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John Gill's

A BODY OF DOCTRINAL DIVINITY

Book 5—Chapter 13

OF THE KINGLY OFFICE OF CHRIST

The prophetic and priestly offices of Christ having been considered; the kingly office of Christ is next to be treated of. Christ is king in a twofold sense: he is a king by nature; as he is God, he is God over all; as the Son of God, he is heir of all things; as he is God the Creator, he has a right of dominion over all his creatures: and he is king by office, as he is mediator; and accordingly he has a two-fold kingdom, the one natural, essential, universal, and common to him with the other divine persons; the kingdom of nature and providence is his, what he has a natural right unto, and claim upon; it is essential to him as God; dominion and fear are with him; it is universal, it reaches to all creatures visible or invisible, to all in heaven, earth, and hell; it is common to the three divine persons, Father, Son, and Spirit, who are joint creators of all the creatures, and have a joint rule, government, and dominion over them; and as Christ is the creator of all, nothing that is made being made without him, but all things by him, he has a right to rule over them. This kingdom of his extends to angels, good and bad; he is the head of all principality and power; of the good angels, he is their creator, lord, and king, from whom all worship, homage, and obedience are due unto him; and who are at his command to do his will and pleasure; and whom he employs as ministering spirits in nature, providence, and grace, as he pleases: and the evil angels, though they have left their first estate, cast off their allegiance to him, and rebelled against him, yet whether they will or no they are obliged to be subject to him; and even when he was manifest in the flesh, they trembled at him, and were obliged to quit the possession of the bodies of men at his command, and could do nothing without his leave. Men also good and bad, are under the government of Christ as God, who is Lord of all; he not only is king of saints, who willingly become subject to him; but even those who are sons of Belial, without a yoke, who have cast off the yoke, and will not have him to

reign over them; whether they will or not, they are obliged to yield unto him; over whom he rules with a rod of iron, and will break them in pieces as a potter's vessel; so easy, so inevitable, and so irreparable is their ruin and everlasting destruction by him. This his kingdom rules over all men, of all ranks and degrees, the highest and the greatest; he is King of kings, and Lord of lords; he sets them up and puts them down at his pleasure; by him they reign, and to him they are accountable. But besides this, there is another kingdom that belongs to Christ as God-man and Mediator; this is a special, limited kingdom; this concerns only the elect of God, and others only as they may have to do with them, even their enemies; the subjects of this kingdom are those who are chosen, redeemed, and called from among men by the grace of God, and bear the name of saints; hence the title and character of Christ with respect to them is "king of saints"; this kingdom and government of his is what is put into his hands to dispense and administer, and may be called a dispensatory, delegated government; what is given him by his Father, and he has received authority from him to exercise, and for which he is accountable to him; and when the number of his elect are completed in the effectual calling, he will deliver up the kingdom to the Father, perfect and entire, that God may be all in all. And this is the kingly office of Christ, now to be treated of; and which will be done much in the same manner the other offices have been treated of.

1. I shall show that Christ was to be a king; as appears by the designation of his Father, in his purposes, council, and covenant; by the types and figures of him; and by the prophecies concerning him.

1a. That he was to be a king, appears by the designation and appointment of him by his Father to this office; "I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion", says Jehovah (Ps. 2:6), that is, he had set up Christ his Son, in his eternal purposes, to be king over his church and people; and therefore calls him his king, because of his choosing, appointing, and setting up. And as he appointed him to be a king, he appointed a kingdom to him; which is observed by Christ; "I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me" (Luke 22:29). In the council and covenant of grace, Christ was called to take upon him this office, "feed the flock of slaughter", the church, subject to the persecutions of men; and the act of feeding them, designs the rule and government, care and protection of the people of God; in allusion to shepherds, by which name kings and rulers are sometimes called: to which Christ assented and agreed; saying, "I will feed the flock of slaughter", take the care and government of them (Zech. 11:4), upon which he was invested with the office of a king, and was considered as such; "Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever" (Heb 1:8).

