

*God's Sovereign Government Among the Nations Asserted in a Sermon Preached before His Excellency the Governour, the Honourable Council, and Representatives of the Province of the Massachusetts Bay in New England, on May 28, 1712. Being the day for Election of Her Majesties Council for that Province* (Boston: B. Green, 1712). By Samuel Cheever, Pastor of the Church in Marblehead.

Psal. xcv. 3, 6. *For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods: O come let us Worship, and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.*

Psal. ii. 12. *Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish in the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little: blessed are all they that put their trust in him.*

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Isaac Addington, Secr.

## **GOD'S Sovereign Government Among the NATIONS.**

PSALM XXII. 27, 28.

*All the ends of the World shall remember, and turn unto the Lord: — For the Kingdom is the LORDS: and he is the Governour among the Nations.*

The eternal GOD, for whom, and by whom all things in the world were made, and are preserved and governed, having in his everlasting counsel (notwithstanding the primitive apostasy and revolt from him, foreknown to him with all his works from the beginning of the world) purposed from the ruins of fallen man, to take out of them a people for his name, and to reduce them to subjection and obedience to him, from whom they had revolted; that they might show forth, and might be to the praise of the glory of his grace: was pleased accordingly to pitch upon his blessed SON, to be the great undertaker in this matter, and called therefore *the Captain of their Salvation*, Heb. 2:10, appointed to bring the children unto glory. Christ Jesus being therefore deputed to this difficult task, the desert of sin was such, and the justice of God so immutable, that there was no way to bring the matter to an issue, but by the death and sufferings of the Lord Jesus; sin being such a crime and offence against the Crown of Heaven, that without suitable satisfaction made to Divine justice, the honour of God's law and government could not otherwise be upheld and maintained in the world: Christ Jesus having therefore consented hereunto, and willing to assume that nature which had sinned, and to offer up himself a sacrifice to satisfy Divine justice,

it was very congruous to Divine wisdom, that for so deep a humiliation he should have as illustrious an advancement, and a peculiar honour conferred upon him, so as to be made King and Lord of all, and have a *Name given Him above every Name*, and suffer first, and so enter into glory; according to the prediction of the prophets, and by Christ applied to himself, Luk. 24:25, it being that which he prays for, Joh. 17:5, that the glory which he had, as to his Divine nature, with God from eternity, might be communicated so to his human nature, as that his whole person might be glorious, and by that way have a joint rule with God over all the works of his hands, which as in other places of Scripture, so particularly is plainly hinted in the Book of Psalms, and especially in this Psalm where the text lies: the two great truths respecting the humiliation and sufferings of Christ, and his exaltation afterward being exactly predicted by the Spirit of God, for the directing and strengthening the faith and hope of the church of God in all ages of the world. This Psalm is a prophetic Psalm, and should the question be asked as was by the eunuch, Act. 8:34. *Of whom speaks the Prophet this, of himself, or some other man?* it must be understood of Christ Jesus, in whom many of the passages were literally accomplished; as appears by comparing it with Mat. 27:35, 46. & Joh. 19:24, the former part of the Psalm holding forth his humiliation, and the latter part hinting out his exaltation, and gracious promises made to him in this estate; and is a prophesy of the enlargement of his kingdom by the accession of the nations from one end of the world to the other, who should remember, and turn to him. The words may be considered as a prophesy, and a promise made to Christ, for his encouragement in dispatching that arduous affair he was intrusted withal. And also it implies a strong obligation on the ends of the world, *to Remember and turn to the Lord*; and the more effectually to persuade them so to do, we have laid down in the latter part of the verses read, a most undeniable argument, *For the Kingdom is the Lords, and he is the Governour among the Nations*. Now this kingdom of Christ admits of a two-fold consideration; the first is that universal kingdom by which Christ, together with the Father and Holy Ghost, reigns over all things; this being common to every person in the Godhead. And Christ on this account hath power over all flesh, and *He is King of Nations as well as Saints*. And secondly, there is a special peculiar kingdom which Christ executes over his church, his mediatory kingdom, by special dispensation committed by the Father to him over the hearts and consciences of men to bring the soul to a free, and voluntary subjection to him, hinted in Psalm 110:3.

But it's the first of these two, which shall especially be taken notice of, not wholly excluding the other; the universal kingdom and government, common to the

whole Godhead. There being but One GOD, though Three Persons, and all equal in power and glory: This truth therefore as it hath relation to the calling of the Gentiles, and a particular reward promised to Christ. I shall wholly wave any further consideration of, and the reason given in the twenty-eighth verse, is that I shall principally confine my discourse to. In which verse, we have asserted the universal kingdom of the Lord, and his government of all the nations in the world: The design of this discourse being to persuade, and if possible to prevail with us in these ends of the world to a humble subjection and submission to the sovereign government of GOD, whose we are, and whom we ought to serve, and in all things readily obey.

### DOCTRINE.

*GOD the Lord (or Christ Jesus) is certainly the King and Supreme Governour among the nations of the world, and ought to be remembered, and acknowledged as such by all; and especially by his professing people, at what end of the world soever by his providence they are cast, and placed to dwell in.*

This truth is that, which we find so often asserted, and by irrefragable arguments demonstrated, so universally implanted in the light also, and law of nature, that without offering violence to reason, and blowing out this candle of the Lord the Spirit in man; all must yield to the belief of it: If we own there is a GOD in the world, we must certainly own him as the King and Governour of it; it is what we are taught in the Lord's prayer, *Thine is the Kingdom the Power and the Glory*, Mat. 6:13, and which every one, every day ought to say, *Amen* unto, that which David, that great king over Israel, did most readily in his life, and at his death humbly acknowledge, 1 Chron. 29:11, 12, and that he held his crown from him; all his victories over the nations were such as God gave him, who was exalted as head over all. How often in the Psalms do we find David owning and proclaiming this truth? Psal. 47:2, 7, & 66:7. & 103:19. It's one of the royal titles given to God, that he is the *Most High*, Psal. 83. *ult.* God is the supreme: Other persons may be high in their stations and posts of honour, which providentially they are advanced to; but the title really of the Most High belongs peculiarly to God alone; so he is called by Abram, Gen. 14:18. Power and highness is originally and fundamentally in God. He is a *Great King*, Mal. 1:4. *The Only Potentate*, 1 Tim. 6:15. But not to spend time in averring a truth so plainly demonstrated, and which I hope none need to be taught, by the terrible works of God, as Nebuchadnezzar was, by turning him *a grazing among the beasts, till*

