

THE AMERICAN NATIONAL PREACHER.

No. 2, Vol. XXXI.]

FEBRUARY, 1857.

[Whole No. 362.]

SERMON DCCI.

BY REV. HENRY J. VAN DYKE,

PASTOR OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, BROOKLYN, N. Y.

THE CONVERSION OF SAUL.

"And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the High Priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem, and as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven. And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do."—Acts ix. 1-6.

EXCEPT only the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, no fact recorded in the New Testament is more important than the conversion of Saul. This is sufficiently indicated by the very manner in which it is recorded. It is set forth in the inspired history minutely and repeatedly. Besides various allusions to it in the Epistles, three detailed accounts of it are found in the Acts of the Apostles. Once it is related by the Evangelist Luke, in the passage before us; and twice by Paul himself; in his address to his countrymen at Jerusalem, and in his defence before the throne of Agrippa. In these several accounts, the facts are related with such circumstantial variety, and at the same time such substantial agreement, as to leave no room for doubt or disputing. The history is plain and unvarnished. After the martyrdom of Stephen, in which he had acted a conspicuous part, Saul continued to breathe out threatenings and

of his providence or his grace. He bends the young and tender sapling. He turns the course of the infant stream as it springs from the fountain. His converting grace achieves its chief triumphs in the soul that is not yet hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. How suitable, therefore, is the lamentation which the prophet puts into the mouth of impenitent old age: "Woe unto us! for the day goeth away, and the shadows of evening are stretched out!" And with what emphasis do the words of wisdom come home to the hearts of the young, "Remember now thy Creator, in the days of thy youth, before the *evil* days come"—before the heart is absorbed by the world, and hardened by the deceitfulness of sin—before the affections become insensible to the melting love of Christ—before the long-suffering Spirit of God is grieved and provoked to abandon the soul to its own devices; even *now* obey every heavenly voice, follow every thread of gracious influence that would lead you to the Saviour, put forth every Divine impulse within you to lay *hold on eternal life*.

SERMON DCCII.

BY REV. HENRY J. VAN DYKE,

PASTOR OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, BROOKLYN, N. Y.

POLITICS FOR CHRISTIANS.*

"Render, therefore, unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's."—MATT. xxii. 21.

It is a question of great importance how far the discussion of civil and secular matters should enter into the ministrations of the pulpit. In the practical decision of this question, we have been accustomed to look for guidance mainly to the example of Christ and his Apostles. We believe that example was intended to be a perfect pattern for us. It was written for our learning, and has, therefore, all the binding authority of a Divine law.

Nor let it be supposed that this law has become inapplicable to us by the lapse of centuries or the peculiarities of the present age.

* Preached Thanksgiving Day, November 20, 1854.

In regard to all the principles which govern men's civil and social relations, "that which hath been is now, and that which is to be hath already been, and there is nothing new under the sun." All the great moral questions which are now connected with either political or social life, were at issue in the Apostolic age. And how did Christ and his immediate disciples treat them? Upon examination we find these three facts:

1st. *They never discussed any civil or temporal matter except in its moral bearings.* They never entered into the consideration of mere secular profit and loss. In all cases the prime question with them was, what is right towards God and towards man.

2nd. *They never, in the discussion of any question, assumed a partizan attitude.* In regard to most of the disputes which divided men into contending parties, they stood entirely aloof; and whenever they felt called upon to act as arbiter between them in regard to any question involving moral principle, their decisions were always given in such a way as not to excite party hostilities. And yet,

