

ON THE EXERCISE OF WORLDLY AUTHORITY.

AMIDST all the weakness of faith and failure, which we may discern in the Church, and detect abundantly in ourselves, it is cheering to believe that the Lord is causing many hearts anxiously to desire that they might be more faithful, more separate from evil, and more practically conformed unto His will. Among the many questions which have lately exercised the minds of such, one of great importance is this:—How far is it compatible with faithful discipleship to the Lord Jesus, to seek or to retain stations of power and influence in the world?

That the possession of power is not in itself evil, but that its righteous exercise is a thing excellent and blessed, is abundantly evident from scripture, as well as experience. Thus it is ascribed to God as one of His distinguishing attributes: “Twice have I heard this—that power belongeth unto God.” It is the endowment of the Lord Jesus as the Son of man glorified: “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” And it will be communicated by Him to the saints in their glory: “He that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power, * * * even as I received of my Father.” Moreover, the place assigned to Adam in innocency, when set over the creation which God had made, sufficiently indicates its adaptation to the original constitution of our nature; and the anxiety evinced by mankind in every age to secure its healthful administration, shows how important they esteem its influence to be on the welfare and happiness of man. We cannot wonder,

therefore, at the tenacity with which even believers are accustomed to cling to its possession. It is excellent in itself; and if any objection does really exist against its present exercise by the disciples of Christ, it can arise only from contingent circumstances connected with the present mode of its administration upon earth.

There is only one test by which the character of these contingent circumstances can be rightly tried, and that is the New Testament. Some stations of authority are clearly sanctioned there, and rules distinctly given to guide us in its exercise. The father, the master, and the husband, are all directed how to use the authority which is entrusted to them; and thus it appears, there are some circumstances in which power may fitly be exercised by the disciple of Jesus. And if it be asked, How then are we to distinguish the circumstances in which power may be rightly used? is not the answer simply this? "It may be exercised whenever its exercise is guided only by the laws of Christ."

The master may control his household, or the parent his children, without being himself constrained to forsake the laws of Christ, and to adopt others from men as the rule of his domestic government. He can reward or punish without being constrained to use the laws of man. He is simply the servant of Christ; and the Apostles supply him with directions how to use the authority he holds. He can obey the Scripture faithfully, and therefore govern others according to Christ.

In the Church, too, authority can be exercised according to the laws of Christ. The gathered company of saints which the Apostles planted and watered, had each their rulers who watched over them; and these rulers owned no directory, except the laws of Christ through His Apostles, and now found in the word: nor at that time was His lordship denied by formally allowing the right of man to make laws for the Church of God. Here then are blessed spheres for the exercise of power. It is a comely and a pleasing sight to see a parent training up his child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord—to see masters measuring to the servants that which they would desire to have measured back to themselves again

by their Master who is in heaven, and to see the shepherds caring for the sheep. These are blessed but lowly spheres for the exercise of power. They may have been, and they have been, valued by some who silently and unregarded by the world have sought that crown of glory which the chief Shepherd will give at His appearing. But the world values not, and does not care to seek, the exercise of a lowly authority, restricted by the laws of Jesus of Nazareth. Power, to be valued by the world, must be possessed and exercised according to the world's principles, and guided by its laws. Can such power be desirable for the servant of Christ?

Civil magistracy, for example, is a thing eagerly sought for by the world. It is *in itself* a blessing,—a blessing from God, for “there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God.” But yet the New Testament, while it directs the father, the husband, and the master, gives no similar rules to guide the civil magistrate; because the magistrate was then, and still is, according to the *present* arrangements of civil society, the servant of the world, that is, he *must* administer the world's laws. A magistrate in the time of Trajan, was constrained to enforce the law of the empire for the proscription of Christians: and a magistrate now may be required to sign the warrant of impressment or any other similar edict, in which the supposed utilities of human society bury every remembrance of what is owing to the laws of Christ.

