

The Subjection of All Things Under the Feet of Jesus

Preached at North Street Chapel, Stamford, on Lord's Day Morning, Nov. 28, 1858

"Thou hast put all thing in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him." Hebrews 2:8

In reading the Scriptures I have been struck sometimes with the peculiar interpretation which is often given by the inspired writers of the New Testament of the passages which they quote from the Old. I do not mean to say that they are not most spiritual and blessed as being beyond question the infallible interpretations of the Holy Ghost, but they certainly are not such as we should have attached to them had we drawn the meaning from them for ourselves. For instance, we find in the first chapter of this epistle, as a scriptural proof of the Sonship of the Lord Jesus Christ, this passage: "I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son." Now these words were spoken in the first instance by Nathan the prophet to David in reference to the seed that he should have to sit upon his throne, and were literally fulfilled in Solomon. (2 Sam. 7:14.) We should not, except we had found it here, have had the least idea that the words were applicable to the Sonship of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that the Holy Ghost had a reference in them to that glorious truth in addition to the promise given to David to be fulfilled in his son after the flesh. Take another instance of a similar kind. In the second Psalm we find these words: "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee." (Psa. 2:7.) We can well understand how these words apply to the eternal Sonship of Jesus, for as such they are quoted in the first chapter of this epistle. But we should not have understood that they had

special reference also to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ unless they had been so applied by Paul: "And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second Psalm, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." (Acts 13:32, 33.) So again, "I will put my trust in him," as quoted Heb. 2:13 from Psalm 18:2 is another instance of this peculiar interpretation of the Old Testament Scriptures in the New. Should we have thought, except the apostle Paul had attached that interpretation to it, that the words were a testimony to the Lord Jesus Christ taking the flesh and blood of the children? And yet as thus quoted and applied by him we can now easily see their suitability. For does not Jesus speak in the Psalm by the mouth of David, as is evident from various passages in it? And how? As man; for it was only as man that he could trust in God. This, therefore, was a prophecy that he should become a trusting man, and as such should partake of the flesh and blood of the children.

But I do not know a more striking instance of this what we may call divine mode of interpretation than is furnished in the chapter from which our text is taken, viz., Heb. 2. I refer to the interpretation given of Psalm 8, with which no doubt you are, or at least should be, familiar. But, for the sake of clearness, I will quote its opening verses: "O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens. Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger. When I consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" (Psa. 8:1, 2, 3, 4.) Now were we to read this

Psalm without the interpretation given in Hebrews 2, we should most probably think that David on one occasion, going out on a starry evening, was suddenly struck with amazement at the wonders of the midnight sky, and comparing the beauty of those glorious orbs with the poor, abject condition of man, broke out into a burst of admiration at the greatness of God and the insignificance of the poor worms of dust of which he was one. It seemed to fill him with astonishment when he considered "the heavens, the work of God's fingers, the moon and the stars which he had ordained," that so great and glorious a Being as manifested by these works of his creative hand should be mindful of a creature like man, or ever condescend to visit any son of man. And yet David saw that this poor, insignificant man was made at his first creation only a little lower than the angels, and that dominion being given him over the works of God's hands, according to the declaration in Genesis (Gen. 1:28), and all things being put under his feet, God had thus crowned him with glory and honour. This, I say, would probably have been our interpretation of Psalm 8, as indeed it is the literal meaning. But the apostle in this chapter leads us far beyond any interpretation of that kind. He shows us that the Psalm had a special reference to the Lord Jesus Christ; and that the "Man" spoken of was the God-Man—human nature in union with the Person of the Son of God. Let me quote his words. The object of the apostle, you will observe, is to show the superiority of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Mediator of the new covenant to the angels who assisted at the giving of the first covenant, as we find Stephen speaking before the council: "Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it." (Acts 7:53.) And in similar language the apostle himself speaks: "It was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator." "For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. But one in a certain place testified,

saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the work of thy hands. Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." (Hebrews 2:5-9.) The world (or rather age) to come means the gospel dispensation, that being the term often applied to it at the time when the apostle wrote. Looking, then, to the insignificance of human nature in itself, the mind of the psalmist was as if overwhelmed with wonder and astonishment at the contemplation of the purpose of God so to glorify and adorn it by investing his own Son with it. If you read Hebrews 2 with a spiritual eye you will see how the apostle thus brings forward Psalm 8 in the way in which I have pointed out, and thus casts upon it a gracious and heavenly light.

Now it is in reference to a passage in that psalm that the words of our text are brought forward by the apostle; for in it the inspired composer had spoken of God putting in subjection to man all the beasts of the field and fowl of the air and all that moveth in the paths of the seas. The apostle then taking those words as his text, shows from them that God had put all things in subjection under the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ in his present glorious exaltation as the God-Man to his own right hand.

