

The next point to be considered is,

III.—THE DUTY OF CHRISTIANS TOWARDS THE CIVIL GOVERNMENT, AND ESPECIALLY TOWARDS THE CHIEF MAGISTRATE. These duties are so clearly pointed out in the word of God, that we need be in no danger of overlooking or misunderstanding them, among them we may reckon

1. *Homage, or Reverence*, and that for his office sake, if for nothing else. The injunction which bids us "Honor the King," is unmistakeably plain, and is put upon a par with that which bids us "Fear God." This duty prohibits all evil speaking against Rulers, even although they may be wicked men. When Paul stood before the High Priest, and complained of the injustice of his treatment, some who stood by said, "Revilest thou God's High Priest?" "I wist not, Brethren," said Paul, that he was the High Priest, for it is written, thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people."—Acts xxiii. 4-5. In a similar spirit Peter declares that "the Lord knoweth how to \* \* \* reserveye the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished; \* \* \* chiefly them that \* \* \* despise government," and "are not afraid to speak evil of dignities." 2 Peter, ii, 9-10. In this connection the wise man's admonition is significant, "Curse not the king, no not in thy thought; \* \* \* for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell of the matter." Eccles. x. 20. "Render therefore to all their dues: \* \* \* fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor."

2. Another manifest duty is that of *prayer*. This is so plainly stated, that he who should refuse to perform the duty would show himself to be a bad citizen and a worse christian. "I exhort, therefore," says St. Paul, "that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men: for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour."—1 Tim. ii., 1-3. But this duty arises, be it observed, not merely from the allegiance we owe to the