

PRESENT DAY PAPERS—XVI.

The Disciple and The State.

BY

D. M. PANTON.

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The Disciple and the State.

NO subject is more practical or more urgent, none holds more momentous consequences for the last days, than the exact relation of the disciple of Christ to the State; and so important is the general principle underlying our conduct that it is laid down in all three Synoptic Gospels. When challenged on taxation our Lord said:—"Shew me a penny" (Luke xx. 24): that is, a penny carries its own answer on taxation; every circulating coin reveals a universal duty. Cæsar's penny—unlike the British, which, by its 'Anno Domini' and 'Dei gratia,' recognizes both God and Christ—bore these words,—"To the god Cæsar Augustus"; and on the reverse, "Pontifex Maximus": that is, it was the actual coin of an Antichrist, and of a government which within three days crucified the Lord of Glory, and attempted the extermination of the Church. No test of our principles could be more crucial.

The Lord answers:—"THEN RENDER UNTO CÆSAR THE THINGS THAT ARE CÆSAR'S, AND UNTO GOD THE THINGS THAT ARE GOD'S." Jesus does not define *what* is Cæsar's, and *what* is God's: He lays it on our conscience, our sanity, our study of Scripture to discriminate: but the broad principle is laid down once for all. *Cæsar has rights as well as God, which must be scrupulously discharged by the disciple of Christ.* 'Render' implies a moral duty, the discharge of a just claim: so the coin that comes from Cæsar's mint must be restored to Cæsar's exchequer; for while in our hands it grants us civil protection, freedom of trade, order, and stable government.

So the Holy Spirit reinforces a perpetual command on Christian teachers,—“ Put them in mind to be in subjection to rulers, to authorities ” (Tit. iii. 1). For in the background of all government rises the awful majesty of God :—“ THE POWERS THAT BE ARE ORDAINED OF GOD ” (Rom. xiii. 1). ‘ The powers that be ’ is a carefully chosen phrase of the Holy Ghost ; fair or foul, king or president or dictator or emperor or proletariat :—not only the Powers that lawfully inherit, but the Powers that *be* ; the *de facto* government as well as the *de jure* : “ there is no power but of God.” Therefore, to the divine aloofness of the Christian pilgrim the *form* of government is of no concern, the *government* is ; for every State authority has the Divine sanction, and is a Divine ordinance. The sword of the civil power involves armies and navies, international diplomacies and wars, and God’s governmental control of nations for discipline. For administration of justice ; for preservation of order ; for the punishment of the lawless ; for the protection of property and life : “ by Me kings reign, and princes decree justice. By Me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth ” (Prov. viii. 15). God has created all government to enrich and bless the governed ; so, as a matter of fact, no government punishes good as good, or rewards evil as evil : nor is the worst government as bad as pure anarchy. And it is manifest from the terms in which Paul couches the truth that thus to police the world is a duty committed, not to the Church, but to the Gentile power, from whose hands God has never withdrawn it since it was granted to Babylon (Dan. ii. 37). The sword is given to Nebuchadnezzar, not to Paul ; we are to submit to it, not to wield it ; until, at the Advent, “ the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High ” (Dan. vii. 27).

A grave fact thus reveals itself. “ Therefore he that resisteth the power, withstandeth the ordinance of God.” These instructions were issued with the crimes and cruelties of Tiberius, Caligula, and Claudius fresh in memory, and with the monster Nero upon the throne : to no age of the Church could the command have been more startling, or

obedience to it a more signal triumph of grace. For rebellion is rebellion against God. Political resistance passes at once into spiritual : the power is God’s power, the sword is God’s sword, the wrath is God’s wrath (though it may reach us through the magistrate) ; for “ he that resisteth the power, withstandeth the ordinance of God.” Neither ancestry, nor sword, nor ballot-box is the real source of political power ; “ there is no power but of God ” : the power is God’s, the abuse of the power is man’s ; and God does not ask the Church to interfere between Him and His administrative officer. For a bad ruler may be (like Saul) His judgment on a nation ; or (like Pharaoh) a monument for wrath (Ex. ix. 16) ; or (like Nero) a fulfiller of the martyr-roll ; or (like Napoleon) a scourge for anarchy. The Most High “ shall strike through kings in the day of His wrath ” (Psa. cx. 5) ; but throughout the day of His grace “ they that withstand shall receive to themselves judgment.”