These points may appear at first sight a little obscure and difficult to understand; but I trust, with God's help and blessing, to throw upon them sufficient light to make them,

as far as I can, not only a means of instructing your understanding, but of furnishing some food to your soul.

In opening up, then, the words of our text, I shall, with God's blessing,

I.—*First*, endeavour to direct your thoughts to *the humiliation* of our most blessed Lord; for without understanding his humiliation, we can have no spiritual or adequate views of his subsequent glorification.

II.—*Secondly*, to the *subjection of all things as put under his feet*.

III.—*Thirdly*, that in this matter *there is no exception*; for "in that God put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him."

IV.—*Fourthly*, that at present this subjection is *not complete*. It is begun, it is carrying on, but it is not finished: "But *now we see not yet all things put under him*."

I.—The incarnation of the Son of God is always spoken of in the inspired volume as the greatest depth of divine wisdom, the fullest display of divine power, and the highest fruit of divine love. As such therefore it is the sublimest mystery that can ever enter into the heart of man or angel on which to exercise their admiring thoughts, whether they adore the wisdom of God in designing, or his love in giving it birth, or his power in bringing it into execution. Angels therefore are represented as "desiring to look into" the heavenly mysteries of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow, as preached in the gospel by apostles and prophets "with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven." (1 Pet. 1:12.) There is also a remarkable passage to the same effect in the Epistle

to the Ephesians. "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Eph. 3:10, 11.) Do you not see from that passage how "the manifold wisdom of God according to his eternal purpose in Christ Jesus is made known by the church unto the principalities and powers," that is the angels, "in heavenly places?" And there seems little doubt that this was intimated by the two cherubim whose faces were made to look toward the mercy seat in the ark of the testimony. (Exod. 25:18-20.)

i. Now a part of this solemn mystery of godliness, into which the very angels desire to look, is the *humiliation* of the Son of God, which I proposed first to consider.

But before we can have any adequate views of the *humiliation* of the Lord Jesus Christ, we must first view him in the glory which he had with the Father before the world was; for he had *a being with God* before the world itself had a being. He therefore appeals to his heavenly Father in that memorable prayer which he offered up before his sufferings and sacrifice: "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." (John 17:5.) But what stronger proof of this eternal being of the Son of God with the Father can there be than the words which stand in the very front of John's gospel, as though written in letters of light to meet our eyes as we open it? "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." What a divine testimony does the Holy Ghost here give by the pen of John to the being of Jesus before all worlds, and that he is God, verily and truly God, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Holy Ghost.

But not only does Scripture give unto us this and many other precious and blessed testimonies to the eternal being of the Lord Jesus Christ as a Person in the glorious Godhead, but it also sets before us in the plainest and most distinct terms his *eternal Sonship*, as the mode of his Personal subsistence in the Godhead. Now as this is a point which I consider of vital importance, and one very dear to my heart, I have long felt led strongly to insist upon it;* and this not only on account of its own momentous importance and its connection with every branch, as well as with the very root of our most holy faith, but because the fearful error is spreading in our day of denying and attempting to overthrow this vital doctrine. Blinded by error and deceived by the father of lies, how little such men understand, or bear in mind those solemn declarations of the Holy Ghost in the inspired word, such as, "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father." (1 John 2:23.) And again, "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son." (1 John 5:9, 10.) Is it not a solemn consideration that he who believeth not the witness which God hath given of his Son maketh God a liar? And is not that also a solemn word, "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life?" (1 John 5:12.)

* It should be borne in mind, that this sermon was preached (Nov. 28, 1858) some time before I wrote and published so much upon this subject.—J.C.P.

But I will now attempt to show you, with God's blessing, some of the reasons why we should hold and adhere to the

scriptural doctrine of the eternal Sonship of Christ with all the strength of an enlightened understanding and all the power of a believing heart.

1. First it *involves the very doctrine of the Trinity itself*. There are two errors which men hold concerning the nature of the Trinity. One is usually called "Tritheism," that is, a holding or speaking of the Trinity as if the three Persons in the Godhead were three distinct Beings or Gods. That is an error in one direction, and does away with the Unity of the Godhead. The other error in the opposite direction is called "Sabellianism," from one Sabellius, an ancient heretic, who introduced or maintained it, which is, that there are not three distinct Persons in the Godhead, but only one God under three different names. Each of these errors is deadly and fatal, for as the one denies the Unity of the Persons in one undivided Godhead, so the other denies the Trinity of Persons in that undivided Unity. Now between these two errors lies the truth, which is, that there is but one God, and yet, that in this Unity of Godhead, exists a Trinity of distinct Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. But if you deny that Christ is the eternal Son of the Father in truth and love, and yet hold, as many of these erroneous men do, the Deity of Christ, you then set up three distinct Gods instead of three distinct Persons in the Godhead; in other words, you really are a Tritheist, and so are involved in fundamental error. But when we see by the eye of faith the Father and the Son ever as the Father and the Son, and so subsisting through all eternity in a way which we can never comprehend and yet can believe, and by the same eye of faith see the Holy Ghost proceeding from the Father and the Son, and yet a divine Person in the Trinity, we hold three distinct Persons in the Godhead; and yet so bound together in the very nature of their personal Subsistence, the Father being eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Ghost eternal, that these three Persons are but one Jehovah in the