3rd. *They fearlessly applied to men of all parties the great principles of truth and righteousness.* These three observations are strikingly illustrated in the history from which the text is taken. Judea, in the days of Christ, was a subjugated province of the Roman Empire, and as such, was subject to all the hard exactions of its iron-handed government. The people were divided into two parties, in regard to the duty of submitting to this foreign yoke. The Pharisees, on the one hand, contended earnestly for what they considered the Divine right of the Jews, to be free; and bitterly opposed the payment of that tribute which was the badge of servitude. On the other side, the Herodians advocated a cheerful submission to the Roman Government, and defended the payment of tribute as both wise and just. Here, then, was an opportunity to lay a snare for the Great Teacher. They determined to enlist him as a partisan in this dispute. And it mattered not much for their purpose which side he assumed. If he identified himself with the Herodians, he would at once lose his influence over the great mass of the people, whose hatred to the government was inveterate. If he espoused the side of the Pharisees, he would become obnoxious to the Roman authorities, and his enemies would be able to prove the accusation that he perverted the nation and forbade to give tribute to Cæsar. The plan thus cunningly devised was adroitly executed. Some of the Herodians respectfully approached him, and with many flattering words, propounded the question, "Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar or no?"

But he perceived their craftiness; and with a skill, which it would have been well for his church if his ministers had always imitated, he avoided on the one hand the peremptory and zealous tone of a partisan, while on the other he fearlessly set forth those great principles of right which would apply to all parties. As to the particular question about paying tribute, he declines to give a direct answer. But then he charges it home upon their conscience that they are bound to pay Cæsar *whatever they owe him*. If the government were *de facto* in his hands, if they received the protection of that government, and if the very money in their pockets bore the image and superscription of the Roman, the very relation which they sustained to him as subjects to a ruler created obligations; and he left it for them to decide whether the easiest and most natural expression of those obligations was not the payment of tribute. And yet, at the same time, he would remind them that this duty to the government was not their only or chief obligation. They owed a debt to God, which was not only consistent with the duties they owed to the State, but so intimately connected, that one could not be faithfully discharged separately from the other. "Render, therefore, unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's."

I think you will agree with me that the text, as thus expounded, presents a suitable theme for discourse on the present occasion. We are assembled as citizens, at the invitation of our rulers, to unite in our annual thanksgiving to God. It is to be hoped that our thank-offering will not be the mere utterance of formal praises; but that bearing, as we do, the image and superscription of God, we are here to consecrate our living selves in all our possessions and relations, as a tribute to the King of kings. Do we not need instruction as to how we can make this living sacrifice acceptable? What theme, therefore, is more suitable for our present meditation THAN THE DUTIES WE OWE, AS CITIZENS, TO GOD AND TO THE STATE. Keeping the example of Christ in view, and relying on your Christian charity, if, through weakness, I should deviate in anywise from that perfect pattern, I proceed to a plain and practical discussion of the subject.

I. *The duties which we owe, as citizens, to God.* Here we make three observations:—that the claims of his everlasting kingdom should stand first in all our plans and efforts,—that a sense of accountability to him should control us in the discharge of our civil duties,—that we should practically acknowledge the supremacy of his word as the rule of right.

1. *The claims of God's everlasting kingdom should stand first in all our plans and efforts.*

Patriotism is one of those natural impulses which it is the design of religion not to eradicate but to chasten. He is not a

true man, much less a true Christian, whose soul is so dead to the generous emotions that link us to kindred and birth-place, as never to exclaim "this is my own, my native land." If Paul, looking back from the world-wide scene of his Apostolic labors to his home in Tarsus, could say with evident satisfaction, "I am a citizen of no mean city," how much more may we glory in the goodly heritage which the God of the whole earth has given us. And yet this natural patriotic impulse needs to be chastened, lest it degenerate not only into a selfish national prejudice, but into forgetfulness of God. And how can it be chastened more effectually, than by a habitual regard for those higher relations by which every Christian is an heir to an eternal heritage? Now, brethren, "ye are no longer strangers and foreigners; ye are fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God." High as may be our appreciation of this land's goodliness,—and it may safely be affirmed that we cannot too gratefully estimate its blessings,—yet have we another and a better country. We have taken the oath of allegiance, and been naturalized into the citizenship of a kingdom which excels this infinitely more than the green valleys of the Jordan excelled the wilderness of Sinai. We know not what fate is written for our country in the secret volume of the future. He has read the history of the past to little profit, and looked with but a dull eye on the judgments that have ever been abroad in the earth, who does not sometimes feel that disunion, and strife, and ruin may yet be ours; so that the departed glory of old Israel shall be forgotten, amid the hissing of the world over the self-destruction of another and more glorious Canaan. But then we do know that God's kingdom cannot fail. Whatever may be the vicissitudes of its progress, it shall ultimately prevail over the whole earth; and we know, too, that we have a lot in that kingdom. We owe it, therefore, to God, as well as to ourselves, that our first regard should be fixed on this everlasting inheritance. When the cry of the owl and the bittern comes up to us from the site of cities whose memorial has perished with them, seeming like the voice of destiny in regard to all human empires; when danger looms up, now and again, like a dark storm-cloud, on our political horizon; it is a blessed relief to fall back upon our heavenly citizenship, and fix heart and hope on God's everlasting dominion. Yea: and our allegiance to him requires that we should acquiesce, and even rejoice, in the overthrow of any government which stands in the way of that dominion. "I," says the voice of the Almighty, "I will overturn, overturn, overturn, until he whose right it is shall come." If it be needful for the maintenance of thy right, O thou King of Glory, that the sands of oblivion should cover the monuments of our national greatness, *thy will be done*. Let every one who would render to God the things that are God's, say *Amen*.

