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Civil Government, a Divine Ordinance.

A DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED IN THE MEETING-HOUSE

OF THE

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, OF PHILADELPHIA,

November 6th, 1864.

BY THE

Rev. George Dana Boardman,

PASTOR.

PHILADELPHIA :

RINGWALT & BROWN, STEAM-POWER BOOK PRINTERS,

111 & 113 South Fourth Street.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

PHILADELPHIA, November 10th, 1861.

REV. GEORGE DANA BOARDMAN :

DEAR SIR—Having enjoyed the pleasure of hearing the loyal and patriotic sermon delivered by you, on Sabbath evening, November 6th, instant, and believing that the sentiments therein so eloquently, forcibly and logically enforced are calculated, not only in a religious aspect, but in a national view, to impress upon every citizen the duty and obligation of rendering obedience "to the powers that be," as well as a cheerful support to the Government in its efforts to subdue the existing rebellion, we are induced to request, at your earliest convenience, a copy for publication.

Although the immediate occasion for which your discourse was specially intended has happily passed, yet it will, no doubt, tend to establish more firmly the faith of all who labored for the success of the principles you so nobly advocated.

Notwithstanding some of the undersigned are not members of your church or congregation, nor identified with the Baptist denomination, and are strangers to you personally, yet it is hoped you will not have any hesitation in acceding to the request herein contained.

With great respect, your friends and fellow-citizens.

WILLIAM D. KELLEY,
GEORGE H. CROSMAN,
JAMES L. CLAGHORN,
JOHN HANNA,
SAMUEL H. PERKINS,
JOS. W. BULLOCK,
B. R. LONLEY,
JOHN C. DAVIS,
HENRY C. HOWELL,
THOMAS WATSON,
WASHINGTON BUTHER,
CHARLES D. TALMAGE,
WM. S. HANSELL.

JAMES M. BIRD,
STEPHEN A. CALDWELL,
EDWIN HALL,
CHARLES JEWELL,
ALEX. T. LANE,
WM. F. DEAN,
JOHN M. FORD,
JOHN HARTMAN,
JAMES S. MOORE,
WM. COFFIN,
JOSEPH F. PAGE,
JOHN F. FOREPAUGH,
I. H. O'HARRA.

No. 1712 VINE STREET, November 14, 1861.

TO THE HON. WILLIAM D. KELLEY, COL. GEORGE H. CROSMAN, JAMES L. CLAGHORN, ESQ., JOHN HANNA, ESQ., and others.

GENTLEMEN—Your note of the 10th instant, requesting for publication the discourse delivered in the meeting-house of the First Baptist Church, on the evening of the 6th instant, has been received.

I gratefully acknowledge the sentiments of esteem which your note so courteously expresses.

Believing with you that the truths so imperfectly set forth on the occasion referred to are of supreme and abiding value, I cheerfully place the manuscript at your disposal.

I have taken the liberty of adding a few paragraphs, which, in consequence of the extreme length of the discourse, were omitted in the delivery.

Fervently congratulating you upon the magnificent decision of last Tuesday, by which the American people declared, with a unanimity truly august, that God's Ordinance of Civil Government shall be unconditionally maintained. I am, gentlemen, with profound respect,

Your friend and townsman,

GEORGE DANA BOARDMAN.

DISCOURSE.

We are living in a most extraordinary epoch. It is an era of stupendousness in the field, stupendousness in the court, stupendousness in the arena of the nation's feelings. It were but a miserable, guilty affectation of indifference for the ministers of Christ to ignore mighty national crises like the present. In common with my countrymen, I have been profoundly agitated by these sublime events, following each other with such startling rapidity; and yet, oppressed as I am with the terrible catastrophe which has overtaken our land, it is very seldom that I would venture to introduce into the pulpit topics, the discussion of which seem to have a political bearing. For, the Kingdom of which I am an ambassador, is not of this world. But, ever and anon, some billow of our tempest-tossed ocean, surging to an unwonted height, bears aloft the ship of state far above the level of considerations merely political, into the purer region of Christian morals. At such times, when the Almighty visibly makes bare His arm, and the nation passes through some sublime moral crisis, that minister is false to his trust, as the prophet or spokesman of God, who does not seize the occasion and turn it to a religious use. Such an occasion, I solemnly believe, is the approaching Presidential election. Next Tuesday, this nation is to decide whether it will obey God by maintaining His own ordinance of Civil Government, or disobey Him by ignominiously yielding it to mad insurgents. We all know that there is throughout the nation more or less of misgiving as to the righteousness of this war. The secret heart of the great

Public needs assurance on this point. This is the grand question which is to be decided next Tuesday. The real question, stripped of whatsoever attaches itself to it incidentally, is simply this: Shall we have a peace by maintaining with the sword God's ordinance of civil government, or by surrendering it? Thus surveyed, the question assumes a profoundly religious aspect. Accordingly, I invite your attention to some comments founded on a clause in the fourth verse of the thirteenth chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans :

HE BEARETH NOT THE SWORD IN VAIN.