*seven times passed over him, that he might know that the Most High rules in the Kingdom of men, Dan. 4:32. I shall therefore dispatch in a few propositions this truth, and illustrate the same by a few conclusions resulting from them, for the clearing up of the same, in order to the application of the whole, and to conclude all with all convenient brevity.*

PROP. I. *God the Lord is certainly concerned in, and about the affairs of all nations, all the world over. And here we may consider,*

1. *The being and constitution of nations is really from God. The wise God, though he had the residue of the Spirit, and could at once, if he had so pleased, made the whole stock and race of mankind, and replenished the earth with a sufficient number of inhabitants, as God did do at the creation of some parts of the world; yet notwithstanding he chose rather to display his manifold wisdom and power in this great affair, to frame, and make immediately but one man, and one woman, designing from that one stock, all mankind should be propagated, Acts 17:26, of one blood, from one family, all should have one father, be all Adam's children, who was to be the representative of all his seed: Whereas among the angels the inhabitants of the highest heaven, God made the whole number at first; and in the starry heaven, God at once garnished them with those lights which continue to this day according to his ordinance: but in this lower world it is otherwise. All came from dust, in a little time God had a multitude of nations in the first age of the world before the Flood; and afterward when they were brought to eight persons in the ark, yet God in a few years replenished the earth, and from those three sons issued a multitude of nations; it was the blessing promised to Abraham, Gen. 12:2, though he was but one individual, *Of thee*, Gen. 15:5, he was the father of many nations, they were as the stars of heaven; in Egypt, in the space of two hundred and fifteen years became a great nation, six hundred thousand males, from twenty years old and upwards.*

2. *As God is the Maker of the nations, so all the motions of the nations, are all ordered by God, from one part of the world to another. We find at Babel, how God by the confusion of languages, scattered them up and down, when they were building to prevent their being so scattered, Gen. 10:5. And indeed it's the Lord who bounds every one's habitation; in him we *move*, as well as *live*, Act. 17:26. *It is not in man to direct his steps*, as Jer. 10:23. God's ways and thoughts are not as men's; God made for man a large house to dwell in, a great body of earth, though part of it be a wilderness, and a barren land, for the wild ass to dwell in, as we read, in Job 39:6. Yet a very great part of it is very fertile, as Egypt watered by the river Nilus, and*

Canaan counted the glory of all lands, and by God allotted to be the place of his people's abode, Deut. 33:8. Though at first possessed by the posterity of Canaan, and improved for many ages, yet God for the sins of that people rooted them out, and brings Israel in their room: As God gave them the grant of that land, so in that grant he sets down their bounds and limits: in Exod. 23:31 and Josh. 1:4, though Israel possessed not the whole till David's time. God is indeed the Lord of the soil, and removes nations as he sees meet. As Joseph did by the Egyptians from one end of the land to another, never intending that all the nations should be penned up in one corner of the world, nor drove together in heaps, when he hath room enough for all, without encroaching upon one another's proprieties: He brought up the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir, Amos 9:7. Gave Mount Seir to Edom, would not let Israel disturb him in his possession. And by the Wise Orderer of all, it was that this little handful of people came to dwell in this wilderness, God moving on the hearts of our predecessors to leave a fruitful land, and come to this Jeshimon.

3. *All the changes that happen among the nations are all over-ruled by this God, and Lord of all.* It is the great GOD who doth most certainly order all events, and issues of affairs which to men, and second causes may be unknown and unexpected, yet so brought about, that no man can always foresee or prevent: God's peculiar is that he himself is JEHOVAH, and changes not, Mal. 3:6. There is not the shadow of turning, or any variableness: but the world is full of changes. It is with political bodies as with bodies natural, at such times when persons have the fever and ague, one day sick, another day tolerably well: and as Job speaking of himself, in his 10. Chap. & 17. v. *Changes & War are against me*; is very applicable to nations. God sometimes blesses a nation with a great deal of prosperity, some considerable time: at another time, vexes them with all manner of adversity. In Solomon's time, Israel had very happy days: as we read, 1 King. 4:25. Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine; and it was durable all the days of Solomon; so that there was no adversary, or evil occurrent, as Solomon acknowledges to Hiram, 1 King. 5:4. But as soon as Solomon's head was laid in the dust, what an amazing change and turn of affairs, ten tribes rebel against the house of David, and Solomon with all his wisdom could not prevent it, 1 King. 12:15. God gave up Rehoboam to so foolish and fatal a mistake, as to alienate the very hearts of his subjects from him; and what abundance of changes in both the kingdoms fell out, the history of their reigns in Sacred Writ do abundantly evince: And indeed nations are very prone to transgress against the Lord, and change their glory for that which doth not profit, Jer. 2:11. And no wonder if God change his dispensations towards them: Sin brings trouble in a nation, and God

hath very often a controversy with nations, *with all the Inhabitants of the Land*, Hos. 4:1, 2. We read, *of a Sinful Nation*. Isa. 1:4. & Jer. 7:28. *This is a nation that obeys not the voice of the Lord*: and this will cause God to take other measures, and vex such with all manner of adversity, as we find, in 2 Chron. 15:5, 6. God hath his time to diminish, and bring a people low, Psal. 107:39, so also to take away the peace of a people, as you have it, in Jer. 16:5. He can draw out his sword out of the sheath of his patience, give it a large commission to pass through a land; and it's God alone who can give quietness. How much of God's sovereignty is seen in this matter in the times of the Judges? The land sometimes rested many years, but they had also long times of servitude. And indeed in our times, what multitudes of changes have passed over us? And what a long calamitous war have we laboured under? As from the heathen behind us, those pricks and thorns left to prove and afflict us by; and also a foreign enemy: and it must be God only that makes wars to cease, Psal. 46:9, that can give us quietness. And had we been more careful to have pleased the Lord, he could before this day have made our enemies to be more at peace with us.

