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## Fire and Ice Sermon Series

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### Fourth Sermon on 2 Thessalonians Chapter 2

*Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or is worshipped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.—*  
2 Thes. 2:4.

**I**N this matter of Antichrist we have made this progress:—First, That he arose upon, and by a falling away from, the ancient pure state of Christianity. Secondly, That the Holy Ghost points him out by his names and titles, which are two:—‘the man of sin,’ wherein he is resembled to Antiochus; and ‘the son of perdition,’ wherein he is resembled to Judas. As Antiochus, he is one that by force and power should change the laws and ordinances, and compel men to his abominations. As Judas, he should betray Christ by a kiss for worldly gain, and be one that is in pretence an apostle, but indeed a real adversary to Christ. Now, after the apostle had pointed at him by his names and titles, he describeth him by his practices, wherein his names and titles are verified; for here he proveth that he should be as Antiochus, by his exalting himself above all that is called God, which is said of Antiochus, Dan. 11:36, ‘And the king shall do according to his will, and he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods;’—and as Judas, one sitting in the temple of God; that is, he sitteth there as exercising a public ecclesiastical office, yea, challenging the highest seat in it. He sitteth there *potestate regiminis*, by the power of his government; be doth *Cathedratica potestate praesidere* (Estius). His sitting there as chief shows him as Judas; his sitting here as God, and exalting himself above all that is called God, sheweth him Antiochus.

But to handle the words more closely, Antichrist is here set forth:—I. As opposite to Christ; *o antikeimenoV*, one set to the contrary, that is, in respect of pride chiefly. Christ was the pattern of humility, Antichrist is the king of pride; Christ would not so much as assume to himself an authority to divide the inheritance between two

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brethren —Luke 12:14, ‘Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?’ —but Antichrist will depose kings, and dispose of kingdoms.

II. The instances of his pride:—(1.) In exalting himself above all human power: ‘Who exalteth himself above all that is called God, or is worshipped.’ (2.) A usurpation of divine honour: ‘He, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.’

Let us open these things more particularly:—

1. He is represented in the term ***o antikeimenoV*** as one diametrically opposite to Christ, and contrary to him, who is the true head and Lord of the church: Acts 10:36, ‘He is Lord over all;’ but Antichrist opposeth himself, that is, sheweth himself in a quite contrary appearance. That which is most remarkable in Christ, and should be in all his followers, is humility. He expressed a wonderful contempt of the riches and greatness of the world, and all the honour which is of man; taking the form of a servant, and making himself of no reputation, and living a mean, inferior life. He ‘came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many,’ Mat. 9:28. He kept no state, nor affected pomp of attendants; though he were Lord of all, yet ‘he became poor, to make us rich,’ 2 Cor. 8:9. But it may be this was proper to him; doth he expect it from his servants and officers in the church? Yes; this is the grace which he hath recommended to all his followers: Mat. 11:29, ‘Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly.’ But especially to the ministers of the gospel: our Lord foresaw what spirit would work in them, and therefore he forewarned them of pride and lordliness: Mat. 20:25, 26, ‘Ye know that the princes of the earth do exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them; but it shall not be so among you but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister.’ Among Christ’s servants, he that is chief must be chief in service, even as a servant unto all: Luke 22:26, ‘He that is chief, as he that doth serve.’ Domination, greatness, principality and power, is allowed in the civil state, for there it is necessary; yet it is excluded the church. This affecting of pre-eminence and chiefness is the bane of the church—it is taxed as a great sin in Diotrephes, 3 John 9—be it either over heir fellow-labourers, or the people of the Lord. You see how tender the apostles were in this point; everywhere they disclaim this affectation of lordship: 2 Cor. 1:24, ‘Not that we are lords of your faith, but helpers of your joy.’ And Peter recommendeth it to his fellow-elders: 1 Peter 5:3, ‘Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being examples to the flock.’ And if the apostles would not assume lordship, who may? It is true, there is a government in the church, and the people are to obey their guides, Heb.