2. *It is due to God that a sense of our accountability to him should control us, in regard to our civil duties.* That the Church, in its organic capacity, ought to be entirely distinct, in every respect, from the State, is a sentiment deeply inwrought into the public opinion of this country. We thank God that it is so. The practical working of State establishments has always been to array Christ in a purple robe, and put a mock sceptre in his hand. But, then, it does not follow, from this entire separation of the Church from the State, that the real power of the one is not to exert a controlling influence over the other; it does not follow that a citizen is to forget or disregard what he has learned in the sanctuary, when he goes to vote; or that the magistrate, when he is seated in the place of power, is to cast off the influence of the truth he has heard from the minister's lips. If the Governor of this State is seated to-day where he ought to be—in the sanctuary—he is reminded that he is responsible, not to the people only, but to the people's God, for the discharge of his office; and every citizen who unites in this thanksgiving is put in remembrance that, among the deeds for which he shall answer at the judgment, the votes he has cast, the tribute he has paid, the whole exercise of his civil rights and influences, will, by no means, be forgotten. In that solemn reckoning, it will not be enough that he has fulfilled the behests of his party, or even conformed to the requirements of the civil law. *There is a higher law;* and, much as that term has been perverted and prostituted, on the one hand, and railed at, on the other, we hold that it is orthodox, theologically and politically. There is no higher law which can dissolve the obligations of political compacts; no higher law which can justify a man in the perjury, that voluntarily takes an oath of office and yet violates the requirements of that oath while he retains the office; but there *is* a higher law, binding every man to answer, before the highest court in the universe, for every action put forth in his civil relation. And this higher law is not the intangible and changeable creation of men's fancy or ambition. It is a written statute, recorded by the finger of inspiration, and handed down to us in the Book of books—in the Digest of Heaven.

3. *It is due to God that we should practically acknowledge the supremacy of his Word, as the rule of right.* With us it is a principle, fundamental to all religion, that the Bible is a complete code of morals, designed and fitted to furnish men thoroughly unto all good works. To deviate from this principle, by setting up any other standard of truth and righteousness, is, in our estimation, the starting point and the essence of infidelity. We cannot now discuss the question as to the authority of the Bible, which, in this Christian assembly, we take for granted; but we desire you to notice that *it has spoken*, and spoken *emphatically*, in regard to *men's civil and social relations*.

(1.) *It plainly teaches that government is a divine institution.* It is an ordinance of the Creator, clearly revealed in the first ages of the world, handed down by tradition, and abundantly confirmed by written revelation, that men should be associated in civil society—that they should sustain the relation of ruler and subject; and he who denies the obligations growing out of this relation, or attempts, in any way, to renounce them, “resists the ordinance of God.” In regard to this point, it is needful to avoid two extremes of error. On the one hand, we reject and abominate that theory of the dark ages which teaches that “the powers that be are ordained of God,” in such a sense as to put an infallible authority upon every ruler, and make it damnable, in any case, to resist; and yet, on the other hand, we hold that it is God’s will that there should be some form of civil government; and we hold that every man who comes into the world, by the mere fact of his birth, is placed under obligations to the State. This, we say, is the Bible doctrine.