4. *The government of the nations is most certainly ordered by this God and Lord of all*. As God hath made the nations of one blood, so he hath and doth take care in his providence, that all may be under rule and government; and as he hath given laws, and general rules to all, so he is pleased to set up persons, who shall be entrusted in a great measure, with the execution of them; and to govern men by men, putting that honour on some to rule, so on others to obey, and be ruled by them; civil government being certainly God's ordinance, to be observed in his realm every where. God endoweth some with particular gifts of wisdom and knowledge above others, that they may be the more serviceable in their generation to others. God ordered a special education for Moses, who was to be king in Jeshurun, to be trained up in the court of Pharaoh, and well learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, Act. 7:22, and mighty in words as well as deeds, one that could *do*, as well as *say* what became him. And Saul the first king of Israel, God gave him another spirit, of government to fit him for the place he was called to, 1 Sam. 10:6, civil government being the great instrument in God's hand, appointed for the preservation of human society, that men might not live as beasts, but live civilly and orderly as become rational intellectual beings. And God's care is such, as that he lays down rules for governours as well as for the governed; we may read their character, what they ought to be, given by David by the order of the God of Israel, and directed by the Spirit of God, in 2 Sam. 23:3, to make and leave a record of the same; for the direction of all in after ages, and God orders also the king to write out a copy of the law, Deut. 17:18,

19. And Johojada gave to Joash the testimony with the crown, 2 Chron. 23:11, when he anointed him king: And so all inferiour officers also are by the orders of God's realm, to be men *Fearing God*; and such as must *Judge not for man, but for the Lord, who will be with them in the Judgment*; to observe their carriages, so also to defend them against all those persons whom the impartial exercise of justice might provoke and exasperate their spirits: God hath therefore kindled this light in the minds of all men, that they cannot but see the necessity of upholding and maintaining it in the world: and although oppositions have been in the world, and rebellions against governours, yet it hath been only to put it into others' hands; and if one hath been thrown out of the saddle, another hath been put in; licentious nature doth not love to be controlled, and would have no lord over it: but sound reason will tell every man that there is no living where every man may do what he will without control. The most barbarous nations who never saw a Bible, have their governours, to whose edicts and wills, they do most unaccountably submit. The old Persians had a custom, when their old Prince died, to indulge the people with five days misrule, in which they might do what ever they would without control; that so by the rapine, and outrages committed, they might be brought in love more with the person and government of the succeeding prince: A sad way, but a sure one, as the author calls it. But our holy Christian religion hath taught us a better way; let us be the more thankful to God for his holy Oracles, and study to do our part, and duty of submission to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, who is our King, and lives for ever, though such as are sent by him, may and will die like men.

PROP. II. *What ever rulers are by Divine providence set over men, yet God the Lord is certainly the most absolute Supreme Governour, and King over all.* The great God, though he entrust mortals with a power to rule, yet he keeps the government in his own hands. Christ tells Pilate, Joh. 19:11, when he was telling of his power, that *he could have no Power at all against him, except it were given him from above*: his power must come from God, though Caesar had put him in the place; there was One above Caesar, and without the permission of this God, he could neither condemn him, nor see execution done upon him. The Lord is that King, who will never part with his sovereignty to any of his substitutes whatever; as Pharaoh tells Joseph, *In the Throne I will be greater than thou*, Gen. 41:40, in the account given of Israel's conduct in the wilderness: Psal. 77:20. *Thou leddest thy People, like a flock by the hand of Moses & Aaron.* We find that God is the greatest principal Leader; Moses and Aaron were but instrumental under God; as in the natural body,

the head guides the hand, so also in all political bodies: God could indeed, but he puts in men, not that God needs their help, for he can do all of it alone. Though men cannot do all alone, the number and care is too great, Moses complains, Numb. 11:11, 14. But God doth it as an act of favour, to put honour on the creature, as in his preserving providence he often uses instruments, not out of necessity, as when he employs the poor widow of Zarephath, to take in his prophet to her table, but puts a singular honour on her, and sends himself provision enough for both of them; so it is also in his governing providence, God uses instruments, but it must always be remembered by such as rule for him, and such as are to be ruled by them, that God is the supreme, and his laws and rules must be by both, carefully observed and kept, and it's God who concurs with the instruments; and without him the builder builds in vain, and the watchman's care would be insignificant; God never therefore gives commission to any, but he gives and limits their commission with such particular instructions as he sees meet. And for the illustration of this, we may consider a few conclusions which result from this proposition laid down. As,

Conclu. 1. *God the absolute supreme lawgiver, as he is the Governour of the nations, so he gives laws to all of them, to regulate all persons in all their actions.* In all government, there is a legislative power; and in Judah's blessing, Gen. 49:10, the scepter, and lawgiver are joined together; and the church very readily owns this Lord of all, to be her Lawgiver, as he was her King, Isa. 33:22. And it's an argument used by the Apostle James, to dissuade persons from rigid censuring and rash condemning of men for those things which the Law doth not condemn in them, because there is One Supreme universal Lawgiver, who can directly bind men's consciences, and make laws for their souls, and is able to save, and to destroy men's souls, which no other lawgiver can do, Jam. 4:12. This God hath his throne prepared in the heavens, and is so represented as sitting on it, Rev. 4:21. And as there he receives honour from all, so from thence he gives forth his laws and commands to all men whatever. The Eternal God, having the whole model of the world in his own mind, as he proposed to make man the chief of all his visible works, so he resolved how all his subjects should be governed; and pitched upon a rule according to which all should walk, Gal. 6:16. Never designing to make any creature who should be absolute lord of his own actions, to live, speak, act or do as he pleased; but that all their ways should fall under law and rules congruous and suitable to the nature of that being, he was pleased to give them.