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13:17, and to 'have them highly in honour, for their works' sake,' 1 Thes. 5:13; but yet the pastors of the church should govern by light and love, not by pomp and force, and not be known by such pomp and authority as begets fear. Well, now, let us see the opposite state. If humility and meekness be in the very essence of Christianity, and woven throughout the whole frame of it, then it is antichristian to be lordly and proud, especially in them who pretend to be successors of Christ and his apostles. Now, in the Pope and his adherents, you will see the most odious pride set forth that ever the world was conscious unto, without any cloak and shame. And all their business is to get power; what designs they have for preferment in the world, how studiously they have, and do prosecute it, they blush not to own openly before angels or men. This worldly ambition to rise higher and higher is their design and trade of life. As the bishop of Rome, at first, from the chief pastor of that city, affected to be an archbishop over the suburban towns and cities; then, a patriarch over many cities; and because two opposed him in Italy a long time, Ravenna and Milan, he gets power over them, and then he must be oecumenical bishop over all the world. But Constantinople resisteth for a long time, yea, arrogateth within the empire the same titles. Who more earnest against it than Gregory, whom they call the Great, and more forward to charge the assuming of this title as antichristian? But then, when once they began, by powerful means and many indirect courses, to be owned as universal bishop, they enlarged their bounds, not only over the ecclesiastical power, but civil, and all kings and princes must stoop to them, as well as bishops. So that here was the progress and gradation:—First, from the chief presbyter, a bishop over many presbyters in the same city; then, a metropolitan over many bishops in one province; then, a patriarch over many provinces in one diocese (for in the Roman division there were seven provinces in one diocese); then, universal bishop in the whole world; then, the only shepherd and bishop, and others but his substitutes. Pretty steps of ambitious encroaching f But yet exalting himself farther, he challengeth all power in heaven and earth; and the like is practised by his followers at this day in the church of Rome. From private priests they grow up into some prelature, as archdeacons, deans; then a bishopric; then a better or richer; then archbishops, cardinals; then pope. And the devil is grown so impudent, by the help of these churchmen, as that it is counted a great piece of spiritual wisdom, publicly owned in the world, to be able, by these steps, to get higher and higher, and lord it over God's heritage; as if ambitious affectation were the honour of Christianity, and gospel humility would expose the church to scorn, and pomp and grandeur were a greater ornament to religion than grace; when, in the meantime, they have nothing to prove them to be true pastors of the church but Judas's kiss, a little owning of Christ to countenance their ambition.

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II. The particular instances wherein the pride of Antichrist is set forth are two:—

1. His exalting himself above all human powers: ‘He opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or is worshipped.’ Here the object is set forth by two terms:—(1.) All that is called God; (2.) Or worshipped. They both belong to the same thing.

[1.] That which is called God, that is, magistrates, princes, and kings: Ps. 82:1, ‘He judgeth among the gods;’ and ver. 6, ‘I have said, Ye are gods; all of you are children of the Most High;’ and John 10:34,35, ‘It is written in your law, I said ye are gods. If he call them gods unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken,’ &c. God hath clothed magistrates with his own honour so far that he hath put his name upon them; and their eminency is a part of his image, as it lieth in superiority, dominion, and power. Though magistrates be but like their brethren as to their common nature, yet in respect of their office they have the glorious title of *gods* conferred upon them; as being his vicegerents, and bearing his person in government, they are honoured with his name. So that, without impeachment of blasphemy, those that excel in the civil power may be called gods. Now, over these Antichrist exalteth himself, that is, above all kings and potentates.

[2.] The other notion is, ‘*h sebasma*’; we render it, ‘or is worshipped.’ The Greek word is, whatever is held in the highest degree of reverence, whatever is august or illustrious; as the emperors of Rome were called *Sebastoi*: Acts 25:21, Paul ‘appealed to be referred to the hearing of Augustus;’ it is *tou Sebastou*, not Augustus Caesar, who was then dead, but his successor. Well, then, here is the character of Antichrist: that he exalteth himself above all civil authority authorised and permitted of God, not only above ordinary magistrates, but kings and emperors. Now, we find in history no less than twenty kings and emperors trampled under foot by the Pope of Rome, some of whom he had excommunicated and deposed from their kingdoms, and their people dispensed withal in denial of their subjection to them; others brought to cruel, shameful deaths, and their kingdoms miserably rent and torn, to the destruction of millions of men, by their means. He that hath any knowledge of the histories in Christendom cannot but know these things; how he treadeth on their necks, kicketh off their crowns with his feet, and hath brought them to the vilest submissions. And if kings and emperors have received more spirit and courage, and the Popes of Rome learned more modesty nowadays, thanks is due to the light of the gospel, which hath shined so far and to such a degree as to the consuming of Antichrist, though not to his utter destruction.