(2.) *Moreover, in the history of the Jewish polity, which was formed under his immediate direction, God seems to have given us a specimen of what, in his estimation, is the best form of government.* We do not mean to affirm that the example of the Jewish Commonwealth is set up as a binding law, so as to make all other governmental forms wicked. There are but few nations in which that model could be wisely imitated. A long discipline, in which instruction and judgments were mingled together, were needful to fit the Israelites for its enjoyment; and when they had degenerated into an utter unfitness for self-government, God sanctioned the expediency of another form, when he “gave them a king in his wrath.” Yet the fact that the old Commonwealth was established by divine interposition, and by such a miraculous expenditure of means, does seem to stamp it with God’s special approbation. And it is a significant fact, that this Commonwealth was similar, in all its essential features, to our own Republic. Like ours, it was a confederation of separate and, to some extent, independent States, under the guarantees of a written constitution. It was substantially a government of the people, through representatives chosen by their own suffrages; and by a judiciary system, very similar to our own, it provided for the prompt and equal administration of justice between man and man. But the Hebrew Commonwealth, in its essential features, is set up as an example which all should desire to imitate, rather than as a model to which all must be conformed. And hence it is to be further observed—

(3.) *That the Bible lays down great principles for the regulation of ruler and subject, under every form of government.* It has been well said that “the best laws are those which are best administered.” Even under the worst form of government, integrity in the ruler and faithfulness in the subject will produce

peace and prosperity ; while the best laws are easily perverted into instruments of ruin, in the hands of wicked magistrates, or among a licentious people. Hence, all through the Scriptures, and especially in the New Testament, the civil relations of men are treated chiefly as matters of *personal responsibility*. Every ruler, whatever may be his title, the tenure of his office, or the extent of his powers, is exhorted to be faithful, and God-fearing, and just ; and every citizen, whatever franchises he may possess, is taught to use them peacefully and honestly. Christianity did not come forth into the world as a revolutionary power. There is not, in all the teaching of Christ and his Apostles, a single word which aims directly at the overthrow of one dynasty, or the building up of another. So far as its designs have reference to this world's kingdoms, it seeks to accomplish them by sanctifying men in their present relations. The missionary who goes to some barbarous nation, if he be a wise man, does not spend his strength in railing at the tyranny of the king, or assailing the political bonds by which the people are united ; but he seeks to bring both king and subject under the influence of Christian principles, knowing that the prevalence of such principles will soften all asperities, and gradually do away with all evil, even as the light of the morning dispels the darkness. It is by this method that Christianity has accomplished all its genuine triumphs. When Jesus taught in the streets of Jerusalem, or by the sea of Galilee,—when the Apostles stood before kings and governors, or delivered their message from God to the people,—the burden of their instruction was, not that this or that political revolution should be inaugurated, but that every man, on his individual account, should first render to God the things that are God's, and then patiently bear the burdens, and pay the debts, of that earthly station which Providence had assigned him. Thus it was that Christianity, in the early ages, gradually pervaded and modified the whole texture of society ; making the master Christ's servant, and the slave Christ's freeman ; humbling the king at the footstool of Heaven's Sovereignty, and elevating the lowest subject to the dignity of a king and priest unto God. We verily believe that, if the true leaven of the Gospel could have continued to work thus,—if the kingdom of Christ had never in anywise been identified with this world's kingdoms, and its ministers had confined their official relation to civil affairs—to the simple enforcement of the duties of ruler and subject, as they are set down in the Bible,—every shadow of evil that now darkens the earth would long since have fled away, before the dawn of millennial glory. And we believe that now, if any man would consecrate to God his franchises, and his influence as a citizen, he need only imbibe the spirit, and obey the letter of the Bible, in regard to the duty of a subject.