I. The origin of Civil Government is a problem which has baffled the ingenuity of the subtlest intellects in every age. The principal theories concerning this matter may, however, be reduced to two. The first theory—recognising Civil Government as an external fact, existing independent of men's wills—traces its origin back to the *Paternal or Patriarchal* system of rule. This was the view maintained by the Tories and the great body of Churchmen under the English Stuarts, and on which they founded their famous doctrines of the Divine right of Kings, and of Passive Obedience, or absolute non-resistance. The second theory, regarding Civil Government as a creature of men's wills, represents it as a *Social Contract*. Just as two or more men unite together for certain purposes of business, and pledge themselves to obey certain rules mutually agreed upon, which rules are binding so long as the contract stands, so Civil Government is conceived of as a compact between each and every citizen. This is the common theory. Thus the Parliament which deposed James II, declared by solemn vote that James had “broken the original contract between King and people.” Thus, also, we read in the Constitution of Massachusetts: “The body politic is formed by a voluntary association of individuals. It is a social compact, by which the whole people covenants with each citizen, and each citizen with the whole

people, that all shall be governed by certain laws for the common good." Now this theory, as you perceive at once, does not explain at all the origin of Civil Government. Besides, it would be a difficult matter for even the astutest lawyer to ascertain the day on which you and I, as citizens of the United States, entered into any such contract, or to state the terms of the contract we agreed upon. to say nothing of the fact that Government has rights which no contract among the subjects can confer. The theory is, as the old schoolmen would have said, a simple *ens rationis*, or creature of reason. Yet, like some other figments of law, as, for instance, "the State is a person," "the King never dies," this theory, that Civil Government is a social compact, has certain advantages, as being a convenient form for expressing political and legal principles.

Now the Holy Scripture cuts short all these theories and speculations, by positively asserting that Civil Government is of *Divine* origin, and consequently of Divine authority, and this it asserts in the broadest terms: for, while it explicitly defines the duty of the subject, it does not define the nature or structure of the government to which that duty is owing. This is perfectly evident from the paragraph which has supplied us with our text, and on which I would now fasten your closest attention: *

1. *Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.*

2. *Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.*

3. *For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same.*

4. *For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain;*

* Let those whose sensibilities are shocked whenever the preacher alludes to politics, beware how their eyes fall on this political chapter of an inspired apostle.

for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.

5. *Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.*

6. *For, for this cause pay ye tribute also; for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.*

7. *Render therefore to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour. Rom. xiii. 1-7.*

In these verses St. Paul is enforcing the duty of obedience to those in authority by several considerations. Let us rapidly run over them. He enforces it,

1. By the consideration that Civil Government is a Divine institution. "*Let every soul be subject unto the Higher Powers. For there is no Power but of God. The Powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the Powers, resisteth the Ordinance of God. And they that resist shall receive unto themselves damnation.*" That is to say: Let every man submit himself to the authorities of Government. For all civil authority comes from God. Civil Government is a Divine Ordinance. We must obey our rulers *because* Civil Government is of Divine appointment. Consequently, resistance to rulers is resistance to God Himself. And all who thus resist invoke upon themselves a just judgment.

2. The apostle enforces the duty of obedience to those in authority, secondly, from the end or design of their appointment. "*For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the Power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same. For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil be afraid. For he beareth not the sword in vain: a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.*" That is to say: Magistrates are to be obeyed, not only because such is the will of God, but also because they are appointed for the

very purpose of promoting the welfare of society. Government is a terror to none but evil doers. The magistrate is God's steward, to whom He has entrusted the welfare of society. But if the subject rebels, it is not in vain, neither is it by chance, that Government is invested with authority to punish him: for God has appointed Government for that very purpose.

3. That we may complete the apostle's view of the subject, let me repeat the third consideration which he presents, why we are to submit ourselves to those in authority, viz: because such submission is a religious as well as civil duty. "*Wherefore, ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.*" That is to say: We must obey our rulers, not only from fear of civil punishment, but also out of conscientious regard for God Himself.

The apostle deduces from this statement the following inference: Since Civil Government is of Divine origin and authority, we should cheerfully sustain it with our pecuniary and moral support. "*For, for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render, therefore, to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.*" (See Appendix, note A, page 29.)

We see then what the Scriptural teaching concerning Civil Government is. It teaches us to accept government as a Divine fact, which exists as soon as, and wherever, men exist. There has never been a nation so degraded that it had no government. There has never been a nation so advanced that it intentionally based its government on the idea of a social compact, except as a figment of law. Men never have lived, and men never will live, and this simply because men never can live, without government. Government is a fact, just as the atmosphere, or gravitation, or man himself, is a fact. God established the principle of gravitation. God created the

atmosphere. God brings man into being. God makes governments. We shall never be able to trace the origin or basis of Civil Government further back than was done more than two thousand years ago by the great philosopher of Stagira: "It is manifest," says Aristotle, "that the State is one of the things which exist by nature, and that man, in virtue of his very being, is a political animal: "ἄνθρωπος φύσει πολιτικὸν ζῷον." And a greater than Aristotle hath declared, as in our passage: "*The Powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the Power, resisteth the Ordinance of God.*" That is to say: Society and Government are not altogether creatures of men's wills; but they are Divine institutions, existing wherever men exist. Those who are in authority are to obeyed within their sphere, no matter how or by whom appointed; and this because Civil Government is a Divine Ordinance. The Powers that be are ordained of God, not because they chance to have been justly inaugurated, not because they are at present justly administered, but because they are the Government, and Government is a Divine institution. And we are to be subject to the Powers that be. And what is specially worthy of being noticed in this connection is, that this was the teaching of our Lord and of His apostles, living though they were, under the murderous despotism of the Cæsars, in the crimson days of a Tiberius, a Caligula, a Claudius, a Nero, and a Domitian.

But if the Powers that be are ordained of God, and if whosoever resisteth the Powers, resisteth the Ordinance of God, how then, you ask, can *Revolutions* ever be justified? What redress have we when tyranny becomes absolutely intolerable? Will you carry your doctrine of loyalty to the extreme of pronouncing, for instance, the American Revolution an act of treason, rather than of patriotism?