So then obedience is essential to the will of God. “ Wherefore ye must needs be in subjection, not only because of the wrath ”—in fine or imprisonment—“ but also for conscience sake.” Militant disciples, whether Crusader or Inquisitor or Covenanter or Ironside, have always pleaded ‘ conscience ’ ; but it is a *perverted* conscience ; for God says we are not to resist for conscience sake. An uninstructed conscience can fall into colossal blunders (John xvi. 2, Acts xxvi. 9). “ BE SUBJECT TO EVERY ORDINANCE OF MAN FOR THE LORD’S SAKE : whether it be to the king, as supreme ; or unto governors, as sent by him ”—viceroys, magistrates, police, municipalities : “ for so is the will of God ” (1 Pet. ii. 13). So an act of parliament is to be obeyed, not for the act’s sake, but for the Lord’s sake : obedience is a spiritual duty to God, irrespective of the goodness or badness of act or government. Thus a Christian has no ‘ right of rebellion ’ : he may always emigrate (Matt. x. 23) ; but so long as he uses the coin of the realm, and therefore draws its attendant advantages, he must render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s. “ Render to all their dues ”—for submission is not a gift, but a debt : “ taxation to whom taxation ; custom to

whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour." No State in time of peace demands more than this. Conversely, also, the disciple who pays all taxes, submits to all ordinances, and prays for all rulers (1 Tim. ii. 2), may legitimately accept in return the privileges of passive citizenship (Acts xxii. 28)—police protection, pensions for the aged, general order and liberty—as from "ministers of God's service, attending continually upon this very thing."

But it is obvious that Scripture thus regulates the relation between the State and the disciple on an underlying assumption of enormous importance: *it keeps the magistracy and the discipleship wholly sundered*, as dwelling in distinct spheres: and it is our Lord who most clearly reveals this sharp distinction in one of His least known and profoundest revelations. To the world He had said, without modification or explanation,—“Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's”: to the Church, a mystical Body chosen out of the world, He reveals why for her also the same rule holds good. Peter, challenged by the tax collectors, acknowledges Christ's habit of yielding to the civil authorities. (Made an imperial tax under Vespasian, the half-shekel, in our Lord's time, was a State tax for the upkeep of national worship: closely similar to a heathen or Christian ecclesiastical “tithing,” it was enforced by the civil power—Herod and Pilate, acting on behalf of the Sanhedrim). “What *thinkest* thou, Simon?”—Jesus suddenly challenges Peter's thinking powers, for the apostles, like the modern Church, had not yet grasped the underlying principle of a disciple's payment of taxes: “the kings of the earth, from whom do they receive toll”—duties in the custom house—“or tribute?”—taxes on person or property: “from their *sons*”—the princes of the palace—“or from *strangers*?”—all outside the palace, personally strangers to the king. Peter answers,—“From strangers.” Jesus then flashes a new and mighty revelation upon the heart of Peter:—“*Therefore* the sons are *free*”—that is, free of taxation; a privilege of royalty in all ages and in all lands: Buckingham Palace pays no taxes. For all taxation presupposes that property and

life are held at the pleasure of the King, or governing authority; so that confiscation and capital punishment are in the power of all governments: but confiscation of the *King's* property is treason, and infliction of death on the *King's* family is rebellion. Now “the *WORLD* is *YOURS*” (1 Cor. iii. 21); for “He hath made us to be *KINGS*” (Rev. i. 6): as princes of the blood royal, *the sons of God are inherently lifted above all earthly taxation*. “But, *LEST WE CAUSE THEM TO STUMBLE*”—here is the introduction of a totally new and far profounder principle—“*give unto them* for thee and Me.” The enormous reflex advantages of the presence of Christ and His disciples in a city, making Capernaum (for example) “exalted unto heaven” (Luke x. 15); the perpetual check on crime, the diffusion of light and grace, the barrier it affords (as in Sodom) against the inrush of Divine judgments:—all this is so profoundly unreal to the world, that the principle that those who sow the spiritual may well reap the carnal (1 Cor. ix. 11) could only be, if pressed, a hopeless stumbling block to the unbeliever. Statesmen would but mistake us for anarchists, where they did not regard us as lunatics, if we insisted on a royalty that is under such deep disguise: therefore the command goes forth to the Church in all ages,—“Tribute [taxation] to whom tribute, custom [in the custom house] to whom custom” (Rom. xiii. 7). But the distinction between Church and World, at the very point of their civil contact, could not be made more amazing or more profound.