(4.) *The Bible, furthermore, gives plain instruction in regard to all the social relations of life, and especially in regard to*

those which are intimately connected with civil society. It sets up the family, hedging it around with heavenly sanctions, and throwing over it the honor and beauty of Paradise. No citizen who takes the Scriptures for his guide, can hesitate for a moment as to whether his duty to God and to the State requires him to defend and uphold the purity of the marriage relation. No legislator or judge, no voter in choosing those who shall make and administer law, if he is willing to be guided by the *divine law*, can doubt for a moment whether it is right before God to make divorces a marketable and cheap commodity, or to sanction the public prostitution by which a land is defiled. And so, also, in regard to *domestic servitude*, the Bible gives plain instruction. I shall not now indicate *what* instruction it gives on this subject. All I would insist on is that it does speak in regard to the matter, and speaks plainly, too; and that among the things which, as citizens, we are bound to render to God, is a practical regard for its teaching. That domestic servitude existed in the Jewish Commonwealth, that it was prevalent, in the days of Christ, in Judea, and all over the Roman Empire, in the times of the Apostles, are facts which no student of history can deny. Indeed, it must be obvious to the humblest reader of the New Testament, that the Apostles came into constant contact with it. The audiences to which they preached were made up of masters and servants. Both bond and free applied for admission into the churches which they established. These holy men of God were no time-servers. They never compromised the right; they never shirked responsibility. They met all the questions by which the Church is related to society, fairly; decided them with inspired wisdom; and, guided by the Holy Ghost, have left their example and teachings on record, for the instruction of all succeeding ages. I do not now attempt to indicate the course they pursued in regard to this particular matter. The New Testament is a plain book; read it for yourselves. The Epistles to the Galatians, and Philemon, and Timothy, need no cunning politicians, or hair-splitting metaphysicians, to expound them. The Acts of the Apostles are recorded in an honest, straight-forward history. And oh! that Christian men would agree to be guided by this law and testimony! That, in the discussion of the *vexed question*, we might hear less of the wrath and bitterness of the demagogue, and more of that meek wisdom which Christ teaches, and Paul practically applies!

Such is a brief outline of the duties we owe, as citizens, to God. If we would render Him that which is his due, we should give the first place to the claims of his everlasting kingdom; we should be guided in all our civil duties by a sense of accountability to him; we should practically acknowledge the supremacy of his Word as the rule of right.

II. *The duties which as citizens we owe to the State.* What we have to say under this head may be summed up in three general observations, which you will readily perceive are intimately related to what has been said in regard to our duty to God. Every citizen is bound to perform his part in the support and direction of the Government; to cultivate friendly feelings towards all his fellow-citizens; and to render a peaceful submission to the exercise of lawful authority.

1st. *Every citizen is bound to perform his part in the support and direction of the Government under which he lives.* This is an obvious inference from the doctrine, that civil Government is of divine origin. This obligation rests upon men in every political condition. We do not question that it is the privilege and even the duty of the oppressed subject to alter and amend a bad government whenever it is in his power to do so; but since the very worst government is better than none, and since no tyranny is so violent as the mad passions that run riot in a state of anarchy; every one who is protected in any degree in his person and property, is under an obligation there for to support the State. How instructive on this point is the example of the Saviour! Judea in his day was a conquered province of the Roman Empire, and was held in subjection by a military despotism. But, no doubt, this iron rule was vastly preferable to the civil dissensions which were ready to break out among that degenerate people as soon as the Roman legions were withdrawn. And hence, the Saviour not only refused to join the faction who inflamed the mind of the populace against the payment of the tribute by which this stern government was supported, but set the example of a peaceful citizen, by paying tribute for himself.

Now, if this be true, in the extreme case of those who live as tributaries, under the yoke of a foreign conqueror, how much more is it true in those highly-favored lands where they who pay tribute are not only subjects but citizens, and where the government is to a greater or less degree the creation of the popular will! Men living in such a land as this, are bound by their duty to both God and man, to render its civil institutions a hearty personal support; and that, not merely by contributing their legal share towards the expenses of the State, but by exercising all those privileges through which the citizen may direct the Government. The more we reflect upon this point, the more we are satisfied that it is the solemn duty of every man who enjoys the protection of our laws, to exercise his right to vote for those who make and execute them. The relation between us and the State is as divine and sacred as the relation between parent and child. The elective franchise is a talent committed to us; and the Christian should be the last man to hide that talent in a napkin. We go further than this, and affirm that it is the duty of the Christian citizen to do what he may to secure the nomination of upright

