by the Father: for besides the *essential, native, ingenite* power and dominion over all, which he hath as God, and is common to every person in the Godhead, Psal. xxii. 28. there is a *mediatory dispensed* authority, which is proper to him as *Mediator*, which he receives as the reward or fruit of his suffering, Phil. ii. 8.