1b. It appears from the types and figures of Christ, in his kingly office. Melchizedek was a type of him; not only in his priestly office, of whose order Christ was; but in his kingly office; both offices meeting in him, as they do in Christ, who is a priest upon his throne; from his quality as a king he had his name Melchizedek, king of righteousness, or righteous king; and such an one is Christ, a king that reigns in righteousness; and from the place and seat of his government, king of Salem; that is,

king of peace; agreeable to which, one of Christ's titles belonging to him, in his kingly office, is, prince of peace; (see Heb. 7:1; Isa 9:6). David was an eminent type of Christ in his kingly office; for his wisdom and military skill, his courage and valor, his wars and victories, and the equity and justice of his government; hence Christ, his antitype, is often, with respect to the Jews, in the latter days, called David their king, whom they shall seek and serve; and who shall be king over them (Jer 30:9; Ezek. 33:23 37:24; Hosea 3:5). Solomon also was a type of Christ as king; hence Christ, in "the Song of Songs", is frequently called Solomon, and king Solomon (Song of Sol. 3:7,9,11; 8:11,12), because of his great wisdom, his immense riches, the largeness of his kingdom, and the peaceableness of it; in all which he is exceeded by Christ; and who, speaking of himself, says, "a Greater than Solomon is here" (Matthew 12:42).

1c. This still more fully appears, that Christ was to be a King, by the prophecies concerning him, in this respect; as in the very first promise or prophecy of him (Gen. 3:15), that "the Seed of the woman", meaning Christ, should break the "serpent's head"; that is, destroy the devil, and all his works; which is an act of Christ's kingly power, and is expressive of him as a victorious prince, and triumphant conqueror over all his and his peoples enemies. Balaam foretold, that "there should come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre", that is, a Sceptre bearer, a King, should "rise out of Israel" (Num. 24:17 which prophecy, some way or other, coming to the knowledge of the magi, or wise men in the East, upon the appearance of a new star, led them to take a journey into Judea, to inquire after the birth of the King of the Jews, where he was born. In the famous prophecy of Isaiah, concerning Christ (Num. 9:6,7 it is said, that "the government should be upon his shoulders"; one of his titles be, "the Prince of peace"; and that of his government, and the peace of it, there should be no end; as well as it should be ordered and established with justice and judgment: and to the same purpose is another prophecy in Jeremiah (Jer 23:5,6) of the Messiah, the Man the Branch, it is said, "And a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth; and this is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness": and there can be no doubt but Christ is here meant; as well as in that known prophecy of the place of his birth, Bethlehem Ephratah; of which it is said, "Out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be Ruler in Israel", the King of Israel, as Christ is sometimes called (Micah 5:2). To which may be added, another prophecy of Christ, as King, and which was fulfilled in him; "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion—behold thy King cometh unto thee" (Zech. 9:9; Matthew 21:4,5), yea, the angel that brought the news to the Virgin Mary, of Christ's conception and incarnation, foretold unto her, that this her Son should be "great, and be called the Son of the Highest"; and that "the Lord God would give unto him the throne of his father David"; and that he should "reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there should be no end" (Luke 1:32,33).

2. I proceed to show, that Christ is a King; as it was decreed and determined he should be, and according to the types of him, and prophecies concerning him. And,

2a. Christ was a King before his incarnation, during the Old Testament dispensation. He was King over the people of Israel; not as a body politic; though their civil government was a theocracy; but as a church, a kingdom of priests, or a royal priesthood; and he is the Angel that was with them, the church in the wilderness, which spoke to Moses on mount Sinai; from whose right hand went the fiery law, the oracles of God; for the rule, government, and instruction of that people: he is the Angel that went before them, to guide and direct them, and to rule and govern them, whose voice they were to obey: he appeared to Joshua, with a drawn sword in his hand, and declared himself to be the Captain of the Lord's hosts, to fight their battles for them, and settle them in the land of Canaan. David speaks of him as a King in (Ps. 45:1-17), and represents him as a very amiable Person, grace being poured into his lips, and he fairer than the children of men; as a majestic and victorious Prince, whose queen stands at his right hand, in gold of Ophir, his church, who is called upon to worship him, to yield homage and subjection to him; because he is her Lord and King; and as such he is acknowledged by the church in the times of Isaiah; "The Lord is our Judge; the Lord is our Lawgiver; the Lord is our King" (Isa. 33:22; 26:13).