Conclu. 2. *God having therefore in his own hand drawn up a body of laws, hath been pleased to proclaim and declare to man, what is his great duty, God*



*expects from him; and what God hath revealed, ought carefully to be studied and practiced.* Promulgation of laws, being what is ordinarily practiced in all governments. Deut. 29. *ult. Secret things belong to the Lord, but those things which are revealed, belong to us and our Children* for ever. There are indeed *arcana imperii*, mysteries of state, and many secret events of providence, which God in his own time will bring to pass; but the things revealed by God are the proper objects of man's inquiry, study and practice. Micah 6:8. *He hath shewed thee O man, what is good, and what the Lord requires of thee, & c.* At man's first creation, God making of him in His image, He gave him the full knowledge of his mind and duty, and by oral tradition in the first ages of the world, His Law was safely handed down, and communicated by one to another, till God after man's life was so exceedingly shortened, was pleased to commit his laws of the government to writing, and at Mount Sinai gave the Ten Commandments, the moral law, to his people, and wrote them on two tables of stone with his own finger; as we are certified by Moses, his Secretary of State, Exod. 31:18, it being a new edition of what was first given to Adam, and an universal rule to oblige all persons in all ages to observe and do; and in after ages this God inspired holy men to write down, and leave upon record such rules, as might be sufficient to make men wise to salvation, and compile that complete canon, by which men might be thoroughly furnished unto every good work: the Scriptures being those sacred digests, where God discovers his imperial power, as well as his wisdom and justice; and though indeed the wise God hath been pleased to give some more opportunity to know his will, than others; yet all have the light and law of nature, a *Law written in their hearts*, as it's called, Rom. 2:15, the non-improvement of which will clear up the justice of God in punishing such, and leave all without excuse in the Great Day of Account; when God will render to every one according to his deeds.

Conclu. 3. *As God hath published the laws of his government, so he doth positively enjoin and command obedience to all his laws.* God doth not leave the creature at liberty, to comply, or not; but lays a strict charge on all, speaks with authority; and although the word is sometimes called God's counsel, and God (though the Sovereign Governour) condescends to reason, and debate with poor mortals, makes them judges as it were in their own case, Micah 6:3 & Jer. 2:6 Isa. 5:3, yet it is to convict them of the equity and reasonableness of all his demands and expectations, and the unreasonableness of their disobedience in any thing there-unto. At Mount Sinai, with what authority did God speak, such words, that they entreated might not be spoken to them any more; but prayed that Moses might speak with them,

and they would hear, but *let not God speak with us, lest we dye*, Exod. 20:19. And Christ Jesus in the day of his humiliation, under the form of a servant, yet had this testimony given of him by the officers sent to apprehend him: Joh. 7:46. *That never man spake like this Man*. And the evangelist Matthew in the history of Christ's life, declares, that Christ taught them as *One having Authority, and not as the Scribes*; as you may read in Matth. 7:29. In the Levitical Law, God enjoins them to do this and that, *I am the Lord*, Lev. 19:3, 12, 14, 30, 37. Never any laws delivered with that majesty, and in that style, as the laws of this God are, Deut. 30:15, 16. Without any exception in both covenants, in the first *do and live*; and in the second covenant, *believe and live*: Act. 17:30. *He Commands all men to Repent*. 1 Joh. 3:23. *And this is his Commandment that we believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ*; and what we cannot do without supernatural aid, he binds us to seek the help of his grace to enable us to do it, and therefore in so many places binds us to *Bow down & kneel before the Lord our Maker*, acknowledge our constant dependance on him, for all we need.

Conclu. 4. *As this God gave us the copy of his laws, and enjoins obedience to them; so he hath given the highest sanction that is possible*. He promises the greatest rewards; to allure and persuade to obedience, no less than everlasting life; God is the *Rewarder of such as diligently seek him*, Heb. 11:6. He hath eternal salvation to give to such as *Obey him*, Heb. 5:9. Rom. 2:7. A crown, a kingdom for such as love him, James 2:5. No potentate in the world can give such a reward. Satan made the highest offer to Christ when he promised him the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them; but it was far more than ever he could have made good: The highest reward men give is some earthly preferment; but in God's government, he will give a crown which fades not away.

Concl. 5. *In this sanction, God as he promises a reward of eternal blessedness, so he threatens, for contempt of his laws, he will inflict everlasting punishment*. Mat. 25:46. *These shall go into Everlasting Punishment*: God will punish both here and hereafter. Kings can condemn a traitor but to death, kill the body; but can do no more: but this King of kings can after he hath killed the body cast into hell the soul also, Luk. 12:5. He hath prepared a Tophet; he hath *Everlasting Burnings*, 2 Thes. 8:9. Mark 9:44. He hath an everlasting prison to throw such into, who trample upon his authority, and rise up against their Maker.

Conclu. 6. *God being supreme, will certainly call all men to an account at his Bar, for all the contempt of his laws, and government; and sentence every one according to the merits of their offences*. The Ancient of days will sit on the throne

of his glory, the books will be opened, and the Judge of all the earth will pass sentence, which will never be reversed, and from which there lies no appeal; he is the Most High over all the earth, and his laws are settled in Heaven, Psal. 119:89. *v.* Such as die in their sins, found guilty, will not be cleared; though God be *gracious*, yet he is *just* also. God did upon man's first transgression of the Law provide indeed a remedy, and passed an Act of Grace, for such as would submit to the terms of it; *gracious* being one of God's essential attributes, to be *good* as well as *great*, as in the proclamation made by God of himself, Exod. 34:6, 7. will readily appear: God did in the second covenant, let his subjects know, that by the interposition of Christ, and satisfying his Law, sinful man might by faith, and obedience to Christ as their Lord for the future, be saved; but where these terms of grace are neglected, and slighted, and sinners will not accept of the man Christ Jesus to reign over them; such will be treated as rebels, find no favour, but the sentence of the Law will remain untaken off, Joh. 3:36, there being no provision in the Book of Statutes for the salvation of such as despise the Gospel, though there be for sins against the Law, on men's repenting and believing, Mark 16:16.