Unity of one undivided, indivisible Essence. If you ask me to explain how this can be, and how these three distinct Persons can be but one God, or how there can be an eternal Father, an eternal Son, and an eternal Spirit, I answer at once that I cannot. I cannot explain the nature of my own being: how then can I explain the nature of the being of God? I cannot tell how my own soul and body are united to form one man: how then can I unfold the mystery of the Unity of the three Persons of the sacred Trinity? But as I believe that I have a soul, though I cannot tell how it is united to my body, from the inward testimony of my own being, so I believe, from the testimony of God in the word, and from the internal testimony of the blessed Spirit in my heart, that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of the Father in truth and love, and was so from all eternity.

2. Again, to deny the eternal Sonship of Jesus overthrows the grand *distinguishing feature of God's love to the Church*. What read we in John 3? "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16.) There the love of God is set forth as constraining him, so to speak, to give up his only begotten Son. But if Christ be not his only begotten Son, where is God's love in giving him up? Have I not quoted the very words of Jesus himself, and did not *he* know the mystery of his own generation? Has not then the word "only begotten" in *his* mouth peculiar force? And surely if God gave "his only begotten Son," he must have been his only begotten Son *before* he gave him. Did God's love precede his gift, or did his gift precede his love? Did God's giving his Son make him his Son, or was he a Son antecedent to, and independent of God's giving him? Thus this one text is sufficient to decide the whole matter, if men could or would but receive God's own testimony. But take another text of a similar character: "Herein is love, not that

we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 John 4:10.) Here the gift of the Son is spoken of as the fruit of God's love. If then he be not his Son, and were not his Son before this gift, what and where is that love? Its very proof at once is gone, and with it the love of God quite overthrown. He is also said to be sent to be "the propitiation for our sins," which involves his Deity, for it was that only which made his bloodshedding and death a propitiatory sacrifice. How much then is involved in this doctrine of the eternal Sonship of Christ. Again, we read, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. 8:32.) Here the love of God is set forth as being so great that he even *spared* not "his own Son." But if he had not been his *own* Son, his real, true, and proper Son, where is the force of that Scripture? where the nature and value of the gift? If the Son of God be merely a Son by adoption, by virtue of the covenant, by the assumption of our nature in the womb of the Virgin Mary, where is all that wondrous depth of love which constrained the Father not even to spare his own Son, but to deliver him up for us all? Surely he was "his own Son" *before* he delivered him up for us. Thus, by denying that the Lord Jesus Christ is God's *own* Son, that is, his Son by nature, you strike a blow not merely at the Trinity but at the love of God also in the gift of his dear Son, virtually deny propitiation by his blood, and thus overthrow the gospel of the Lord Jesus root and branch. Therefore whatever you do, cleave with all the strength of your mind and heart to that grand truth which shines as with a ray of light all through the Scriptures, that Jesus is the true, proper, and only begotten Son of God. Unless you believe that he is the Son of God, nay more, unless you receive him into your soul as the Son of God, you have no eternal life; and if you go out of life without believing in his name and receiving him as the Son of God into your heart, where he is you will never

come. You will see him on his great white throne, but to your eternal dismay; you will see his face covered with a most awful frown, and he will banish you from his presence into an abyss of endless woe, with these words, "I never knew you; depart from me ye that work iniquity." (Matt. 7:23.) But "whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in God;" and it is this alone which will give "boldness in the day of judgment." (1 John 4:15-17.)

ii. Having then seen a little of the glory of Christ as the eternal Son of God, we will now look at his *humiliation*.

1. When and where did his humiliation begin? It was at his incarnation. I have often thought of a passage in the Prayer Book, though older probably than the Prayer Book by a thousand years, in what is called the "Te Deum:" "When thou tookest upon thee to deliver man, thou didst not abhor the Virgin's womb." There is much truth and beauty in that expression of the ancient Church. It was there that he took flesh, as the angel assured Mary. "And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." (Luke 1:35.) Here then is the grand distinction between our generation and the conception of the human nature of the Lord Jesus Christ. In earthly generation there needs must be sin; for a sinful father cannot but beget a sinful child; but there was no sin in the conception in the womb of the Virgin Mary of the human nature of Jesus under the operation of the Holy Ghost: for he sanctified that portion of her flesh which the Lord took by that act and in that very moment. Thus, though the human nature of the Lord Jesus Christ in both body and soul was like our own in all points, sin excepted, yet there was in neither any speck, spot, or blemish, because conceived in a supernatural way under the

operation of the Holy Ghost. O what a mystery, that the Lord Jesus should be complete man, and yet man without spot or wrinkle; possessing all the faculties of manhood, both in body and soul; as complete a man as any of us, and yet not as we are, stained and defiled by original and actual sin, but possessed of a pure humanity which he united in the very act of conception to his own eternal Godhead. This is the great mystery of godliness, "God manifest in the flesh;" this is the mystery which angels adore, and the contemplation of which will be heaven's eternal joy.

