

*My Son is in my servant's prayer,
And Jesus forces me to spare.*

13. I add but one reason more, why we may rationally hope that these kingdoms, sinful as they are, will not yet be given up to destruction. Religion, true, scriptural religion, the love of God and our neighbour, inviting men to avoid evil and to do good, to practise justice, mercy, and truth, is not decreasing therein; no, it is continually increasing in every part of the kingdom; as an impartial inquirer cannot but observe, whether he turn east, west, north, or south. Now, I know no instance in all history, from the earliest ages to this day, of the Governor of the world delivering up a kingdom to destruction, while religion was increasing in it. I believe no such instance can be found. And indeed it seems to be totally inconsistent with his wisdom and goodness, and with the rules whereby He hath governed all nations from the beginning of the world. Fear him therefore with a filial fear; and you need fear nothing but him. In this sense also, one thing is needful,—the making God your friend. And when we have “a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man,” we may say with boldness, “The Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge: Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be moved, and though the hills be carried into the depth of the sea. The flood thereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High.”

HOW FAR IS IT THE DUTY OF A CHRISTIAN MINISTER TO PREACH POLITICS?

1. It is impossible to answer this question before it is understood. We must, First, therefore endeavour to understand it; and then it will be easy to answer.

2. There is a plain command in the Bible, “Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.” But notwithstanding this, many that are called religious people speak evil of him continually. And they speak many things that are palpably false; particularly when they affirm him to be a

weak man ; whereas a Nobleman, who is not at all prejudiced in his favour, when he was pressed to speak, made this honest declaration : " Sir, I know him well ; and I judge the King to be one of the most sensible men in Europe. His Ministers are no fools ; but His Majesty is able to wind them all round his finger."

3. Now, when a Clergyman comes into a place where this and many more stories, equally false, have been diligently propagated against the King, and are generally believed, if he guards the people against this evil-speaking, by refuting those slanders, many cry out, " O, he is preaching politics !"

4. If you mean this by the term, it is the bounden duty of every Christian Minister to preach politics. It is our bounden duty to refute these vile aspersions, in public as well as in private. But this can be done only now and then, when it comes naturally in our way. For it is our main and constant business to " preach Jesus Christ, and him crucified."

5. Again : Many who do not so freely censure the King, speak all manner of evil of his Ministers. If any misfortune befalls us at home or abroad, by sea or land, it is " all their fault." If one commander in America is surprised with all his forces when he is dead drunk, " Lord North deserves to be hanged." If General Burgoyne or Lord Cornwallis is betrayed into their enemy's hand, all the blame is laid on our Ministers at home. But still the King is wounded through their sides ; the blame glances from them to him. Yet if we say a word in defence of them, (which is in effect defending him,) this also is preaching politics.

6. It is always difficult and frequently impossible for private men to judge of the measures taken by men in public offices. We do not see many of the grounds which determine them to act in this or the contrary manner. Generally, therefore, it behoves us to be silent, as we may suppose they know their own business best ; but when they are censured without any colour of reason, and when an odium is cast on the King by that means, we ought to preach politics in this sense also ; we ought publicly to confute those unjust censures : Only remembering still, that this is rarely to be done, and only when fit occasion offers ; it being our main business to preach " repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ."

JOHN WESLEY.

LEWISHAM, *January 9, 1782.*