If he could go to the seat of authority with his Bible in his hand, and, drawing all the principles of his conduct from the New Testament, act simply as the servant of Christ, a magistrate might retain his dignity and be a faithful disciple still; but he is not there as the servant of Christ, he is there as the expositor and administrator of the world's laws, which are based on principles so entirely discordant with those of the Lord Jesus, that to admit the one is to nullify the other:—another code based upon principles of expediency and human selfishness, is brought in between him and the Sermon on the Mount; nor can he follow the plain precepts of the latter, without being false to his engagements to uphold the

former; and, therefore, he has to choose which master he will obey.*

For if we turn to facts,—where is any nation to be found which dreams of receiving the laws of Christ as its directory? There may be, in the midst of the nations, many *individuals*, who, being children of faith, and instructed by the Holy Spirit, have esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of the world: but where can we find one nation, which, in its collective capacity, in its laws and social regulations, has esteemed the reproach of Christ? Let us take, for an example, one branch only of Christian service, the meek forgiveness of those who despitefully use us, according to the spirit of the command—“Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.” Where is the nation whose laws are not rather based upon principles of retaliation and revenge? whose fleets, and armies, and institutions, do not witness, that, as a nation, it is not subject to the laws of Him, who by and by shall be manifested as the Prince of peace? when “nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more;” and if this will be the result of His legislation then, who can doubt that it would be the consequence of its acceptance now? Can a believer then, when once he sees that the measures of nations are, from the highest to the lowest departments of their control, regulated by other principles than those of Christ, assist in promoting their plans? Christ did not, neither did His Apostles. They rendered to the powers

* There was, indeed, a time, when amongst one people the laws of the nation, and the laws of God, were professedly identical. The kings of Jerusalem, and its other rulers, were bound to the administration of no laws excepting those of God, and acknowledged them as much in their official character of rulers, as in their private character as individuals.

Their conduct, indeed, soon evinced how little they valued their distinctive privilege; but yet so important is this distinction, as to render it impossible to draw any parallel between them and any other nation, inasmuch as there never has been another people whose national arrangements flowed immediately from God: and, therefore, to say that a Christian may rule among the Gentiles, because David ruled in Israel, shews an entire misunderstanding or forgetfulness of what the distinctive privileges of Israel were.

that were, custom, obedience, honour; but they neither held, nor sought to hold, authority in the world, and were, therefore, free from having entailed upon them, through the use of it, the necessity of acquiescing in the world's principles and habits.

And here I would again repeat, that it is not the mere possession of power that does in itself entail this necessity; but its possession and exercise, in conformity with the principles of government now established among men. The nations which have been, and continue to be, the mainspring of the world's energies, are those which have been included within the Chaldean, Persian, Grecian, and Roman dynasties. These are the nations whose institutions have leavened the earth; and we know, from the prophecies of Daniel, that they will continue to do so until the end shall come.

The reign of Nebuchadnezzar was the period at which the sovereignty of these Gentiles commenced. That monarch is expressly said to have received his power from the God of heaven (Dan. ii.) He received it like health or riches, or any other similar blessings, as a gift precious in itself and precious also in its results, if rightly exercised. The power of God is irresponsible to its subjects, and uncontrolled by them; and such was the character of the power which He gave to the first Gentile monarch. It had the splendour and preciousness of gold: "Thou, O king, art this head of gold." Here then power was given and received, without its possession entailing the necessity of being subject to the selfish and evil institutions of man. Nebuchadnezzar was free to use his power in his own way; and no hindrance from God prevented his choosing God for his master and stay. It was a third trial of man in authority. Adam had been tried—the Jews had been tried—and now power, unfettered power, was committed to the Gentile. If Nebuchadnezzar and his successor had been true servants of the Lord, if they had leaned only on Him, and ruled in all things according to His will, then we might have said, "their power is of God," not merely as we now say it, in description of its origin, but also as denoting the character of its administration. But such faith towards God

had not been found even in the people of Israel, when brought into a much nearer relation to Him. Neither was it found in the Gentile king and his successors. Not leaning on God, and too weak to be without support, they leaned on those inferior to themselves,* until the character of power becomes so debased, that "iron mixed with miry clay," is chosen as the symbol of that whose preciousness and splendour were originally symbolized by gold. And as respects the use to which it was applied; the plains of Dura, where Nebuchadnezzar erected his idolatrous image, and the insults offered by Belshazzar to the God of Israel, in the midst of his revelry, stamp with sufficient plainness a character of blasphemous and vain-glorious independence of God, upon this, the earliest and most promising period of Gentile power—most promising, because while nothing came in betwixt the monarch and God; while power was held free from the constraints of human law and human custom, there was less to hinder its being exercised according to God—less than when at an after period, the subject could dare to say to the well-intentioned monarch—The law of the Medes and Persians altereth not, and, therefore, we require thee to obey it, and to cast Daniel into the den of lions.†

* The Medes and Persians leaned on the *hereditary* nobles: the Greek kingdom on nobility, determined by merit or military success; which last method had, of course, less reference to God than the former.