2. Now in taking this nature, Christ voluntarily "descended into the lower parts of the earth," that is, he took the lowest condition man could take. He did not take our nature so as to travel in the highest walks of life; to sit as a king upon his throne, surrounded with pageantry and power. But "he took the form of a servant" and assumed the lowly guise of the son of a mechanic; for Joseph, his reputed father, exercised the trade of a carpenter, and it is supposed that in his early days the Lord Jesus wrought with him at the same occupation. At least, it was reproachfully said of him, "Is not this the carpenter?" (Mark 6:3.) But whether so or not, and it is no indignity to the Lord Jesus to suppose that he did, certainly when he assumed his ministry he went out himself as he afterwards sent his disciples without purse or scrip, having no property of his own, but living upon alms. We therefore read that "Joanna" and others "ministered unto him of their substance." (Luke 8:3.) Nay he himself said, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." (Matt. 8:20.) You, or some of you, may have to travel far and long in poverty's vale; may have hard work at times even to obtain the bread that perisheth for yourselves and families; and being deeply tried by these providential afflictions, may often mourn the hardness of your lot, and secretly envy the

prosperity of others. But what an example of patient endurance of poverty's rugged lot have you set before your eyes in the Lord Jesus Christ! Surely you are not yet so poor as he was. You have a place where to lay your head, a bed to lie down on all night, and do not live upon alms, ministered to you by the hands of others. Surely, then, though your appointed lot may be amongst "the poor of this world, rich in faith, you are not sunk so low, even in outward poverty, as your blessed Redeemer." And surely it is for your good that you are walking in that path. The Lord of life and glory chose it for his own, and shall you murmur because he has chosen it for you?

3. But look again at another feature of the humiliation of the Lord Jesus. The prophet describes him as "despised and rejected of men;" *a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief*. He adds also, "Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows." His tender, feeling heart was ever suffering; for there was no form of human sorrow which did not touch his sympathising soul. We therefore find it recorded: "But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd." (Matt. 9:36.)

4. He also had, as the apostle speaks, "to endure the contradiction of sinners against himself" (Heb. 12:3); so that on one occasion his righteous soul was even moved with holy anger, "being grieved at the hardness of their hearts." (Mark 3:5.) What humiliation in the Son of God, to be thus opposed as well as scorned by the proud Scribes and Pharisees, and his words of truth and grace wrested into occasion of accusation against him.

5. But the greatest instance of humiliation in the blessed Lord

was, as the apostle speaks, in his becoming "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross;" for this includes all his sufferings of body and soul, when he was made a propitiation for sin. It was then chiefly at the last that the Lord came into those floods of suffering, under which he cried, "I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me." (Psa. 69:2.) O how sin pressed him down in the gloomy garden, when the sweat and blood fell thickly (it is in the original "large drops," or "clots") from his surcharged brow! What humiliation as well as suffering were his when he stood before the council, and afterwards in Pilate's judgment hall; when spit upon, buffeted, and his back mangled with stripes; when sunk below the rudest soldier and the lowest servant when Pilate sentenced him to be crucified. What humiliation when he was condemned to endure that most cruel and ignominious death—a death which none but slaves and the worst of malefactors ever suffered. And what humiliation and what depths of suffering when the sentence was actually executed. But it was not the mere bodily agony of the cross, it was not the mere pain, though most acute and severe, of the nails driven through his sacred hands and feet. It was not the being stretched upon the cross six hours that constituted the chief part of the Redeemer's suffering. As a proof of this, he never gave a sigh under his bodily agony; for "as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." But it was the almost intolerable load of imputed sin—the imputed sins of millions; it was the tremendous discharge of the wrath of God into his holy soul; it was the hiding of his Father's face, and as the bitter consequence the very pangs of hell that there caught hold of him. You may have experienced some small measure of the wrath of God, and had your soul tortured by the weight of sin and guilt pressing upon you. This may give you some feeble idea of the sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ under the wrath of God

