

in giving such a high title, in a qualified sense, to Kings and Rulers. They are God's ministers, and may therefore lay some claim to the name or authority of Him whom they represent.

These are the only two classes of beings who, while they were not God, are yet acknowledged in Scripture to be called Gods; namely, false Gods, and lawful magistrates, and the Apostle declares that Antichrist exalts himself above them both.\* Much light is thrown on the passage, by comparing it with the following language which the prophet Isaiah puts in the mouth of Lucifer, "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God, I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High." A similar personage, or perhaps the same personage in a prophetic sense, is spoken of by the prophet Daniel—"the King shall do according to his will, and shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every God, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods."† And, we think, it can scarcely be doubted, that the "Lucifer" of Isaiah, and the "King" of Daniel, and "the Man of sin," of the Apostle Paul, have all a typical relation to one another.

It could not be charged against Antichrist as a sin, if he were only to exalt himself above the false Gods of the heathen, for they were mere fictions; creatures of the imagination; one living man or woman is more than the whole catalogue of them. But the Apostle goes on to inform us, that, while Antichrist sets them aside, it is only to substitute himself in their room; for, ‡ *as God he sitteth*

\* It is worthy of notice here, that the reading in the Vulgate is "every thing that is called God." That was the reading in Jerome's time, in the latter part of the 4th century. Calvin prefers it, and thinks that the reading in the authorized version is a corruption of Paul's words.

† As Daniel does not include the true God in the expression *every God*, it affords a strong presumption that the Apostle does not include the true God in the expression, *every one, called God*. It therefore corroborates our exegesis.

‡ The words *as God* are thrown out of all the late recensions of the New Testament.