We will not undertake to answer these questions flippantly. They are among the most momentous that history, or the possi-

ble fortunes of our own dear land, can put to the Christian patriot. Let us, therefore, survey the matter as becomes thoughtful, conscientious, Christian lovers of country.

In reply to the question, whether resistance to the government ever can be justifiable, we answer that the question belongs to the domain of casuistry, or cases of conscience. All will admit that revolutions are not the ordinary conditions of society, but that they are exceptional cases. We cannot, therefore, argue from them: for it is manifestly absurd to deduce a rule from an exception. Again, all will admit that if revolutions are ever justifiable, they can be justified only on the plea of necessity. If the plea of necessity holds good, it holds good because "Necessity knows no law." But who is to be the judge when a revolution is a necessity? Evidently, the question is one in casuistry: and questions in casuistry are proverbially the most puzzling of all problems. The remark is pre-eminently true of the subtleties of the law. "Law," said Dr. Johnson, "is the science in which the greatest powers of the understanding are applied to the greatest number of facts." No formula, then, can be enunciated that shall exactly apply to cases of revolution. Evidently, the line which separates the patriot from the traitor is very narrow and delicate. "A good action," said Lord Macauley, "is not distinguished from a bad action by marks so plain as those which distinguish a hexagon from a square." Take the case so often submitted to our juries—that of killing, when the defendant urges the plea of self-defence. Now, if the evidence is that the killing was in self-defence, the law, as you are aware, recognizes the validity of the plea, and pronounces the homicide justifiable. But what lawgiver, what jurist, will dare to fix, with perfect precision, the limits of self-defence? Will you show me the law which measures the precise amount of jeopardy to which the defendant must be exposed, in order to

justify the killing? But, because the law cannot, from the very nature of the case, measure the precise amount of necessary jeopardy, are we prepared to affirm that all cases of killing in alleged self-defence are on the one hand justifiable homicides, or, on the other hand, murders? Evidently, each case is peculiar, and must be decided by itself, and decided, too, on an exhaustive view of all the circumstances belonging to the transaction. The general principle of these remarks may be applied to cases of resistance to the government, remembering, however, that in the latter cases the materials for our decision are vastly more complicated, since no revolution is justifiable till every means of constitutional redress has been exhausted; and this, as the English revolution of 1688, and our own colonial struggle show, is not the work of a day or of a year. Neither can any revolution be justified in which the chances of success do not clearly preponderate over the chances of defeat. For, civil war is a more terrible calamity than despotism; and the same revolution, which, if successful, makes him who leads it a patriot, and entitles him to the patriot's wreath, if unsuccessful, makes him who leads it a rebel, and justly exposes him to the rebel's doom.

The question, as I have said, is one that belongs to the domain of casuistry. It is very much like the question that often arises, whether or not a child is ever at liberty to disobey his parents. And, permit me here to remark, that I believe that the relation between parent and child is a divinely ordained type of the relation between the State and its subject. What the parent is to the child, that the State, in many particulars, is to the citizen. Not without deep significance did the Roman law pronounce the rebel against his country a *parricide*. Now, the parental relation, like Government itself, is a Divine institution. The essence and gist of the fifth article of that supreme constitution which the great Lawgiver has drafted for the

government of the human race, in all lands and times, *Honor thy father and thy mother*, consists, as I understand it, in these two principles: First, There is such a thing as LAW; and, secondly, law must be OBEYED. This commandment is not an arbitrary enactment, but has its immutable foundation in the very essence of the relation which subsists between parents and children. We might, indeed, legitimately ground this duty on the basis of expediency, or of æsthetic propriety, or of justness, or of the personal character of the parent himself. But, resistless as are the motives to filial obedience furnished by considerations like these, I believe that our commandment rests on a basis more immutable and unconditional. It is a singular fact that, in many languages, the word employed to denote obedience to God is identical with that employed to denote obedience to parents. Both the Greeks and the Romans, heathen though they were, called devotion to parents *piety*. What is this but a sort of universal, intuitive feeling that the honoring of parents partakes of the nature of an absolute religious obligation, rather than of a contingent, social duty, or of an æsthetic propriety? I believe that when a son is disobedient to his parents he is guilty of something more than undutifulness; and that when he insults them he is guilty of something more than insolence; and that when he is unkind to them he is guilty of something more than cruelty; and that when he wrongs them he is guilty of something more than injustice. There is in each of these actions a peculiar element of wickedness perfectly distinguishable from that which gives to each separate action its specific title. I think that every rightminded person instinctively discriminates between the infringing the rights of our neighbors and the infringing the rights of our parents; so that, while he describes the former as being wicked, he spontaneously describes the latter as being *impious*. It is not enough, then, to say that it is expedient, or appropriate, or beautiful, or even just, that we honor our

parents. But this duty, originating, as it does, outside of and above the circle of conditions and contingencies, is a thing absolutely and unconditionally right in itself. "Children! obey your parents *in the Lord*, for this is RIGHT," is the Apostolic injunction. And this word here translated *right*, St. Paul is always careful to employ when he would designate an action which is right, not incidentally or relatively, but inherently and unconditionally. Hence, for a son to honor his parents is not merely an æsthetic propriety, or a matter of justness, but a religious obligation, partaking of the nature of an elementary principle. I do not know that I make myself understood. It is difficult to define this conception, just as it is difficult to define any other elementary principle. Perhaps I can illustrate it best by an ancient usage. The Pharisees had a custom, founded on tradition, of refusing, in certain cases, to assist their needy parents, on the ground that what they had to offer as gifts they had already consecrated to God, and hence they claimed that they were released from the duty of maintaining their parents. It was enough for them to exclaim: Corban! that is, *already devoted*. But the Great Teacher pointed out the impiety which lurked beneath this cloak of sanctity, by affirming in substance that, while it was perfectly right that they should contribute of their resources to the Lord's treasury, nevertheless, the specific commandment, *Honor thy Father and thy Mother*, and the duty involved in it of maintaining them, was of the nature of an antecedent, primary, fundamental obligation, and could never be dispensed with to make room for an incidental contingent duty. But it often happens that parents, viewed in respect to their personal characters, are unworthy of being honored; and, therefore, our idea of the fifth commandment is that, in its fullest and truest significance, it does not regard the parent himself so much as it does the *Parental Relation*—not the person so much as the PRINCIPLE.

