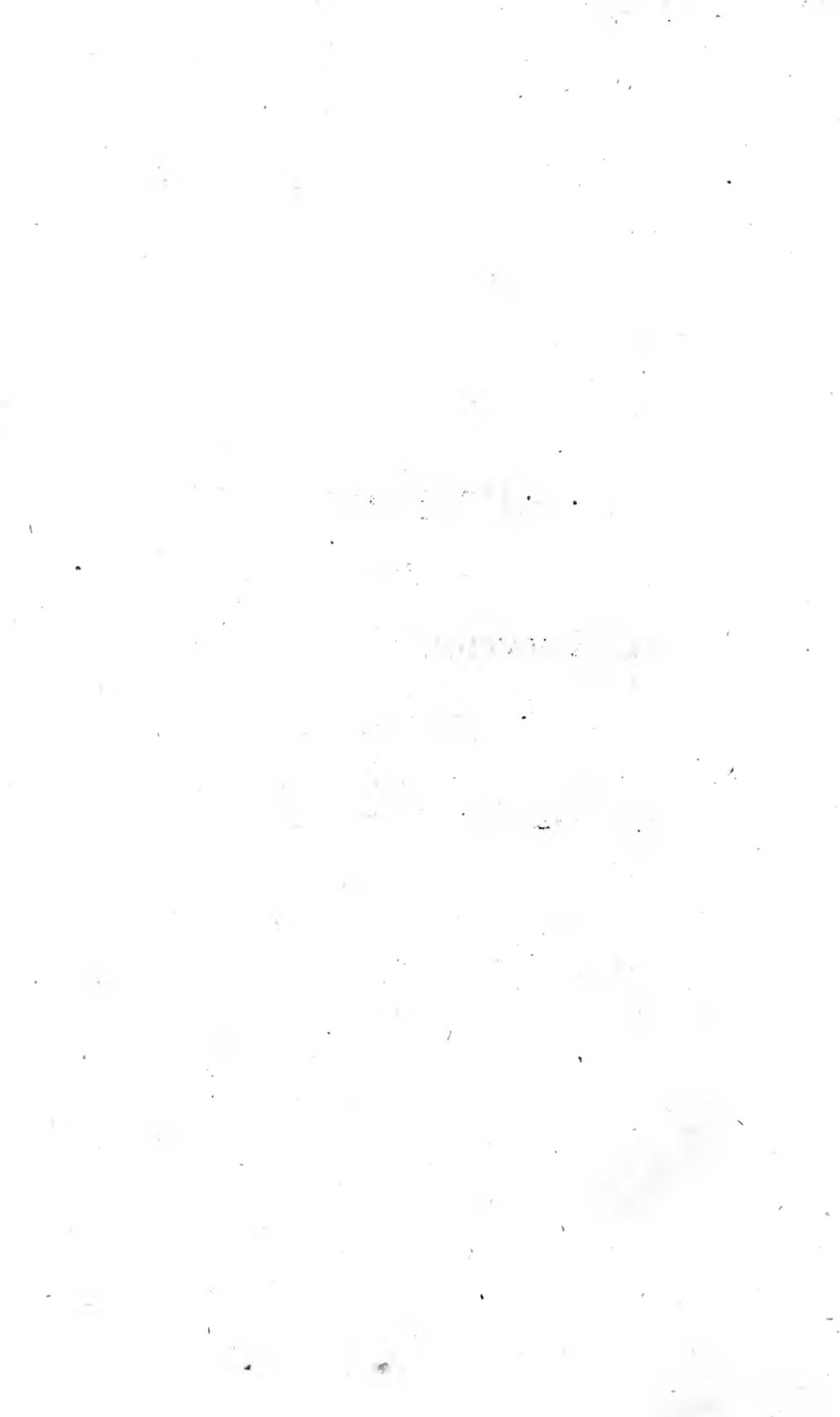


A
SERMON,
FOR THE
REFORMATION OF MANNERS.

Rom. 13. 4.

FOR HIM THE MINISTER OF GOD, TO THEE FOR GOOD-----



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THE temper of this our present assembly ought to be not only serious, but also mournful: for the occasion it hath reference to, is both very important, and most deplorable, and requires to be attended to, as with very intense consideration, so with deep sorrow. Even rivers of tears running down our eyes, as the words are, Ps. 119. 136. could not more than equal the sadness of the case, that is, the same there mentioned; because men (as is meant by the indefinite they) kept not God's law. That there should be such disorders in the intellectual world! That reasonable creatures should be so degenerate, that it is become hardly accountable why they are called so! They are said to be constituted and distinguished by reason, but disdain to be governed by it, accounting their senses and their vices, their better and wiser directors. With us the case is yet worse! that in a Christian city and kingdom, the insoucencies of wickedness are so high, tumultuate at such a rate, and so daringly assault heaven, that the rigour of laws, the severity of penalties, the vigilancy and justice of magistrates, with the vigorous assisting diligence of all good men, in their several stations, are more necessary than sufficient to repress them. The same considerations that should excite our zeal, ought also to influence our grief; and the more apparently necessary it is that all possible endeavours be used for redress, and the stronger and more convictive arguments can be brought to

evinced it, the deeper sense we ought to have of the evils that create this necessity, and the more feelingly we should lament them. And if this be the temper of this assembly and of all other, upon this occasion, this would give us measures, and set us right, as to the whole business of such a season. No body will then think it should be the business of the sermon, to please curious ears, or of the hearers to criticise upon the sermon, or that it ought to be my present business to compliment the worthy persons that have associated on this account, how laudable soever their undertaking is. But it will be the common agreed business of us all, to take to heart the sad exigency of the case, to be suitably affected with it, and quickened to what shall appear to be our duty in reference thereto. And though the words I have read do more directly respect the part and office of rulers, yet since there is that relation between them that govern, and those that are under government, that the duty of the one, will plainly imply, and connote the duty of the other. I shall so consider the words, as they may have a direct, or collateral reference to all sorts of hearers; and do point out the duty, as well of them that live under government, as of them that govern.