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2. The next instance of his pride is his usurpation of divine honour, expressed in two clauses:—(1.) The one sheweth the usurpation itself, ‘That he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God;’ (2.) The other, the degree of it, ‘showing himself as God.’ Both must be explained and vindicated.

[1.] For the usurpation itself, ‘he sitteth as God in the temple of God.’ By the temple of God is meant the church: 1 Cor. 3:16, 17, ‘Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.’ So 2 Cor. 6:16, ‘What agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God.’ The external visible church, which professeth the faith of Christ and beareth his name; so that the place wherein Antichrist shall arise is the visible Christian church; not Rome ethnic, but Christian.

But is, then, the church of Rome the church of Christ?

*Ans.* It was one part of it before it was perverted; it usurpeth still that name; it retaineth some relic of a church, mangled as it is. Saith Calvin in his Epistles: ‘I think I have given some strong reasons that it yet retaineth some show of a church.’ Now in this temple of God he sitteth as an officer and bishop there, as I before explained it and whereas other princes are said to *reign so* many years, the Pope is said to *sit so* long. It is his *sedes*, his cathedral or seat. And again, here he is said to sit as God, that is, as God incarnate, for Christ is the true and proper Lord of the church; none should reign there but he. And the name of this man of sin is not *Antitheos*, but ***anticristo***<sup>V</sup>; not one that directly invadeth the properties of the supreme God, but of God incarnate, or Christ as Mediator: he sitteth negatively, not as a minister, but positively as supreme lord upon earth, whom all must adore and worship, and kings and princes kiss his feet. In short, he usurpeth the authority due to Christ. Now I shall prove that by a double argument:—First, By usurping the titles due to Christ; for he that will make bold with names will make bold with things; as to be *sponsus ecclesiae*, the husband of the church, as Innocent called the church *sponsam suam*, his spouse; *caput ecclesiae*, the head of the church, which is proper to the Saviour of the body; supreme, visible, and universal head, which only Christ is, who hath promised to be with her to the end of the world, and will be visible to those who do at length approach his court in heaven, where his seat is; to be chief pastor, Christ’s own title: ‘And when the chief shepherd shall appear,’ 1 Peter 5:4; to be *pontifex maximus*, the greatest high priest, whereas Christ alone is called ‘the high priest of our profession,’ Heb. 3:1, and ‘the great high priest over the house of God,’ Heb. 4:14; so his vicar-

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general upon earth; whereas the ancient church attributed this to the Holy Ghost, calling it *Vicariam vim Spiritus Sancti*, he supplies his room and absence. Now titles including power, certainly they are not to be usurped without warrant. Therefore to call the Pope the chief and only shepherd, and the like, it is to usurp his authority to whom these things originally belong.

Secondly, He doth usurp the thing implied by the titles—the authority over the church, which is only due to God incarnate. Supreme authority may be considered, either as to the claim, right, property, and pre-eminence which belong to it, or to the exercise.

1. The claim and right pretended. He sitteth as God in the temple of God; that is, by virtue of his office there, claimeth the same power that Christ had, which is fourfold:—

(1.) An unlimited power over all things both in heaven and earth. This was given to Christ, Mat. 28:18, and the Pope, as his vicar, challengeth it. But where is the plea and ground of the claim? For one to set up himself as a vice-god without warrant, is rebellion against Christ. To set himself in his throne without his leave, surely none is fit to have this authority that hath not his power to back and to administer and govern all things for the church's good, which power God would trust in the hands of no creature.