2b. Christ was King in his state of incarnation; he was born a King, as the wise men understood it he was, by the prophecy of him, and by the star that appeared, that guided them to come and worship him as such. The angel that brought the news of his birth to the shepherds, declared, that that day was born a Saviour, Christ the Lord, Head and King of his church; agreeable to the prophecy of him by Isaiah, that the child born, and Son given, would have the government on his shoulders, and be the Prince of peace; and Christ himself acknowledges as much, when he was asked by Pilate, whether he was a King? he answered in a manner which implied it, and gave assent unto it; though at the same time, he declared his kingdom was not of this world, but of a spiritual nature (John 18:36,37). He began his ministry with giving notice, that the "kingdom of heaven was at hand"; that is, his own kingdom, which was going to take place, with some evidence of it; and he assures the Jews, that the kingdom of God was then within them, or among them; though it came not with the observation of the vulgar: nor with outward show, pomp, and splendor, like that of an earthly king (Matthew 4:17; Luke 17:20,21), and Christ was known, and owned by some, as a King, though not by many: Nathaniel made the following noble confession of faith in him, respecting his person and office, upon a conviction of his being the omniscient God; "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God! thou art the King of Israel!" (John 1:49). When Christ entered into Jerusalem, in a very public manner, whereby was fulfilled the prophecy of him as a King (Zech. 9:9), not only the children cried, Hosanna to the Son of David! expressive of his royal character and dignity; but the disciples, in so many words, said, "Blessed be the King, that cometh in the name of the Lord!" (Matthew 21:4,5,9 Luke 19:38). Moreover, Christ, in the days of his flesh on earth, received authority from his divine Father, to execute judgment; that is, to exercise his kingly office in equity and justice; and this before his sufferings and death; and had all things requisite to it, delivered unto him by his Father (John 5:22,27; Matthew 11:27), and after his resurrection from the dead, and before his ascension to heaven, he declared, that "all power was given him in

heaven and in earth"; in virtue of which, he appointed ordinances, renewed the commission of his disciples to administer them, promising his presence with them, and their successors, to the end of the world (Matthew 28:18-20). All which shows how false the notion of the Socinians is, that Christ was no King, nor did he exercise his kingly office before his ascension to heaven. It is true, indeed,

2c. That upon his ascension to heaven, he "was made both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36), not but that he was both Lord and Christ before, of which there was evidence; but then he was declared to be so, and made more manifest as such; then he was exalted as a Prince, as well as a Saviour, and highly exalted, and had a name given him above every name; and angels, authorities, and powers, were made subject to him. He then received the promise of the Spirit, and his gifts from the Father, which he plentifully bestowed upon his apostles; whom he sent forth into all the world, preaching his gospel with great success, and causing them to triumph in him in every place where they came; and so increased and enlarged his kingdom: he went forth by them with his bow and arrows, conquering and to conquer, making the arrows of his word sharp in the hearts of his enemies, whereby they were made to submit unto him; sending forth the rod of his strength out of Zion, the gospel, the power of God unto salvation; he made multitudes willing in the day of his power on them, to be subject to him; whereby his kingdom and interest were greatly strengthened in the world; and from small beginnings, his kingdom being at first but like a grain of mustard seed, became very flourishing and populous: and in this way, more or less, Christ has been exercising his kingly office in the world; which, though sometimes it has been in great obscurity, yet will more gloriously appear in the latter day, in that remarkable period of time which may be properly called, "the spiritual reign of Christ"; when he shall take to himself his great power and reign; not begin to take it, nor begin to reign; but shall take it and exert it in a more conspicuous manner; and will reign before his ancients gloriously; when the kingdoms of this world shall become his, and he shall be King over all the earth; and there shall be one Lord, and his name one; and more especially, when the kingly office of Christ shall appear in its full glory, in his personal reign on earth a thousand years; of which two types of his kingly office, I shall treat separately and distinctly, in their proper place; and at present shall only observe,

2d. That all the rites and ceremonies used at the inauguration of kings, and their "regalia", are to be found with Christ. Were kings anointed? as Saul, David, and Solomon were, so was Christ; from whence he has his name, Messiah; he whose throne is for ever and ever, is anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows; that is, with the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit without measure; as he more eminently was, upon his ascension to heaven, when he was made, or declared, Lord and Christ; and, indeed, because of this ceremony used at the instrument of kings into their office, the original investiture of Christ with the kingly office is expressed by it; "I have set", or as in the Hebrew text, "I have anointed my King upon my holy hill of Zion" (Ps. 2:6; 45:6,7). Were kings crowned at the time of their inauguration? so was Christ at his ascension to heaven; he was then "crowned with glory and honour"; his Father set "a crown of pure gold on his head"; not a