We are therefore to take notice, that the text admits, either of an absolute consideration, or a relative. *Absolutely* considered, it is in *assertion*; *relatively*, is in an argument. As the introductive particle, *for*, shews. For the *absolute* consideration of the words, as they are an assertion, we are to see what they assert. The person spoken of under the term *He*, is any ruler, supreme or subordinate, as in that parallel text, which we may take for a comment upon this, is expressed, I Pet. 2. 13, 14. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the King as supreme, or to governors sent by him, for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well. The words ἐξουσιαι, and ἀρχοντες, used in this context admit of the same extent. So among others, that great man Grotius understands this place also, not only of kings and princes, but whosoever are the *Tutores status publici*, (borrowing that expression from Seneca) any that are to take care of the public state, by whatsoever name they are designed. Indefinitely, any magistrate whatsoever. That which is said of such a one, contains an account of the original, and the end of his office and power. The *original* of it, that he is the minister of God, which signifies he is, as such, to act only by his authority, derived from him, as ver. 1. there is no power but from God, and the powers that be, are ordained of God. Which also implies, that such power

is to be used for God, and that consequently God is to be the ruler's first and last; and he is to be subordinate to God, both as his principle and end. Acting by his authority, he is by consequence to act for his interest; his minister, or servant is to serve him.

But besides what is thus implied of the general and ultimate end of the magistrate's power, in what is more directly said of the *original* of it; we have also a more explicit account of the *end* of it namely, the next, and more particular end, which is twofold. The end for *whom*, indefinitely expressed. For thee, that is, for every, or any one that lives under government; and by consequence, the whole governed community. For all the parts make up the whole. And further we have the end for *what*, that is, for good, the good of each individual, and of the whole community, as comprehending all the individuals. Thus we see what the words contain *absolutely* considered, as they are an *assertion*.

We are to consider them *relatively* as they were an *argument*. So the particle, *for*, shews their *relation*, and directs us backward, where we shall see what they argue. And we find they are brought in to enforce the duty before enjoined, which is twofold.—Primary, and more principal.—Consequential, deduced from the former.—The *primary* duty is that ver. 1. Let every soul be subject to the higher powers, or to the powers that are above us. Some blame the comparative expression, *sublimioribus*, *higher*, for which there is no pretence, from the word *υπερέχουσι*, that only signifies the powers mentioned, to be over us, whether in a higher or lower degree. Let them be less or more above us, we are to be subject to them.—The subsequent duty is double, first, that they are not to be resisted. A doctrine which from the terms of the context is capable of being so stated, as neither to be just matter of reproach or scandal to the wise and good, nor of sport and laughter to another sort of men. But that is not my present business. And secondly, that they are not to be (unduly) dreaded; or apprehended as a terror, that is, not otherwise, than (in the design of their appointment) they are so, namely, to evil works and the workers of them, not to the good, ver. 3. A fear of reverence is indeed due from all to their character, and the dignity of their station: a filial fear, that of children, for they are the fathers of their country; not a servile, or that of slaves, except from such as are so; evil doers, who are slaves of the vilest and more ignoble sort; to their own lusts, that enslave their minds, which might otherwise enjoy the most generous liberty, under the meanest and more oppressive external servitude. The text, according to its immediate reference, is but

an amplification of the reason alleged, why the magistrate is not to be looked upon with terror and affright, by any but such as resolve upon a profligately wicked course of life, not by such as intend only a course of well-doing. For, if thou be such, he is the minister of God to thee for good; his sword is only formidable when it fetches its blow from above, when it is bathed in heaven, as we may borrow the words, Isa. 34. 5. when it is wielded according to divine appointment, and God and he concur in the same stroke. When it is otherwise, it is true that the fallible or unrighteous human ruler, may for well doing afflict thee, and therein do thee wrong, but he can do thee no hurt, even though the stroke were mortal, Luke 12. 4. for our Lord forbids the fear of what is no worse; so said Socrates of them that persecuted him to death, they can kill me, but cannot hurt me. Who is it that can harm you (saith a great apostle) if ye be followers of that which is good? 1. Pet. 3. 13. And it is added, ver. 14. If ye suffer for righteousness sake, happy are ye—And hath any man reason to be afraid of being happy?

But though this be the more immediate reference to these words "He is the minister of God to thee for good," and is therefore, not to be unduly feared, they do yet ultimately and more principally respect the grand precept first laid down, of being subject to the powers over us. Which is evident, for that upon this very ground, and the intervening consideration, which further illustrate it, this same precept is resumed and pressed upon conscience, and a necessity is put upon it, on the same account, namely, that because the magistrate, is the minister of God for good; and is to be a terror to evil-doers, and hath a sword put into his hands for that purpose, which he is not to bear in vain, but must be the minister of God in this kind, namely as a revenger, to execute wrath, upon such as do evil; that therefore we must needs be subject, and that not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. This is therefore the principal relation of these words, namely, as an argument to prove that he, the magistrate, is the minister of God to us for good; that therefore we ought not only not to resist him, when he is doing his duty, nor be afraid of him when we are but doing ours; but that we also ought to be subject to him; and that, not only that we may escape wrath, but that we may satisfy conscience. This is therefore the relation, according whereto we shall consider these words, namely, as they are an argument to enforce the required subjection. Which subjection that we may the more fully apprehend, it will be requisite with the more care to consider the propriety of the word, used to express it. It is a word that carries order, *ταξίς*, in the bowels of it, *υποτασσεσθω*, ver. 1. and *υποτάσσεται*, v. 4 and with the pre-