(2.) A universal headship and supremacy over all the churches of Christ. Now, this supreme power over all Christians is the right of God incarnate, and whosoever challengeth it sits as God in the temple of God; and it is very derogatory to the comfort of the faithful that they should in all things depend upon one man as their supreme pastor, or else be excluded from the hope of salvation. Certainly this power, as to matter of fact, is impossible to be managed by any man, considering the vast extent of the world, and the variety of governments and different interests under which the people of God find shelter and protection, and the multitude and diversity of those things which are comprised in such a government; and, as to matter of right, it is sacrilegious, for Christ never instituted any such universal vicar and bishop. It is a dignity too high for any creature: none is fit to be universal head of the church but one that is God as well as man.

(3.) Absolute authority, so as to be above control. When a mortal man should pretend to be so absolute as to give no account of his actions, that it shall not be lawful to be said to him, What doest thou? and all his decrees must be received without examination or complaint, this is such a sovereignty as belongs to none but God: Job

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9:12, 'Behold, he taketh away, who can hinder him? who will say unto him, What doest thou?' Now, this is in their canon law, that the Pope is to be judged by no man; that though he should lead millions of souls into hell, none can say *Domine, cur ita facis?* (Lord, what are you doing?)

(4.) Infallibility and freedom from error, which is the property of God: he neither is deceived nor can deceive. 'Let God be true, and every man a liar.' Now, that corrupt and fallible man should arrogate this to himself, such an unerring in judgment, is to usurp divine honour in matter of right and in matter of fact. For the Pope to arrogate this is as great a contradiction to all sense and reason as if a man sick of the plague, or any other mortal disease, should say that he was immortal, and in that part wherein the disease was seated.

2. As to the exercise, there are two acts of supreme authority.—

(1.) Legislation.

(2.) Judgment.

(1.) Legislation: It is the peculiar and incommunicable property of Christ to be Lord and lawgiver to the church; Isa. 33:22, 'The Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king; he will save us.' God alone hath such interest in his people as to prescribe supreme or universal laws to them, and we are his subjects: James 4:12, 'There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy.' Now, whosoever will make laws that shall immediately bind the conscience, they invade Christ's sovereignty. This is spiritual tyranny, and the worst sort of tyranny, to arrogate a power over the subjects of Christ and their consciences as lord of their faith. He that taketh upon him to rescind and make void his institutions and ordinances, and set his own in their place, and give that reverence and honour to them which only belongeth to the ordinances of Christ, he is Antichrist, whatever he be.

(2.) As to judgment: It is an exercising an authority no less than divine, so to take upon him to absolve man from his duty to God, or the penalty which sin hath made his due. The one is done by dispensations, the other by indulgences: and therefore whoever by dispensations antiquates and dispenses with the laws of God himself is thus guilty; as dispensing with marrying the brother's wife. Nay, one of the Popes dispensed with one that took his own sister to wife. I do not allege this so much for the particular facts, but to show the power which they challenged to be inherent in themselves. Bellarmine saith, Christ hath given Peter and his successors a power *faciendi peccatum non peccatum*—to make a sin to be no sin; and again, 'If the Pope,

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should err in forbidding virtues and commanding vices, the church were bound to believe vices to be good and virtues to be evil,' which certainly is to set man in the place of God. As to indulgences: as to pretend to give pardons for sin for so many years, a thing that God himself never did; to pardon the sin before it was committed, that is, to give a license to sin: so for the highest crimes to absolve men, upon a little attrition or trouble about the sin,—to do all this and more than this as of right, is to sit in the church of God as God.'