Now, this relation between parents and children involves, on the one hand, the idea of parental authority, and, on the other, of filial subordination. But, is a child never at liberty to disobey his parents? Suppose, for instance, a father commands his son to do what the latter knows he ought not to do, or forbids his doing what he knows he ought to do, must the son obey him? Now, concerning this, we must say what we are compelled to say concerning cases of conscience generally, that, in the absence of specific scriptural precepts, we must govern ourselves by general principles. We must also remember that there can be no real conflict between moral laws; and that, if any conflict appear, the difficulty is not in the objective laws themselves, but in our subjective inability to perceive their harmony; and hence, in deciding such cases, we must proceed with the utmost diffidence and caution. Some of the general principles which may help us in this matter are these: First, it is manifestly my duty to obey both God and my parents. Again, there are certain distinctly enunciated laws which lie in the unchanging plane of fundamental, unconditional obligation. In respect to these laws, my father and I stand on an equality before God. On the other hand, there are many inferential, incidental duties, which lie in the ever-shifting plane of contingencies. In respect to these, I am to yield to the commands of my father, in virtue of my own youthfulness and inexperience, and state of subjection to an authority which has been divinely ordained. For example: If my father impose on me commands which I cannot help feeling are unreasonable and cruel, I think that I ought to obey him, remembering that, in virtue of a divine arrangement, the responsibility in such cases rests with him. But if my father command me to worship graven images, or to take God's name in vain, or to steal, or to bear false witness against my neighbor, I must, at all hazards, refuse to obey him: for my father has no right, or power, to

make or unmake moral laws : and moral laws impose obligations antecedent and superior to any which parents may dictate.

Now let us make use of these principles in answering the question, whether it can be right to refuse obedience to the Government? Let us never lose sight of the fact that the Powers that be, like the parental authority, are ordained of God. Suppose, now, that some of the enactments of the State are not such as accord with my ideas of reason, or justice, or republicanism? Am I at liberty to be undutiful to my civic father and mother? Because I do not like a particular law, am I at liberty to set myself up against the law? Who has anointed me king over the legislature, and the judiciary, and the executive, of my nation? Am I to translate the grand doctrine of the higher law, as too many have translated it, into the doctrine that the higher law is my own will? Am I to carry the noble doctrine of Popular Sovereignty to the extreme, that, as an American citizen, I am above the laws of the land, and thus illustrate, for the thousandth time, the truth of the proverb, that extremes meet, by showing that there is very little difference after all between the modern anarchical doctrine of the Divine right of *citizen* sovereignty, and the old monarchical doctrine of the Divine right of *kings*? Remember that liberty, unbalanced by law, is anarchy. Liberty, like every other blessing of God, not excepting even the grace of Christ's Gospel, may be abused, and prove our ruin. Liberty, unbridged by law, is ever a perilous thing. Man's true freedom consists, not in an unfettered license, but in a voluntary subordination to law. And the true freedom of a nation consists, not in the suicidal privileges of outlawry, but in a cheerful obedience to the laws which they themselves enact, and administer by representatives of their own free choice.

But remember, ye heirs of immortality, that there is a law higher than even the ratified enactments of the freely elected

deputies of a free people. There is a Power more omnipotent than that of the people. We enter a most solemn and earnest protest against the blasphemous dogma, so frequent on the lips of certain politicians, and editors, and demagogues, that *the voice of the people is the voice of God!* Let their motto rather be this: THE VOICE OF GOD, LET IT BE THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE! The popular sovereignty which does not reverently bow before the Theocracy, whose constitution is the Decalogue, and whose interpretation is the Life of Jesus of Nazareth, is essentially an Atheistic Democracy. Do you want an illustration of this? You shall have one. It shall be an appalling one. It is the French Revolution. "The People is sufficient for itself," shrieked Anacharsis Clootz, one of the haranguers of that awful epoch, "the People is sufficient for itself, and will subsist forever. Citizens! there is no other sovereign than the human race—the People-God! To this Utopia the only obstruction is Religion. Let us grind it to powder!" And in grinding it to powder, they compounded for themselves that terrific, fulminating force, which suddenly exploded into a thousand blackened fragments, the liberty, and the peace, and the virtue, and the glory of France. Let a people once be seized with the idea that they have no sovereign but their own will, and that the only curb to their freedom is physical force, and neither expediency nor patriotism, neither reason nor mercy, can prevent them from using their liberty as a cloak for a most hideous diabolism. "O, Liberty! Liberty!" exclaimed the illustrious Madame Roland, when, in the name of liberty, she was goaded on to the guillotine by a frenzied horde of Parisian outlaws: "O, Liberty! Liberty! what crimes have been perpetrated in thy name!"

But while holding these strong notions concerning the authority of the State, I believe that there are cases in which the people are justified in resisting the Government, even though

civil government is an institution of Divine ordination, just as I believe there are cases in which the child ought to disobey his parents, even though the parental authority is of Divine origin. But it is not necessary that I prosecute the topic further. For, however discontented a portion of our Northern community may be, the great mass of the people repel with utmost abhorrence the intimation that the time has come for such a resistance to the National Authority as shall amount to an organized revolution. I have adverted to the topic, not because it is specially pertinent to the object I have in view, but because I wished to obviate the objection which might be urged that I had not surveyed the matter in all its bearings.

