

A SERMON
ON
CIVIL
GOVERNMENT,

PREACHED AT COLDENHAM, FEB. 11, 1821.

BY

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The powers that be are ordained of God. Rom. 13:1.

—All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Mat. 28:18.

—Ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. Rom. 13:5.

—Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil. Exod. 23:2.

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1821.

A SERMON.

Exod. 20:12. Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord God giveth thee."

THIS precept, as it lies at the foundation of all social duty among men, occupies with great beauty the first place on the second table of the law. In the course of our exposition of the ten commandments, we have explained those precepts which contain our duty to God, and have advanced two discourses in expounding our duty to one another. Beginning with the most prominent duty, we have attempted the illustration of filial duty—the correlate, parental duty—and we now proceed according to, a plan before announced, to discuss the duties of political parents and political children—or those social obligations, which arise out of the divine ordinance of civil government.

All expositors of the decalogue embrace those relations, under the provisions of this statute of Jehovah, and with great accuracy; as the civil rulers of nations are employed to exercise one branch of that authority, which in the early ages of the world resided entirely in fathers, or patriarchs, in the literal acceptation of the word. Subjects are political children of their legitimate civil rulers, who are their political fathers.

This consideration alone is of sufficient weight to justify the introduction of such a topic, in our public ministrations on the Lord's day; and to set aside an opinion too prevalent among a certain class of our citizens—that the doctrine of civil government does not lie within the province of the minister' of the sanctuary. It is painful to observe that some who are professors of religion put themselves into that class. That an infidel should maintain this position does not excite astonishment—is not wonderful, but that professors of the religion of Jesus, who have solemnly declared their belief of a Catechism which teaches that the Scriptures are the only rule to direct us how we may glorify God—is justly matter of wonder. If professors mean to glorify God in whatsoever they do—in the performance of political, as well as all other duties they will surely admit that the Bible is the only rule to direct them; and the ambassador of Jesus is not only authorized, but under moral obligation, to declare to the utmost of his knowledge, the whole counsel of God contained in that book.

But why should this remote train of reasoning be pursued? We have evidence the most direct, instructions that cannot be misunderstood, binding us at the peril of our own souls, to declare to Judah his transgressions, and to Israel his sins. "When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked of his way to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thy hand." Do men then commit sins in their political relations? Will God never pronounce the sentence of death upon any man for the sins which he commits as a citizen? Shall tyrants and profane demagogues, who poison the public fountains of law, and base peculators on the public wealth, be acquitted at the bar of God? No; unless they repent, they shall be cast into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. If we do not warn them of their sins, our Master will require their blood at our hands. How shall we warn them of their sins unless we explain the laws of God, in their application to the duties of civil functionaries, and thus ascertain the rule of sin and duty?

A large portion of the books of Moses refers to the civil institutions ordained by the God of heaven. Has the minister of Jesus no warrant to expound the books of Moses? Jesus and his apostle Paul thought otherwise. How very large a space does the civil policy of God's covenant people occupy in the volume of the Old Testament? The prophets which God raised up, endowed and inspired among the people of his covenant, denounced the judgments of Jehovah against kings, and all rulers in the land, when they departed from the laws of the Lord of hosts. They stood on the hills of Judea, and lifted up their voice to warn the kings of Egypt, Ammon, Moab, Tyrus, and Babylon, of the storm of God's wrath ready to break over their head, and to

destroy themselves and their empires for their transgressions. Daniel denounced Belshazzar in the midst of his court. Has that Jesus who commissioned the Daniels, Elijahs, and Isaiahhs of the former dispensations, "to speak the word of God to kings and not be ashamed," no warning voice against political transgressors in modern times?

The New Testament abounds with instructions to the same effect. Peter denounced Herod and Pontius Pilate as the murderers of the Prince of life. Paul uttered by inspiration many maxims of civil government. Who could expound the thirteenth chapter of Romans, without preaching on the subject of civil government? Would the professor of religion say to his pastor, while expounding that epistle, You must tell your congregation, when you arrive at that chapter, there is no gospel in it; and therefore it must be passed by without one remark? He must, or admit that his commission extends to the civil duties of men. The book of Revelation is designed to exhibit chiefly the state of empires, and the influence which they have on the church of God, and on the eternal destinies of men.

However gratifying, brethren, it might be to our love of carnal ease; however much we hazard in speaking the truth of God, when the sins of "vile men high in place" are laid bare; however fashionable it is in our age for the ministers of the gospel to seek their own comfort, and to court the great by neglecting to warn them; we do not, we dare not be silent: for the glory of God, the souls of men, and our own duty demand the discussion. We fearlessly proceed:—

I. To explain the origin and nature of civil government.

II. Its administration.

III. The duty of subjects.

I. On the first of these topics it may be said, with a distinguished civilian;^[1] "As man depends absolutely upon his Maker for every thing, it is necessary that he should in all points conform to his Maker's will." "This will," he proceeds to say, "is expressed in the immutable laws of nature," and in the communications made "at sundry times and in diverse manners"—"by an immediate and direct revelation;"—which, "when revealed, are found upon comparison to be really a part of the original law of nature."^[2] Here indeed he treats of law in general, but as "every ordinance of man," all the different forms of government, are to be established on certain principles, which have in them the essence of law, as well as particular statutes made in conformity with those principles, we safely interpret his doctrines as extending to the whole institution of civil government. The doctrine of this civilian ought to be considered an axiom in morals. It really neither requires, nor admits of any proof. It prepares us for the following truths:

1. Civil government is an ordinance instituted by the God of heaven, as the Creator and moral governor of the world. "There is no power but of God; the powers that be

are ordained of God." [3] "He (the civil ruler) is God's minister." [4] Civil power, whether viewed as the object of knowledge and research, and as embodying in itself the great and immutable principles of moral order in society, or, as invested in civil officers authorized to act in its administration, is "from God." It emanates from him as the Supreme ruler of those moral subjects whom he creates, upholds, and governs. It must be viewed as springing from the moral attributes of God, on the hypothesis of his creating beings possessing such moral constitutions as those of men. It respects man not as an individual merely, but as endowed with social faculties, and propensities, whose powers cannot be evolved, and whose happiness cannot be complete, but in a state of society. The Creator having imparted to man his whole moral and social constitution, must from the very nature of his attributes, place him under the obligation of such an institution, as is favourable to the development of the whole, moral excellency of which his nature is susceptible. Such an institution is civil government. It grows out of the very relation that naturally, and necessarily exists between God and intellectual, moral, creatures, and the relations existing among these creatures towards one another.

This view of the subject, given us by the inspired apostle, discovers the absurdity of the claims of tyrants and usurpers, who wage war with the human family, with the inherent rights of men, with the moral laws of God, and even with God himself; and yet claim to be "of God," "ordained of God;" as though God could be the Author of tyranny and usurpation; and had authorized them to trample under foot every moral precept written on the constitution of man, and recorded more distinctly and emphatically in the Holy Scriptures. Such claims, the Holy Ghost, in the Apocalypse, instructs us to consider as blasphemy. "And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and I saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy." [5] This beast is the Roman empire, under seven different forms of government, extending from the founding of the empire by Romulus to the commencement of the blessed millennium. Its last head has ten horns—these are the modern despotisms of Europe. [6] On every one of these heads is written the name of blasphemy. The head characterizes the beast. Why inscribed with this motto? Why does blasphemy constitute the essence of all these governments? That it does so, no Bible believer can doubt; for they are all so labelled by the Holy Ghost. They claim to be of God and his ordinance, and pretend that all their deeds of iniquity are authorized by him. Hence you hear them in their public acts proclaiming;—"Otho by the grace of God Emperor of Germany." "Ferdinand by the grace of God King of the two Sicilies." "Ferdinand by the grace of God King of Spain." "George by the grace of God," &c. Thus they open their mouths in blasphemy against Heaven, by pretending, that, by the grace of God, they have received their authority from him, to oppress the nations, and practice all their evil deeds. Thus they assert that their power is from God, while in fact the "Devil gives them their power, and their seat, and eat authority." [7] How could they blaspheme with greater emphasis?

That power that is from God "bears not the sword in vain;" "he is an avenger to

execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." "He is a terror to evil doers and a praise to them that do well."—"God's minister, attending continually to this very thing."^[8] When government, in its origin and administration, is the very reverse of all this, and yet pretends to be the ordinance of God, how greatly does it attempt to dishonour him!