position *υπο*, it signifies order under another, as of inferiors under superiors; it imports therefore not to be subject only, but subordinate and subservient. And the form wherein it is here used, admitting of its being taken not strictly in the passive sense, but in the middle, whereupon it may be indifferently capable of being rendered actively, namely, not only to be subordinate, but by your own act, and with your own design subordinate yourselves to the magistrate, come into order under him, as he is God's minister invested by him with power for such and such purposes. This without straining, carries the sense yet higher.

And whereas *ταξις* is a word of known military import, and signifies the order of an army formed for battle, wherein every one knows his own rank, place and station, it is as if it were said, take your place, come into rank, that you may, under the commander's conduct, *in acie stare*; stand in order of battle; as the word *ἀντιτασσεσθαι* rendered to resist the ruler, is *ex adverso in acie stare, to stand in rank, or in battalia against him*. You are not only not to resist, but you are to assist, and in your place and station stand by him, whom God hath deputed to be his minister, as he is to promote common good, and be a terror to them that do evil. This was the just claim and demand of that excellent prince, Ps. 94. 16. Who will rise up for me against the evil-doers, and stand up for me against the workers of iniquity? This according to lexicographers of good note, is the import of that word, which we lay such weight upon, and accordingly very valuable expositors understand this place. By this time therefore you may see what place and order these words, I pitched upon, have in the series of the apostle's discourse; and thereupon what aspect they have upon the design for which we are met; pursuant whereto, they admit of being thus summed up.

That for this reason, and under this notion, as the magistrate is to be a terror to them that do evil, and therein God's minister for good to them over whom he is set; it belongs to every soul, or to all persons under his government, to be each one in his station, and according to his capacity, actively and with their own design, subordinate and subservient to him herein.—In speaking to this I shall shew,—That the magistrate is God's minister, upon the mentioned account, and that therefore such duty is incumbent upon all that live under government. The former whereof is a doctrinal proposition, the other the use of it.

I. That the magistrate is the minister of God, for the good of them over whom he is set. This we are to consider by parts. That

First. He is God's minister. Hereof none can doubt, who doubt or deny not the being of God. His being God's mi-

nister, signifies his deriving his power from him; who else can be the fountain of power, but he who is the Fountain of all being? It is true, the governing power hath not been always derived the same way, but it hath been always from the same fountain. When God was pleased to have a people within a peculiar sort of enclosure, more especially appropriate to himself; he was very particular in signifying his will, concerning all material things that concerned their government. What the form of it should be. What persons should govern, or in what way the power and right to govern should descend, and be conveyed to them. What laws they should be governed by. What the methods should be of governing, according to those laws.

Since it is very evident much is left to the prudence of men, always to be directed by general rules of equity, and as these allow, by immediate interpositions of his own providence; I resolve this discourse shall be involved in no controversies, and therefore shall not determine, nor go about to dispute as to what is so left, how much or how little that may be. But it is plain and indisputable, that the governing power he reserves, and claims to himself; that is, not to exercise it himself immediately, in a political way; but to communicate and transmit it to them that shall. So that in what way soever it is derived to this or that person, or under whatsoever form, the conferring of it he makes his own act: as we find it said to Nebuchadnezzar, Dan. 2. 37. The God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom. And he is told, ch. 4. 32. The Most High ruleth in the kingdoms of men, and giveth them to whomsoever he will. And so much, you see, is in this context asserted to him over and over. Two things are plain in this matter.—That it is the mind of God there should be such a thing as magistracy, and government in this world.—And again that men shall be governed by men, by some or other of themselves; who shall be, as the text speaks, God's ministers. As he is the original of the governing power, the administration shall be in them. And of the mind of God in both these there is sufficient indication by the very law of nature; how is it conceivable such sentiments should be, so common if they were not from a common cause? He seems to me to have determined well (if it be considered in what way the course of nature is now continued, and by whom all things consist) that makes the governing power to be from God, as the Author of nature;* and that though government, as it is such and such, be *juris humani*, it is *juris divini* absolutely considered, or as it is government. It was most appa-

* Suar. de Leg. Lib. 3. C. 3. 4.

rently a thing worthy of God, when he peopled this world with such a sort of creatures as man, to provide for the maintaining of common order among them; who without government were but a Turba, a Colluvies, as a noted heathen speaks on a different account, a rout of men. Had man continued in unstained innocency, it is concluded on all hands there must have been a government among them; that is, not punitive or coercive, for which there could have been no occasion; but directive and conservative of superiority and inferiority, as it is also even among the angels of heaven, where are no inordinate dispositions to be repressed. Much more his government, in the severer parts of it, necessary for lapsed man on earth; the making of restrictive laws, and governing by them. And that God should design the governing of men by men, was also most agreeable to the perfections of his nature; especially his wisdom and his goodness, considered in comparison to the imperfection of this our present state. When the government over Israel was a theocracy, God used the ministry of men, in the management of it. That it should be his ordinary, stated course to govern by voices or visions, or by frightful appearances, such as those on Mount Sinai, had been very little suitable to this our state of probation; as his accurate wisdom we find hath determined; and was less agreeable to his benignity and goodness, which would not amazingly terrify, where he designed more gently to admonish and instruct. Hence had he regard to their frailty, who so passionately supplicated; let not God speak to us lest we die; and this his compassionate goodness we are led to consider, being next to treat of the end of this his constitution, namely