PROP. III. *As God is the Supreme Governour of all, so he is to be remembered, and owned as such by all; but especially by his professing people, on what spot of the creation so ever they are got. And here first of all.*

1. *The whole world, and all the nations of it are under his government.* God's dominion is universal, it certainly reaches to all the ends of the earth; there is no created being, but it's under the rule of this great GOD: All the angels good and bad were in Micaiah's vision, 1 King. 22:19. He had a representation of the Divine presence in the air, attended with good and bad angels, standing in the posture of servants, ready to receive God's commands; and in the starry heaven, Isai. 48:13. — *When I call to them, they stand up together:* As servants to their master: every creature, wind and seas obey him; and all is to teach man his lesson and duty to God, much more of subjection to Him; but it's the subjection of rational beings to the Great God we are speaking of; this is that which all ought to acknowledge, though all have not the laws of God's kingdom so clearly made known, having not the Gospel among them; yet, if they ask the beasts, they would tell man a great deal of his duty, as Job 12:7. *The crane and swallow*, Jer. 8:7, will teach man to know the time of judgment, and the time of mercy. But to come to our selves.

2. *God's professing people ought most especially to remember and turn to the Lord.* Such whom God hath especially known of all the families of the earth, these

are under especial bonds to own and submit to his government; so God tells Israel, *He had formed them for himself*, Isai. 43:21, *and they should shew forth his Praise*: God did more for them than any others; they are called his peculiar people, Exod. 19:5. Deut. 10: 14, 15, the Lord's by a special profession, and the objects of his peculiar care, privileged with his special protection; it is therefore their duty and interest to acknowledge, and most readily submit to his government. It is the unhappy lot of a multitude of the nations, to live in darkness, and in the region of the shadow of death; but where God irradiates any dark corner of the earth by the Sun of Righteousness, and takes possession of it as a special part of his dominion; such though they dwell in a wilderness ought to bow down before him, and serve him; and they ought to be peculiar in their recognition, and acknowledgment of his sovereign authority over them; and the name, nature, titles and attributes of God, not notionally only, but practically to be remembered and improved; and this in whatever part of the world so ever they are got, all being under the jurisdiction of the omnipresent God: There being no place in the world where God is not, no privileged place where any offenders can take sanctuary, Amos 9: 2, 3. Job 34:22, which hints to us our duty in these ends of the world, and will be found our best method, as soon as we hear of him to obey him, and submit ourselves to him. But more of this in the application of this truth, which I must hasten to; but before that, I would say a little for the confirmation: And if it be asked,

*How God comes to be the Supreme, and why He must be owned, and submitted to as such?*

The equity and reasonableness of it will appear, if we consider the following particulars.

Reason 1. *God by the right of creation hath a most unquestionable title to this government, and may well challenge it as his due.* The world and nations in it had never been, if God by his almighty power had not given them their existence; it is an argument used in all ages; the church looks on it as her duty to serve him, Psal. 100:2, 3. *He made us, and not we our selves*: had the nations been their own maker, there might have been some pretence not to have served him; but all must acknowledge they have their being from God; fear and worship appertains to him therefore as his due, who made the earth by his power, Jer. 10:7 & 13 verses: He is the Creator of the ends of the earth, Isai. 40:28, every part, the utmost ends of it. God was indeed from all eternity, the first Being that ever was, and all others must own themselves but of yesterday, but God is *from Everlasting to Everlasting*, Psal. 90:2. It is this God, who formed the earth, and laid the foundations of it alone; and he therefore hath the

highest reason to govern it: fathers of the flesh, who give but (under God) a being to their children, and but the less noble part, the flesh, are to be revered, and submitted to, Heb. 12:9. The Father then of their spirits may much more challenge submission and subjection. *Remember thy Creator*, Eccl. 12:1, carries with it an irrefragable argument, and motive, as well as duty.

Reas. 2. Consider, *That God is not only the Maker, but Preserver of all*. He nourishes, and brings them up; they are all at God's finding; this is what the church declares and owns, in Neh. 9:6. *Thou preservest them all, & the Host of Heaven worshippeth thee*; and it's a strong argument why things on the earth also should do it, being all under the same Divine hand of Providence. It was the great aggravation of Israel's sin in the wilderness, that when God had furnished a table for them in that desert land, opened the doors of Heaven, rained down manna upon them to eat, and given them of the corn of Heaven, gave them flesh, and feathered fowl; that yet for all this, they should sin still, and not believe, for his wondrous works, Psal. 78: 23. & c. In this great family of the world, God takes care even of the brute creatures, provides for the raven his food, fills the appetite of the young lions; and doth much more for man, and hath therefore the greatest reason to expect that man should be willing to serve him, who is the great Benefactor: and therefore God enters his complaint against Israel, refers the equity of it to the senseless creatures, to make judgment of it, *That he had nourished and brought up Children, & they had rebelled against him*, Isai. 1:2, 3, doing that which the brute beasts in their kind would not do to their benefactor, but gave their labour to such as provided a crib for them.

Reas. 3. *God's government must be owned, because he is indeed the best governour in the world*. He is as the first, so the best good: he is *optimus maximus*; he hath the most transcendent excellencies, and perfections imaginable, all in the highest degree, and it is impossible there should be a better. We may without the least shadow of flattery, and we ought to ascribe to him, the highest encomiums; and when we have said all, it is but a very little part of his glory that we know or can express: Whatever wisdom and conduct, is in mortal potentates here, falls infinitely short of the wisdom of this great GOD. Heman and Chalchol, and Solomon himself, though men of great wisdom, yet no way to be compared with God's, who is wise in heart, and called the Only Wise, 1 Tim. 1:17, wise at all times, never did a foolish act; and as his wisdom excels the wisdom of all, so his strength also, Job 9:4. None hath arm like God; never was God put to a nonplus, but was able to do whatever he pleased to do among the inhabitants of the world: he is in a word, the only ONE, in whose reign never any blemish could be really found, so holy and just in all his

administrations, that nothing ever done by him can be excepted against, 1 Sam. 2:2. The least thought of any such thing was that which Elihu abhorred, Job 34:10, 12, and challenges any that could say, that God wrought ever any iniquity, Job 36:23. His own will is indeed the highest rule, by which God governs, but it's so holy and just, that it is as impossible, that God should do any wrong to any creature, as it is for God to act against himself contrary to his own mind and will; and therefore though wicked men complain sometimes, as those did in Ezek. 18:29, to be punished for the sins of Manasseh, but God vindicates his own act, and declares, that their ways were unequal, and not the Lord's, and that if they would repent and turn, iniquity should not be their ruin. God's judgment being a great deep, but always righteous, Psal. 36:6. Rom. 11:33.