Again, "all power is of God,"—"the powers that be are ordained of God"—instructs us that they err, who consider all civil power as originating from the people and not from God. Those who set up governments without any reference to the authority of the Lord God Omnipotent, and without admitting the truth that he reigneth, rebel against Jehovah. What! "all power of God," and God not acknowledged by the power! What! "the powers that be ordained of God," and yet no mention of his authority, in those constitutions, that form the basis on which the superstructure of the Commonwealths is erected! How wise the maxim contained in the line of the Latin poet! *Stulti semper in contraria currant*. "Tyrants, to suit their nefarious designs upon the human race, ascribe all their public crimes, and the whole structure of their iniquitous, blooderected thrones, to Heaven; while infidel nations, rebel against God, by ascribing, in the pride of their hearts, all authority to themselves. We are the fountain, say they. This is great Babylon, that we have built for the honour of our might, and for the glory of our majesty. It will remain a truth the heaven and earth pass away, "that all power is of God, that the powers that be, are ordained of God"—a holy God who will never set his seal to transgression, will never give the sanction of his investiture to "thrones of iniquity," never permit any Nebuchadnezzar to lift up his heart, and harden his mind in pride, without deposing him from his kingly throne, and taking his glory from him: for "all power is of God."

Again, "all power is of God," *i.e.*, all civil power is of God, as Creator. Before Satan fell, and he fell before man, there were thrones, principalities powers, and dominions in heaven. He that is now the prince of the power of the air, was once seated on one of these thrones. He was Lucifer a morning star. In the celestial hierarchy the power was, and is, of God for perfecting the glorious system of moral order, which regulates the vast concerns of the commonwealth of angels. We call it indeed a hierarchy, but it did not grow out of the plan of redemption; for it existed before that plan commenced its administration, and though now among other "all things," it is subjected to the Messiah the head of the new covenant, yet it was originally administered by God essentially, as Creator.

Before man fell the essence of all civil power in this world resided in the first Adam. He was made head of his wife and endowed with authority, which would have embraced his sons and daughters, had they been born to him before his fall. He had subjected to him, "all sheep and oxen, fowls of the air, fish of the sea."^[9] The authority necessary for the exercise of government over subordinate moral agents, and over all earthly property, was conferred on him by his Creator, "all power is of God."

2. The ordinance of civil government is instituted for the preservation of moral order among the intelligent creatures of God. "Rulers are not a terror to good works, but to

the evil." [10] In its original constitution by Him who ordained it, the law which gave it birth was the substance of this proposition of the apostle of the Gentiles. Rulers are ordained to promote good works, by the exhibition of the rewards which follow them, and the pains which ensue upon a breach of them. That the moral laws which were enacted for the government of angels, held out both rewards and punishments to promote obedience among that class of moral creatures, scarcely admits of a doubt; for punishment has been inflicted upon transgressors, and blessedness is bestowed upon those that obey. In the covenant of works, both promises and threatenings were employed for securing obedience to God. In the latter instance indeed the obedience to be rendered was to the Creator immediately; but the principle is the same, whether the immediate superior is God, or his vicegerent; to God it is all ultimately yielded. What certainly was employed in the covenant of works, and what probably was among the angels in their primeval state, the apostle, in the passage quoted, assures us is employed for the preservation of good order among men, in the authority with which the civil magistrate is vested, by Him who ordains "the powers that be." The regularity of operation in the various ranks of creation below man, imparts to them nearly all their beauty, and displays illustriously the glory of the Creator. It is this which charms in the starry heavens, in the mineral, in the vegetable, and in the animal kingdoms. "O Lord, our Lord, how, excellent is thy name, in all the earth!" The principle of attraction is the grand agent in all those sublime and regular operations of the solar system. In the moral creation, civil authority was originally made to operate as a common centre, attracting social beings to itself, as a common centre of motion, and all towards God the Creator. Hence the figure used in relation to small states moving in their orbits around large ones. On the regularity of the system of order, in the great society of created moral beings, depends the beauty of the whole.—By promised rewards God draws moral agents to himself as the common centre, and by threatened punishment he repels evils. "Rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil." The mere settlement of claims relative to property, is a secondary consideration in civil government; because one part of morals refers to the rights of individuals in temporal goods. In these men are to be viewed not as mere animals, but as moral, accountable beings, in whose volitions and actions the glory of God, and the great interests of the commonwealth of created mind, are partly involved. Of this depraved men are too apt to lose sight.

This truth will appear in a more forcible light by a reference to the state of the Roman empire when this epistle was written to the Christians at Rome; or, rather to the whole nature and origin of that blasphemy and tyranny which constituted the very essence of the Roman government. In the year sixty-one of the Christian era, the church at Rome received this letter from Paul. It was also the seventh of the reign of Nero, than whom a greater tyrant never filled an earthly throne. Nothing more Certainly brought destruction on any Roman citizen than his having the reputation of an upright man. Nero murdered his own mother and his wife in a state of pregnancy. He filled Rome with wanton carnage. He caused the city to be set on fire in different places, which consumed a considerable part of it; and when he found that he was charged with so execrable a deed, "he persecuted the Christians, who were very

numerous in the capital as being its author. He refined on the torments which he made them suffer. Some he wrapped up in the skins of beasts of prey, and threw them to dogs that devoured them; others he nailed to crosses, that in the severest agonies they might wait the slow approaches of death; others he Covered with inflammable substances, and fixed them to stakes or threw them into fires, that they might give light to the amusement of the monster, who drove through the avenues, in his car, in the dress of a charioteer."[\[11\]](#) He spared no age, nor sex. The historian, quoted above, speaking of his reign, says, "at this time is mentioned a prodigy, or phenomenon. Saturninus, very rich and very much respected, died, governor of Rome, a natural death, aged ninety years!" So insupportable was his tyranny, that by common consent, the whole empire rose in rebellion, and pursued him to extermination, as a common enemy. Here is the entire reverse of the picture of God's ordinance drawn by Paul in the seventh year of his reign. At the very moment when Paul, by the inspiration of the Almighty, was writing this proposition, "for rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil," Nero may have been driving his car through avenues, where the flames were consuming Christians as a terror to the good works of Christians, and as an encouragement to the evil works of heathen idolaters. How hold a reproof does the apostle tender to the bloody tyrant!

Nero's cruelties were perpetrated in the true spirit of a system of gross idolatry, of which as emperor, he was the head, under the title of *Pontifex Maximus*, supreme pontiff—a system of idolatry, the corruptions of which Paul describes in the first chapter of his epistle to the Romans—a system of idolatry woven into the texture of the whole Roman government, from the days of Romulus, to those of Nero—a system directly opposed to the whole moral law of the first table—a system in which stocks and stones were adored, and thus insulted Jehovah—and hence a system which promoted disorder and confusion by rewards, and attacked moral order by punishments. The Roman government was founded, and cemented, by the blood of victims immolated on the altar of lawless ambition, and never derived its authority from the majority of the people, and yet pretended to be of God. No wonder, then, that the apostle John, standing on the sand of the sea, saw it, in vision, as a beast of prey rise up out of the sea, having seven heads—and on his heads the name of *blasphemy*.[\[12\]](#) Every head had blasphemy for its name—the kingly, decemviral, dictatorial, tribunitial, consular, and imperial forms of the Roman government, had WRITTEN ON THEM, BY THE HAND OF JEHOVAH, BLASPHEMY. Why? Because in their very nature they were opposed to the moral government of God—to moral order among men—and yet, what gross blasphemy! pretended that they were ordained of God, as his ordinance. No wonder, John says in the same chapter,[\[13\]](#) "the Dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority." The Dragon he explains in another chapter,[\[14\]](#) to be "that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan," the author of all the disorder and disobedience in the government of God. The Roman government, as Dr. Scott says, was "the Devil's vicegerent." I cannot exhibit the force of this remarkable text, better than in the words of Dr. M'Leod, in his profound, accurate, and elegant Lectures on the Revelation, "Dunamin, the force; Qronon, the actual investiture; ecousian, the authority, or national right to reign; are all in this

verse said to be from the Devil, and not from God. The beast is from God only in the same sense that the Dragon is from him." No wonder, I say, the government of Rome is thus characterized by the Spirit of God, because it was in its constitution, and vital principle, destitute of that which is essential to the ordinance of God, the preservation of moral order, because in its nature and administration it was not "a terror to evil doers, and a praise to them that do well."