material one; the phrase is only expressive of the royal grandeur and dignity conferred upon him: his mother, the church, is also said to crown him; and so does every believer set the crown on his head, when, rejecting all self-confidence, and subjection to others, they ascribe their whole salvation to him, and submit to him, as King of saints; and he, as a mighty Warrior, and triumphant Conqueror, is represented as having many crowns on his head, as emblematical of the many great and glorious victories he has obtained over all his, and the enemies of his people (Heb. 2:9; Ps. 21:3; Song of Sol. 3:11; Rev. 19:12). Do kings sometimes sit on thrones when in state? Isaiah, in vision, saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, when he saw the glory of Christ, and spake of him: and when our Lord had overcome all his enemies, he sat down with his Father on his throne, as he makes every overcomer sit down with him on his throne; and this throne of his is for ever and ever: and when he comes to judge the world, he will sit on a great white throne; an emblem of his greatness, purity, and justice, in discharging this part of his kingly office, judging quick and dead (Isa. 6:1 45:6; Rev. 3:21; 20:11). Do kings sometimes hold sceptres in their hands, as an ensign of their royalty? so does Christ; his sceptre is a "sceptre of righteousness"; he reigns in righteousness; he has a golden sceptre of clemency, grace, and mercy, which he holds forth towards his own people, his faithful subjects; and he has an iron one, with which he rules his enemies; (see Ps. 45:6; 2:9). Do kings sometimes appear in robes of majesty and state? Christ is arrayed with majesty itself; "The Lord reigneth, he is clothed with majesty" (Ps. 93:1), and so is he appareled, as now set down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; of which his transfiguration on the mountain was an emblem, when his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light (Heb 8:1; Matthew 17:2).

3. Having shown that Christ was to be a King, and is one; I shall next consider the exercise and administration of the kingly office by him; and observe,

3a. First, his qualifications for it. David, who well knew what was requisite to a civil ruler, or governor, says, "He that ruleth over men, must be just, ruling in the fear of God"; and this he said with a view to the Messiah, as appears by what follows (2 Sam. 23:3,4), and with whom these characters fully agree; he is the righteous Branch, raised up to David; and sits upon his throne, and establishes it with judgment and justice; a king that reigns in righteousness, and governs according to the rules of justice and equity; who with righteousness judges, and reproveth with equity; the girdle of whose loins is righteousness, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins, all the while he is executing his kingly office; his sceptre is a sceptre of righteousness; and his throne is established by it; and one of the characters of Zion's King, by which he is described, is just, as well as lowly; (see Jer. 23:5,6; Isa. 9:7; 11:4,5; Ps. 45:6; Zech. 9:9). And the other character, "ruling in the fear of God", is found in him; on whom the Spirit of the fear of the Lord rests, and makes him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord, so that he judges impartially; not through favour and affection to any, nor according to the outward appearance; but with true judgment (Isa. 11:2,3), and a king should be as wise as an angel of God, to know all things appertaining to civil government, as the woman of Tekoah

said David was; even to know and to be able to penetrate into the designs of his enemies, to guard against them, to provide for the safety and welfare of his subjects: and such is David's Son and Antitype, the Messiah; on whom rests "the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, of counsel and of knowledge"; and who has all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; and all that wisdom by which kings reign, and princes decree judgment, is from him; to which may be added, "the Spirit of might" rests upon him (Isa. 11:2), he has power and authority to execute judgment, to enforce his laws, and command obedience from his subjects; all power in heaven and on earth is given to him, and which he exercises; yea, he is the Lord God omnipotent; and as such reigns (Matthew 28:18; Rev. 19:6), and how capable therefore, on all accounts, must he be to exercise his kingly office? The next inquiry is,

3b. Secondly, Who are his subjects? a king is a relative term, and connotes subjects: a king without subjects, is no king. The natural and essential kingdom of Christ, as God, reaches to all creatures; as has been observed; "His kingdom ruleth over all" (Ps. 103:19), but his kingdom, as Mediator, is special and limited, and is over a certain number of men; who go under the names of Israel, the house of Jacob, the holy hill of Zion, and are called saints; hence Christ is said to be "King of Israel"; to reign over "the house of Jacob"; to be set King upon "the holy hill of Zion"; and to be "King of saints" (John 1:49; Luke 1:33; Ps. 2:6; Rev. 15:3), and by Israel, and the house of Jacob, are not meant the people of the Jews, as a body politic, of whom Christ was never king in such a sense; nor carnal Israel, or Israel according to the flesh, especially the unbelieving part of them, who would not have him to reign over them, in a spiritual sense; nor only that part of them called the election of grace among them; the lost sheep of the house of Israel Christ came to seek and save, and so to rule over, protect, and keep: but the whole spiritual Israel of Gods consisting both of Jews and Gentiles; even that Israel God has chose for his special and peculiar people, among all nations; whom Christ has redeemed by his blood, out of every kindred, tongue, and people; and whom, by his Spirit, he effectually calls, through grace; and who are saved in him, with an everlasting salvation: and these are meant by the holy hill of Zion, over which he is set, appointed, and anointed King; even all those whom God has loved with an everlasting love, and chosen in Christ his Son, and who are sanctified and made holy by his Spirit and grace; and are brought to make an open profession of his name, and become members of his visible church, and are immovable in grace and holiness; for all which they are compared to mount Zion, the object of God's love and choice, a hill visible, holy, and immovable: and to these Christ stands in the relation, and bears the office of a King; and they are his voluntary subjects; and who say of him and to him, "Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints!" (Rev. 15:3), the church of God is Christ's kingdom, and the members of it his subjects.