But to close this head:

Reas. 4. *It's most certain, that God's government is the easiest government; his laws are the most just and equal.* And if this be demonstrated, sound reason as well as conscience in every man will give its suffrage that God should be Governour in Chief over all, and all deference, and submission should be given to him above and before any other; it's so equal, that God reasons the case, Micah 6:2, 3, and would have his people testify against him, if they knew any just cause to be weary of him: And in Jer. 2:5, would have Israel tell, what iniquity they found in him, to go far from him. God governs indeed by law, and will uphold the honour of his government, not let his authority be trampled upon, but will punish the contempt of it; but he imposes no grievous burdens, as men sometimes do, Luk. 11:46. Christ's commands are not grievous, 1 Joh. 5:3, and hence Christ assures us, *That his Yoke is easy*, and will be so where it is lined with love, Mat. 11:30, and a new nature given, which our blessed Lord hath purchased by his blood, and is one among the *All things* delivered him by the Father, as is hinted, in Matt. 11:27, he being made of God to us, *Sanctification*, as well as righteousness, as we find inserted, 1 Cor. 1:30. It's only therefore corrupt nature that will complain, not grace: And these laws of God's government are the most beneficial, useful, and every way profitable to the subject: *Godliness being profitable to all things, having the promise of this life, as well as that to come*; so that upon the whole, it may be well called, a *reasonable Service*, Rom. 12:1, and the easiest in the world. And here, I might summon the experience of Christ's faithful subjects: David invites the faithful, Psal. 34:8. *O taste and see that the Lord is good*: What sweetness did he find in God's laws! Read, Psal. 19:10. *They were sweeter than honey*; and Psal. 119:16 it was his *delight*; and so 24 and 72 verses. And as God hath among us a number of faithful and loyal subjects, so there are such as have lived

under both governments; once were in a state of nature, now in a state of grace; other lords have had dominion over you, but through grace you have submitted to God's name, and his only; surely you can speak well of his government, and would not change this God, nor yield yourselves to be servants of sin, and Satan again; you never repented your choice, but grieved only that you submitted no sooner thereto, and can readily give your affidavit to the world, that it is the easiest, and best government, and far more eligible than to be under the tyranny and bondage of sin and Satan. But I must not enlarge any further, but come to the APPLICATION: Briefly, in a threefold USE; and first by way of inference.

USE I. We may hence learn, That if God be the Supreme Governour, and hath, as you have heard, such an indubitable right to govern the world, *That sin, and especially willful sin, whatever advocates it may have in the world, is certainly the most malignant and mischievous evil, that can possibly be.* The laws of God's realm are so holy, just and good, that sin which is the transgression of such laws must needs be very evil; and will be very bitter at last, how light a matter soever men make of it; and ready to say, as Lot of his Zoar, *Is it not a little One?* when he would have it spared: But yet where it reigns, it is rebellion against the Lord, as it is a departing and wandering from the best rule; so it's disobedience to the highest Authority, it is a traitor to the Crown, and dignity of Heaven, and deserves exemplary justice to be executed upon it, usurps the government which is the Lord's only due, it's a slighting and despising of God, 1 Sam. 2:30, makes light of God's commands, sets at nought his counsel, Prov. 1:25, strikes at the very being and essence of God; every such reigning sin would have no God. It's deicidium, as the schools call it, contrary to God as Lawgiver, enmity in the abstract to the Law of God, Rom. 8:7, an act of disloyalty to the Eternal God, like Absalom's treason against his own father, and like Sheba lifts up its hand against the king, and therefore not to be dealt gently withal, but pursued, and brought to condign punishment: It is Satan's work who sinned from the beginning, 1 Joh. 3.8, and was the arch-rebel against God's government, would not be under God's rule, and make it his work to draw man into that horrid conspiracy, to take the government on himself, and break off that yoke? And among men, we find treason against government made such a crime, that men's lives and estates are little enough to atone for such an offence, and satisfy for such a transgression: the law of rebellion of children against their parents was in the Levitical law a capital offence, Deut. 21:18 & 22 verses. What then is rebellion against the Living GOD: God hath proclaimed it to be the great enemy of his government, and that ought not to reign in our mortal bodies, Rom. 6:12, it being that

abominable thing which his soul hates, Jer. 44:4, and which he charges every one to have no fellowship with, Eph. 5:11, to hold no correspond with this rebellion, SIN, but bring it forth, that it may be slain, and destroyed, as Jehojada did with Athaliah, the usurper of the crown of Judah, 2 King. 11:15.