Secondly. That the magistrate is God's minister to men, for their good. Next to the sweet airs and breathings of the gospel itself, where have we a kinder or more significant discovery of God's good will to men? Here we are to stay and wonder, not to assent only, but admire! To behold the world in a revolt! The dwellers on earth in arms, against heaven! And the councils that are taken above are how to do them good: how God-like is this! How suitable to magnificent goodness! Or beneficent greatness; being secure from hurt by their impotent attempts, and when revenge was so easy, to study not only not to harm them, nor also how they might less harm and mischief themselves; but how to do them good: this was every way great and most suitable to the greatness of God; wherein it falls into conjunction with so immense and absolute goodness, as doth beyond what any created mind would ask or think. This imports not implacableness, nor destructive design towards the generality of mankind; but great benignity even to every soul, in as full extent as the command runs to be subject to the higher

powers. This is, we find, another medium by which God testifies, or leaves not himself, without witness, besides what we have elsewhere: that he gives men rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons.

The most compassionate eye of God beholds men, under the power of vicious inclination, bent upon destructive ways; whereas by the course of nature, which he hath fixed, he should give them ordinarily competent time, as he hath given them breath and being, and all things, Acts 17. that they might seek after him, and labour to feel and find him out. They live in a contemptuous neglect of him, and are cruel to themselves, often shorten their own time, live too fast, and make too much haste to dig their own graves, and turn their habitation into a charnal house; yea even bury themselves alive, in stupifying sensuality and vice. God, though provoked, hastens not their destruction by sudden revenge; he animadverts not upon them by flames, and thunderbolts, nor amazes them by astonishing appearances; his terrors make them not afraid. He only clothes some, from among themselves, with his authority, who shall appear on the stage with them, as gods among men, resembling themselves in human nature, and God in power, as they should in other Godlike excellencies; if men would so far co-operate towards their own welfare, as they ought, that by such gentler methods some stop might be put to the stream, and flood of miseries, wherewith otherwise unrestrained wickedness is continually ready to deluge the world. The magistrate is herein an instrument of good, and of wrath at once; these two things disagree not, to be a minister for good, and to execute wrath. This latter is said, in conformity to vulgar apprehension, because when men afflict one another, it is usually the effect of wrath; when a fixed, though most sedate and calm resolution to punish hath the same effect, this most different cause is called by the same name. In this allusion is wrath ascribed to God, the most serene and dispassionate of all beings; and hence they who represent him among men in authority, ought in this respect to be Godlike too. *Magistratus non debet irasci*, judges (as Cicero most aptly speaks) ought to be *Legum similes*, like the laws themselves, which are moved by no passion, are angry with no man, but keep one steady tenour, so as neither to despise an enemy, nor indulge a friend. To this temper it well agrees to design good (as in lancing a tumour) where one does a present hurt. Two ways may punishment be a proper and apt, though it be not always an effectual means of doing good.

1. As it may work the good of the offenders themselves. To which it hath in itself a tendency, if the disease be not so strong and stubborn, as to defy the remedy; as it puts them upon reflecting, and should awaken in them their considering power.

As in the matter of treason against a rightful power, *Deliberasse est descivisse, to deliberate whether to be loyal, or no, is to revolt*, so it is in the just and glorious rupture that is to be made of the bonds of vice, whereby men are held as slaves under the usurped power of the devil's kingdom. If once they come duly to consider, they will disdain so vile a servitude; when they meet with a check in their way, it may occasion them to check themselves, and consider their ways. No external means do any good to the minds of men, otherwise than as they themselves are engaged, drawn in, and made parties, in some sense against, but (as we are compounded) in a higher and nobler for ourselves. This comes in as one among external means of that kind, as do give some present uneasiness, but in order to after advantage; it afflicts it is true, and no affliction is for the present joyous, but grievous, but yields afterwards a peaceable fruit. When the magistrate's power is called a sword, it signifies its business is to wound; but as wounds are generally painful, some are sanative healing wounds, and so are these designed, and apt to be. They vex a while, but *vexatio dat intellectum*, it rouses the understanding, and is most apt to do so to good purpose in plain and undisputed cases; and where there is no pretence for conscience, in the cause one suffers for.

Where indeed a formed and fixed judgment of conscience, once hath place, for the practice which exposes a man to suffering; mullets and prisons, gibbets and faggots are very improper means of illumination, or of public utility; if the civil peace, and the substance of religion be not hurt by such practice. And the sincerity of that conscience is much to be suspected, that is ever altered by such methods; but no man will pretend it is against his conscience, not to be drunk, not to debauch, or to be sober, chaste and virtuous. Therefore a man's way lies open to that consideration which is most immediately to influence his practice, to correct a lewd, and begin a regular good course. He needs not be detained with any subtle disputes, or be put to solve perplexed doubts, or answer specious arguments, and objections. It is obvious to him to bethink himself: "What a strange sort of anomalous creature am I become, whom the law of mine own nature remonstrates against? How degenerate a thing! that after forsaking my own noble order of intelligent creatures, to herd with brutes!" That have made myself unfit for human society, otherwise than as one that must bear a mark, wear a disgraceful scar, from the wound of a sword not that of a public enemy, or my own; but a sword drawn in defence of the sacred rights of God, and to vindicate the honour of mankind! And hereupon if the crime be not capital, with the concurrent use of other appointed means, and the blessing

of God upon all (from whence only the good issue can be hoped for) may a vicious person be so reclaimed, as to become of great use in the world. Yea, and if the crime be capital, such as that the criminal survives not the punishment, but the sword of justice must cut him off from the land of the living; our charity will not let us doubt but there have been instances, wherein a prison and arraignment, and the sentence of death have been the blest effectual means to the offenders, of their escaping the more terrible sentence, and of obtaining eternal life. But however, though the ministry of civil justice doth often fail of its most desirable effects, as to the particular persons that suffer it (as even the ministration of the gospel of grace proves also ineffectual to many.) Yet