men as candidates for office. It is a crying evil and a shame, that the selection of the voter must too often be a choice between evils. It is a disgrace to us as a Christian people, that our Municipal Governments, and even the judicial tribunals of our great cities, should so often be a by-word and a reproach in the mouths of the people. If these accusations of corruption are false, to what a desperate perfection in the art of slander have we attained! But if they are true, whose is the fault? Are there not honest men enough in all parties to fill every office under Government? Why, then, are they not chosen? Why must your children be taught by what they hear in every social circle, and read in every newspaper, the fearful lesson that an itching palm, and a false tongue, and a depraved heart, are the passports to public office? The answer is obvious. It is because upright and Christian citizens delegate their duties to the offscouring of our great cities, to the corrupt demagogues whose only allegiance is to their party, "whose god is their belly, and whose glory is their shame." The upright men, who are the majority in all parties, leave the selection of candidates, which is, after all, a virtual selection of the public officers, in the hands of the corrupt and unprincipled few. These things ought not so to be. Much as we should deprecate the thought that any Christian man should become a mere political caucuser, we do think that the control of our primary meetings has come to be a matter of sufficient magnitude to justify this reference to it in the sacred desk.

2nd. Our second observation is that every *citizen is bound to cultivate friendly feelings towards all his fellow-citizens*. We use the term fellow-citizen in its broadest sense. We cannot consent that it shall be limited by any state boundaries, or by any imaginary line between clusters of States. Every man who lives under the protection of the same broad shield, and exercises the same civil privileges with ourselves is our *fellow-citizen*; and the simple relation in which we stand towards each other binds us to the cultivation of friendly feelings.

Need I stop to show by abstract argument, or by an appeal to historical facts, that no law can long unite those whose hearts are alienated? Why, even under despotic Governments, sectional and provincial jealousies, when long persisted in, have always proved stronger than thrones and standing armies. What, then, shall hold a free people together when once they are fairly separated into hostile sections? Let the chasm once be fully made; let a single generation be trained up breathing an atmosphere of jealousy and defiance, and all the sanctions of law and constitutions, and all the ties of association hoary with antiquity, shall prove no stronger to bind the giant people in their wrath, than the flax on the limbs of Samson. In regard to our own country, I know it has become a common thing to sneer at the supposed danger of disunion and civil war. Many, either in ignorance

or in contempt of all the lessons of history, tell us that *commercial interest* is the golden chain which, in spite of all opposing influences, must always bind us together. But we tell you the dollar is *not almighty*. The voice of the past teaches us emphatically that men's political passions are not controlled by their interests. Was it not the interests of the old republic of Greece to bury their quarrels, and unite against their common enemies? Was it not the interest of the twelve tribes of Israel to rally as one around the throne of David; but did that interest prevent the revolt of the ten, and the civil wars between Ephraim and Judah? When the armies of Rome beleaguered Jerusalem, was it not the interest of the inhabitants to unite for the common defence; and yet, who does not know that contending factions within the walls shed more blood than the fierce legions without? No! mere interest can never bind those whose hearts are filled with mutual hate. Let the alienation, which has been so rapidly increasing between the two great sections of our country, continue to grow, and as surely as human nature is the same as it was two thousand years ago, two generations will not pass before our glorious Commonwealth shall be dismembered, and its harvest fields watered with blood.

I do not design by these remarks to give the least intimation in regard to the cause of this alienation. But I do mean to declare plainly that it has been perpetuated by faults on both sides. And I do know that the remedy is in the hands of Christian men. That remedy does not consist in substituting bludgeons for arguments, nor in the use of those sharp words which cut like a sword, and poison while they cut. Every good citizen should strive to pour oil on the troubled waters, to allay prejudice, and palliate, rather than magnify faults. And especially does this duty belong to the followers of Christ. We have Christian brethren in every part of the land; brethren who pray at the same altar, and preach out of the same Bible the same great doctrines which we love. God has united us, not only in civil, but in ecclesiastical and spiritual bonds. What, therefore, He has joined together, let not man or devil put asunder.