But by way of inquiry,

USE, II. This truth should put us on searching our own hearts, and inquiring, *Whether indeed we have really owned, and in our hearts submitted to God as we should, and ought to have done?* Whether his sovereign authority and government hath been so far regarded among us in these ends of the world, as it ought, and should have been. It is not enough to come as Hushai sometimes did to Absalom with good words, *Let the King Live*; when in his heart it was King David, and not King Absalom he meant. God knows all our hearts; let us then see that our hearts be right in this matter. It is most certain, that we are by profession the Lord's people: Our predecessors openly professed themselves the servants of the Most High God, and that their errand hither was to enjoy the worship and ordinances of God in their power and purity; and we are now a small handful got into these corners of the earth, where I presume there are none amongst us, that can possibly think themselves out of God's jurisdiction, but do certainly owe a duty of subjection and allegiance, as to our gracious QUEEN: so also to the KING of Heaven; and here GOD hath mercifully increased and blessed us, he hath been accommodating us with all necessaries, and furnished our tables in this wilderness: Let us take heed of Jeshurun's sin, Deut. 32:18, to be unmindful of, and forget the God who formed us; and made us his people: We have professedly taken God for our King and Governour; he hath given us his book of statutes, the laws of his kingdom; if we have not the first [autographs], what was written by his own hand, and the hands of his faithful secretaries; yet we have well attested copies of the same: and as he hath given us this to be the rule of our lives, so he hath told us, on what terms we may expect, that he will own and bless us; and I hope none of you are without a copy of these laws; you all have, or may easily get the Holy BIBLE to read in, all the days of your lives. The inquiry then should be, *How far we have been careful as to call Christ our Lord; so to do what he hath said to us, and enjoined us to do?* to allude to Luk. 6:46. He hath shown us what is good, and what he requires of us; he hath the most incontestable right, and authority over us; it's not matter of indifferency, whether we will obey or not, but of absolute necessity on pain of his everlasting displeasure. I am satisfied, God hath among us a great many good and faithful subjects to his kingdom and government, who readily, sincerely and willingly submit to his laws and government among us,



upright men who would on no account be false and treacherous, but careful to keep themselves unspotted from the world, and would not harbour sin that enemy to God's government, nor countenance or suffer to their power, *Wickedness to dwell in their Tabernacles*; but are mourners for the sins which they cannot reform. But I fear upon enquiry, that there are too many who are too slight in this matter, and have cause to be ashamed because they have not a respect to, and for all our Lord's commandments: Many may be ready as Saul in the case of Amalek, to tell Samuel, that he had performed the commandment of the Lord, which was to slay utterly that people, young and old, spare nothing, 1 Sam. 15:3, and yet had spared Agag, the best of the sheep and oxen, only the vile and refuse they destroyed utterly. And it's well if there be not some such like evil among us, to allude to that history; it's well if there be not a great many gross corruptions. If you have been so faithful; what means the bleating of the sheep and lowing of the oxen in our ears? What means, I pray, all that *pride* in the land, notwithstanding so many humbling and impoverishing providences by sea and land? So many oaths and direful imprecations? Such little regard to fear that dreadful *Name, The Lord thy God*? What poison of asps is under the lips of so many? What brutish drunkenness? Breaches of the Seventh Commandment? What a deal of profanity, neglect of the worship of God? How much sensuality, worldliness? Rules of sobriety, temperance and justice are violated. How many Agags, master sins spared, which should have been hewed in pieces before the Lord? And all this notwithstanding all the warnings given by God in his Word and works. What a terrible severe mulct did God lay the last year on this poor land, by those fearful judgments at sea and land: The sore disappointment at Canada, breaking our ships with his east wind: And that desolating fire in our metropolis, laying so much of our glory in ashes, destroying so many goodly edifices, turning us out of doors, where these solemnities have been so many years formerly celebrated; both the places, as if God were angry with both orders among us: Certainly these with many other remarkable occurrences; and the continuance of the heathen, and other enemies rage against us, do most evidently indicate the Lord's great displeasure against this land, and call aloud on all to enquire, What means the heat of this great anger? and to reform and amend whatever is amiss: Lest God punish us yet seven times more for our walking so contrary to him, and refusing to submit to his government and laws, so clearly published, and so often explained, and urged on us to observe. But I must now hasten. In the last place.

USE, III. A word then of EXHORTATION; and first of all to the shields of this part of God's earth which belong to, and are put in by God to be the fathers and

protectors of his people; and defend them from all wrongs and oppressions.

*May it then please your EXCELLENCY;*

The supreme Governour and Lord of all hath in kindness to this land, seated you in this post of honour, and made you under our gracious QUEEN, his chief minister of state, entrusting you with the care and charge of his people, and furnished you with suitable accomplishments for the discharge of the same, and sent you for the punishment of evil doers in his realm, and for the praise also and encouragement of such as do well. Give me leave then with all due respect, to request that your Excellency would please to lay out all your talents for the upholding and maintaining the honour of God's government, and his laws, that he hath given out for the regulating of all the actions of the children of men. Let not God's authority be trampled upon; it's the Lord of all, who hath mercifully continued you in this post some years longer than your former predecessors, whom the King of Heaven was pleased long ago to send for home. Permit me then to be your humble monitor, and put you in remembrance, (though you know these things,) from whom it is you hold your place; the King of kings: and though our governour, and so to be honoured, regarded, and submitted to, yet the God of Heaven is your Lord and Governour, to whom you and all of us must give an account for all our betrustments. Men in the highest posts on earth are yet servants to the great GOD, and it's certainly a privilege as well as a duty so to be. Among men it's a great honour to serve in king's courts: All officers about them are honourable; much more in God's court. The epitaph on Moses his grave, and the title given him by God was, Josh. 1:2, *Moses my Servant is Dead*. Give me leave then only to request, you would be good and faithful to God, and his interest, and God's *euge* will be better than all the acclamations of men whatever. Imitate good Nehemiah's pattern, *Seek the welfare of this People*; with Joshua, *Be Strong and very Courageous, and God will not fail nor forsake you*. And that God who was with Moses, Joshua, David, lives still, and is among us, and can make his service a place of profit, as well as honour, and in another world however, bountifully reward such as are careful to do the things which are pleasing in his sight in this world.

Secondly. Those honourable persons, the Lieutenant GOVERNOUR and COUNSELLOURS, into whose lap the lot for election of them may fall this day, to assist in government. Let me entreat all of you, to tender the honour and glory of God above all; stand for and maintain the honour of God's laws, which must be observed to the end of the world. Be careful to make no laws repugnant to the statutes of God's

realm, dispense with none of those immutable rules which God the Governour of all hath set down in his Word; no mortal can make that lawful which God hath forbidden. Let all of you what place so ever in the government you sustain, in the legislative power, or the executive part of it; be men of integrity and truth; answer the great expectation of God and his people: In all emergencies whatever, put to your helping hand. Say as Shecaniah did to Ezra, *We also will be with thee*, Ezra 10:4. Take notice of all the disorders in God's realm, do your utmost to reform and amend what possibly can be done; you are God's warrant officers; be men fearing God at all times: Do God's work faithfully, and he will stand by you. Rehum the chancellor, and the enemies of the Jews, pretend to Artaxerxes, Ezra 4:14, because they had maintenance from the king's palace, it was not meet for them to see the king's dishonour; what they pretended, it is certainly your duty with respect to the King of Heaven, and is no way meet for you to see his great dishonour, nor his authority trampled on, who is King of all the earth, and from whose palace all have their maintenance. Let no affection of popularity, or fear of man, which brings a snare, impede you in God's work: Let not vice and gross immoralities go unpunished: Be just in all your administrations; you are called *gods*, Psal. 82:6, by God and by men. Your title is worshipful, endeavour to imitate your Maker, and credit that post God hath put you in.