2. It is not only apt, but effectual to do much good to others and generally to the community. Punishment is justly said to be, in its proper design, medicinal to the delinquents; yet not always in the event.* But the common good it may serve, when contumacious offenders perish, under the deserved infliction of it. This was the thing designed by the righteous Judge of all the earth, when he gave so particular directions how to punish offenders in such and such kinds, that others might hear and fear and do no more so wickedly. And in all equal government, it is the design of penal laws that the terror might reach to all, the punishment itself but to a few. And when the utmost endeavours that can be used, shall have had that happy success to reduce a vast number of offenders to a paucity; we should rejoice to see that there needed to be but few examples made in such kinds. In the mean time, where this sword of the Lord, in the hands of his ministers of justice, is unsheathed, and used according to the exigency of the case; it is an apt and likely means to have a happy effect, for the good of the community; both as it may put a stop to the prevailing wickedness of men; and may avert, from a nation, the provoked wrath of God.

(1.) As it may give some check to the daringness and triumph of unrebuked wickedness, which indeed, naturally carries in it a pusillanimous meanness, and a vile abjection of mind, so as no where to insult, but where it meets, in those who should oppose it, a timorous fainting and succumbency; it so far resembles the devil, whose offspring it is, that being resisted it flees. When men find that while they dare to affront the universal Ruler, and offer indignities to his throne; there are those, that, clothed with his authority, and bearing his character, dare to vindicate the injury; when they feel the smart, and cost of open wickedness, it will no doubt, become at least, less open,

* Aquin. Sum. 1, 2æ. q. 87.

and seek closer corners. They will not long hold up the head, in so hopeless and deplorable a cause, that can afford them no support, no relief to their abject, sinking spirits, in suffering for it. What encouraging testimony of conscience can they have, that not only act from no direction of conscience, but in defiance of it? What God can they hope, will reward their sufferings which they incur by highest contempt of God? And if such gross immoralities be somewhat generally redressed, as more directly fall under the magistrate's, animadversion, how great a common good must it infer, inasmuch as those evils, in their own nature, tend to the detriment, decay and ruin of a people where they prevail? They darken the glory of a nation which how great a lustre hath it cast abroad in the world from the Romans and Spartans, and other civilized people, when their sumptuary and other laws, were strictly observed, that repressed undue excesses; and when temperance, frugality, industry, justice, fidelity and consequently fortitude, and all other virtues excelled and were conspicuous among them. It were a great thing we should have to transmit to posterity, might we see England recover its former, or arrive to the further glory which it is to be hoped it may acquire in these kinds!

Yea and the vices which are endeavoured to be redressed, are such as not only prejudice the reputation, but the real welfare of any nation. Profane swearing tends gradually to take away the reverence of an oath; which, where it is lost, what becomes of human society? And more sensual vices tend to make us an effeminate mean-spirited, a desident, lazy, slothful, unhealthful people, useless to the glorious prince, and excellent government we live under, neither fit to endure the hardships, nor encounter the hazards of war, nor apply ourselves to the business, nor undergo the labours that belong to a state of peace, and do consequently tend to infer upon us a deplorable, but unpitied poverty; and (which all will pretend to abhor) slavery at length. For they are most unfit for an ingenuous, free sort of government, or to be otherwise governed than as slaves or brutes, who have learnt nothing of self-government; and are at the next step of being slaves to other men, who have first made themselves slaves to their own vicious inclinations. Thus are such liable to all sorts of temporal calamities and miseries in this world. Besides, what is of so far more tremendous import, that the same vile and stupifying lusts, tend to infer an utter indisposition to comport with, or attend to the glorious gospel of the blessed God; and so to ruin men's hopes for the other world, and make their case unconceivably worse, in the judgment of the great day, than theirs of Tyre or Sidon, Sodom or Gomorrhah. But how much may a just, prudent, well tem-

pered vigilancy and severity do, towards the prevention of all this? and so much the more, by how much public animadversions, shall render the things men incur punishment for, not only in common estimate, unrighteous, but ignominious things.

That principle of shame in the nature of man, if by proper applications it were endeavoured to be wrought upon, would contribute more to the reforming a vicious world, than most other methods that have ever been tried to that purpose. It is a tender passion, of quick and most acute sense; things that are thought opprobrious, have so sensible a pungency with them, that (though all tempers are not herein alike) many that can feel little else, reckon a disgrace; an unsufferable thing. And I little doubt but if punishments for grosser vices, were more attuned to this principle, they would have much more effect. This hath been too much apprehended by the usurping god of this world; this engine he hath made it his business to turn, and manage to the contrary purpose, to drive or keep serious religion out of the world; yea to make men ashamed of being sober, temperate and regular in their conversation, lest they should also be thought religious, and to have any thing of the fear of God in them, and make them debauch, to save their reputation. A plain document to such as covet to see a reformation of manners in our days, what course ought to be endeavoured in order thereto. A great apprehension to this purpose that noble pagan* seems to have had, who inquiring whence legislation† had its rise, from some man or from God? and determining from God, if we will give the most righteous judgment that can be given; doth elsewhere write to this effect: that † Jupiter pitying the miseries of men, by their indulgence to vice, lest mankind should utterly perish sent Mercury to implant in them, together with justice, shame, as the most effectual means to prevent the total ruin of the world.