II. Having thus considered the Origin and Authority of Civil Government, we ask, secondly, whether Civil Government has the right to maintain its authority with the sword?

This question is of primary consequence. In fact, it lies at the base of all other questions pertaining to this gigantic war. The whole spirit of the New Testament is so benignant, and war develops such terrible passions, and brings in its train such unspeakable woes, that no man, least of all the Christian, should dare commit himself to it thoughtlessly, without having carefully scrutinized, in the light of Scripture, every inch of the ground. I care not how great provocations we may have received: I care not how imperilled our Constitution, our Union, our Government, our institutions, our liberties, may be; if, as a soldier, or as a citizen required to help supply the sinews of war, I have the slightest misgivings as to the Scriptural teachings concerning war, better for me that I should let Constitution, Union, Government, institutions, country, be given over to ruin, rather than lift my hand against my fellow-man.

I wish to meet this question fairly, in the full face, without reserve or subterfuge. The thoughtful, conscientious man will be guided by principle rather than by impulse. This question,

then, is of fundamental, decisive consequence. It becomes us, then, to look at the matter calmly and as Christians.

It must be confessed that the general tenor of the New Testament is very decided against the use of physical force in redressing injuries. Love it pronounces the grand avenger of wrongs. Take, as an instance, the Sermon on the Mount. What a sweet spirit of forgiveness and love runs throughout, teaching us, in various phrases, to suffer wrong rather than resent it! And this is the teaching of the Epistles as well as of the Gospels. "Dearly beloved! avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath. For it is written: 'Vengeance is *mine*, I will repay,' saith the Lord. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink. For, in so doing, thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head." Certainly, this does not look as if the maiming and slaying one another were accordant with the peaceful spirit of the Gospel.

Now there is one very remarkable exception to this general tenor of the scriptural teaching. If I remember right, it is the only formal exception in the whole New Testament. But it is perfectly decisive. It is the exception of our text: "HE BEARETH NOT THE SWORD IN VAIN." Now, what is this sword that is not borne in vain; that is, this sword which is borne authoritatively and effectively? Why, it is none other than *the sword of Government wielded to maintain its own supremacy*. This is perfectly demonstrable from the context, which we have already examined. "The Powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the Power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive unto themselves damnation. *For he beareth not the sword in vain*. For he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." And to make the case the strongest possible, remember that St. Paul penned these words when living under the most merciless and nefarious

despotism that ever cursed the earth—the despotism of the Cæsars. Even the Cæsars had the right to use the sword to maintain the supremacy of their own Government; and this on the basis of the universal fact, that the Power, that is, the Government, is ordained of God.

The doctrine of the text, then, is this: Civil Government, in virtue of the fact that it is the ordinance of God, has the right, in order to maintain its own authority, to use physical force. This use of physical force, in the case of the single rebel, is confiscation, or imprisonment, or banishment, or the scaffold: in the case of many rebels, or of a rebellious district, it is *war*. The New Testament, then, though it is the evangel of Peace, and though it everywhere teaches the forgiveness of personal injuries, nevertheless justifies war, but only on this ground: Civil Government, as being the ordinance of God, in order to maintain its supremacy, has the right to use the sword, even though millions perish. Rebels are nothing as compared with an ordinance of the Almighty.

Here, then, men and brethren, we have a complete New Testament justification of the present war, at least so far as we wage it in maintenance of Government as being God's ordinance. The New Testament nowhere justifies a war for mere conquest, or acquisition of territory, as in our war with Mexico. It nowhere justifies war for the retaliation of injuries. It nowhere justifies war for the avenging of an insulted flag, unless, indeed, that flag be considered at the time as the symbol of the authority conferred by an ordinance of God. When I was abroad, I often heard Europeans making some such remark as this: "The Americans are a curious people. They are always talking about their flag—the Star-spangled Banner—as though that were everything!" And whenever I heard a remark like this it always filled me with pride, and I more than once said to them: "I thank you for

that tribute to America. My countrymen are so poetical that with them their flag is the symbol of everything they deem glorious. All that they have inherited from their fathers, all that they have themselves achieved, all that makes them the American people, they poetically symbolize in their glorious Stars and Stripes." And yet, because this flag, considered simply as the emblem of our glory, has been insulted and trailed in the dust, *this* is no New Testament justification of our war. But if we wage this war because God's ordinance of Government has been assailed, and if we avenge the insult to our flag because we consider it the symbol of a Divine Institution, then we are not only authorized and justified, we are *compelled* to wage this war to the bitter end, even though millions on millions of our countrymen perish. And if we wage the war on this basis, (and I believe, before God, that *this* is the basis on which we are waging it), then we confidently bring the debate before the Court of High Heaven, and we say: "Let Jehovah, the Lord of Hosts, the God of Battles, the Giver of Victories, decide between you rebels against His ordinance, and us, who are loyal to it! Let the God of Battles weigh you and us in His balance, and let the balance in which loyalty to God is wanting, kick the beam!" This is precisely the point in issue in this tremendous conflict. We call it, and properly enough, rebellion against the Government; we might, with equal propriety, call it rebellion against Jehovah's ordinance.

III. "But this war is not at present waged for maintenance of Government," I hear some one saying, "It is a war for emancipation."

What you say is partly true and partly false.