when he drank the cup of his indignation to the very dregs. In fact, unless Deity had supported the humanity of the Lord Jesus, he must have sunk under the weight. A millionth part of what Jesus suffered upon the cross would burst the soul and body of any man asunder. But as it was the power of Deity that sustained his human nature in the Mount of Transfiguration, so it was the power of Deity that supported that same nature upon the cross. And O what a glorious fruit and issue of atoning blood and dying love! There he put away sin by the sacrifice of himself; there he defeated Satan; and through death destroyed him that had the power of death. (Heb. 2:14.) There he reconciled the Church unto God, washed her from her sins in his own blood, and so to speak held her up triumphantly before the eyes of his Father without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. O blessed, thrice blessed are our souls if we have an interest, a clear and manifest interest in that precious blood; if our vile, dreadful, and horrible sins were then laid upon our suffering Surety, and he washed them all in his most precious blood. Here is all our hope, for there is no other sacrifice for sin but this, no other propitiation, no other expiation, no other atonement. If then we have no interest, no lot or part in this atoning sacrifice of the Lord the Lamb, what and where are we? Guilty sinners, exposed to the wrath of God as a consuming fire.

II.—But we pass on to show the *exaltation* of the Lord Jesus in the *subjection of all things* under his feet.

We have viewed him in his humiliation; we have seen him at the cross, beheld his atoning blood, and heard his expiring voice. Now then let us look at him as raised from the dead and exalted to the right hand of the Father. And you will observe, that he is exalted not only to the throne of dignity but to the throne of *power*. "*Thou hast put all things in*

subjection under his feet." This exaltation was the promised reward of his humiliation. This is clearly put before us by the apostle, when having shown us how Jesus "humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross," he adds, "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth." (Phil. 2:9, 10.) This was a part of the "joy set before him for which he endured the cross, despising the shame." (Heb. 12:2.) In the verse therefore following our text, the apostle says, "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, crowned with glory and honour." Thus his exaltation consists mainly in two things: 1. First, that God has crowned him with glory and honour; 2. Secondly, that he has put all things in subjection under his feet. The last is that which we have here chiefly to consider. The figure is taken from the practice of ancient conquerors, as we find Joshua bringing the five kings of the Amorites out of the cave, and bidding the captains of the men of war to put their feet upon their necks. And I remember to have seen a representation of a picture, still existing in one of the Egyptian tombs, of a conqueror putting his feet upon the necks of those whom he had vanquished. Thus when we read in the text, "Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet," the meaning is, that all things are submitted to the sovereign command of the Lord Jesus Christ at the right hand of the Father. Let us then look at some of these things. How comprehensive the expression; what a wide scope it affords for thought. But time and opportunity only allow me to hint at a few of them.

1. First, *all persons*, from the Queen upon the throne to the pauper in the Union workhouse, are put in subjection under Christ's feet. The Queen's throne is not her own. She is only there because Jesus has put her there, and will only be there

as long as he sees fit. We see men high in power and place, the rulers of our land, to whom we owe subjection, as powers ordained of God, on the same gospel principle as we owe honour and loyalty to our Queen. But who gives them that power? Who exalts them to that authority? The Lord Jesus Christ. He is Sovereign king over them all. Now if this be true, and it must be so unless the word of God be false, how it represents men of every station, rank, and degree as completely subject to the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. They cannot move hand or foot, except by his sovereign good pleasure; and to lift up a hand against him, is to lift up a hand against that Sovereign, who, with one frown, could crush them into the very dust. Now could we carry about with us a realising sense of this Sovereign supremacy of Jesus, how little we should fear the face of man. We should still render to all their dues, tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour (Rom. 13:7); but we should stand in slavish fear to no man. You may have those placed in worldly circumstances over you, who seem not only to have the will but the power sadly to oppress you. Need you fear them if you are one of the Lord's? Why need you fear the face of any man? Look around you; view your oppressor; look him fairly and steadfastly in the face. Need you fear his frown, or blench before his angry look? Is he not, with all other men, put in subjection under the feet of Christ? Could he lift up a hand against you, except the Lord Jesus Christ gave him permission? Can he go a single step beyond the will and intention of the Lord Jesus Christ? He cannot. Fear not then the face of the oppressor: he has no power against you, except so far as the Lord Jesus Christ gives him power; and that power he will never suffer him to exert to do you any real harm. I can speak here from experience; for I remember on one occasion being much afraid of one high in power who could have done me, and indeed threatened to do me serious

injury. But before the appointed day came for my coming before him, he was in his grave. And O how sweet were those words made to me, "Who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass?" (Isai. 51:12.)

2. But again, as all persons are subject unto his authority, so *all things* are equally subject to his almighty power. There may be circumstances in your earthly lot which at this moment are peculiarly trying. You look round and wonder how this or that circumstance will terminate. At present it looks very dark; clouds and mists hang over it, and you fear lest these clouds may break, not in showers upon your head, as Cowper speaks in his hymn, but burst forth in the lightning flash and the thunder stroke. But all things, and if all things then this circumstance also that fills your mind with apprehension, are put in subjection under Christ's feet. The thing cannot take place except by his sovereign will, nor can it move any further except by his supreme disposal. Then make yourself quiet; he will not suffer you to be harmed. It shall only execute his sovereign purposes, and it shall be amongst those all things which, according to his promise, shall work together for your good.