And so inseparable is the connexion between being wicked and being miserable, that whatsoever molestation and uneasiness tends to extinguish dispositions to wickedness, ought to be reckoned given with very merciful intentions. It is no improbable discourse which an ingenious modern writer,** hath to this purpose, (for I pretend not to give his words, not having the book now at hand) that though the drowning of the world was great severity to them who did then inhabit it; yet it was an act of mercy to mankind. For hereby (he reckoned) the former more luxuriant fertility of the earth, was so far reduced and checked, as not, so spontaneously, to afford nutriment to

* Plato. † De Leg. Lib. i. ‡ In Protag. ** Dr. Woodward's Essay.

vice ; that men in after time, must hereby be more constrained to labour and industry, and made more considerate, and capable of serious thoughts ; and that when also they should find their time by this change of the state of the world naturally contracted within narrower limits, they would be more awakened to consider and mind any overtures, which should be, in following time, made to them in order to their attaining a better state in another world ; and consequently the more susceptible of the gospel, in the proper season thereof. If God were severe with so merciful intentions, what lies within the compass of these ministers of justice, appointed for common good, ought certainly to be endeavoured ; in imitation of him, whom they represent.

(2.) The administration of punitive justice, when the occasion requires it, tends also to the common good ; as it may contribute towards the appeasing of God's anger against a sinful people, and the turning it away from them.

What may be collected from that noble instance of Phinehas's heroic zeal, upon which a raging plague was stayed, compared with the effect which Ahab's humiliation, and Nineveh's repentance had in averting temporal judgments, would signify not a little to this purpose. But I must pass to the

II. Head of discourse proposed, namely, to argue and enforce from hence the duty incumbent upon all, under government, as their several stations and capacities can admit, to be, in due subordination, assisting and serviceable to the magistrate, as in executing punitive justice, he is the minister of God for good. And this (as hath been said) is to be the use of the former part of the discourse, which will answer the design of the apostle's discourse, and agree to the natural order of the things discoursed in this context. For the magistrate is the minister of God for good, to us, is a doctrine. And let every soul be subject or subordinate to him, accordingly an exhortation which was at first proposed, and is afterwards resumed and pressed, ver. 5. as of absolute necessity from that doctrine. Wherefore it is necessary that we be, or we must needs be subject. There is an *αναγκη* put upon it, a cogent ineluctable necessity, arising even from hence, namely, from this doctrinal assertion as it is proposed, and as it is afterward applied to this purpose ; we are not to be dispensed with in the case, but we must every one do our parts in subordination to the magistrate, and that not only for wrath, but for conscience sake. We shall therefore shew,—what duty we who are in private capacities are exhorted to, and—shew the strength of the apostle's argument, as it is proposed in the text, and amplified in what follows, to engage us to that duty.

First. For the duty we are exhorted to, that we may understand what it is, I shall only premise some few plain things, and then leave it to yourselves to judge, and conclude what it is, and cannot but be.

1. It is plain, private persons are not to do the magistrate's part, are not to invade his office, nor usurp his authority; they are to act but in subordination to him, as their charge given them plainly imports.

2. They are not only not to oppose him. As the former would be too much, this would be too little. The arguments used to enforce it, import much more. What! because he is the minister of God for good, and to me, am I therefore only not to oppose him? Can it be thought there should be such an apparatus of argument, to draw from it so faint and dilute an inference? Ought not every man so far to reverence God's authority as to endeavour it may not lose its design? And ought not every man to co-operate to a common good, wherein each man claims a part?

3. It is not only to save myself from punishment, by not doing the evil which would expose me to the stroke of the sword; for my duty, I am to do, not only for wrath, but for conscience sake, which plainly respects God and his authority and interest, which I am to obey and serve. And I am to endeavour not only that he may not be a terror to me as an evil-doer, but that he may be a terror to them that are such.

4. Somewhat positive is manifestly carried in the word *υποτασσέσθαι*, to subject or subordinate myself to him, under this very notion, as the minister of God for good. Is this doing nothing? He is plainly said to be the minister of God for good, under this special notion, as he is the administrator of punitive justice, namely, as he bears the sword, and is to be a terror to evil-doers. I am so to subordinate myself, as that herein he may effectually serve the end of his office, and not bear the sword in vain. Now upon all this, judge you yourselves what is it that is left to be my duty in a private capacity, that is less than the magistrate's part; more than the mentioned negatives, and yet so much, as whereby I am to take care to my uttermost, that he may do good in his office of punishing wickedness? So as that his doing his duty must some way depend upon my doing mine, and be the effect of it, or of theirs who are in like circumstances, and so but under the same common obligation with me, so that ordinarily his duty cannot be done, without any care or concern of theirs or mine. What, I say, can it be less than to bring punishable matters under his cognizance? Otherwise, if no obligation lie upon private persons, to this purpose, he will only be to punish such wicked-

ness as he beholds with his own eyes; and then how narrow will his precinct be? What multitudes of magistrates must there then be? And what a monster thereupon would the body politic become!