But we are now confronted with a principle still more stupendous, a principle more than any other dyed purple with martyrs' blood. *It is obvious, as all the Church has admitted in all ages, that there must be limits to our obedience*. “*RENDER UNTO GOD THE THINGS THAT ARE GOD'S*.” It is true that our Lord says:—“Whosoever shall *compel* thee to go one mile, *go with him twain*” (Matt. v. 41). The word here for ‘compulsion’ implies enforced pressure, usually from the State:—“to press one to serve as a despatch rider” (Liddell and Scott), and includes (see Alford) the billeting of soldiers; and our Lord directs that, as a concession of grace, we are to do more even than we

are asked. The use made of such compulsion (any compulsion, short of commanding what God has prohibited) is the responsibility of the compeller; exactly as the expenditure of taxation, which may be expended on objects of which we deeply disapprove, is the sole responsibility of the State. But it is obvious that there are compulsions to which we cannot yield. "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's,"—namely, obedience to every law of the State (1 Pet. ii. 13) *which does not conflict with a command of God*; "and unto God the things that are God's,"—namely, obedience to every Divine command, irrespective of all state law whatsoever (Acts v. 29). There is a realm into which no earthly power may intrude. It is only to a command of the State which conflicts with a specific command or prohibition of God that we can yield no obedience; *but the State may, and must, be disobeyed when it commands something God has forbidden, or forbids something God has commanded*. God has granted to the State no authority in the sphere of revealed religion. If a Nebuchadnezzar orders image-worship, or a Darius forbids prayer, or a Sanhedrim prohibits the Gospel; if a King of Spain commands the acceptance of Transubstantiation, or a Tsar or a Soviet forbids the Gospel, or a Chinese Republic orders incense to be offered to tutelary spirits; a still mightier law comes into operation, which has been the bedrock of the saints in all ages:—"WE MUST OBEY GOD RATHER THAN MEN" (Acts v. 29). No portent of the Great War was more sinister than the reply of the British Government, when—challenged by Lord Hugh Cecil in the House of Commons—the Home Secretary officially declared that State law is above all law. *Cæsar slew both Christ and Paul*.

Now therefore we reach a crucial question:—may the child of God take up arms at the magistrate's command? not against the State, but for it—that is, against other States? The disciple may not take arms to *resist* the Power: may he take arms to *defend* the Power? *Does Conscription fall within the permitted, or the prohibited, sphere of State authority?* The gravity of the question is seen the moment it is put in its ethical nakedness. May a believer involve himself in national quarrels he never

originated, in fighting conducted on the principles of a godless world, and in a military obedience, under oath,¹ which compels action whether Christian or not? It is obvious that the answer must depend solely upon Christ, and His revealed will; and no *a priori* reasoning can here supplant Divine revelation.

Now we observe at once that, if the believer is authorized to take arms, either on behalf of the State, or to protect his own property, religion, or life, it must be the sword of the Law; for it is the Law which commands and blesses the sword; and we find ourselves immediately involved in acute embarrassments. For the sword under the Law sanctioned by Jehovah, was sharply defined in its use. For example, (1) no national war was to be undertaken without the express permission of God, and prayer. "If thy people go out to battle, and they pray unto the Lord, hear Thou, and maintain their cause" (1 Kings viii. 44). It will hardly be contended that modern Cabinets kneel in prayer, consult Jehovah, or obtain His approval before plunging the world into blood. Nor (2) might an alliance be made under the Law with any but righteous nations, and only in a righteous cause. *But the conscript believer has no choice*: if he draws the sword at the magistrate's command, he must fight *whether the war is righteous or not*. Combatant Christians always refrain from stating that they would refuse the sword in an unrighteous war; *nor is it ever done*. Moreover (3) no Hebrew was ever to draw the sword on a brother-Hebrew. The appalling spectacle is presented, in modern war, of Russian Greek Catholics, German Lutherans, French Protestants, Austrian Roman Catholics, and British Anglicans and Nonconformists bayoneting one another, and beseeching the same God to bless their rival arms, to the horror of the whole heathen world. If the Scripture is made to authorize modern war,

¹Oaths—and no combatant is exempted from an oath—are prohibited to the Christian, both by Christ and by the Spirit, as explicitly as language can prohibit. "Swear not at all" (Matt. v. 34): "above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by the heaven, nor by the earth, NOR BY ANY OTHER OATH" (Jas. v. 12). See *Democracy, Socialism, and the Sermon on the Mount*, p. 23.