3. But all *trials* are also put in subjection under him. Many are the trials of the righteous, for we read, "The Lord trieth the righteous" (Psa. 11:5); and if the Lord himself try them, how can you escape if you are one of the righteous nation which keepeth the truth? (Isai. 26:2.) But none of these trials come upon them by chance. They are all appointed in weight and measure, are all designed to fulfil a certain end; and however painful they may at present be, yet they are intended for your good. When the trial comes upon you, what a help it would be for you if you could view it thus: "This trial is sent for my good; it does not spring out of the dust; the

Lord himself is the supreme disposer of it; for I am sure it could not come without his sending or permission. It is very painful to bear; but let me look up to him who sits at God's right hand; let me believe that he has appointed me this peculiar trial; it is in subjection under his feet with every other circumstance. He will bring about his own will therein, and remove the trial, or give me patience under it, and submission to it." You may be afflicted by sickness. It is not by chance that such or such sickness visits your body; that the Lord sees fit to afflict head, heart, chest, liver, hand, foot, or any other part of your body. If all things are put in subjection under him, has he exempted sickness and disease? Whatever you suffer in bodily disease, if you can but believe that it is put in subjection under his feet, and that he appoints and arranges it for your good, it will give you resignation to his holy and almighty will.

4. Again, if all things are put in subjection under him, then are *all temptations* also put under his feet. Do we not read? "And the God of peace shall bruise (*margin* "tread") Satan under your feet shortly." (Rom. 16:20.) And why under your feet, but because Satan and with him all his temptations are put under Jesus' feet as your risen and exalted Head? How sweet to see and feel this. Your path may at present be a path of great temptation; snares of the most dangerous and most deceitful kind may be laid for your feet in various directions; Satan may be allowed to assault your soul with all his infernal arts and arms. You may have a sad conflict with the vile lusts of your depraved nature, and feel that you have as many sins alive in your heart as there are hairs upon your head. But are not these things put in subjection under his feet? Would it be true that God has put *all* things under his feet if temptations were omitted? Is it not expressly said of our gracious Lord? "For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted." (Heb.

2:18.) And again, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." (1 Cor. 10:13.) "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations" (2 Pet. 2: 9); and we are told, that "Blessed is the man that endureth temptations," so that you are bidden even to count it all joy when you fall into them. (James 1:1, 12.) Can Satan tempt you a single point beyond the Lord's permission? How was it with Job, when Satan was allowed to tempt him? Did not God fix the exact length of Satan's tether when he said, "Touch not his life?" He was allowed to destroy all his property, to sweep off all his children at a stroke, to smite him with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown, and, what was worse, to fill his carnal mind with the most horrid suggestions to blaspheme God and die. But he could not touch his life, either natural or spiritual, or drive him to blaspheme God, though he so far prevailed as to make him curse the day of his birth. "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further," the Lord virtually said to him, "and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." (Job 38:11.) So with you: if indeed you are the Lord's, whatever temptations you may have to endure, they can never touch your life; for that is "hid with Christ in God"—safely lodged in his heart and hands who reigns supreme in power and glory.

5. So with your *afflictions* also. They too are put under the feet of Jesus. You may think at times how hardly you are dealt with; mourning, it may be, under family bereavements, sorrowing after the loss of your household treasures, a beloved husband, wife, or child; or you may be sorely fretting in your own soul under such afflictions of body and mind, as you could not disclose even to your nearest friend; or you may be even, what is worst of all, murmuring and

rebellling against the Lord himself. But O that you could bear in mind that all your afflictions, be they what they may, are put under the feet of Jesus, so that, so to speak, not one can crawl from under his feet but by his permission, and, like chidden hounds, they crawl again beneath them at a word of command from his lips.

III.—But I pass on to our third point, which is to show, that in putting all things in subjection under the feet of Jesus, God *left nothing that is not put under him.*