3c. Thirdly, The form and manner of Christ's executing his kingly office; which is done, —1st. Externally, by the ministry of the word, and administration of ordinances; and in the exercise of discipline in his church, which is his kingdom.

And, —2dly, Internally, by his Spirit and grace, in the hearts of his people; and by his power, with respect to their enemies.

3c1. First, Externally, by the word and ordinances, and church discipline.

3c1a. By the ministry of the word; which is his sceptre he holds forth, and by which he invites his people to come and submit to him; and by which he rules and governs them when come; it is the rod of his strength he sends out of Zion, and which is the power of God unto salvation to them that believe: it is signified by the weapons of warfare, the sword of the Spirit, the bow and arrows, with which Christ rides forth, conquering and to conquer; and with which he smites the hearts of his people, while enemies to him, and causes them to fall under him, and be subject to him; it is the rule and standard of their faith and practice, he sets before them, showing them what they are to believe concerning him, and what is their duty in obedience to him; it is the "magna charta" which contains all their privileges and immunities he grants them; and which he, as their King, inviolably maintains; and it is according to this his word, that he will execute that branch of his kingly office, judging the world in righteousness at the last day.

3c1b. By the administration of ordinances; as baptism: Christ, in virtue of that power in heaven and earth, which he received as King of saints, issued out a command, and gave a commission to his apostles, as to preach the gospel, so to baptize, such as are taught by it, in the name of the three divine Persons; and directed that all such who become members of his visible church, the subjects of his kingdom, should first submit to this ordinance of his; as the instance of the first converts after the commission given shows; who were first baptized, and then added to the church: this is part of that yoke of Christ's kingdom, which is easy; and one of those commandments of his, which are not grievous. The Lord's Supper is another of the ordinances kept by the church at Corinth, as delivered to them; for which the apostle commends them; the account of which he had from Christ himself, and delivered to them; and which he suggests was to be observed in his churches, and throughout his kingdom, to the end of the world. Public prayer in the house of God, is another appointment in Christ's kingdom, the church; which is distinct from the duty of private prayer, in private meetings, and in the family, and the closet; and is what goes along with the public ministry of the word; and is meant by what the apostles proposed to give themselves continually to; and which was attended to by the first Christians, and continued in, and by which they are described, and for it commended; (see Acts 2:42; 4:31; 6:4). Singing of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, in a public manner, in the churches, is another ordinance of Christ, enjoined them (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16), and in doing which, they express their joy and gladness, in Zion's King (Ps. 149:2).

3c1c. In the exercise of church discipline; about which Christ, as King in his church, has given orders and directions; in case of private offences, the rules how to proceed, are in Matthew 18:15-18. In case of public, scandalous sins, which bring a public disgrace on religion, and the church; the delinquents are to be rebuked

before all in a public manner, and rejected from the communion of the church (1 Tim. 5:20). In case of immoralities and disorderly walking, such are to be withdrawn from, till repentance is given to satisfaction; and in case of false doctrines, and heretical opinions, such that hold them, are not only to be rebuked sharply, in a ministerial way, that they may be sound in the faith; but being incorrigible, are to be cut off from the communion of the church (Titus 1:13; 3:10).

3c1d. For the execution and due performance of all this, the ministry of the word, administration of ordinances, and exercise of church discipline, Christ has appointed officers in his church and kingdom; whom he qualifies and empowers for such purposes; who have a rule and government under Christ, and over the churches, to see his laws and rules carried into execution; and who are to be known, owned, and acknowledged, as having rule over the churches; and to be submitted to and obeyed by them, so far as they act according to the laws of Christ (Eph. 4:10-12; 1 Thess. 5:12; Heb. 13:7,17).