3. The great object of this ordinance is to promote the glory of God. "The heavens declare the glory of God." For this purpose "they are and were created." When a great earthquake swallows up a tenth part of the city, "the remnant are affrighted, and give glory to God." [15] How? The beast under his seven heads has blasphemed God—the whole Roman government had blasphemed God, by disregarding his law; and instead of honouring had dishonoured him. When God destroys by an earthquake "thrones of iniquity," and affrights the nations, they give glory to him, by modelling their governments according to his revealed will, and for the express purpose of honouring him. When "the kingdoms become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ—the four and twenty elders which sit before God on their seats, fall upon their faces and worship God because he has taken to him his great power and has reigned." [16] God's glorious image is impressed upon his moral laws, and when these are imbodyed into the constitutions of the nations and carried out into their practical details in the administration of civil government, then the glorious image of our God is impressed upon civil society, and thus honour is given to the "Lord of all." The ruler then becomes the vicegerent of God, and honours the Supreme Sovereign, whom he represents. "He is the minister of God to thee for good." [17] Kings appoint viceroys and ambassadors to maintain the honour of their crowns, among those to whom they are sent, and when Jehovah appoints magistrates to govern in his name, he gives them in charge to keep his honour near to their hearts, and suffer no encroachments on the glory of his throne. The heads of the Roman beast "changed the glory of the incorruptable God, into the likeness of fourfooted beasts, and creeping things, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is God over all blessed for ever." [18]

The supreme power of the empire, whether residing in a king, a triumvir, a dictator, a military tribune, a consul, or an emperor, concentrated in itself all the dishonour done to God, by all the abominations of heathen idolatry, recorded in the first chapter of the epistle to the Roman; for, as the head of the empire, he was head of the Roman idolatries—the pontifex maximus, or high priest of the Dragon, whom he served and honoured more than "God over all blessed for ever."

4. The ordinance of magistracy is instituted to promote the happiness of the creature. "He is the minister of God to thee for *good*."—God has ordained him to be instrumental in diffusing enjoyment among his subjects by securing obedience to the moral law, decreed by eternal Wisdom, "whose ways are pleasantness, and all her paths peace." The Roman government was the rod of his wrath to chastise guilty nations. God let it loose upon the nations like "the lion roaring and ravening for his

prey,"—the lion is a name given to the Roman emperor by Paul, when he says, "I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion."^[19] This government is the fourth beast of Daniel, by the consent of all Commentators, Protestant and Popish. "After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it."—"The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon the earth,—and shall devour the whole earth."^[20] Such a voracious monster is not, cannot be the minister of God to thee for *good*, any otherwise, than the whirlwind, the earthquake, the volcano—than famine, war, and pestilence, which are indeed his ministers of vengeance, but not the ordinance of God for *good*. But the ordinance of God administered by his vicegerent is "the minister of God to thee for good."

5. To render this power efficacious in securing glory to God, and happiness to man, the magistrate is armed with rewards and punishments, to be dispensed with justice, according to the law of God, of whom he is the minister.

(1.) Rewards—"Do that which is good and thou shalt have praise of the same."^[21] Whatever be the power to which Paul here refers, he assures his reader, that if he does good—obeys the law of God, by worshipping God alone, and abstaining from the worship of graven images, or any likeness of any thing in heaven or in earth, "by keeping pure and entire all such religious worship and ordinances, as God hath appointed in his word," "he shall have praise of the same;" not merely that such a good man will be permitted without molestation to practice good works, but that he will be encouraged in his good deeds, by the facilities which government, and the common morality of society, will afford him to prosecute his righteous, and benevolent enterprises. The government will praise him in the most effectual manner, by promoting him to civil honour, *because* he does good—"walking in all the commandments of the Lord blameless." By bestowing the praises which the apostle intends, "kings become nursing fathers of the church."^[22] It is by the praise bestowed on them who do goods in maintaining truth and holiness, that the church is made "to suck the breast of kings."^[23] Thus while kings, glorify the God who is the fountain of "just and legal authority," by enforcing obedience to his laws, they promote that felicity which is enumerated by all judicious civilians as one end of civil government. "It is evident," says Vattel,^[24] "that men form a political society, and submit to laws, solely for their own advantage and safety. The sovereign authority is then established only for the common good of all the citizens, and it would be absurd to think that it could change its nature on its passing into the hands of a senate and monarch. Flattery therefore cannot disown, without rendering itself equally ridiculous and odious, that the sovereign is only established for the safety of the state, and the advantages of society." This advantage results to the state by its government being "a praise to them that do well."—For the reverse of all this we refer again to the Roman government. Idolatry and cruelty were the high road to all praise, all honours in the court of the Cesars. With the two edged sword of the word,—the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God," Paul cuts deep into the vitals of the Roman beast, and thrusts it deep under the imperial head.

(2.) By the infliction of punishment. "But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil." [25] God has implanted in the constitution of every being susceptible of pleasure and pain, a desire for the former, and an aversion to the latter. To this principle, viewed under each of its aspects, powerful appeals are made in the administration of the divine government. The whole system of promises and threatenings, rewards and penalties, addresses itself to this part of the moral constitution of the creature. The Creator endows the civil ruler with power to administer in part this system. His power as a revenger, appealing to the principle of fear, tends to prevent crime, and he does not bear the sword in vain.—He must actually take revenge upon him that doeth evil. The object of this revenge is not merely the reformation of the criminal, nor the influence of terror to prevent crime. He is a *Revenger*, ordained as the minister of God, to shew the righteous indignation of Jehovah in punishing the guilty. In capital punishment, the object cannot be the reformation of the murderer. And whatever modern visionaries may dream, every Bible believer must admit that the Judge of all the earth did once arm the civil power to take away life. He was at least then a *revenger*, but Paul Says he is so still. The word *revenger* admits of no other interpretation. Could we say of a father when he chastises his child that he is a revenger? Might we say of our Redeemer when he chastens those whom he loveth that he is a revenger? The magistrate, then, is authorized to take vengeance on criminals. But all those acts of vengeance are to fall, of course, on the guilty, and thus the vicious through fear are restrained; and the welfare of the people promoted.

This will all appear in a clearer light by contrasting it with the conduct of the Roman Cesar, Nero, the minister of the Dragon. He executed his own personal revenge in the murder of his mother, his wife, Seneca, the celebrated heathen moralist; and the revenge of all the heathen priesthood—the revenge of heathen idolatry,—upon whom? Those that did evil? *No*, emphatically, *no*; but on Christians. Here again we find the apostle aiming another deadly thrust at the beast. Though the beast of blasphemy thus set at defiance the laws of God, yet it is still true that the minister of God who possesses just and legal, authority, "beareth not the sword in vain, but is a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil."

II. We now invite your attention to the administration of this ordinance in the present state of the world, fallen from God, and yet spared under a visitation of mercy through a Redeemer.

1. It is committed by God the Father to the Lord Jesus Christ as Mediator. We see this taught even in the first promise—"the seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent." Satan had as a conqueror vanquished our ancestors in the garden of Eden, and having conquered them, he had in some sense overcome the world, of which the lordship had been committed to them. The Second Person of the glorious Trinity, the Eternal and only Begotten Son of God, appears, as the head of the covenant of grace, to introduce a dispensation of grace; and at the very moment when the world was

ready to perish under the infliction of the penalty of the violated covenant of works, he lays hold of, supports, and establishes the pillars of the earth, and promises to conquer the destroyer. His right to do so, was according to the tenor of the covenant, to be purchased by his death in the room of those "who were chosen in him before the foundation of the world." [26] Every thing necessary to the ruin of the kingdom of Satan, and the restoration of moral order among men, was committed to him. Among the rest the ordinance of civil government. In this character as head of the nations, he gave authority to the ancient patriarchs, before the flood, to govern their posterity. And though Cain and his murderous race, descended from a murderous father, went out from the presence of God, and founded governments as the seed of the serpent; and though the dragon gave the power, and the seat, and authority, to them "who were of old time men of renown,"—yet Messiah who will give the Roman beast with his ten modern horns to the devouring flame, sent destruction, by a general deluge upon the thrones, and people of the antediluvian Cesars. In this character, as the head of empires, he promised to Abraham the land of Cannan; destroyed the first-born in the land of Egypt; gave a body of civil laws, at Sinai, to the commonwealth of Israel; led, as the Captain of the Lord's host, the armies of Israel to victory over the Canaanitish nations, put his chosen people in possession of their land, and governed the people of Jacob in all their civil concerns. As the great Conductor of all providential dispensations, "he has all power in heaven and earth given to him;" [27] "is made head over all things to his body the church;" [28] "and all things are subjected to him, except the Father who did put all things under him." [29] All thrones, principalities and powers are subjected to him as Mediator; in no other sense could they be given to him, for as God he possessed them equally with the Father. So Turretin expounds the grant. In his exposition of Mat. 28:18. he says, "all power is to be given him," (Christ) "which necessarily supposes omnipotence, for he could not have all power in heaven and earth, as *Mediator*, unless as God he was Omnipotent." [30]