and God's servant participating in it, then it authorizes things which have never before been authorized by God in the whole history of the world. For "whence come wars"—both in the New Testament and the Septuagint the word always means actual warfare—"and whence come fightings"—duels, brawls, industrial conflicts—"among you?" In the world, the magistrate rightly wields the sword: the unbeliever, so long as he is an unbeliever, is under no dispensational prohibition of Christ. Does war spring from defective politics, or secret diplomacy, or badly drawn frontiers, or mismanaged government? Whatever part these may play as provocatives, a far profounder cause is unmasked by the Holy Ghost:—"Come they not hence, even of your pleasures"—what pleases the lustful man—"that war in your members?" The first battleground is the heart, which creates all consequent war: "ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war." Napoleon, with a flash of his evil genius, once said to his brother Joseph:—"What a nation hates is—another nation." Political pacifists lodge war in the wrong spot: they lodge it in human organization; God lodges it in human nature.

So we are prepared for the new law of Christ. "PUT UP AGAIN THY SWORD INTO ITS PLACE: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" (Matt. xxvi. 52).¹

¹ This is our Lord's answer to Peter, and an elucidation of the only utterance of Christ claimed on behalf of war (Luke xxii. 36). His meaning is put to an instant test. Peter himself was not sure what Jesus meant, for he said, "Lord, shall we smite with the sword?" then, not waiting for an answer, and using one of the very swords, he smote, in the justest cause the world has ever seen. This is the first and last time a disciple ever appears in the New Testament with a sword in his hand; and on this solitary occasion our Lord not only repudiates and prohibits the act, but actually and instantly nullifies the act by miraculously undoing it. Moreover, the Holy Spirit, whose function it is to reproduce Christ's teaching (John xiv. 26), nowhere enforces the sword on the ground of this utterance; the apostolic assemblies, while still gifted and guided by inspired speech, never so understood it; and the sub-apostolic church never dreamed that our Lord here authorizes Christian war, or a believer's appeal to the sword.

The Law said:—"If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, your enemies shall fall before you by the sword" (Lev. xxvi. 3, 8). But now all fighters are left to the pure hazards of war, "The Reformation grasped the sword," says D'Aubigné, "and that very sword pierced its heart." The Huguenots gave no quarter in battle, and God let them be wiped off the face of the earth. Zwingle perished as a young man on the battle field. General Gordon, after writing,—"I go to the Soudan sure of success," fell under a rain of spears on the steps of Government House at Khartoum. Praying Boers were cut up in battalions; as, centuries earlier, whole armies of Crusaders were annihilated by the Saracens. The soldier who now survives the hazards of battle *does not survive because he is a Christian*: even an Atheist in the trenches may be canopied by his mother's prayers; but the defence of the Law is withdrawn from the combatant under the Gospel. *That God is no longer behind the combatant is, in our Lord's view, a sufficient reason for permanently sheathing the sword.*¹

It is no easy task to which our Lord calls us. Hard though it be to confront the shrapnel, it is harder to be dragged to a prison cell under universal execration, and it is hardest to be wounded in the house of our friends, and denounced by the vast majority of modern disciples as fanatics and renegades to the teaching of Christ and His Church. *To stand defenceless before loaded guns is a braver thing than to confront them from behind another battery.* But it is the pathway of the early Church. In the first two centuries of our era, so swordless was the Church that Celsus, the Gnostic, in the first written attack ever made on the Christian Faith, grounds his censure on this very fact, and says:—"The State receives no help in war from the Christians; and if all men were to follow their example, the Sovereign would be deserted, and the world would fall into the hands of the barbarians." Origen gave an answer profoundly in the spirit of James:—"The question is—

¹ Our Saviour scourged sheep and oxen, not men (John ii. 15); and destructive miracle in His hands blighted the vegetable (Matt. xxi. 19), never the human.

What would happen if the Romans should be persuaded to adopt the principles of the Christians? This is my answer—We say that if two of us shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them by the Father Who is in heaven. What, then, are we to expect, if not only a very few should agree, as at present, but the whole Empire of Rome? They would pray to the Word, who of old said to the Hebrews, when pursued by the Egyptians, ‘The Lord shall fight for you, and you shall hold your peace.’” So to the persecutors of the last days, killing the righteous man, the Spirit prophesies,—“*he doth not resist you*” (Jas. v. 6). For at all costs to ourselves the Gospel must be proved a Gospel of love; “the cup which my Father hath given me, *shall I not drink it?*” (John xviii. 11). This is the pathway up the stupendous heights of the Divine approval. “Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. *Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: FOR GREAT IS YOUR REWARD IN HEAVEN.*” (Matt. v. 11).