3c2. Secondly, The kingly office of Christ is exercised internally, by his Spirit and grace in the hearts of his people, and by his power, with respect to their enemies; and which chiefly lies in the conversion of his people; in the protection of them from their enemies; and in the utter abolition and destruction of them.

3c2a. In the conversion of his people; which is no other than a rescue of them out of the hands of those who have usurped a dominion over them. While unregenerate, they are in a state of enmity to Christ, and in open rebellion against him; they who are reconciled by him, are not only enemies in their minds, by wicked works; but enmity itself, while their minds remain carnal; and such they were when reconciled to God, by the death of Christ; and so they continue until the enmity is slain, by his powerful grace in them; by which the arrows of his word are made sharp in them; and thereby they are conquered, and fall under him. While in a state of nature, other lords have dominion over them, sin, Satan, and the world; sin reigns in their mortal bodies, and they yield their members instruments of unrighteousness! and are servants and slaves to sin, even unto death; for it reigns in them to death; and though its reign is so severe and rigorous, yet they yield a ready obedience to it; "We ourselves", says the apostle, "were foolish and disobedient", disobedient to God, and disobedient to Christ, "serving divers lusts and pleasures": Satan, the prince of the power of the air, works in them, while they are the children of disobedience; and they have their conversation according to him, and according to the course of the world, while in such a state; and live according to the will of men, and not according to the will of God (Isa. 26:13; Titus 3:3; Eph. 2:2,3). Satan particularly, the god of this world, has power over them, and leads them captive at his will, until the prey is taken from the mighty, and the lawful captive is delivered; he is the strong man armed, that keeps the palace and goods in peace, till a stronger than he comes; who is Christ, the King of glory, who causes the everlasting doors of men's hearts to lift up, and let him in, when he enters, binds the strong man armed, dispossesses him, and spoils his armor, wherein he trusted; sets up a throne of grace in the heart, where he himself sits and reigns, having destroyed sin, and caused

grace to reign, through righteousness; and will not suffer sin to have any more dominion there. By the power of his grace he makes those his people willing to submit to him, and serve him, and him only, disclaiming all other lords (Isa. 26:13; 33:22). Christ, as King in Zion, enacts laws, appoints ordinances, and gives out commands, which he enjoins his subjects to observe and obey; and those he writes, not on paper, nor on tables of stone, nor on monuments of brass, but upon the tables of the heart; and puts his Spirit within his people, to enable them to walk in his statutes, and to keep his judgments, and do them. Moreover, Christ being set up as an ensign to the people, they flock unto him, and enlist themselves under his banner, and become volunteers, in the day of his power, or when he musters his armies; and declare themselves willing to endure hardness, as good soldiers of Christ; to fight the Lord's battles, the good fight of faith, and against every enemy; when they are clad by him with the whole armor of God, and become more than conquerors, through their victorious Lord and King; by, and under whom, they abide as his faithful subjects and soldiers unto death.

3c2b. Christ's kingly office is further exercised, in the protection and preservation of his people from their enemies; out of whose hands they are taken, and who attempt to reduce them to their former captivity and slavery: they are protected and preserved from sin: not from the indwelling and actings of it in them; but from its dominion and damning power; and the grace that is wrought in them is preserved, and its reigning power is continued and confirmed. Christ, as a Prince, as well as a Saviour, gives repentance to his people, attended with the manifestation and application of pardon of sin; and he not only gives this grace; but every other, faith, hope, and love: these are his royal bounties, and are principles of grace, wrought in the souls of his people; according to which, and by the influence of which, he rules and governs them: and these he preserves, that they are not lost; that their faith fail not; their hope remain, as an anchor, sure and stedfast; and their love continue: and the fear of God, put into them, abide; so that they shall never depart from him: he is able to keep them from falling, finally and totally, and he does keep them; they are in his hands, out of which none can pluck them: they are protected by him from Satan; not from his assaults and temptations, to which the most eminent saints are exposed; but from being destroyed by him, who goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, and would gladly devour them: but Christ is able to help them, and does; and knows how to deliver them out of temptation, and does, in his time and way, and bruises Satan under their feet; so that, instead of being destroyed by him, he himself is destroyed by Christ: and they are protected from the world, its force and fury; he makes their wrath to praise him, and restrains the remainder of it. In short, he protects them from every enemy; and from the last enemy, death; not from dying a corporal death, but from the sting of it; and from it as a penal evil; and from a spiritual death ever more taking place in them; and from an eternal death, by which they shall not be hurt, and which shall have no power over them.