Every one who loves the Lord Jesus Christ, when he fully understands what is here meant, must delight in the contemplation of the high glory to which God the Father has exalted Him, who is all our salvation, and all our desire. Glory to the sovereign mercy and free grace of our new covenant God, that he who became a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, who expired in agony on the cross to purchase us by his precious blood, has been exalted to the "right hand of the Majesty on high,"—made "King of kings and Lord of lords,"—that he has given us assurance, that he will reign until all his enemies are subjected to his regal sceptre, after he shall have "put down all the rule, and all the authority" which the Dragon has given to the tyrants and despots of the world, from the days of Cain, to the conspiracy of the horns of the beast against God and the rights of man ;—an *Alliance*, which, in the true spirit of the last head of the beast, they blasphemously call *Holy*.

2. The Bible is the rule by which the nations of the world are to establish their constitutions, and administer their civil affairs. The laws which it contains are the same with the original laws of our nature, imbodyed in the covenant of works. Indeed

one great object of the covenant of grace, is to restore all the chosen of God to the obedience of his laws. Jesus the Lord of creation comes with his word, and promulges it among the nations, and says to commonwealths, as well as to individuals, "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to them, it is because there is no light in them." According to that word, proceeding from the Eternal Wisdom, kings are bound to reign, and princes to decree justice, even all the nobles of the earth.

3. It should be administered by men fearing God, hating covetousness, and able men. Not by infidels, duelists, profane swearers, sabbath breakers, card players, drunkards, adulterers, &c.

4. In subserviency to the interests of the church. We have no means of moralizing the nations that will ever prove effectual but the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and those institutions in which it is imbodyed. Literature has evinced its impotency in Greece and Rome, whose citizens became more immoral in proportion to the progress which they made in knowledge. Athens was in the zenith of her literary splendour in the days of Demosthenes, who reproaches her with bitterness for her degeneracy. Rome, in her highest literary polish, brought forth a Catiline, a Caligula, a Nero. Paul gives you the state of her morals in the days of Nero.[\[31\]](#)

As the great object of civil government is the preservation of moral order among men, the nations are bound to render all their civil institutions subservient to that alone which can effectually reform the morals of the world. Kings and Queens should nurse the church. God has promised that they shall. He would not have promised it as a blessing, had it not been for the interest of the church and of the world. But as we have elsewhere[\[32\]](#) illustrated these important topics, we proceed:—

III. To consider the duty of subjects. A question of much interest arises here. Are all the associations of men, and all the powers of the earth that are called civil governments, to be viewed as the ordinance of God? Are all who are called *civil rulers* to be considered as the ministers, the vicegerents of God, armed with his authority to rule the nations? However this question may be decided, there can be no doubt, that when the ordinance of civil government is constituted, and administered on the principles exhibited in the first and second divisions of this discourse, there are important duties devolving upon the subjects. Attend to them as exhibited by the Apostle Paul—obedience—tribute and custom—fear—honour.[\[33\]](#)

1. Obedience. "Whosoever resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God." "Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake." "Submit yourselves unto every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether it be the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for a praise to them that do well."[\[34\]](#) The powers delineated by Paul and Peter, as sent and commissioned by God to punish the guilty, and reward the good, are to be submitted to, and not resisted; and this not merely from a principle of convenience, but for conscience' sake, and for the Lord's sake. When these two are joined together we discover the principle from which the

obedience must spring. God reigns by them as his delegates, whom he has solemnly invested with authority to rule in his name. In rendering obedience to them, we obey God, our Supreme King. When they issue a command to perform a duty, we obey it, not merely because it is right in itself, not merely because we find it recorded, but because it is enjoined by him whom God has sent to see that the command is fulfilled. The distinction should be carefully marked. Were we to be taken by an Algerine pirate, contrary to all law, all right, we would no doubt obey the officers of the pirate, when they commanded any thing not sinful, and also the master to whom we might be sold. A regard to the law of self-preservation, and humble submission to the afflictive dispensations of God's providence, would not only render it allowable to yield such obedience, but would make it our duty. We would in some measure be bound for conscience' sake to render such obedience. But we would not obey them as "God's ministers sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for a praise to them that do well." We would not admit that the pirate sailed and made us prisoners, under a commission, sanctioned by the broad seal of Heaven; nor would we admit that even when they commanded us to do things in themselves just and right, they gave such command under the sanction of divine authority. To obey from a principle of this nature, would be offering dishonour to a just and holy God, that can never give a sanction to an act of injustice. The obedience, which an intelligent and conscientious man would render to the Algerine, would be the obedience for wrath's sake, contemplated by the apostle. He would excite, by obstinacy, the robber, to add the sin of wrath and perhaps murder to his other crimes. He would be patient, lest through the wrath of his enemy, he should lose his life. Obedience for conscience, and for the Lord's sake, proceeds from a respect to the high and solemn authority with which the power commanding is vested. The ordinance of man mentioned by Peter is limited in the same manner. It is not merely every thing which man may ordain, whether agreeable to the law of God or opposed to it, but that government only which in its origin, principle and administration, has the authority of God to act, and really does act in the punishment of evil doers, and in rewarding them that do well, that is to be obeyed conscientiously. Doing evil is the violation of God's law, and doing well, with right motives, is the fulfilling of the same law; and these alone in God's estimation constitute moral good and evil; and the same law measures the rewards and the punishments. When the subject obeys the commands of such a government, according to the tenor of the precept—"Submit yourselves," &c. he does so from an inward love and reverence for the holy law of God, in which "he delights after the inner man."

The power contemplated by Paul must be obeyed from this principle of conscience, on pain of damnation. Neglect to obey, as well as openly to resist, exposes to the vengeance of eternal justice, in whose majesty the power is arrayed.

2. The payment of tribute and custom. "Pay ye tribute also." "Render to all their dues, tribute to whom tribute—custom to whom custom." Those who are employed in attending to the general interests of the commonwealth are necessarily prevented from making efforts in the ordinary way, to provide for their temporal wants, and those of

their families. The public is bound on principles of common honesty to make comfortable provision for their sustenance. National defences, internal improvements, the diffusion of knowledge, and other important public objects, cannot be effected without the payment of tribute and custom. The happiness and security of all are promoted by them, and all are bound to contribute their just proportion towards them. The principle upon which the payment is to be made ascends much higher. The former principle binds to pay for services rendered even by those who may not be recognized as the vicegerents of God. But the payment of dues to the powers mentioned by Paul, is ascribed to the fact that "they are God's ministers attending continually upon this very thing." What is the very thing on which they attend continually? Not the receiving of tribute and custom, but the execution of the laws of God, in the exercise of their official functions. For they are God's ministers, attending continually to their ministry, for God's glory and the interests of the nation. Their whole time is occupied in the service of God, as public functionaries, that he has appointed; and therefore the tribute and custom are given to God, as a demand which he makes on the behalf of those public and honourable servants, who serve not their own evil passions, by deeds of iniquity, who serve not the cause of idolatry, or vice; but serve God continually. Wherever powers, thus ordained, are found in the continual service of God as accountable to him; custom and tribute are their due, and he who withholds, when he can give, withholds not merely from man, but from God his due.