It *is* true that the Government stands committed to the policy and work of emancipation. And from the very profoundest depths of my soul do I thank and glorify my God for the fact. I hail this Proclamation of Emancipation as

God's own morning star: the brightest promise He has vouchsafed us of our National Redemption. It is a great act of public justice, which the world will yet acknowledge as one of its grandest eras. For, though this Proclamation is based on the ground of military necessity, yet no man can help feeling that its real nethermost basis is a moral one. Stripping the question of all partisan hues, all political associations, all personal prejudices and preconceptions, surveying it in its moral bearings alone, I believe that it elicits a profound response from the general moral sense of the community. And could we get at the secret, honest feelings of the thousands who affect to sneer at it, we are bold to say that, with the exception of those who are utterly given over either to prejudice of color, or to partisan blindness, or to secret, treacherous complicity with treason—could we, I say, get at the secret, honest feelings of the thousands who affect to sneer at this Proclamation, we are bold to affirm that in the depths of their hearts they feel that it is right; emphatically, intensely, gloriously RIGHT. It *is* right that they who have risen in armed conspiracy against their government, should lose their property, or what they call their property, specially when that property consists in the weapons with which they fought against the government. It *is* right that that which was the primary, fundamental cause of the war should be swept away forever. It *is* right that they who have been enslaved, not because they were criminals, but because they were dark-skinned and defenceless, should enjoy the rights of manhood as freely as you or I. O, how my heart has been pained, when I have heard respectable, high-minded gentlemen speaking of the poor defenceless negro, in terms of opprobrium, using epithets of vulgar cant, which may befit the lips of barbarians, but which certainly do not befit the lips of Christian gentlemen, who must one day meet these same unfortunate fellow-men of theirs at the judgment seat of Christ.

Yes, I hail this Proclamation of Freedom as a colossal stride in the direction of American progress. It has changed the whole attitude of the government toward slavery: Formerly, slavery was, as it were, a foster child of the government, and so a national institution: now it is an outlaw, to be exterminated with the rebel outlaws, whose idol it is. It matters not, in this particular, who is elected President on the 8th inst. Retrogression now is impossible. The die is cast. Slavery is doomed. I know not what is before us as a nation. I am willing to trust God for our future. But if the very worst should come, if He, with whom the nations of earth are but as wands of gossamer, hath determined that the Union of our fathers shall go down forevermore, it will be a blessed thing for posterity to know, that, when the American nationality went down, she went down all alone, beneath the direct touch of Jehovah's finger, without the weight of so much as one single slave-infant dragging at her skirts!

Therefore, let God be praised! The American People, by this act of their Constitutional Executive, stand irretrievably committed to the work of Emancipation. What though the proclamation itself be "but a piece of paper?" It is a glorious thing that at last we have a Government that dares to admit, even on paper, that Freedom is not altogether a question of complexion, and that wherever God has put a human soul, there he has put a freeman. But this proclamation is something more than a piece of paper. It is a weapon of tremendous power, for it is borne on the points of half a million of bayonets, and heralded by the whiz of ten million bullets. Ah! we little know as yet what that piece of paper has accomplished. We little know what is taking place in quietness to-night on those distant Southern plantations. We little know how many hearts are throbbing with wild delight beneath sable skins, or how many eyes are turned heavenward in grateful joy

from cabin and pine grove, from cottonfield and canebrake. Poor, oppressed, moaning children of Africa! Lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh! The tide of Emancipation, God's own tide, has set in, and the world's united forces cannot drive it back. The men of to-day may sneer at the Proclamation: the men of to-morrow will reverence it.

But the good deed, through the ages,
 Living in historic pages,
 Brighter grows, and gleams immortal,
 Unconsumed by moth or rust.

But while it is true that the Government stands committed to the policy and work of emancipation, it is not true that we are fighting for emancipation as an end, but only as a means. And God be praised for the evidences He has vouchsafed us that His own ordinance of Civil Government is swiftly marching on to victory over the glorious highway of that other ordinance of His, the ordinance of universal freedom. Strange, passing strange, it is, that while some of the bitterest opposers of the emancipation proclamation are Northern men, who have no practical acquaintance with the workings of the institution of slavery, the most distinguished among the Southern loyalists, who, through a painful personal experience, have known its paralyzing effects on their own communities, are hailing the proclamation with a feeling approaching to ecstasy. The practical movements towards emancipation of such slave States as Missouri, and Maryland, and Delaware, and portions of Virginia, and Kentucky, and Tennessee, and North Carolina, and Florida, and Texas, and Louisiana—States which understand experimentally the workings of slavery, are worth more than all the theories and arguments ever elaborated by the human intellect. Most significant of all is the intelligence which has reached us within the past few days, that the very men who are leaders in

this atrocious conspiracy against an Ordinance of the Almighty; the very men who deliberately inaugurated this unparalleled war, for the avowed purpose of founding a new, and that a slave-holding empire; these very men are themselves vindicating the military policy of our Government, by proposing to imitate that policy themselves, and proclaiming emancipation to their own slaves. [See note B, page 32.] What a confession this is, that the conduct of the war on our part has been a transcendent success! Verily, the ruler of the land hath not borne the sword in vain! And yet there are those scattered through the north, who are craven enough to assert that "the war is a failure." To compel these haughty insurgents to cast away the very corner-stone on which they had vauntingly founded their unhallowed Confederacy; to compel these scornful task-masters to confess that white men cannot conquer us, but that black men may; to storm and carry the very citadel of the rebellion—and slaveholding is that citadel—to extort such confessions as these from these swollen Southrons; *this* do you call "a failure?" If this be failure, God send us many more like unto it!