3c2c. Christ's kingly office appears to be exercised in the utter destruction of the said enemies of his people. He came to finish transgression, and make an end of sin;

and he did it meritoriously, on the cross; where the old man was crucified, that the body of sin might be destroyed; and by his Spirit and grace he weakens the power of sin in conversion; and will never leave, till he has rooted out the very being of it in his people: he came to destroy Satan, and his works: and he has destroyed him; and spoiled his principalities and powers, on the cross; and rescued his people out of his hands, at conversion; and will not only bruise him under their feet shortly, but will bind him, and cast him into the bottomless pit for a thousand years; and after loosed from thence, will cast him into the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, where he will continue for ever. Christ has also overcome the world; so that it could not hinder him from doing the work he came about: and he gives his people that faith by which they overcome it also; and nothing they meet with in it, even tribulation, persecution, and everything of that kind, shall not be able to separate them from Christ, from a profession of him, and love unto him; but they become more than conquerors over the world, through Christ that loved them; and who must reign till all enemies are put under his feet; and the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death: which will be destroyed at the resurrection; when mortal shall put on immortality, and corruption incorruption; and then that saying will be brought to pass, that "death is swallowed up in victory"; in a victory obtained by Christ over that and every other enemy (1 Cor. 15:25,26,54).

3d. Fourthly, The properties of Christ's kingdom and government; showing the nature and excellency of it.

3d1. It is spiritual; not carnal, earthly, and worldly: "My kingdom", says Christ, "is not of this world" (John 18:36). Though it is in the world, it is not of it; its original is not from it; it is not founded on maxims of worldly policy; it is not established by worldly power, nor promoted and increased by worldly means, nor attended with worldly pomp and grandeur; "The kingdom of God", that is, of Christ, "cometh not with observation", with outward glory and splendor (Luke 17:20). The Jews, at the coming of Christ, having lost the notion of the spirituality of his kingdom, thought of nothing but an earthly and worldly one; and expected the Messiah as a temporal king, who would deliver them from the Roman yoke; and make them a free and flourishing people, as in the days of David and Solomon: and this was the general and national belief; the disciples and followers of Christ were possessed of it; as appears from the request of the mother of Zebedee's children (Matthew 20:20,21), and from the question of the apostles to Christ, even after his resurrection (Ac 1:6). But this notion was contrary to the prophecies of the Messiah; which represent him as poor, mean, and abject; a man of sorrows and griefs, despised of men; and should be treated ill, and be put to death (Isa. 53:2-4,8,12; Zech. 9:9), and not being able to reconcile these prophecies, with those which speak of him as exalted and glorious, they have feigned and expect two messiahs; the one they call the son of Ephraim, who shall make a poor figure, be unsuccessful, and shall be slain in the war of Gog and Magog; the other they call the son of David, who prosperous, gain many victories, and shall live long; restore the Jews to their own land, and make them an happy people. But the true Messiah was neither to destroy his enemies with carnal weapons; but smite them with the rod of his mouth, and consume them with the