But here if any man ask me the question (because what is to be done herein is to be done for conscience sake) am I bound in conscience to discover to a magistrate all the evil that I know by any man that is justly punishable by law? To this I shall only at present say, that cases of conscience can only be with judgment resolved in hypothesis, and with application to this or that person, when material circumstances, relating thereto, are distinctly known. I must have clear grounds if I will conceal such a man's punishable fault, upon which I may judge, that more good is likely to be done to his soul, that the honour of God and the public good, will be more served by the concealment, than by the discovery, and the government not hurt or endangered. But if the crime be such as is national, and imports contempt of God and his laws, and in reference where-to, the offender expresses, more shame of the punishment than of the fault, and I will yet, upon private respects, to him or myself, conceal it, I shall herein while I pretend conscience in the case, cheat my conscience and not satisfy it. And I add in reference to this case let any man that would exempt his conscience from any sense of obligation to endeavour the punishment of offenders in the mentioned kinds, take great care he do not ground his concealment upon other, than very peculiar grounds, or not common to him, with any other man in a like case. Is it because such a one is my friend? or he may bear me a grudge? or I lose his custom, &c? These are things so common, that guiding myself by such measures, is both to overthrow magistracy and conscience too. Upon the whole, therefore, what is ordinarily a private man's duty in such cases, is sufficiently evident. Therefore,

Secondly. Let us see the force of the apostle's arguments, to engage us to it.

1. That the magistrate, as he is the dispenser of punitive justice, is God's minister. It is the authority of God that he is invested with, he bears a sword which God hath put into his hand. Is that authority to be eluded, and made to signify nothing? Is that sword to be borne in vain? What an awe should this lay upon our spirits? It is therefore to be served for conscience sake, which hath principal reference to God. We need not here dispute, whether human laws bind conscience, no doubt they do, when they have an antecedent reason, or goodness. If men command what God forbids, the apostles make their appeal to enemies, as judges whom they were to obey. He is the

minister of God for good, not for hurt, or for no good; it is a perverting of God's authority, to do mischief by the pretence of it, a debasing it, to trifle with it. But the question is out of doors, when human laws are but subsidiary to divine, and enjoin the same thing. And as that celebrated saying of St. Austin is applied, by him, to the former case of a supposed contradiction of the proconsul's command to the emperor's for disobeying the inferior; it is equally applicable, as fortifying the obligation to obey both, when they are coincident.

And this consideration can be insignificant with none, but such as say in their hearts there is no God, that think this world hath no universal, sovereign Ruler, or no Lord over it; and it might as well be supposed to have no intelligent Maker, to have become what it is by chance: an imagination which the most vicious, that make any use of thoughts, begin to be ashamed of; and have therefore thought fit to quit the absurd name of atheist for the more accountable, as well as more convenient name of deist. But then it is strange they should not see the consequence from Maker, to Ruler, and from God's having made this, world, to its being under his present government, and liable to his future judgment; or that from any just apprehension of the nature of God, they should not collect so much of the nature of their own souls, as to judge them capable of subsisting out of these bodies, and in another world; and consequently of their being liable to a future judgment, for what they have been, and done in this! Or that a Being of so much wisdom and goodness in conjunction with power, as to have made such a world as this, and such a creature as man in it; should not have made him for nobler ends, than are attainable in this world!

If any of themselves had power enough to make such another sort of creature, and furnish him with faculties capable of such acquisitions, and attainments, only to fetch a few turns in the world, and form plots, and projects in it, that must, with himself, shortly come to nothing; they would have little cause to boast of the performance: they would have cause to be ashamed of it, to use so unconceivable power only to play tricks, that neither themselves nor any one else should ever be the better for! And though they might, hereby, awhile amuse the world, they would gain little reputation of wisdom, or goodness above other men, by being the authors of so useless a design, that would at length appear to have nothing of design in it; for finally it terminates in mere nothing. But the great God hath not left himself without witness, the illustrious characters of his Godhead shine every where. He doth insist upon, and will assert his rights, in this lower world; it is a part of his creation, though a meaner part; he rules in the kingdoms of men, and he that

rules will judge. The jests and laughter of fools will not overturn his throne, they that have taught themselves to turn his laws, and the whole frame of his government over the world, into ridicule; (because it is to be hoped they do not use to laugh always) should be advised by a wise and great man in his time, than to judge of their jest, when they have done laughing;* sometime they will have done, and shall consider that he, to whom it belongs, will judge over their heads, as he will over us all.

And if his throne and government are as insolently, as they are vainly attempted against by many, and the most connive; we shall all be taken for a combination of rebels, against our rightful Lord. It will be a heavy addition to be partakers of other men's sins, when every one hath more than enough of his own. Let me ask, would you not dread to be found guilty of misprision, of treason against the government under which we live? Why doth the fear of the great God, and the dread of being found accomplices against him, signify less with us? And what means it, that the charge of punishing great offenders is given to the community, thou, every individual, as in the text, thee, all the individuals making up the community? Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live, Ex. 22. 18. And so for the idolater, thou shalt bring forth that man or woman, and stone him—Deut. 13. 13, 14. ch. 17. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Is it that all the people were magistrates? no, but that it was not to be supposed that so horrid impieties could long escape unpunished; but by the people's, as well as the magistrate's neglect; upon which all would be taken as conspirators against the great Lord of all.