[2.] *And showing himself that he is God:* that is meant, not of what he professeth in words, but what he doth in deed. It is not said that he saith he is God, but ***apodeikunta***, he showeth himself, or sets forth himself as God. The reason of the thing showeth it:—(1.) Antichrist gets power by seduction, or the deceiveableness of unrighteousness; therefore does not openly call himself the true and only God. He is represented as a false prophet, that speaketh lies in hypocrisy. If one would openly and plainly profess himself to be God, he might be a frantic usurper, but could not be a cunning seducer, and few would be so stupid and senseless as to be led by him. (2.) Antichrist, whoever he be, is to be a Christian by profession, and to have a high and great charge among the visible professors of Christianity. He is a secret adversary, that groweth upon the apostasy or degeneration of the Christian state. Now, such pretends observance and obedience to Christ, and therefore he would not openly declare himself to be God, and he sitteth in the temple and church of God, as before. And it is a mystery; all which imply crafty conveyance, and that he doth not openly assume the godhead, but slyly and secretly, which doth not mend the matter; for the insinuating, devouring, unsuspected enemy is the most perilous and pernicious; as Joab to Amasa, and Judas to Christ. (3.) Antichrist is plainly a man. Now, for a man to disannul all religion, and set up himself directly as God, is improbable. Nero, Nebuchadnezzar, Simon Magus would be adored as gods; they did not deny other gods, nor a greater God above them; therefore it is the arrogance of works is intended. If Antichrist will show himself as God, certainly he will sweeten his blasphemy with some hypocrisy, as that he is the vicar and vicegerent of God. (4.) His showing himself as God, is either accepting or doing such things, which if they did rightly belong to him, they would show that he is God. Two persons I find in scripture charged for usurping divine honours. The one, Herod Agrippa, who was smitten by an angel for not giving God the glory, when the people cried, 'The voice of God, and not of man,' Acts 12:22: his fault was accepting what was ascribed by others. The other is the prince of Tyre: Ezek. 28:2, 'Because thy heart is lifted up, and thou hast said I am God, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seat; yet thou art a man, and not God, though thou set thy heart

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as the heart of God.' His fault was taking upon him, as if he were God, to accept divine honours, to do those things which would make him equalise himself to our Lord Christ, blessed for ever. So doth he show himself that he is God. (1.) His accepting Antichrist's disciples, who call him our Lord God the Pope, *supremum numen in terris*, a certain deity upon earth. That the Pope hath the same consistory with God, and the same tribunal with Christ; that he is lord of heaven and earth; that from him there are no appeals to be made, no, not to God himself; that the Pope may do all that God doth; that he is the husband of the church, and the foundation of faith (*Council of Lateran*, sess. 4); *Alter Deus in terra*; that the words of the Pope *in cathedra* are for certainty of truth equal to the scriptures; that he can change the form of sacraments delivered by Christ, or decree contrary to scripture. If any do object that these were the applauses of his flatterers and claw-backs, it is true they were so uttered; but those flatteries of the canonists and Jesuits do come to be received doctrines among them; and whereas divers popes have directed special commissions for perusal of the works of the learned, with authority to expunge and purge out whatsoever is not orthodox, many better things have come under censure, but these things stand still, as being very pleasing to his holiness's humility, and so not to be altered: besides, many of these things have been spoken to his face without rebuke.—*Conc. Latt.*, sess. 2. He is called the high priest and king that is to be adored by all, and most like unto God—(sess. 9). It is said, the aspect of thy divine majesty dazzleth our eyes, and that of the 72d Psalm applieth to him, 'All the kings of the earth shall worship him, and all nations shall serve him.' Now, to accept and approve of these flatterers is to show himself that he is God: (2.) By doing such things as if he were God, not by the usurpation of the formal name, as by arrogating to himself such things as belong to God, his right and property, to take upon himself to be lord of consciences, to command what faith is to be believed, suppressing the true doctrine of Christ, and setting up his own inventions, dispensing with God's laws, taking upon him to pardon sins. One article for which Luther was condemned is this: that it is not in the power of the church or Pope to make new articles of faith; another, that the best penitence of all is the new life. *Qui facit Deos divosque Deo major est* (He who makes God and divine things is greater than God.) The Pope doth canonise saints, and his decrees must be received as oracles, &c.

The first *use is* to give us a clear discovery where to find Antichrist; every tittle of this is fulfilled in the bishop of Rome, that we need no longer be in doubt, and say, 'Is this he that should come, or shall we look for another?' Who is the *o antikeimenov*, but he that opposeth himself to that humble state and frame wherein Christ left the church, and will be prince of all pastors, and swear them to his obedience, and hath