† It is not intended by these observations to imply that uncontrolled despotic power, vested in any merely human hand, would now, in the midst of the ruin and disorder which sin has introduced throughout the whole family of man, produce a greater result of blessing than other forms of human government. The truth is, that men have wearied themselves from age to age in finding some trust-worthy hand or hands wherein to deposit power. They have long feared to trust an individual, and despotism has in reality ceased to be, for monarchs nominally despotic are often really the most controlled. The discontent lurking in every nation evidently shews that none are as yet satisfied. But the Christian can say—I am satisfied—satisfied if needs be to suffer under any government now, because, as to myself, I am a citizen of heaven (Phil. iii. 20.) And, as to the prospects of the earth, I know that a time is coming when power, sovereign and uncontrolled, will be vested in the hands of One, whose power, and love, and wisdom, will be alike almighty. Irresponsibility to its subjects must of course be

And here I would notice the great importance of regarding the dispensations of God, as intended to evidence, not to Himself, but to us, His own character and the character of man. The power dispensed to Adam, even whilst he was perfect, and had all perfect around him, was lost almost as soon as given; the power subsequently entrusted to the Jews under peculiar circumstances of advantage, was soon, in like manner forfeited; and the Gentiles, to whom it was next committed, have used it in crucifying the Lord of glory.

The rejection of the Lord Jesus was the final manifestation that the systems of the world were hopelessly evil, or, to use the words of the Apostle John, that the whole world was lying in the wicked One (*ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ*). The titles—"god of this world," "prince of this world," are given by the Scriptures to Satan only in connexion with or after the rejection of the Son of God; for thereby the world's alienation from God and allegiance to Satan were fully shewn. To seek the things that the Gentiles seek, and to work the work of the Gentiles, are, in the language of our Lord and His Apostles, equivalent to worldliness and sin; and if any one should acknowledge this, but imagine that the preaching of the gospel has produced a change, it may be again asked, How is this exhibited? When did the national systems of the Gentiles alter themselves into conformity with the Sermon on the Mount? If an individual is rescued from his state of sin, and brought into the light of the Gospel of Christ, and under the power of his before unrecognized precepts, the change is so great, that it can only be described by saying—Old things are passed away, and behold all things are become new. But when was it so with the systems of the nations? Our Lord says—"Nation shall rise up against nation," *i. e.* they shall continue to break my laws until the end come.*

the characteristic of such power as this; and the age to come will fully show that such power only can adequately meet the exigencies of man. Then, and not till then, the saints may safely rule. "Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?" (See Dan. vii. 22.)

* The word "end," as used in the passage, viz. Matt. xxiv.

Indeed, the Scriptures both of the Old and New Testament reveal much respecting the state of the Gentile nations at the close of the period allotted to their sovereignty. The Apostle Paul speaks in the same passage of the Jews, the Gentiles, and the Church of God, as three classes contemporaneously existing (1 Cor. x. 32). They are equally distinguishable still; and any one who candidly examines the Scripture, cannot fail to see that some portions pertain to the Jews, some to the Church, and some to the Gentile nations. The visions of Daniel, for example, contain the history, not of the Church nor of the Jews, but of the Gentile nations in their relation to the Jews. And the reason why the nations are thus specially recognised, is, because they at present possess what now belongs neither to the Church nor to the Jews; and that is—dominion in the earth, an important and responsible talent which *might have* been used for good, but *has* been used for evil. Surely no one who peruses the past history of the Gentiles, can doubt the character of what *has* been. It was said by a celebrated infidel, that “the annals of Christendom had been the annals of hell.” But are there fairer prospects for the future? Not till the “times of restitution,” when “God shall send Jesus” (Acts iii.) Satan, who hates the person of the Son of God, would seek to persuade us that no such “sending” of the Lord is needful, and that the nations are rapidly becoming Christ’s subjects now. But the testimony of the Scripture is express—“As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be when the Son of man is revealed.” The prophet Daniel, also describes the last embodiment of the Gentile nations under the following symbol—a beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; its last actions are to speak great words against the Most High, and to wear out the saints of the Most High (Dan. vii. 25), until at last, because of its wickedness, it is judged by the Ancient of days, and given to the

is explained by the question to which it is an answer. “What shall be the sign of the coming, and of the end of the age?” (*αἰῶνος*). There shall be war in the world—persecution *against* the Church—division and evil *in* the Church—the gospel shall be preached *as a witness*—and then shall the end come.