3. Fear. "Wilt thou not then be afraid of the same?" "Fear to whom fear." Not that species of fear which a wild beast "devouring much prey, and stamping and breaking to pieces," produces, when he rushes upon the benighted, unarmed and feeble. Fear then is involuntary, and neither of the nature of obedience nor disobedience. As far as the law of God refers to this kind of fear, it is to check its extravagance. "Fear not them which kill the body, but rather fear him, who hath power to destroy both soul and body in hell." It is a degree of that fear which we are commanded to exercise towards God. "Fear God." "I will put my fear in your hearts."—A fear which is consistent with the exercise of love, respect and confidence. "Who would not fear before thee?" This comprehends angels, who are penetrated with a solemn dread of the glorious majesty of Jehovah, even while they enjoy its vision with the most rapturous admiration. The more clear the views of the divine excellency, revealed to the faith of the believer, the more does he fear this fear, though his assurance in the divine favour, and his confidence of safety from punishment, are confirmed.

It is quite natural, and even indisputable, that the powers ordained of God, clothed with the divine authority, and acting in the name of King of kings,—the Messiah, should be entitled to fear; for he who fears them, fears God, in them. Through the civil rulers the subject looks up by faith to the throne of God, a feeble image of which is presented in the throne of the earthly potentate, whom he hath inducted into office, on whose head he hath set the crown, and into whose hand he hath put the royal sceptre. The constitution which gives him his power, the laws which he administers, his own personal and official virtues, and the beneficent results of the exercise of his

dominion, are all calculated to inspire the subject with fear, and that heart in which the Holy Spirit sheds abroad the fear of God, by his saving and gracious operations, will fear such a prince, filling such a throne. Did the throne, the personal virtues, the court, and administration of Nero,—did the Roman government present such an image of the throne of God? What notions can they have of God's throne, who think so?

4. Honour. "Honour the king." "Honour to whom honour." Some seem to think, that the rights of men, and the Christian religion, do not allow us to employ the tokens of external respect, which are ordinarily expected by those who occupy high stations. They are not only allowable, but becoming, even to those who are not entitled to the honour which ought to be rendered to the magistrate who is God's minister. Abraham bowed to the children of Heth, as a token of respect to a large family that treated him in a friendly generous manner. Much more than an attention to the ordinary forms of politeness, is comprehended in the honour due to a king. It is very nearly allied to the fear which is due to him; yet even as a sentiment of the mind it is distinguished from it, as it is not mingled with any apprehension of danger, from his power as a revenger. It is a high esteem for the office which the king fills, as ordained of God, and calculated to promote the declarative glory of the Lord of heaven and earth, and to advance the welfare of the nation. It restrains from speaking evil of the dignities emanating from God's authority, and prompts to active exertions for strengthening the arm of government, and maintaining in its vigour that public sentiment, which constitutes the strength of a nation, and secures the administration of justice.

As the fear enjoined terminates ultimately and chiefly on God, so does the honour. Respect to an ambassador at a foreign court, is honourable to the government and nation that he represents; and when he is treated disrespectfully, his government is insulted through him. Jesus Christ says, "By me kings reign, and princes decree justice." Honour those who reign by his authority, and he is honoured; for their authority is an emanation of that holy and glorious authority, with which he as "Prince of the kings of the earth" is vested by his Father. They who love and honour the Son of God, as now exalted in his mediatorial glory, will love and honour those who represent him in the holy and righteous administration of holy and righteous laws, founded on a holy and righteous constitution. Never can we express too strongly the truth,—that holiness and righteousness alone are deserving of honour, and that all unholiness and unrighteousness, merit degradation. To bring holiness and righteousness into honour, and to maintain their honours, is the object of all law, of all government, in God's dominions. For this purpose "the throne are cast down, and the Ancient of days sits, whose garment is white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire."^[35] For this purpose "the Ancient of days comes, and judgment is given to the saints of the Most High, and the time comes that the saints possess the kingdom."^[36] For this purpose when God send his magistrates to execute his laws, they should be honoured. "Honour the king." Was this the tendency of the Roman constitution, of the government of Nero? What notions have they of holiness and righteousness, who

think so?

5. Prayer. "I exhort therefore, 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." [37] In this command there are three things involved.

(1.) We pray that God will have mercy on the souls of the individuals, who are kings, or who occupy any subordinate, civil station in the commonwealth. "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all men (men out of all ranks) to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth." This does not respect them as magistrates, for as such they are not saved, but as men; wherefore the apostle uses the words all men (*pantaj anqrwpoj*) not all kings, nor merely all (*pantaj*) the most common form of expression in the New Testament, but he inserts the word men to render it emphatic, that kings do not obtain salvation through the atoning blood of Jesus, as public functionaries, but as men, who are by nature and practice guilty, depraved, and ignorant; and require to be taught the knowledge of the truth, that they may be made free. This prayer, the Christian is bound to pray no matter how wicked the ruler, no matter though *the name of blasphemy*'s written on the constitution of the government which he administers.

(2.) That God will balance their counsels, overrule their operations, so as to promote the interests of religion and the peace and comfort of his own people. This is the import of the reason assigned by the apostle for the duty—"that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." "God has the king's heart in his hand and turneth it as the rivers of water whithersoever he will." It is impossible that the church and people of God should not be afflicted in some degree, by the public policy, and the measures of state, in those nations where they are domiciliated. The apostle alludes to this—when he connects the "quiet and peaceable life" of God's people with the prayer for kings. Godliness and honesty must be practised at every earthly hazard, and when the power of the nation is hostile to the religion of Jesus, as it was in the Roman empire, godliness and honesty expose to persecution—and prevent the saints from enjoying a "quiet and peaceable life." The apostle would have Timothy to know that none should seek "a quiet and peaceable life" by a dereliction of "godliness and honesty," but that they might pray, and were bound to pray that God would restrain their persecutors, and so regulate the public movements of the empire, as "that the word of the Lord might have free course and be glorified." Their motive in their prayers should not be to recommend themselves to the favour of the tyrants or impious rulers, that they might receive a *regium donum*, a royal bounty as a reward for their prayers in behalf of despotism, as some dissenting ministers now do for George IV. in Ireland. That God would thus restrain even a Nero, should be the earnest prayer of God's people.

It is remarkable that the apostle confines his argument relative to prayer to these two topics.

(3.) That God would bless and prosper the king as his vicegerent upon earth give stability and dignity to his throne, and perpetuate the constitution of the empire, as his own ordinance, appointed for "a terror to evil doers, and a praise to them that do well." This prayer ought to be made for God's ordinance of civil government, whenever we find it constituted in such a manner as he approves. But to pray that God would give stability and dignity to thrones of iniquity, with which he will have no fellowship, would not, could not be the prayer of faith, for there is no promise for it on which faith can rest; it is directly contrary to many most express prophetic denunciations. In the Psalms of David we have many prayers for the king, for David by name; for the kings of Judah were anointed by the Lord. But there is not recorded either in the Old or New Testament, one prayer of any prophet, of any apostle, or of any saint, for any king of any other nation. I say not merely that none of them are prayed for by name, as David was, and as Samuel prayed for Saul, but there is no prayer for any king actually occupying any throne, except in the commonwealth of Israel—a remarkably significant omission.

That these distinctions may be illustrated by a plain fact, we refer you to the prayers of the church respecting the Pope of Rome. He is a temporal prince and governs as a king the ecclesiastical estate—a temporal dignity, which he holds as head of the Roman catholic church. His pontificate and principedom are connected so closely that the latter is founded on the former. Destroy his headship over the church, and you tear away the whole foundation on which the superstructure of his temporal authority is erected. A great majority of protestants, for three hundred years, have been accustomed to pray, both publicly and privately, that God would destroy the pontificate, with the "breath of his mouth, and with the brightness of his coming." These prayers may have been offered up in faith; for they have the promise of God on which to rely. Could any one pray in this manner, and yet supplicate that God would bless his holiness the Pope of Rome, and give stability to his throne and energy to his administration as a civil prince? Yet we may pray that God will be graciously pleased to bring to the knowledge of the truth the person of him who is the Pontiff, and that he will balance his counsels, restrain his persecuting rage, and overrule all his operations, for the interests of the church, and for the glory of Jesus her head.

This view of the subject is strengthened by the fact that the martyrs of Jesus, under the reign of the House of Stuart, when they were offered their lives, on condition that they would pray for the king, constantly refused, "counting not their lives dear;" while they expressed their willingness to pray that God would bring him to the knowledge of the truth, and save his soul; but their persecutors as well as themselves understood the distinction, and would not accept of this as a prayer for the king.^[38] For no other formal reason than their refusal to pray for the king, many of them accepted the crown of martyrdom.