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made such troubles in the world to make himself acknowledged for head and chief? Who is he that exalteth himself above all that is called God, and is eminent in the world, but he that takes upon, him to deprive and depose emperors, kings, and princes, by his excommunications, suspensions, interdictions, and decrees, discharging subjects of their allegiance and oaths, and giving away their kingdoms; that doth crown and uncrown emperors with his feet, and tread upon, them as one would do upon a viper? Who is he that sitteth as God in the temple of God—that is, affecteth the honour due to our Lord Jesus Christ—but he that doth thus imperiously aspire, *subesse Romano Pontifici definimus esse de necessitate salutis* ('We define that is necessary for salvation to be under the Roman Pope'); that takes upon him a power to make a new creed, and say we are bound to obey him; that saith he can change the things which God hath commanded in his word, and dispense with them, and so by his decrees make the commandment of God of none effect; and can forgive sins, not only already committed, but to be committed, which God himself never would do; that lords it over consciences, enslaving the world to his usurpations: in short, that will be obeyed in those things which God hath forbidden, and take upon himself an office which no human creature is capable of? Who is he that showeth himself that he is God, but he that suffereth himself to be decked with the spoils of God's own attributes; to be *optimum maximum*, the best and chiefest, our Lord God the Pope, a visible deity; and will be adored by all the potentates of the earth, with such veneration as greater could not be given to Christ himself if he were corporally present, and will have all the world to submit to his decrees as being infallible; that challengeth a power over angels, purgatory, and hell? These things are as clear as daylight, and ought to be regarded by us, partly that we may bless God, who hath freed us from this tyranny, and have a liberty of judging of truth and falsehood out his holy and blessed word; partly that we may stand fast in this liberty. Those that were never pope-bitten know not the mischiefs that attend this spiritual tyranny; and God grant that we never more know it to our bitter cost. Therefore, as Samuel dealt with the Israelites when they would cast off the theocracy, or God's government, under which they had been well and safely governed, unless they forfeited the protection by their own sin, that they might be like all the nations round about them, 1 Sam. 8:20;—Samuel telleth them what would be the manner of the king that should reign over them: 1 Sam. 8:11-13, 'And he said, This shall be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: he will take your sons, and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and some shall run before his chariots. And he

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will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties; and will set them to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots. And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers. And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants,' &c.;—so if such a wanton humour should possess us, that we must have the religion of the nations round about us, consider whom you receive spiritually to reign over you—the king of pride, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or is worshipped, &c., one that will not only devour your substance, but lord it over your consciences, and put out the eye of your reason, that you may the better swallow his damnable errors, pestilent superstitions, and idolatries, and bold usurpation on the authority of Christ; or else burn your bodies with temporal fire, and cast out your name as one to be condemned to that which is eternal. It is easy to open the flood-gate, but when that is done, it is not so easy to call back the waters; and when you come to discern the difference between the blessed yoke of Christ and the iron yoke of Antichrist, it will be too late for a remedy to repent of your error.

The second *use* is to show us how things should be carried in the true and reformed Christianity.

1. With such meekness, modesty, and mortification, that our religion may be known to be established by a crucified Lord, whose doctrine and example do visibly and eminently hold forth the contempt of the world. The pride and ambition of the pastors of the church hath been the cause of all the evil in it; therefore nothing so unsuitable to the gospel as a domineering spirit. We, that are to preach heavenly-mindedness and self-denial, should not affect the greatness of the world, lest our lives contradict our doctrine.

2. How eminent and exemplary we should be in our obedience to magistrates, for this is to be opposite to the antichristian estate. God is very tender of the honour of civil powers and authorities, and will have every soul to be subject to them: Rom. 13:1, 'Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers, for there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God;' and again, 1 Peter 2:13, 'Submit to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the king as supreme, or to governors, as them that are sent by him.' Great respect and submission is due to them for God's sake, and that we may commend religion to the profane world, and live down the reproaches of the gospel. They were branded as wicked men that were not afraid to speak evil of dignities, that despise governments in their own hearts, or

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weaken the esteem of it in the hearts of others by their speeches: 2 Peter 2:10, 'But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government; presumptuous are they, self-willed; they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.'

3 What a wickedness it is to usurp divine honours! We do so when we take that praise and admiration to ourselves which is only due to God: Acts 3:12, 'And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our power or holiness we had made this man to walk? The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus, &c.; and his name, through faith in his name, hath made this man strong, whom we see and know; yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.'

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