burning flame. In the Revelation, also (to omit other apostolic testimonies), the nations are described as being "angry" (Rev. xi.) when Christ takes to Himself His great power to reign, and as being gathered to Armageddon against the Lord (Rev. xvi. 14). Indeed, past and future prophetic history alike testify that the systems of the nations *have been, are, and will be*, till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled, consistently opposed to the precepts of Christ; and, therefore, we must not flatter ourselves with delusive hopes, nor expect that to-morrow will realize the hope in which we have been disappointed to-day. The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done, is that which shall be done; and there is no new thing under the sun; but the work that is wrought under it is grievous (Eccles. i. 9; ii. 17).

And has the Scripture written nothing respecting Babylon? I know, indeed, that this word is often so vaguely applied, as to carry with it none of the force which ought always to attend every application of the word of God. Some cast it upon the Church of Rome—others upon the Church of England, and almost all have a tacit conviction in their minds, that it must mean something ecclesiastical; and, consequently, that they, if unconnected with ecclesiastical enormities, are individually free from any danger in participating in its guilt. But a slight examination of the Scripture is, I think, sufficient to show that Babylon is always used as the symbol of secular greatness—it is the "golden city,"—the city abundant in treasures (Jer. li.)—"great," delicate, and costly, concentrating, in fact, as within a circle, all those things which the nations of this world seek after. We find it first mentioned in connexion with Nimrod, of whom it is said, that he "began to be a mighty one in the earth." It was at this period that the energies of men began again to develop themselves after the flood; and from that moment to the present, the chain of human plans has continued unbroken from age to age. One generation profiting by the experience of the former, has added something to the previous store; and nothing has yet occurred to frustrate the onward progress of human prosperity. God has indeed

many times sent miracle and testimony. Prophets have prophesied and been rejected; His Son spoke unto us, and been crucified; His Church at Jerusalem been formed and scattered; other Churches been planted among the Gentiles and removed; all these things have happened, but yet never has been stayed the onward progress of Gentile greatness, toward that final pinnacle of Babylon's prosperity, in which she will say, "I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow." The characteristic words, "Let us make ourselves a name," ascribed to the rulers of Babylon, at its first commencement; the descriptions of her greatness, as detailed in the Old Testament prophets; and, lastly, the description of her yet future prosperity in the 18th chapter of Revelation, sufficiently shew that greatness in the earth has been, from the beginning, unceasingly the aim of that great city. It is true, indeed, that moral influence over the minds of men, conduces to the attainment of this greatness; and so if the Church of God can contribute (and it can) towards the increase of such moral influence, Babylon may gladly hire its services, and the Church consent to be the servant or the slave. But still it would thus become only *one* among the many servants of that great city, just as the "souls of men" are once only mentioned, as *one* amongst the many items in the list of Babylon's merchandise. And when we see a worldly government, or a worldly corporation, or a worldly system, or a worldly individual, selling "the cure of souls" to an ungodly man perhaps, because he is the highest bidder, what else do we see than an exemplification of this? I would not be understood to palliate or think lightly of such an enormity as this. No! I believe God will judge it, and not *it* only (for it is but one leaf of the evil tree), but the root also which bears it; for the world has been allowed to say, and Christians even have sanctioned the saying, whilst knowing it to be false, "This is the Church; do you own it as the Church? I will make laws for it. I will direct it, and give you honour in it, only you must obey my rules." I would not palliate such evil as this; perhaps it is the worst of all evils; but still it is possible to be quite

unconnected with any such enormity, and yet to be a servant of Babylon still. Suppose that in an office purely secular, I do *officially*, what I would not do *individually*, if left to the simple guidance of the Spirit of Christ; am I not still the world's servant, am I not sustaining and helping on its system? The more honourable the station, according to the world's estimate, the greater is the probability of its being connected with the world's evil. But even in stations where we are not ostensibly and directly the servants of any worldly system, and where, consequently, we enjoy the inexpressibly precious privilege of being, in this sense, our own masters, we have still to watch against the insidious workings of the principles of Babylon. One tradesman, for the sake of gain, may be tempted to connive at unrighteous principles in trade, adopted, perhaps, confederately; another may be tempted to print, or sell worldly and evil books; or even, in a more private sphere, we may be tempted to seek influence over other minds, by means which the Spirit of Christ would not sanction; and so voluntarily we may adopt the principles of Babylon, even where we are not ostensibly its servants.*