But this war, I repeat, is not a war for emancipation as such. It is a war for God's ordinance of Government *through* emancipation. It is a war for the maintenance and supremacy of Government on the ground that Civil Government is God's ordinance. If this war is waged for any other purpose; if it cannot be based on that loftiest of grounds, the duty of maintaining God's ordinance of Civil Government. Heaven forbid that I should have anything to do with it! It is not a war for subjugation. It is not a war for retaliation. It is not a war for avenging the insult to our flag, considered merely as the symbol of our glory. It is not a war for emancipation, as such. But it is a war for God's ordinance of Civil Government. On this unmistakable, lofty, Christian, Divine ground, we

proudly take our position. Jehovah of Hosts summons us forth to vindicate the majesty of one of His own institutions, to re-assert and forever maintain the supremacy of a Divine ordinance on which rebels with accursed heel have trodden.

I have thus endeavored to set before you, men and brethren, the scriptural teaching concerning the origin and authority of Civil Government. I have endeavored to show that Government, in order to maintain its own authority, has the right to employ physical force. I have endeavored to show that in the war which is now devastating our land, Government, in seeking to re-establish its supremacy, is rightfully appealing to the sword. It only remains for me to make practical application of our topic to the exigences of the hour.

Accordingly, I conclude as I began. Next Tuesday this nation is to decide whether it will obey God by re-asserting His own ordinance of Civil Government, or disobey Him by ignominiously surrendering it to insurgents and traitors. This is the real question at issue before the American people. Let no man deceive you. The real question, stripped of whatsoever subordinate details politicians have encumbered it with, is simply, nakedly this: Shall we have peace, a true, righteous, permanent peace, Heaven's own peace, by re-asserting with the sword God's own ordinance of Civil Government? or shall we have a false, treacherous, transient, base peace, by impiously surrendering to traitors an ordinance of Almighty God? *That* is the question. Two parties are in the field. The one party virtually says: "Government, though of Divine origin and authority, is unable to maintain itself. This war is a failure. Let us have an armistice. Let us ground our arms. Let us temporize. Let us compromise with the Powers of Darkness. Let us play the coward. It is safer than to fight. Let us make peace with traitors. And let Heaven's ordinance take care of itself!" The other party virtually says: "The Powers

that be are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the Powers, resisteth the ordinance of God. And they that resist shall receive unto themselves damnation. For the Power beareth not the sword in vain. Government has been assailed, outraged, defied, trampled on. We have undertaken to re-vindicate its authority, to re-assert its supremacy. God helping us, it shall be done, till the last armed traitor bites the dust. Graciously hath the Lord of Hosts smiled upon us. We have begun re-asserting the authority of Government in the field. We will finish re-asserting it at the polls. Next Tuesday Treason shall die. God save the State!"

Fellow-citizens :—I have done my duty. As the minister of God I have not shunned to declare unto you His counsel as it bears on this tremendous issue. I might have plied you with other motives. I might have spoken of the unutterable shame involved in this proposition to capitulate to the enemy in the very hour of his defeat. But I have preferred to take higher, more Christian grounds. As an ambassador from the Court of the King of Kings, I have, on this Christ's day, in this Christ's pulpit, put this question on Christ's own ground. Beware how you trifle with this ordinance of the Omnipotent! It is the nation's crisis. It is the turning point in the nation's fever. Life and death hang on the result of next Tuesday. It is an august hour.

We are dwelling,
 In a grand and awful time,
 In an age on ages telling,
 To be living is sublime.
 Hark! the waking up of nations,
 Gog and Magog to the fray;
 Hark! What soundeth? Is Creation
 Groaning for its latter day?

I believe it. God hasten that bright Millennial Day! Meantime, let America do its part! Let the land of the Pilgrims, the land of Washington, be true to God and His ordinances!

All will yet be well! O! thou afflicted, tossed with tempest
and not comforted! O! land of wailing Rachels! O! land of
patriot-graves! Be of good cheer! for thus saith the Holy One:

Behold! I will lay thy stones with fair colors,
And thy foundations with sapphires:
And I will make thy battlements of agates,
And thy gates of carbuncles,
And all thy borders of pleasant stones.
In Righteousness shalt thou be established.
Thou shalt be far from Oppression.
And great shall be the Peace of thy children.
For brass I will bring gold,
And for iron I will bring silver,
And for wood brass,
And for stones, iron.
I will make thine officers peace.
And thine exactors righteousness.
Violence shall no more be heard in thy land,
Wasting nor destruction within thy borders.
But thou shalt call thy walls Salvation.
And thy gates Praise.
Thy sun shall no more go down,
Neither shall thy moon withdraw itself:
For Jehovah shalt be thine everlasting light:
And the days of thy mourning shall be ended!
I, Jehovah, will hasten it in its time.

Weary, bleeding countrymen! Does that time seem far
distant? Lift up your eyes! Faith discerns bright portents
in the sky. Watchman! What of the night? Watchman!
What of the night? The watchman saith: *The morning
cometh!*

Hark!

Down the long future, through long generations,
The echoing sounds grow fainter and then cease:
And like a bell, with solemn, sweet vibrations,
I hear once more the voice of Christ say PEACE!

Peace! and no longer from its brazen portals
The blast of war's great organ shakes the skies!
But beautiful as songs of the Immortals,
The holy melodies of Love arise!

APPENDIX.

Note A, page 9.

In this connection, I may be pardoned for putting on record some remarks I uttered on a previous occasion.