2. Take the other part of the argument, that the magistrate is God's minister (for good to us) is it enough for us not to hinder? Are we not all obliged, in our stations, to promote our own, our neighbours, and the common good? Our own, as we keep ourselves from being accessaries: our neighbours offending, as we contribute our endeavour that they may be less wicked and (which we should further design) that they may become good; our unoffending neighbours, for if grosser wickedness rule without controul, who that are pious, sober, and virtuous can long live in peace, by such ill neighbours? We are for this directed to pray, 1 Tim. 2. 1, 2. For rulers, even all that are in authority, that we may live peaceable and quiet lives, in all godliness and honesty. And what we are to pray for, we do that ludicrously, if we endeavour it not too. Besides that the untainted, as yet, are liable to worse hurt, by the contagion of their example; and the common good

* Lord Verulam's Instaur. Mag.

is many ways to be served, as hath been shewn. How laudable an excellency, among noble minded pagans, was love to their country ! And even in this way to serve the common good, was reckoned by them a praiseworthy thing. He (saith one of them) that doth no harm, is honourable ; but he is worthy of double honour that prevents it ; and he that assists the magistrate in punishing it, is most honourable, and far excels all his other citizens.* So far were they from thinking it an ignominious thing, to bring offenders to punishment, and especially for impieties, or whatsoever signified a contempt of religion ; such regard they had to the honour of their gods, who were no gods. Shall we reckon the true and living God to deserve from us less regard, to his violated honour ? The common good, which in this way we are to promote, is so common, as all good men can, without scruple, concur in the design ; and blessed be God, they so generally do so. We have the greatest encouragement hereto, by considering the immediate fountain of the magistrate's power and office, our glorious and ever blessed Redeemer and Lord ; to whom all power is given in heaven, and earth by whom kings reign, who is head of all things to the church ; and through whom the divine goodness flows towards a lost world. This infers an obligation upon all, that bear the christian name, to serve the proper ends of this branch of his power ; as they have, in general, to acknowledge him for Lord and Christ.

They who therefore make it their business to promote this design do not herein serve the interest of a party, but the interest of the universal Ruler, of our blessed Redeemer and of mankind. And they who are agreed, with sincere minds, upon so great and important an end, as the serving this most comprehensive interest, are agreed in a greater thing than they can differ in. To differ about a ceremony or two, or a set of words, is but a trifle, compared with being agreed in absolute devotedness to God and Christ, and in a design, as far as in them lies, of doing good to all. An agreement in substantial godliness, and christianity, in humility, meekness, self-denial, in singleness of heart, benignity, charity, entire love to sincere christians, as such, in universal love to mankind, and in a design of doing all the good we can in the world (notwithstanding such go under different denominations, and do differ in so minute things) is the most valuable agreement that can be, among christians. They that are thus agreed, are more one, and do less differ in the temper and complexion of their minds, from one another, than they who are never so much agreed in being for, or against this or that exter-

* Plat. de Leg. lib. 5. *συγκολλάων τοις αρχεσι*

nal form, or mode of religion ; but are full of envy, wrath, malice, bitterness, falsehood, do differ from them all, and from all good men. And I doubt not, when God's time comes of favouring Zion, we shall have churches constituted, by congregating what is of one kind, such as (for the main) are of one mind, spirit, character and temper ; and severing whatsoever is of a different kind, and quite alien hereto ; and cease to have them constituted by what is unnecessary, much less by what is inconsistent with their very being. Pride, ambition, vain glory, and a terrene spirit, with carnal self-design, will not always prevent this. Heaven will grow too big for this earth ! And the powers of the world to come, for those of this present evil world.

In the mean time let us draw as near one another as we can. And particularly unite in the most vigorous endeavour of carrying on this excellent design, which is now before us. And let it be with a temper of mind, agreeing with God's kind design towards men, in appointing the magistrate to be his minister to them, that is, for the doing them good. Let it be with minds, full of all goodness, in conformity to the original first good, from whom as such, this constitution proceeds. Despond not, as apprehending the stream is too strong, and there is no good to be done. That is to yield the day to victorious wickedness. It is to give vice the legislature, to let it be the law of the age, and govern the world : and it is to give up ourselves and our nation to perish as a lost people. Let us not be lost, before we are lost. Much good hath been done in this kind heretofore. There was a time when (at Antioch) the severity of the magistrate was much regretted in the reign of that great prince Theodosius, and upon an ill occasion, the contemptuous subversion of his statutes. This cost Chrysostom divers orations or sermons to the people while yet presbyter there ; in one whereof he asks them : what hurt had the terror of the magistrate done them ? It hath shaken off our sloth, made us more honest, diligent, industrious.* He had told them above, and tells them after : they ought to give God thanks for it, that now there was not one drunken person, or one that sang lascivious songs to be seen. Their city was become as a chaste matron, where great wantonness before did generally appear. Your experience hath told you, much hath been done, you are still getting ground ; God hath, we are to hope, effectually engaged the government in this blessed design ; in subordination thereto, go on with alacrity.

Let me finally set before your eyes, the instructive practice of that excellent prince Jehoshaphat, in a like case, 2 Chron. 19.

* Hom. 6. ἀνδραγαθῶν

when he was bringing back the people to the Lord God of their fathers, v. 4. And had set judges in the land, warning them to take heed as being to judge not for men, but for the Lord, v. 6. which shewed they were not mere matters of *Meum* and *Teum* only, they were to judge in, but matters immediately relating to the interest and honour of God, for he distinguishes the judgment of the Lord, and controversies, v. 8. He charges all to whom he spake, as they were severally concerned (and they were not concerned all alike) to do their work, v. 9. In the fear of the Lord faithfully and with a perfect heart; and concludes as I do, with these words, v. 11. deal courageously; and the Lord shall be with the good.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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