If, then, the testimony of Scripture be so very express as to the evil character of the Gentile systems at their close, if Babylon be the consummation, and Armageddon the end, of all the efforts of Gentile greatness, what can a believer hope respecting them? What can he do, except seek humbly to imitate the Lord Jesus, who, whilst He hated the world's evil systems, loved us sinners, who were in them, and directed towards us the gospel of His grace to save us, and to extricate us (for such is the true meaning of the word) from this present evil age (Gal. i. 4), an age, whose darkness is elsewhere declared to be ruled

* It may be desirable to remark, that it is only in reference to the present age, or what is called by our Lord, "the times of the Gentiles," that Babylon is spoken of as the centre of the earth's splendour, wealth, and influence. Other nations hereafter, such as Gog and Magog, may seek to grasp power, but they will never be allowed to exercise it successfully. Daniel's prophecy, in detail, is confined to those nations which have Babylon for their centre.

by evil spirits (Eph. vi. 12). Salvation, therefore, is "extrication" from the principles and systems of this evil age, and not permission to continue in them, as if sanatory measures were available. Salvation is extrication from these things, and translation into another kingdom, even the kingdom of God's dear Son, the principles of which are, not any of the old principles with which men have already been conversant, renovated or improved, but as strange, and peculiar, and new, as it was strange and peculiar for the Lord of glory to be born in a stable, and to die on the accursed tree.

This marvellous event produced a change in the manifested dispensations of God, which cannot be too carefully considered in its bearing upon the present position of the Christian. Pure, unmixed, untempered mercy, without an attempt to prosecute the just claims of righteousness upon the sinner; unmingled grace, associated with the lowest abasement in the world, is the character of Christ, and of the new things which He came to declare. How could these things agree with the systems in which men were glorying? They did not agree, and, therefore, whilst the power of earth was still continued in the Gentile image, there was also constituted *another* system, viz., the Church of God, commanded to follow Jesus in the steps of suffering here, and to have their exaltation in a future world. The image which Nebuchadnezzar saw in vision, cannot symbolise the Church of God, for the Church will never be smitten with destruction; and, therefore, it follows that there is a system, or systems of government in the world, which, originally deriving their power from God, are using it in rebellion against Him.* God may endure it, as He endures the actions of many a wicked man who is indebted to Him, as his Creator, for the very powers which he perverts to sin; but He neither Himself sanctions, nor would desire His saints to sanction, by their

* Of course, there is no generic difference between the several portions of the divided power, which, having been formerly undivided, will, at the close of the history of the image, be found distributed among the ten kingdoms. The origin, character, &c., of the power, is the same.

aid, its evil course. And thus, whilst we can truly say, "There is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God," and as such are entitled to our submission and reverence; yet we can also say, with equal truth, that power unguarded by the laws of Christ is power perverted, and therefore unsuited for His servant to exercise. This is exhibited in our Lord's conversation with Pilate.

However possible, then, it may once have been for the servants of God, such as Daniel, to hold stations of dignity in the world, when its systems had not finally proved the hopeless character of their evil, by the rejection of Christ, and when Christ had not yet taught His new, and before unrecognised precepts; yet now Christ has taught, and *has been* rejected. And thus there are these two reasons, why one who would faithfully follow Christ, is precluded from the present exercise of power in the world. The first is, that no one can exercise it, without allowing human laws to intervene between Christ and themselves, whereby they subject themselves to a rule which never necessarily agrees with His will, and almost always is essentially discordant with it. This objection would hold, even if Christ had not come in humiliation to be the servant of the Father in exhibiting grace to men; but how much more, if it is not God in His exaltation, but Christ in meek and uncomplaining endurance, and patient but active grace, that is presented to our imitation? The world would cease to be the world, and would be changed into the Church, if its laws and principles were changed into conformity with this pattern. The sword of the "avenger" cannot suit that hand which should bear only the ensign of peace; and, accordingly, it has been placed by God in other hands, than those of the brethren of Christ. He has put it into the hands of the Gentiles, whether heathen, or nominally owning Christ, and they, whilst thinking only of themselves, will subserve His purposes for preserving order in the earth; and thus, even Nero becomes to Paul the minister of God for good, though Paul was not the executor of Nero's laws. The giver and the gift are good; and though they who receive it may use it only to