*Third branch of the exhortation:* To the representatives, and worthy gentlemen concerned in the government. Remember, you have a great trust committed to you. Let me request that you would be faithful to God and his people. What was lodged formerly in the hands of a considerable body of people, is now devolved upon your care and prudence. Be careful then in your choice, to choose such as are really friends to the government, (I mean) to the great GOD and LORD of all. Choose none who are disaffected to God's government; do not imagine your suffrages are your own; there is a God among you, to whom you stand accountable for this, and every day's work. Let all sinister ends and by-respects be laid aside: You must choose for God, as Jehoshaphat told his judges, *They judged not for Man, but for the Lord*, 2 Chron. 19:6. For it must be remembered, you are under God's government, choosing for God: Choose able men, and such as will do good service for God and his people. And remember, the laws of God's realm are by a multitude miserably neglected; and you are entrusted with the execution of them. You have done well to give your civil sanction; and if any thing more can be done, it will be very pleasing in the Lord's sight, for the suppressing those gross vices which abound so much among us. We

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have indeed good laws against vice and immorality, but there is certainly a fault among us, that they are not better executed. [\*\*\*\*\*]

Fourth *branch of this exhortation*, to the Lord's stewards, and ministers in his house.

My fathers, in many respects, and brethren. It is indeed one part of our ministerial work to put our hearers in remembrance of their duty, 2 Tim. 2:14, and 1 Tim. 4:6, if we would be good ministers of Jesus Christ, but we our selves also need to be put in mind of our duty, and place; though we know it, and are established in the truth: It is therefore very meet to remember the post we are in, and by whom it is we are put in, in this supreme government of God over the nations, and among his people; it hath been the pleasure of his grace to put us in as stewards of the mysteries of God, 1 Cor. 4:1, by him entrusted to dispense the Word of truth, and give every one their portion, according to those orders we have received from God our master, rightly dividing the Word of truth, as workmen that need not be ashamed; if we are but careful to approve ourselves to God, more than to please men, 2 Tim. 2:15. But who is sufficient for these things? It's of such stewards most especially required, *That they be found Faithful*, 2 Cor. 4:2. Our worthy predecessors are gone off the stage, sent for home by their Lord and Master; let us who are left behind, follow their faith, and consider the end of their conversation; and as in doctrine, showing uncorruptness, gravity and sincerity; so in all things, to show ourselves patterns of good works. It's the care of souls, the noblest and best part of man which is committed to us, and we must certainly give account to Him who will judge both the quick and dead at His appearing: but let us attend to God's order to Jeremiah, with respect to his hearers, *Let them return to thee, but return not thou to them, and I will make thee unto this People, a fenced brazen Wall. And they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail, for I am with thee to save thee, and to deliver thee, saith the Lord*, Jer. 15:19, 20. Let us endeavour to answer the character given of Tychicus, *A beloved Brother, and faithful Minister of the Lord*, Eph. 6:21, and Epaphras, Col. 1:7. If God say to us it's *Well Done*, though men should say it was *ill done, unadvisedly spoke*. We serve a good God, who will pass by, what a captious, critical ear will find fault withall. We have a great many disorders in God's house; we want a great deal of wisdom to know how we ought to behave ourselves in it, our difficulties and discouragements are many; we are exposed to censures and hard speeches; we live in a time of great degeneracy; but nothing must daunt or dismay us; let nothing put us, who are the Lord's commission officers, to throw up our

commission, or lay down our work, till God give us an honourable dismissal out of the field at last. Our Lord's joy will abundantly compensate all our sorrows and troubles. But I must not enlarge on these things.

I have only one word more to the body of this people: *That they would all Remember and Turn to the Lord.* Own him as your Lord, submit readily to his government, obey him in all things, and hearken to his voice. Let me pray that whatever hath been amiss may be humbly lamented over, and really and sincerely at last reformed. I presume we have no such independents among us, but will most readily own their great dependance is certainly on this God for all we need, for time, and for eternity. Let all then show themselves loyal subjects to this great KING, and walk suitably as such: We are now on our good behaviour, and it's only *Quam diu se bene gesserint*, that God will own us and bless us. And here I might bring in all the reasons of the doctrine, to be improved as so many motives to press you to a cheerful and willing subjection to this government; but I shall be too tedious. I have only one more motive to press and compel you to come in; and this is to *Remember that our protection and safety in this day of trouble, this time of battle and war, depends most certainly on our obedience*: kings do protect their subjects: but a subject may so transgress, as to be outlawed by him: We have most certainly done enough to provoke the Lord, to do so by us, to outlaw us, and throw us out of his protection: But God is a patient, and a good God, but it is our wisdom not to provoke him too far [...] [\*\*\*] God hath indeed made many gracious promises in his Word, but there are conditions to be performed on our part; and if we refuse and rebel against him, he will deliver us into the hands of men, proclaim a liberty to the sword, as he threatened Jerusalem, Jer. 34:17. He can break down the hedge, take away the wall, let us be a prey to any who will devour us. Let all therefore remember and turn: Make God our friend, and he can soon subdue our enemies, and turn his hand against our adversaries; he can cause us to dwell in safety alone, and it then may be said of us, with which I close, as Deut. 33:29. *Happy art thou O Israel: Who is like unto thee, O People! saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency: and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee, and thou shalt tread upon their high places.*

FINIS.