The apostle seems to add these words as if he would, to use a familiar expression, clinch the nail. A person might say, for instance, "Well, I do believe in a general way that all things are put in subjection under Jesus' feet; but when I take a survey of all the various, I might say, immense and complicated circumstances of this world, I find it very difficult to raise my faith up to that point to believe that every individual thing, through the whole complicated series of human events, is under his positive, immediate, and direct control." Now the apostle meets that difficulty not by explaining it, but by enlarging more fully on his previous declaration. He adds, therefore, these decisive words: "In that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him." It is worth observing the stress and authority which he lays upon God's word. That is his ultimatum—the word of a king, from which there is no appeal. Receive it as fully as he does and your unbelief will stop her mouth. But you may look round and ask, as if still unconvinced, "If so, why do the ungodly prosper? Why is sin permitted to go to such awful lengths in the world, and to run down our streets unchecked like water? Why are the children of God so oppressed? Why is true religion so hated? And why, if Jesus is so supreme in authority and power, is Satan allowed to carry the chief sway?" I fully grant, that

many of the saints of God have been puzzled and perplexed upon these points, and have been scarcely able to answer them to their own satisfaction or to that of others. I fully admit, that one would have thought, reasoning naturally, if the Lord Jesus Christ were at God's right hand, and all things put in subjection under his feet, matters would not be as they are, either in the church or in the world. We should not see saints slip and fall and bring reproach on the cause of God and truth; we should not see hypocrites so abounding in churches and congregations; we should not see the truth despised and hated, and error patronised and loved; we should not see the enemies of truth rejoice, and the friends of Jesus mourn: we should not see in this so-called Christian nation sins only to be paralleled by heathens and savages, and the gospel only known and professed by a few despised and outcast people. Reasoning naturally, should we not say, "How can Jesus be at God's right hand, and all things put in subjection under his feet, yet such evils prevail, and so little good be accomplished? As Lord of all, why does he not cause the gospel to be preached more truthfully, widely, and successfully? Why are not more called out of darkness into light? Why does he not make us really what we are nominally, a Christian nation? Why should he have so few to serve and glorify him, and they so feebly and imperfectly?" These questions, and numberless others of a similar nature, may suggest themselves to a reasoning mind: but the apostle meets all such inquiries with this pointed declaration: "In that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him." We shall presently see another explanation which he gives; but for the present, he beats down all such inquiries by bringing down upon them the hammer of God's word—the full force of God's own positive declaration. Then, reason, be still if thou canst, hold thy peace, and allow faith to come forth and submit to the word of truth. But even look at it thus. If all things were not put

under the feet of Jesus, would this world be habitable? Would not men rend and tear each other to pieces like wild beasts? Could the saints of God dwell in this vale of tears for a single day, had Satan full dominion, surrounded as they are by the most deadly enemies, and hated by all the malice of the wicked one? No, their enemies would swallow them up, the gospel be uprooted, the ministers of truth silenced, and darkness and heathenism spread over the land; nor would there be a single saint of God left upon earth, for such a storm of persecution would break out against them as would sweep every one away. Let us then hold fast this truth, for on it depends so much of our comfort, that, in putting all things under the feet of Jesus, God left nothing which was not put under him.

IV.—But we pass on to our fourth and last point, and one which, as I just hinted, may furnish an answer to some of those inquiries which naturally suggest themselves to a reasoning mind: "*We see not yet all things put under him.*"

i. The same difficulty met the apostle's eye as meets yours and mine. He saw that, viewed by the eye of sense, all things were not put visibly under Jesus, though they were actually; that sin still reigned in high places; that persecution still raged against the saints of God; that this was still a disordered world, presenting little outward evidence that the Lord of heaven and earth was exercising supreme government in and over it. He therefore directs our eyes to a future day. "*We see not yet all things put under him.*" The day is coming when it will be seen by all that "all power is given unto Jesus in heaven and in earth." (Matt. 28:18.) A day is coming when the world shall acknowledge his power and his sway; when there will be a universal reign of righteousness, and it shall be seen by men upon earth as well as by saints in heavenly bliss that all things are put

under his feet. It may seem hard to believe this, and many will not believe it: But what has God said? and let God be true and every man a liar. "As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord" (Num. 14:21); and again, "For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." (Isa. 11:9.) How do the waters cover the sea? In whole or in part? So to fulfil the promise must the knowledge of the Lord one day wholly fill the earth. But that day is not yet come, nor do we know when it will come.

ii. But take another view of the words. Look at them experimentally. Take them as applicable to the various circumstances which continually meet your eye, and especially to the trials that your mind is continually exercised with. Is it not true in this point of view, that though all things are virtually put in subjection under Jesus' feet, yet "we see not yet all things actually put under him?"

1. You may, for instance, be in very trying circumstances as regards *Providence*. These trying circumstances are put in subjection under his feet, but as yet you do not see it. A cloud is over your eyes; unbelief dims your view; and you see not yet that those circumstances which are so trying are under his feet who rules all things. You have proved it so in times past; but as regards your present trial you do not yet see it in subjection to his sovereign sway as managed by him for your good.