promote their selfish ends, yet even their use of it may and will produce a result of blessing, far from being despised by those who desire not to strive nor to cry, but to lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty.*

When "the kingdom shall be the Lord's, and He the governor among the nations," when "all the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee" (Psal. xxii. 27); then power may be safely exercised by the saints of the Most High, according to the testimony both of the prophet (Dan. vii. 22), and of the apostle (1 Cor. vi. 2, 3). It is, indeed, true that Christ is even now a king. He was born, and entered Jerusalem, and was crucified as a king; but he is a king *rejected* by the world, and owned only by the Church; whilst, to use the words of Scripture, He "is hidden in God," the Lamb in the midst of the throne. He is not now owned as the head of the world's systems, nor are their laws and regulations derived from Him. The difference between His being a king, and being manifested in the possession and exercise of His kingdom, is strikingly marked in the following passages:—

"He added and spake a parable, because He was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately APPEAR. He said, therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country *to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return*" (Luke xix. 11).

This reception of the kingdom is described in Dan. vii. 13, 14: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold! one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him."

* It has been thought by some, that the commandment to pray for those who are in authority, proves this office to be one which a faithful Christian might hold. But we are commanded to pray for our enemies, even for our most bitter persecutors. The Apostle, perhaps, might have prayed for Nero, both individually, and also that he might so rule as to allow peace to the Church. A Christian would be bound to pray for the Emperor of China, if situated under his power; but how could he administer his laws?

“And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.”

We give thee thanks.....because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.....This in the preceding verses is said to be—when the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever (Rev. xi. 15—17).

Many other passages might be quoted from the Psalms; but these are sufficient to shew the all-important character of that hour, when God “shall again bring (*πάλιν εισαγάγη*) the first-begotten into the world.” And thus, too, the circumstance of His being a king, adds new force to the reasons which restrain us from acquiescing in the systems of a world which has rejected Him. Because Christ is both priest and king, therefore are we a royal priesthood. After Aaron and his sons had been sprinkled with the blood, and anointed with the holy oil, they were not to quit the door of the tabernacle; they were to be engaged only in keeping the charge of the Lord, until the seven days of their consecration ended, and the eighth day (which is to us the day of resurrection) presented them before the Lord, and before the people, in the manifested perfectness of their priestly character. The Church is in the seven days of its consecration now (Lev. viii. 33). The royal priesthood is to be a peculiar people.

In conclusion, I will briefly state a few principles, which may, perhaps, be received as axioms among the rules of our conduct.

I. If the present principles of the nations are essentially opposed to those of Christ, we cannot serve two masters.

II. We cannot do unchristian things in a Christian way. If our professional employment, or the system whose credit we support, is in itself opposed to the principles of Christ, no personal holiness in ourselves can sanctify its evil, nor expel the poison of its influence.

III. In our own little sphere as individuals, we may be gathering with Christ; while in a more extensive one, by being linked with some evil system, we may be scattering abroad.

IV. It is not enough for us to be neutral (if that be possible) in the conflict which is now being carried on between Christ and Satan: "He that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad." Protestation against evil, and separation from it, can alone satisfy the Spirit of Christ.

V. We cannot give ourselves two personalities. We cannot have an *official* existence, distinct from our existence as individuals, and free ourselves from responsibility, whilst doing *officially* what individually we abhor. What kind of antinomianism can be more dangerous than that which flows from adopting the reverse principle to this? It allows us in our own persons to profess ourselves the disciples of Christ, but it sets our actions free from every moral restraint. Darius, the Persian, was sincerely anxious to save the life of Daniel, but *officially* he was bound to execute the laws of Persia. He might have resigned his throne, rather than become an instrument in destroying Daniel; but this was too great a sacrifice, and, therefore, Daniel was cast into the den of lions.

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