So we see that, while subject to the State in all ordinances against which lies no Scripture in specific chapter and verse, our dispensational standing compels, in us, the perfection of mercy and grace. Jehovah came in thunders and lightnings on Sinai: He has now come in the gentle flutterings of the Holy Dove. The fundamental principle of the Law was unswerving justice:—“*Thine eye shall not pity; life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot*” (Deut. xix. 21). So under the Law God granted national recognition—though to one nation alone; and as the régime was judicial, the sword was commanded and blessed: under the Gospel all national recognition (even Jewish) disappears; and a dispensation of perfect mercy removes the sword out of the Church’s hand. “Christ, in disarming Peter, disarms all Christians” (Tertullian). It is the return to nationalism, and to Jehovah as the God of a single and separated nation, that re-grasps the sword. In the words of the ablest modern defender of war as Christian:—“In the act of recognizing, and including within herself, nations, collecting

within herself so many different political communities, *the Christian Church necessarily admitted war within her pale.*”¹ EVERYTHING TURNS UPON A CHANGE OF DISPENSATION. However righteous the cause, the believer is never to call down fire: the act, legally, may be righteous; the spirit, in a Christian, is wholly wrong: and all believers who show that spirit are as certain of rebuke at the Judgment Seat of Christ as James and John in Samaria long ago. *No one would have ever dreamed that war is Christian had it not been for the grave consequences, both public and private, of a refusal to fight.* “Men of the most eminent abilities and extensive erudition,” in the words of Bishop J. C. Ryle, “have never yet, nor ever will, produce arguments sufficient to prove that the profession of a soldier is consistent with the profession of Christianity.” “RESIST NOT him that is EVIL: but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.” Nowhere are we told to resist *as citizens*, while we do not resist *as disciples*. For it is impossible. We cannot hit and not hit at the same moment; we cannot bless and curse in the same breath; we cannot love and hate simultaneously. “But I say unto you which hear, LOVE your ENEMIES, *do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse you, and pray for them that despitefully use you*” (Luke vi. 27).

So we must be prepared to suffer. If, for the refusal to fight, the State withdraws its privileges and protections, we make no complaint: we only pray for grace to take joyfully the spoiling of our goods, or even the forfeiting of our lives. For the State to demand of the disciple what Christ has forbidden him to give is to trench on the prerogatives of the Son of God, and, if conscience is coerced, to persecute. (In all such cases flight, if possible, is both authorized and commanded: Matt. x. 23). Nor can such an attitude ever become a national danger. For so few

¹ Dr. J. B. Mozley’s *Sermons*, preached before the University of Oxford, serm. v. We do not deny the splendid courage, self-sacrifice, and devotion that can be displayed in war. “There are bravery and address,” replies Dr. Johnson, “in the firemen who extinguish a fire; there is great humanity in saving life and property: but who will therefore say that fire is a good thing?”

are the regenerate, and still fewer its obedient fraction, that no State could be endangered, or even embarrassed, by our obedience to Christ: *a fact upon which, since He foresaw it, our Lord built the Sermon on the Mount*; an utterance which is no treatise for the administration of the State, but a chart for the guidance of a pilgrim people. "AND FEW BE THEY THAT FIND IT" (Matt. vii. 14).

Marvellous is the last revelation on the sword and the servant of God in the Sacred Canon. It is a vision of the future, revealed by God Himself. Antichrist arrives; and the saints are locked with him in deadly conflict. Every reason for taking arms is multiplied a hundredfold; every argument for appealing to force is tenfold stronger; every doubt of the righteousness of the cause is gone: *it is the Antichrist*: all iniquity is on one side; all that remains of righteousness on the earth is on the other. Next, the saints are flying conquered from the field: "it was given unto him to overcome them." Waterloo after Waterloo routs the people of God. One can imagine no more fearful shock to faith than this;—the solemn appeal to the God of battles, the righteousness of the cause, the full expectation of Divine intervention, and—disastrous defeat. Faith will reel to its very foundations. *It is a most dangerous thing to disregard and disobey the dispensational commands of God.* For hear the word of God. "If any man hath an ear"—a phrase only used when the truth is difficult of acceptance, and likely to be received by few—"let him hear." Hear what? "If any man is for captivity—for forcing even the hosts of Antichrist into captivity—into captivity he goeth: if any man shall kill with the sword, with the sword must he be killed. Here is"—herein lies the proof and the perfection of—"the patience and the faith of the saints" (Rev. xiii. 10). "He that hath an ear:" someone will catch the undertone in the voice of God; someone, even in that day, will leave it to the Most High to deal with the fearful iniquity of world-power culminating in Antichrist, and follow, in unresisting love, the meek and lowly Jesus. "He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, HE IT IS THAT LOVETH ME" (John xiv. 21).