3dly. *Every citizen is bound to render a peaceful submission to the exercise of lawful authority.* An inspired apostle exhorts us "to submit ourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake." Obedience even to a law which is unjust, if it be rendered for the Lord's sake, is praiseworthy in his sight, and by no means involves the subject in the guilt of the ruler. I shall not attempt to draw the line at which the duty of submission is supposed to end, and the right of revolution to begin. Such limitations are not needful for us. It is sufficiently obvious that our danger does not lie on the side of too much submission. Moreover, so long as the form of our Government continues as it is, we cannot see how revolution can ever be necessary. There is always a peaceful

and a legal way of redress, and though that way of redress may be characterized by the law's delay, is it not better to wait in the endurance of present wrong, rather than risk the incurring of infinitely greater evils? When we hear men, even in sacred places, blustering about appealing to arms, and fighting to the death, and disputing a congressional bill or a popular election at the point of the bayonet, we are prompted to ask, are these men *mad*, or are they really the blood-thirsty creatures their words seem to indicate? Do they really know what civil war is? Have they ever read about the fall of Jerusalem, or the French revolution? Let us have done with these warlike effusions. And especially let us not even speak of resistance to the decisions of that august tribunal, whose voice is uttered at the ballot-box. Let us strive earnestly in God's fear for the success of whatever party we may conscientiously espouse. If we fail once, let us try again. But let the very thought of disputing the will of the people be banished from the patriot's heart. Let it never be uttered, except to be execrated. By the memory of those, whose bones mingle together at the foundations of our republic, by the prosperity of the past, and the glory that gilds the hope of the future, by our allegiance to our fathers' God, let us stand by the undismembered body of our fathers' heritage!

The man who plots or threatens disunion, merely because his party preferences are disappointed, is a *traitor in his heart*; and if his name were not too insignificant to be mentioned at all in history, it ought to be linked with that of Benedict Arnold, and transmitted as a hissing and a by-word to all generations! And I say this not merely as a patriot, but as a minister, standing on the watch-towers of Zion, and looking out for the dawn of millennial glory. It may be only a dream, in which I associate the gigantic growth and the permanence of this country with the on-coming of that latter-day glory; but if it be so, I pray God that I may not live to see it dispelled. There is one way in which it may certainly prove to be a prophetic vision. There is one way in which our national standard shall be exalted as a perpetual ensign among the nations, and our land become not only the asylum, but the evangelizer of the earth. Let the people imbibe the spirit and obey the precept of the text. Let each one, according to his measure, render unto God the things which are God's, and unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsars, and the republic shall stand and flourish until He, whose right it is, gathers all nations into one glorious kingdom. And who shall share more largely in the establishment and triumph of Messiah's Kingdom than we? The angel that is to fly through the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach to all them that dwell on the earth, seems to be pluming his wings in our rich valleys, and couching for his glorious flight upon the mountain summits of this Western world. The spirit of missions which, in its larg-

est sense, expresses the genius, and maps out the true destiny of our land, is gradually leavening the whole mass of society. In less than a quarter of a century, the unshackled enterprise and free church of this country have devised and successfully executed more world-wide schemes of Christian benevolence, than were produced in all the countries of the old world during a thousand years. Let our physical resources continue to be thus developed, while, at the same time, the spreading institutions of the Gospel continue to gather the silver, and gold, and cattle, on a thousand hills, into God's treasury; and it will not be long before commerce herself shall be transformed into the Gospel angel of the nations, spreading her white wings as the beacon of hope on every shore, dispensing the light of a Christian civilization from pole to pole, and, especially, bearing the unshackled African back to the dark home of his race, that by preaching the glad tidings of salvation, he may bid "Ethiopia stretch forth her hand unto God." I know there are those who regard such anticipations as visionary, and especially out of place on an occasion like this. They think that Jeremiah is the true model for a thanksgiving-day prophet; and that to magnify existing evils, to ferment paternal strife, to anticipate coming wrath, is our chief mission to-day in the sanctuary. We believe, on the contrary, that the voice of joy should be heard in our tabernacles, and that the glowing and cheerful spirit of Isaiah should be the inspiration of our song. Let us lay on God's altar a heart not only melted with gratitude for the past, but warm with hope for the future. So shall we best render to God the things that are God's; and so shall we be prepared, amid the bounties and trials of his Providence, to render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's.