Relative to the question noticed in introducing this head,—we now proceed to inquire, whether all the governments that have ever been established in the world, no matter on what principles, or by what means; no matter how administered, or by

whom, have been entitled to obedience, for conscience' sake, and not to be resisted at the hazard of eternal damnation—to tribute and custom as God's ministers, attending to the very duty of praising them that do well, and terrifying evil-doers—to fear—to honour—as clothed with divine authority, and as presenting an image of the holiness and righteousness of the throne of the King of kings—and to the prayers of the saints for the stability and dignity of their thrones, and for the energy and perpetuity of their administrations. For all these the powers that are ordained of God, have a divine right to claim—all these their subjects are bound, under pain of damnation, to give.

Before we go into a detailed examination of the civil establishments of the world, it may be remarked, that the fall of man—the state of guilt and depravity in which every child of Adam is born—the extent to which these evils have spread themselves—co-extensive with the population of the globe—the aggravated crimes that have been perpetrated in every age of the world and in every nation, the gross ignorance, and barbarity of by far the greater part of the nations, in nearly all the successive generations of men—the countless millions that have "lived without God, and without Christ in the world"—the stupendous systems of idolatry, superstition, and profligacy that have grown up and acquired strength, with the strength of accumulated ages—and the enormous pride, ambition, and cruelty of depraved man; render it not unreasonable to suppose, that at least in some one age or nation, a system of civil polity may have been established, which God would not own, as ordained of him for "a terror to evil-doers and a praise to them that do well." Since, even at this moment, Satan reigns "in the dark places of the earth, full of the habitations of horrid cruelty," over nearly 700,000,000 of the human family, with almost undisturbed sway, it is not unreasonable to suppose that in some part of his dominions he may have given "power, seat, and great authority," to his own vicegerents; who could not be God's ministers, or vicegerents, at the same time that they are the commissioned agents of the prince of darkness.

Here, my brethren, I almost think I might bring this inquiry to a close. It would seem almost to offer insult to every sensible man, who believes the Bible, to say nothing of the Christian, were we to advance any farther. In such a world, in such a state, thrones of iniquity must have been established, by those who worship devils, and not God. It is impossible that they should not. But hold—the world thinks otherwise, and many Bible-believers profess to believe, and in charity we must admit do believe, that no such throne of iniquity has ever been set up in our fallen world—that all the powers of all the nations are the ordinance of God, to be obeyed, feared, honoured, and supported, and prayed for as God's vicegerents, under pain of Jehovah's eternal wrath and "the vengeance of eternal justice." Ah! my brethren, do any of you at this moment think so? I trust you have other views of your Lord, other conceptions of the immaculate purity of eternal justice.

"Nimrod was a mighty hunter before the Lord—and the beginning of his kingdom was Babel and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar."^[39] The Targum of Jonathan is, 'he was a powerful rebel before the Lord;' and that of Jerusalem, 'he was

powerful in hunting in sin before the Lord;' and another Jewish writer says, 'he was called a mighty hunter, because he was all his days taking provinces by force, and spoiling others of their substance; and that he was *before the Lord*, truly so, and he seeing and taking notice of it; openly and publicly, and without fear of him, and in a bold and impudent manner, in despite of him.' See Gen. 6:11 & 13:13. The Septuagint renders it, *against the Lord*; he intended, as Jarcho's note is, to provoke him to his face: *Wherefore it is said*; in a proverbial way, when any man is grown mighty and powerful, or is notoriously wicked, or is become a tyrant or oppressor of the people, that he is *even as Nimrod, a mighty hunter before the Lord.*"

So say all the modern commentators, many of whom honour modern "powerful rebels before the Lord," as the ordinance of God. Here was laid the foundation of the Assyrian or Babylonian empire, the first of the four universal monarchies of Daniel, laid by mighty acts of rebellion against Jehovah. Are rebels against earthly monarchs, the ministers, the vicegerents of those against whom they rebel? Are they to be honoured, feared, supported, prayed for, and obeyed, as the Lord's ministers for good to the nation? Is rebellion against Jehovah a slighter sin than rebellion against an earthly prince? He who obeys, fears, supports honours, and prays for the rebel, dishonours the earthly prince against whom the rebellion is raised. Much more,

he who obeys, fears, supports, honours and prays for the rebel against the Messiah, dishonours him.

These two verses of Genesis are God's record to lead us up to the origin of the great secular powers of the earth, and warn us against them.

To the rebel empire of Nimrod succeeded that of Cyrus the Medo-Persian bear—which yielded to that of Alexander, the Macedonian leopard—and the fourth beast more terrible than all that had gone before him, devouring, breaking, and stamping to pieces. Now if all these gained their power in the same manner with Nimrod, they are all mighty rebels against Jehovah. "Nimrod was called a mighty hunter, because he was all his days taking provinces by force, and spoiling others of their substance." Was ever any thing more descriptive of the whole tenor of the Medo-Persian Nimrod, of the Macedonian Nimrod, of the Roman Nimrod, of the Austrian, Prussian, Russian, British, French, Spanish, and Neapolitan Nimrods? The whole forming a mighty and complex system of rebellion against the Lord God omnipotent: the last of the four "ascendeth out of the bottomless pit,"^[40]—out of hell; upon his heads is written "the name of blasphemy"^[41] "the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority,"^[42] "and goeth into perdition,"^[43] to the bottomless pit—to hell, whence he came, with all his ten horns. Is this the origin progress, and end of the "minister of God to thee for good," to be obeyed feared, supported, honoured, prayed for? *Credat Induces Apella.*^[44] Yet so said all the swarms of Popish monks, both regular and secular, especially the Jesuits and the Pope, who have liberally denounced damnation against the Waldenses, against the Bohemians, against John Huss, and Jerome of Prague, against Zuinglius, Luther, Calvin, Knox, and all protestants, who resisted the encroachments of Popes and other

tyrants. "The powers that be are ordained of God, and whosoever resisteth shall receive unto himself damnation," was thundered from the Vatican, from the thrones of tyrant and the pulpits of degraded, priestly panders of power. So said the House of Stuart to the Rutherfords, the Guthries, the Argyles, the Camerons, the Renwicks, in the lands of our forefathers. So said the Fletchers and others against the British Covenanters. So said the courtiers of George III. and the ministers of the the British establishment; so said the Quakers, and all other Tories of the American Colonies, against the Washingtons, the Greens, the Mercers, the Montgomeries, the Clintons, the Monroes, the Adamases, the Hancocks, the Masons, and ,the Annans,[45] who were the patriots, the heroes of the American revolution—damnation from the throne, and the pulpit was fulminated against the warriors, and statesmen of, our country. The alliance, blasphemously called the holy, denounced damnation against the Neapolitans, Spaniards, and Portuguese, because they have resisted the "powers that be." [46]

Are we to believe that all those advocates of passive obedience and non-resistance come on us armed with the authority of the apostle of the Gentiles? Surely the God of heaven would never set his seal to doctrines so monstrous. He has not. He has described the powers that are of him, in a way, that he who runs may read, in a way that gives not a shadow of countenance to impiety so monstrous, as to represent him denouncing judgment on all who will not obey, that, support, honour and pray for the Devil's vicegerents.

Having now clearly established the fact, that there are powers constituted over the nations. By rebellion against God, and "by the force, power, and authority" of the Dragon; let us inquire what is the duty of the disciples of Jesus—of devout and conscientious men, when residing in such a nation.