breath of his lips, his gospel; nor to save his people by bow, by sword, by horses and horsemen; but by himself, his righteousness and sacrifice. His kingdom was not to be, and has not been, set up and spread by the sword, by dint of arms; as the kingdom of Mahomet has been; but by his Spirit and grace attending the ministration of his gospel. Christ never had, nor never will have, an earthly, worldly kingdom; such will not be his personal reign on earth a thousand years, as some have fancied, imagining it will be a state of worldly grandeur, riches, and civil power; which has brought the doctrine of the millennium into disgrace and contempt; whereas they that are worthy to obtain that world and kingdom, which will take place at the first resurrection, will neither eat nor drink, nor marry, nor be given in marriage; but will be like the angels of God: there will be nothing carnal nor worldly in it; it will be a spiritual state, suited to bodies raised spiritual; and to the spirits of just men made perfect: what will have the greatest appearance of a worldly kingdom, will be in what we call the spiritual reign of Christ, when multitudes of all ranks and degrees shall be converted; and great personages, as kings and queens, shall be nursing fathers and nursing mothers to the churches; shall join them, and submit to the ordinances in them; and when they shall bring their riches and wealth into them; and all civil power and authority shall be in the hands of true Christians; and the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the saints of the most High; but then there will be such a pouring down of the Spirit, which will be an over balance to this worldly grandeur, and shall check it, that it shall not hurt, or do prejudice to the spirituality of God's people. But of this, more hereafter, in its proper place. The kingdom of Christ is spiritual; he is a spiritual King, the Lord from heaven, the second Adam, that is spiritual, the Lord and Head of his church; his throne is spiritual, he reigns in the hearts of his people by faith; his sceptre is a spiritual sceptre, a sceptre of righteousness; his subjects are spiritual men born of the Spirit, and savour the things of the Spirit of God; they are subdued, and brought to submit to Christ by spiritual means; not by carnal weapons of warfare, but by the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; the kingdom of God is within them, set up in their hearts, where grace reigns; and it lies not in outward things; it is "not meat and drink", and such like carnal things; "but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost"; they are spiritual promises Christ makes to them, to encourage them in their obedience to him; and spiritual blessings and layouts are bestowed upon them by him; and even their enemies, with whom their conflict is, are spiritual wickednesses in high places; and are not to be fought with carnal weapons; nor to be subdued and conquered by means of them; but by the shield of faith and sword of the Spirit; even by the rod of Christ's mouth, and the breath of his lips.

3d2. Christ's kingdom is a righteous one; this has been suggested already; the whole administration of it is righteous; he is a King that reigns in righteousness, his throne is established by it; his sceptre is a right sceptre; justice and judgment are executed in his kingdom, and nothing else, by Christ the King; no injustice, violence, or oppression; just and true are his ways, who is King of saints.

3d3. Christ's kingdom is a peaceable kingdom: he is the prince of peace; his gospel, which is his sceptre, is the gospel of peace; his subjects are sons of peace; the kingdom of grace in them, lies in peace and joy in the Holy Ghost; and in the latter day, there will be abundance of peace in Christ's kingdom, the church; and of it, and its increase, there will be no end.

3d4. Christ's kingdom is gradually carried on; so it has been from the first; it arose from a small beginning, in the external administration of it; it was like a little stone cut out of the mountain, without hands, which will, in due time, fill the face of the whole earth; it was like a grain of mustard seed, the least of all seeds, in the times of Christ, which grows up to a large tree; as Christ's kingdom afterwards greatly increased, first in Judea, and then in the Gentile world; notwithstanding all the opposition made unto it; until the whole Roman empire became Christian, and paganism abolished in it: and though it has met with some stops, in some periods, yet it has revived again; as at the reformation; and will hereafter be extended from sea to sea; and from the river to the ends of the earth: and the internal kingdom of Christ in the hearts of his people is gradually carried on: it is like seed sown in the earth, which springs up, and whose appearance is but small, and by degrees grows up to maturity; as grace in the heart does; until it arrives to the fulness of the stature of Christ.

3d5. Christ's kingdom is durable; of his government there will be no end; his throne is for ever and ever; he will reign over the house of Jacob evermore; his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom. Christ will never have any successor in his kingdom; for he lives for evermore and has the keys of hell and death in his hands: as his Priesthood is an unchangeable priesthood, which passes not from one to another, as the Aaronic priesthood did, by reason of the death of priests; so his kingdom is an unchangeable kingdom, which passes not from one to another; he being an everliving and everlasting King; his kingdom will never give way to another; nor be subverted by another; as earthly kingdoms are, and the greatest monarchies have been: the Babylonian monarchy gave way to the Persian and Median, and was succeeded by that; the Persian to the Grecian; and the Grecian to the Roman: but Christ's kingdom will stand for ever; his church, which is his kingdom, is built on a rock; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. The word and ordinances of the gospel, by which the government of Christ is externally administered, will always continue: the gospel is an everlasting gospel, the word of God, which abides for ever: and the ordinances of baptism, and the Lord's Supper, are to be administered until the second coming of Christ: and the internal kingdom of grace, set up in the hearts of Christ's subjects, is a kingdom that cannot be moved; grace can never be lost; it is a governing principle, and reigns unto eternal life by Christ: and even when Christ shall have finished his mediatorial kingdom, and delivered it up to his Father, complete and perfect; all the elect of God being gathered in; he will not cease to reign, though in another and different manner: he will reign after the spiritual kingdom is ended a thousand years with his saints, in a glorious manner on earth; and when that is ended, he will reign with them, and they with him, in heaven, for ever and ever.