THE ATTENDING ANGEL.

There is something impressive and awe-inspiring in the thought that we are constantly surrounded with spiritual beings, and that angels are the invisible spectators and witnesses of what is said and done on earth. No man is ever absolutely alone. He cannot be. Wherever he goes or abides, some sentinel of the invisible world has an eye upon him. Men often seek to be alone, and think and feel that they are, and act accordingly; but they may rest assured that the eye of some watchman is upon them, more sleepless and vigilant than any earthly police could ever boast of. In the thronged city, amid the busy haunts of men, and in the gay and festive circles of fashion, as well as in the quiet solitudes of the country, there are those present who gaze with intense interest on the transactions of earth, and on the conduct of candidates for the judgment and immortality.

“Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth,
Both when we wake and when we sleep.”

So said Milton, the prince of poets; and a greater than Milton recognizes the fact that angels are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation, and urges to fidelity and untiring vigilance, from the fact that we are surrounded with a great cloud of witnesses. There is, however, a practical disbelief of this truth among men. They are not often restrained from wrong conduct by the belief of invisible spectators. The practical influence of such belief would often be salutary. If men realized that invisible agents are always present to watch their conduct, and immediately report to the great police above, how much more circumspect would they be than they often are? How differently, too, would they receive and treat the messages of mercy and salvation which are delivered from Sabbath to Sabbath? Instead of the drowsy inattention and the vacant stare, which is often observed, what full-souled earnestness would fix the rapt attention to the great and absorbing themes of eternal salvation? In the case of how many individuals at home, or in the house of God, each Sabbath, is the attending angel compelled, in sadness, to carry his report above, that that Sabbath has been wasted, lost, misimproved, and the means of grace been enjoyed to no good purpose? And did each preacher of the Gospel—each ambassador of God—prepare for the solemn transactions of the Sabbath, and deliver the messages of Heaven's King to his fellow-men, under the full impression that an attending angel was present to mark the manner of both preacher and hearer under each discourse, and ready to begin his flight to heaven to make report there, what a different aspect would often

appear in the services of the sanctuary? And it can hardly admit of a doubt that the comparative coldness and indifference which often mark the manner of both preacher and hearer, is offensive to God, and grieves His Spirit to withdraw those sacred influences which otherwise had exerted the most salutary and blessed effects. An incident in the life of Whitefield strikingly illustrates a truth of this kind. Near the close of an impressive discourse, which he delivered to assembled thousands, he made a solemn pause, and then addressed his numerous auditory:—"The attendant angel is just about to leave the threshold and ascend to heaven. And shall he ascend and not bear with him the news of one sinner, among all this multitude, reclaimed from the error of his ways?" To give greater effect to this exclamation, he stamped with his foot, lifted up his hands and his eyes to heaven, and, with gushing tears, cried aloud, "Stop, Gabriel! stop, Gabriel! stop, ere you enter the sacred portals, and yet carry with you the news of one sinner converted to God." He then, in the most simple, but energetic language, described what he called a Saviour's dying love to sinful men: so that almost the whole assembly melted into tears.

This anecdote is related by the infidel, Hume, who was present, and was much effected by the solemn representation; and well had it been for him had he yielded to the salutary impressions of that day, and allowed his name to be entered by the recording angel in the book of life. And it is too much to suppose that attending and witnessing angels will be called on in the great day to testify against men whom they have seen from their invisible stations, sitting under the ministrations of the Gospel, from Sabbath to Sabbath, with cold and heartless indifference? How appalling to the sinner in that day, to hear such testimony from the attending angel, who is now watching him from Sabbath to Sabbath?—*Chris. Par. Mag.*