They are bound to abstain from rendering civil homage to those commissioned agents of the prince of darkness. So far from their being bound to yield them their homage, upon pain of the curse, they expose themselves to the wrath of God by doing so; and no wonder; for he who unites himself with the rebellions Nimrods of the world, becomes himself a rebel. He says a confederacy with those whom God has doomed to go into perdition, (eij apoleian) and must expect to be a partaker of their plagues. "And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast, and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink, of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out, without mixture, into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the holy angels; and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name." [47] "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." [48] The beast is the Roman government in all its forms,

from the days of the kings, to the time of the present Emperor, Francis of Austria,—"to the time of the end." What is the worship of a civil power? undoubtedly obeying, supporting, fearing, honouring, and praying for it—all which, are comprehended in an oath of allegiance. But hear the commentators, though the meaning is self-evident without them. Bishop Newton, [49] speaking of the second or two-horned beast of the earth, the Roman hierarchy, has these remarks: "He supports tyranny, as he is supported by tyranny. He enslaves the consciences, as the first beast" (the secular power) "subjugates the bodies of men." As Mr. Whiston well observes, "he is the common centre and cement which unites all the distinct kingdoms of the Roman empire; and by joining with them procures a blind obedience from their subjects: and so he is the occasion of the preservation of the old Roman empire in some kind of unity, and name, and strength; which otherwise had been quite dissolved by the inundations of wars, succeeding the settlement of the barbarous nations in that empire."—In the same way Dr. Scott understands the worshipping of the beast. "So that tyranny upholds them" (the Roman Catholics) "as they uphold tyranny; they enslave men's consciences, and help kings to enslave their persons." [50] "The western empire and its inhabitants are reduced by the machinations of a temporizing priesthood; to yield blind submission to the civil power, however impious, and tyrannical. The spirit of liberty and independence, which characterized the invaders of ancient Rome, is broken down by the efforts of the antichristian church, and the doctrine of passive obedience and non-resistance, is inculcated from the several pulpits of oppressed Europe." [51]

"Worshipping the beast," then, is the allegiance of the subjects of the Roman empire, in its ten-horned, divided or modern state—the obedience and support rendered to its blasphemous claims to be the ordinance of God. Against this the heaviest vengeance is denounced, and for the most substantial reason. It is this support, which is the grand cement of the whole great system of iniquity, combined in the secular and ecclesiastical establishments of Europe. Remove this and the whole superstructure of iniquity, idolatry, superstition and tyranny crumbles into dust. Against the beast, John draws the sword of God, and strikes at the vitals. How tremendous the declaration that "the smoke of the torment" of those who espouse the cause of the beast, and yield to him their support, "ascendeth for ever and ever," from "the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone!" But it is "deserved punishment," for how can the lovers of the blessed Redeemer, degrade him by ascribing to him the abominations of the beast, and yield their homage to him who is characterized by blasphemy, who makes war upon the woman—the church of which Jesus is the head—the church which our Lord has purchased with his own precious blood? Not indeed that every one who is deceived will actually go into the bottomless pit, into the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; for "the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin"—the pollution of even this sin may be washed away in the fountain which is opened in the house of David, and among the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin, and for uncleanness; as the sins of many who have eaten and drunk damnation to themselves at the Lord's table, have been washed away in the same fountain. But let no one "sin that grace may abound." "Let all the saints come out from among them and be separate, saith the Lord." Let

them "repent and give glory to God." Neutrality is not permitted. God has again drawn out his glittering sword, and brandishes it over thrones of iniquity. Who can tell what it will accomplish, before it shall have finished drinking the blood of the stain? Our duty is not to "worship the beast, or his image, or to receive the number of the mark of his name."

CONCLUSIONS.—WE now proceed to make some application of the doctrines exhibited in the preceding discussion.

1. There must be a removal of the things which remain. God will speedily shake both the heavens and the earth, and cast out the dragon who has so long influenced the civil policy of the nations. The war has been indeed of long continuance, even from the days of Nimrod to the present time, but the day of decision is near. The contents of the last vial have already begun to be poured upon the nations, as the student of prophecy, who attentively observes the present movements of the nations, will not have much difficulty to perceive. "The day of the wrath of the Lamb is come, and who shall be able to stand before him?" The wars which grew out of the French revolution, raged with an extent and violence, never before exceeded, perhaps never equalled. Certainly, since the organization of the modern kingdoms of Europe, out of the feudal baronies, the thrones of kings never were before so shaken. The whole history of that war is a paraphrase on Rev. 14:14-16. "And I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice, to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap;—for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped." All commentators refer this to great judgments inflicted on the kingdoms, in the dominions of antichrist, when the finishing of the mystery of iniquity is near at hand. Unlike all other wars, the late war may be traced, to one cause, and all its operations referred to the action of one spring—the revolutionary principle. The efforts of kings and nobles to defend their seats, were for a time utterly unavailing. The omnipotent anger thrust in his sharp sickle, and they could not resist him; but, filled with consternation and dismay they endeavoured to save themselves, by flight. Many of them fell on the high places of the field; and those who were permitted to escape, "had space given them to repent, but they repented not of their evil deeds." God hardened their hearts, as he did the heart of Pharaoh, to the end that he might destroy them, having raised them up, to make known in them his mighty power.

When he put down the rod of his wrath, or to use the metaphor of Revelation, when Napoleon, his sharp, sickle, was laid aside, and the kings permitted to return to their thrones they hardened their hearts against the God of heaven, without regarding the doings of his hand, set up their idols, restored the Roman Pontiff to his seat, rebuilt their altars, and set up their idols, with all the madness of idolatry, and with all, the fury of former oppression.

After the husbandman reaps his harvest, he rests a little, before he begins to reap the

vintage. That pause we witnessed from the battle of Waterloo, to the commencement of the late revolutions in the south of Europe, when we heard "another angel come out from the altar, having power over fire, and cry out with a loud cry, to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe." [52]

Does not the vintage synchronize with the seventh vial? The great city is dividing into three parts,—the revolutionary kingdoms—the kingdoms leagued to support the ancient order of despotism—and those kingdoms that remain neutral. Soon will the cities of the nations fall. The hailstorm of the seventh vial, begins to beat upon the empire of the ten horned beast. As the hail produced by the sounding of the first trumpet was symbolical of the invasion of the Roman Empire, by the Goths and Vandals, from the north, the region of hail—so the hail of the seventh vial may well be interpreted of the devastation producing, and to be produced, by Russian armies—the modern Vandals, led on by the Emperor, Alexander, who combines in himself more than all the power and skill of Radagaisus, Alaric, and Atilla—the "scourges of God," that desolated the nations, under the first trumpet. Is he not at present the sickle of the vintage? Does he not evince a disposition relative to the revolution in Greece, to employ, like Napoleon, the principle of revolution for the aggrandizement of his own person, throne and empire? Is not God employing him, as an instrument, to reap the vine of the antichristian earth, which is the vine of Sodom, and its vintage the vintage of Gomorrah? The whole aspect of the times indicates that God is preparing the way, by the speedy destruction of thrones of iniquity, for a glorious display of his own ordinance of civil government, as delineated in the Bible, to bless the nations with an equitable administration of public law, with an application of divine jurisprudence to the government of commonwealths, and with consequent peace prosperity, and felicity to the church, and to all the kingdoms of the world. For the accomplishment of these holy and beneficent purposes, "he cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah;" for this he cometh riding on the wings of the tempest, and his march will be glorious. "Even so come quickly, Lord Jesus."

2. The truths, and facts disclosed in the preceding discussion, call loudly upon the advocates of a scriptural magistracy, not to relax the tone of their testimony, nor to think of compromise, when they have advanced so near securing the victory by the word of this testimony, and by the blood of the Lamb. Many considerations render this admonition needful. Let the following suffice.

(1.) The instruments which the Governor of the nations employs in the subversion of systems of iniquity are at present, ungodly, profane, and generally infidel men, ignorant of religion—men who are goaded on by the fury of the oppressor—and who seem to have no other objects, but to free themselves from unjust and cruel exactions, and to enjoy unrestrained opportunities of licentious indulgence. With such men, the friends of true religion, and the advocates for social morality, can hold no communion, can have no co-operation. When opposition to any thing, however bad,

comes from such a quarter, there is some danger that a good man will feel less abhorrence of that against which they rise up, from the very fact of their opposition. Neither on the right hand, nor on the left, should we "say a confederacy to all to whom this people say a confederacy."

(2.) Many of the ungodly men, who fill the thrones of iniquity, have had their hearts turned to co-operate in the great Bible-cause—and thus pay an external homage to Christianity, well calculated to deceive the unwary. The saints of the Most High have truly need of the wisdom of the serpent in such a crisis, when the occupants of power, illegitimate and tyrannical, are, at least many of them, giving aid to the distribution of the Scriptures, while those who oppose them condemn openly all true religion. Attention to the personal conduct of men in power—to the basis on which their thrones are erected, to their unrighteous administration of the affairs of society—and to the desolating judgments which the God of heaven has denounced against them, together with a devout sense of our duty to the Head of the church, and a determined resolution to abide by the testimony of our fathers—the martyrs and confessors of Jesus, in all its extent, will be necessary to guard us against the specious but hollow pretensions of the enemy.