2. Or it may be that you are now passing through some very painful and severe *trial* under which you groan, being burdened, nor have you any present evidence that the Lord Jesus is managing that trial for you. Your oppression, or persecution, or family trial, or church trouble, you do not yet see put under his feet. It is still too much upon your own

shoulders; it is still too much carried, and that very ineffectually, by your own strengths. But is not this to try your faith? Is it not that you may wait and watch the Lord's hand? And by and by you will see that very circumstance, which seems now almost to escape his notice, put under the Lord's feet. Your oppressor may have still power and even increasing power over you; you may lose a good situation, be deprived of your lawful right, and what you have a fair claim to; be prevented from rising as you ought to rise in a house of business were fair measures carried out: be defeated in your attempts to gain a honest livelihood, and every plan of yours crossed and thwarted. And under all this you may murmur, fret, and rebel that these things are permitted, and that these adverse circumstances are not yet put under Jesus' feet. But you shall see it. The day will come, and it may be before long, for this painful mystery to be cleared up. You may hear the church bell toll and be one to carry the coffin of your oppressor to the cemetery. You may look into his grave or see his name on a tombstone, and say, "There lies my cruel enemy. What and where is he now who sometimes made me fairly tremble? A heap of dust." So with your afflictions. This affliction of yours that does not at present seem to be one of the things that the Lord is managing for you, you will one day see put under his feet. And you will also see that it was as much under his feet when you did not see it as when you do. And you will then see how it worked together for your good what submission it wrought in you to the divine will: what prayer was offered up in and by it: what searchings of heart it led to: what promises were applied to your soul in and under it to which you were previously a stranger; and what strength was given to endure the affliction even when it pressed the hardest. Then you will see that it was even then put under his feet, and that nothing but your unbelief prevented you seeing it.

3. But you complain, and justly, that your sins are not yet put under his feet. These are your greatest burdens. Pride, lust, covetousness, carnality, and a host of other evils, how they oppress you! You would if you could take these sins and put them under Jesus' feet, saying, "Lord, trample them down, that I may never feel their hateful workings more. O take them and put them under thy feet! O tread them down into the very dust that they may never rise out of their ashes to plague me more!" And yet you see them not yet under his feet. Your lusts still work; pride, covetousness, carnality are still alive and lively. You see them not yet put under his feet, but you will see them. The Lord will crucify the flesh and subdue all your iniquities as well as pardon all your sins, for that is his promise.

4. Or the *temptations* you are assailed by, which seem to gather fresh strength and become stronger instead of weaker; or perhaps some old temptation that you have been freed from for months or weeks, but which now has risen again, like a phoenix from its ashes, stronger than ever: you see not yet this temptation put under his feet. But does it not give more room for prayer that it may be put under his feet? more reason to abhor yourself in dust and ashes? Or may it not be instrumental in crushing that hydra-headed monster of self-righteousness in you with its seven necks; or the means of bringing you to a spot you were never brought to before, for your mouth to be stopped and you to become guilty before God? Or may it not bring you down to feel that indeed you are the chief of sinners and less than the least of all saints? But you see not yet the temptation put under his feet. But it will be so, when it has done its work, has let out the life-blood of self-righteousness, and convinced you that nothing but his rich, free, and superabounding grace can save your guilty soul.

5. So also may we apply the words to all *circumstances* which may occur in Providence or grace; however dark or mysterious now, whatever dismal line they may wear, however the riddle cannot be read by human reason or explained by yourself or others, whatever mystery may envelop the Lord's present dealings with your soul, it will be seen by and by still to be one of those things which are put under the feet of Jesus.

Do you not wish to be there? To lie at his feet,—is not that your coveted posture? Is there a better posture than that? Yes, there is one: to lie in his bosom. But do not despair of help or hope if you are but made willing to lie at his feet. Are you not willing that he should put under his feet everything opposed to his grace and his glory? Are you not willing that your sins, your lusts, your temptations should all be put under his feet who reigns and rules above? And are you not willing and more than willing that he should be your Lord and King, bear the chief sway, guide you with his counsel, and afterwards receive you to glory? (Psa. 73:24.) Can you have a believing heart in your bosom and not be thus minded? Can the Lord the Spirit have begun and is carrying on a sacred work upon your soul and you not be made willing to lie at the feet of the Lord—not to be willing that he should put his feet upon the neck of his enemies and your enemies? Do you want any King but Jesus as your spiritual King? We owe all loyalty to our Queen: she has not a more loyal subject than myself. But we have a spiritual King to whom we owe spiritual allegiance, to whom we give what we give to no earthly monarch—the affections of our spiritual mind. Do we then want any one to reign over us but Jesus? We say, "Lord, take us and make us wholly thine. We would be thine here on earth as well as thine hereafter in heaven. Only give us now and then as we struggle through the wilderness a look of love, a cheering word; apply to our heart a comforting

promise, and give us a blessed testimony that as we are suffering with thee here, we shall be glorified with thee hereafter. Lord, enable us to believe, to hope and to love, to struggle on through this vale of tears, not giving way to sin or Satan, but ever seeking to know thy will and do it, and ever desiring that thou shouldst be our Lord and God, be the strength of our heart below and our portion for ever above."