I do not ask who the Powers that be are : it is enough for me to know that the Powers that be, like the parental relation, are ordained of God : and to them, at least while they are the Powers that be, do I owe the profoundest reverence and obedience. The honor which the child is bound to render to his parents, the citizen is bound to render to his civic father and mother. HONOR THE KING is the Scriptural injunction : not because the King is this or that man, but because this or that man *is the King*. Alas ! how often is the spirit of this injunction violated in these days of studied insult and defamation ! I refer now to those who, in forgetfulness or ignorance of the numberless colossal difficulties which have beset and are still besetting the rulers of the land, are ever complaining, with the dreary perseverance which always marks the fault-finder, of the incompetency, and despotism, and dishonesty of the Chief Magistrate of the United States. I mean no partisan allusion. God forbid it ! He who, in this night of national grief and dismay, when the foundations of government, and law, and order, and home are heaving, thinks of parties, or mentions parties, save to spurn them, is unworthy to be a man, least of all an American citizen. Men and Brethren ! I warn you solemnly, in the presence of Almighty God, there is terrible danger 'to the North hidden in these denunciations. It is not possible that any people can long have a good Government who are in the habit of speaking disparagingly of their constitutional authorities. Centuries ago there was a ruler whose name has come down to us as a syno-

nym for atrocity. who once commanded that the most illustrious orator and philosopher of his age should be smitten in the mouth. The indignant hero suddenly turned upon the despot who had given the brutal order, and exclaimed: "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall!" But the moment that he learned that the man whom he had thus answered was the constitutional ruler of the land, the loyal Paul apologized, saying: "I wist not that it was the High Priest; for it is written: '*Thou shalt not speak evil of the Rulers of thy people.*'"

What a lesson for us in these days of bitter insult and denunciation! I repeat: *No people can long have a good government who are in the habit of speaking disparagingly of their Constitutionally elected rulers.* And to-day Government is in fearful peril, hardly more from armed rebels in the South than from thoughtless patriots in the North. And Government has done wisely in stopping the mouth of more than one orator, and arresting the pen of more than one editor. We can well afford to lose the right of *habeas corpus* in times of war, if by so doing we can enjoy the right of *habeas corpus* in times of peace. I believe that one of the many reasons why God has permitted this war to desolate our land is, that we may learn, under the terrible pressure of a military despotism, that the first element of a genuine patriotism is profound loyalty to the Powers that be. I speak strongly because I feel strongly. There is terrible danger before us. We of the North are tottering on the brink of a frightful precipice. So long as we are treating Government, as though it were a football for any man to bandy about whithersoever he pleases, we are not only insulting God's ordinance of Civil Government, but we are most assuredly laying the foundation for insubordination, sedition, treason, anarchy, and hopeless ruin here at our very doors. Let me suppose a case. Here is a noble ship, on a dangerous reef, in a terrible tempest, with a third of her crew in open mutiny.

What, now, would you think of the prudence or propriety of the loyal portion of the passengers and crew, were they to keep iterating and reiterating: "The captain is an imbecile! the pilot is an idiot!" Think you that such denunciations would nerve the officers, or help the ship out of difficulty, especially if one-third of her crew were already mutinous? O, if I did not honestly believe, before God, that the chief peril of my country lies here, God knows that I would not use this pulpit, and the Sabbath day, in thus raising my warning voice. If I cannot enter the field myself, I will at least stand by those who, whether commander-in-chief or private, are struggling to save my country and home.

I am prepared to say more than this. I feel it to be my duty to state here, publicly, that in spite of all the charges of weakness, and vacillation, and tyranny, which have been so fiercely hurled against the present Chief Magistrate of the United States, I believe that no man ever united in himself tenderness and firmness, energy and prudence, together with calm, far-reaching sagacity, more perfectly than the present occupant of the Presidential chair—to whom God grant a renewal of the Executive power. I know not the man in all the world whom I would be willing to see in his place. And I believe that were we admitted behind the scenes of Executive determination and resolve, and could we see all the difficulties, domestic, foreign, constitutional, popular; difficulties suggested alike by justice and by humanity, by the present and by the future, with which the President has had to grapple, and all the problems which he has had to solve, (difficulties and problems of the simple existence of many of which we never have dreamed,) we should see the evidences of an honesty and inflexibility of purpose, of an intense energy, of a consummate sagacity, and of a serene dignity, unruffled as little by sneers of patriots as by curses of rebels, which shall win the enthusiastic plaudits of

posterity. I believe that the nation will be saved if they will only be worthy of the Administration which God has given them. And even if I believed the Government at Washington unable to grapple with the crisis, rather than give utterance to the thought in this hour of sublime peril, let my hand be palsied and forget its cunning, and my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth! If you, yourselves, would join with Southern traitors in striking the final blow that shall murder the American nationality, then insist on and keep parading before the public the feebleness and imbecility of the Constitutional authorities of your country. If the American Republic falls in this awful crisis, it will fall, not because the first blow was struck by Southern conspirators, but because the final, mortal stab was dealt her by her professed Northern friends.

Note B, page 20.

Thank God! The lament of old Philip Massinger, a contemporary of Shakspeare, and second only to him in tragic power, is no longer true.

The noble horse,

That in his fiery youth, from his wide nostrils,
 Neighed courage to his rider, and brake through
 Groves of opposed pikes, bearing his lord
 Safe to triumphant victory, old and wounded,
 Was set at liberty and freed from service.
 The Athenian mules, that from the quarry drew
 Marble, hewed for the temple of the gods,
 The great work ended, were dismissed and fed
 At the public cost. Nay, faithful dogs have found
 Their sepulchres. But man, to man more cruel,
 Appoints no end to the sufferings of his slave.

God be praised! The poet's plaint no longer finds echo beneath our national ensign. In arming the slave, whether for Government or for Rebellion, the sable warrior becomes his own liberator.

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