(3.) The great shew of charity and liberality, for which of late there is so great an outcry, among nearly all professors, is calculated to mislead. The prince of darkness would have a total cessation of hostilities between the professors of religion and the subjects of his government—the instruments of his administration. There is danger that this seductive clamour may deceive even those who know better. The enemy will pay his court to the witnesses for truth, and even appear, to admit, in some measure the truth of their system, that an accommodation may be effected. Like Tiberius Cesar, Jesus Christ may be worshipped, provided it be in company with the 30,000 false gods of the empire. The great danger to the cause of truth, at present, is to be apprehended from flatteries. It is said of an ancient enemy—"through his policy also shall he cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many."^[53] But what is the end of standing up thus "against the Prince of princes?" "He shall be broken without hand." Fixing our eyes upon the amazing progress of the Holy Scriptures, the active diffusion of intelligence relative to religious liberties, conversation, and magazines—the means employed for the education of the poor, and the liberal contributions made for religious and charitable purposes, we are in danger of forgetting that the great system of iniquitous government both in church and state remains entire, and that the enemy is yet fortified in his strong holds.

Though "the morning cometh," yet the call is, "Watchman, what of the night?"

3. Our last observation is,—let there be no relaxation of our efforts to promote a knowledge of the correct principles of moral social order. Every such effort in this age, by word, writ, or deed, shall tell. God has enriched, and will yet much more enrich the soil with the blood of the slain, and the seed sown, though but as "an handful of corn on the tops of mountains, shall shake with fruit like the trees on

Lebanon." However valuable the exhibition of truth, in its native beauty apart, may be, it is never exhibited so effectually as when contrasted with error. Let us hold up to view the ordinance of civil government as instituted by the God of heaven, and administered by the Lord Jesus Christ, and contrast it boldly with its enormous abuses, which for ages have filled the world with mourning, lamentation, and woe. We shall then be understood. Let us name the horns of the beast, and the instruments that Heaven employs, as "carpenters to fray them," so that "he who runs may read." We cannot expose ourselves to greater dangers than those who have gone before us, "who have wandered about in sheep-skins, in goat-skins, in dens, and in caves of the earth, destitute, afflicted, tormented, of whom the world was not worthy;" and we, like them, through faith and patience shall inherit the promises. Even should we "resist unto blood striving against sin," our dying prayers will arm the last vial of Jehovah's wrath against his enemies, with more signal displays of justice, "in taking vengeance upon them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of his Son," and in hastening the period, when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ—while our souls shall rest in security and glorious felicity under the altar, until we see "our blood avenged on them that dwell on the earth," and "the saints of the Most High take the kingdom."

To occupy the following pages, an extract from Dr. M'Leod's Sermons on the late American War with Great Britain is subjoined, in answer to the

Objection—Political remarks are unfavourable to devotion; and therefore unsuitable to the pulpit.

In endeavouring to obviate this objection, I feel as if I had to encounter the most difficult task which my subject imposes upon me. The devotional feelings of many professed Christians are so feeble, and have so little foundation in moral principle, that they are readily deranged or removed. Others, who have learned only the rudiments of religion, seldom consider it in any other light than as matter of mental comfort to an individual, without having any relation to their improvement and usefulness as members of society. As they would give their attention to the things of time, uninfluenced by Christian principles, they may wish to fix in the sanctuary their attention upon the concerns of eternity, without any reference to a general reformation of either church or state. It is ever to be expected that those, who are unwilling to *consider* religiously their political concerns, will be as unwilling to *behave* religiously in their political transactions.

This is the way to produce a separation between the two subjects. And yet the separation cannot be complete, unless all Christians are secluded from every concern in national politics; and the entire management devolved upon those, who will not be tempted to think of the Bible as the rule, or of piety as the principle, according to which civilians should act: and where would this end; but in the transfer of the

undivided management of national affairs into the hands of infidels?

The principle of this objection, while it appears to proceed from spiritual-mindedness, is near of kin to the unenlightened devotion of the recluse or the hermit, who retires from the world into a life of solitude. It approaches monastic holiness more than the piety of Abraham, of Elijah of Daniel, of Paul, and of John the Divine. These were men of piety. They taught, and they practised the duties of political life, both in peace and in war, without thinking that it injured devotion: and even, *in the Spirit on the Lord's day*, the beloved disciple is directed by his arisen Lord, to write of the contendings and changes of empire.

Believe me, brethren, if our religion is of the right description, and exists in a proper measure, we shall certainly be enabled to contemplate the providence of God in all human affairs, and apply the law of God to questions of civil polity, without either endangering a pious frame of mind, or engendering the evil passions of worldly politicians. I confess, however, that I feel, at the same time, for the infirmities of the weak; and should be disposed to avoid any thing that might have a tendency to mar their feeble devotion, did not duty require of the ambassadors of Christ, to apply the law of their God to all questions of practical morality."

S. YOUNG, PRINTER.

Footnotes:

- [1] Blackstone, *Com.* vol. 1. p. 39. [\[back\]](#)
- [2] Pp. 41, 42. [\[back\]](#)
- [3] Romans 13:1. [\[back\]](#)
- [4] Romans 13:4. [\[back\]](#)
- [5] Revelation 13:1. [\[back\]](#)
- [6] *Vide* Faber; and [M'Leod on the Revelation](#). Also Dr. Scott. [\[back\]](#)
- [7] Revelation 13:2. [\[back\]](#)
- [8] Romans 13:3-6. [\[back\]](#)
- [9] Psalm 8. *Scottish Version*. [\[back\]](#)
- [10] Romans 13:9. [\[back\]](#)
- [11] Anquetil's *Universal History*, vol. 3. p. 511. [\[back\]](#)
- [12] So all Protestant Commentators apply the vision. [\[back\]](#)
- [13] Revelation 13:2. [\[back\]](#)

- [14] Revelation 12:9. [\[back\]](#)
- [15] Revelation 11:14. [\[back\]](#)
- [16] Revelation 11:15-17. [\[back\]](#)
- [17] Romans 13:4. [\[back\]](#)
- [18] Romans 1:23. [\[back\]](#)
- [19] 2 Timothy 4:17. [\[back\]](#)
- [20] Daniel 7:7,23. [\[back\]](#)
- [21] Romans 13:3. [\[back\]](#)
- [22] Isaiah 49:23. [\[back\]](#)
- [23] Isaiah 60:16. [\[back\]](#)
- [24] *Law of Nations*, p. 33. [\[back\]](#)
- [25] Romans 13:4. [\[back\]](#)
- [26] Ephesians 1:3. [\[back\]](#)
- [27] Matthew 28:18. [\[back\]](#)
- [28] Ephesians 1:22. [\[back\]](#)
- [29] 1 Corinthians 15:27. [\[back\]](#)
- [30] Vol. 1 p. 315. [\[back\]](#)
- [31] Romans 1. [\[back\]](#)
- [32] *The Subjection of the Kingdoms to the Messiah*. [\[back\]](#)
- [33] Romans 13:2, 56, 57. [\[back\]](#)
- [34] 1 Peter 2:13,14. [\[back\]](#)
- [35] Daniel 7:9. [\[back\]](#)
- [36] Daniel 7:22. [\[back\]](#)
- [37] 1 Timothy 2:1,2. [\[back\]](#)
- [38] *Vide The Cloud of Witnesses and the Scots Worthies*, throughout. [\[back\]](#)
- [39] Genesis 10:9, 10. [\[back\]](#)

[40] Revelation 11:7. [\[back\]](#)

[41] Revelation 13:1. [\[back\]](#)

[42] Revelation 13:2. [\[back\]](#)

[43] Revelation 17:11, Daniel 8:11. [\[back\]](#)

[44] Horace. [\[back\]](#)

[45] Two distinguished Seceder ministers, who were captains in the American armies. [\[back\]](#)

[46] With all these even so good a man as Dr. Scott has leagued himself, though at the expense of contradicting himself far on Revelation 12 he styles the Roman government the Devil's Vicegerent. [\[back\]](#)

[47] Revelation 14:9-11. [\[back\]](#)

[48] Revelation 19:20. [\[back\]](#)

[49] *Dis. on Pro.* vol. 2. p. 292, 293. [\[back\]](#)

[50] Scot on Revelation 13:11,12. pp. 428, 429. [\[back\]](#)

[51] M'Leod's *Lec. on Revelation.* [\[back\]](#)

[52] Revelation 14:8. [\[back\]](#)

[53] Daniel 8:25. [\[back\]](#)

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