Note on the Holy Nation.

Rarely, if ever, has the Church of God been in graver peril of betraying her God-given standing than she is to-day throughout the world. For what is the standing of the Church of God? "Ye are A HOLY NATION, which in time past were *no* people, but now are the people of God" (1 Pet. ii. 9). Three times Jehovah said to Israel,— "Ye are a holy nation"; but Israel fell into deep ungodliness: now therefore, out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues, God is composing 'a holy nation'; and there is no other holy nation in the world. All nations (including Israel) are *Lo Ammi*—not my people. It is said that England is a commercial nation, Germany a military nation, France an artistic nation: this is a *holy* nation; not always holy in conduct, but holy in calling, in imputation, and in destiny. It is a nation in which there is someone from every nation that ever existed (Rev. vii. 9): its government is not visible; its territory is not here; its code of laws is not human; its King is at present a world-exile. All other nations belong to the world,—for the world is but an aggregate of the nations; this Nation belongs to God: therefore between this and all other nations yawns a gulf as high as Heaven and deep as Hell. We became of British stock by birth: so we become of the stock of the Holy Nation by birth again. "I saw, and behold, a great multitude, which no man could number, out of all tribes and peoples and nations and tongues, standing before the Throne" (Rev. vii. 9). What then is our exact relationship to all the other peoples of the earth through whom we are scattered? "Beloved, I beseech you as sojourners and pilgrims." The word here rendered 'sojourners,' means 'foreign settlers,' 'dwellers in a foreign land'; and the word rendered 'pilgrims' means 'transient settlers,' almost 'tourists,' travellers passing through: the one word means that we are not at home, the other that

we are not among our own folk. "For they that say such things"—namely that they are 'strangers and pilgrims upon the earth'—"make it manifest that they are seeking after a country of their own" (Heb. xi. 14). So, then, "if we are naturalized as citizens there, we cannot help being aliens here" (Dr. A. Maclaren). Thus we are not 'nationals'; for God has called us "out of"—and so outside of—"all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues": nor 'internationals,' or cosmopolitan—citizens of the world; for "I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you" (John xv. 19): *we are aliens in every country; everywhere we are missionaries in a foreign land; we speak every language of earth with a foreign accent.* Now our peril is that we may think that all such language is simply poetry, instead of language that expresses God's holy and profound principles, on which we are to build our conduct. When we say 'we,' what ought we to mean? *The Holy Nation*: not Britain, or France, or Germany, or China; but the Holy Catholic Church throughout all the world; "where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision, nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free" (Col. iii. 11); but alone stands forth the Mystical Christ. It has ever been so, even when God's nation had a territory and a name. "I am a stranger with Thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were" (Psa. xxxix. 12). From the moment that God said, "Cursed is the ground" all sons of God have been homeless wanderers and disinherited exiles. As godly pilgrims (not hermits) we submit to every ordinance of the nations through which we pass (1 Pet. ii. 13) that does not clash with the law of God (Acts v. 29); we render taxation to whom taxation is due (Rom. xiii. 7); we are Divinely appointed intercessors for all in authority (1 Tim. ii. 2);—*a threefold helpfulness to the State which, combined, is equalled by no citizen in any nation*: we are to act in love toward all nations, at all seasons, under all circumstances, in all ways: but "*our citizenship is in heaven*" (Phil. iii. 20). "Since heaven has become my country, the whole world is a place of exile; for Constantinople is no nearer Paradise than the desert to which they have sent me" (Chrysostom).

What then is the practical issue? "Come ye out, and be ye separate" (2 Cor. vi. 17). The Church and the World are two circles which intersect nowhere: two divisions of mankind, without a third, mutually exclusive each of each.¹ The world has been buried for us. As Israel separated from all nations, plunged into the Red Sea, and rose to walk a lonely nation, with God in the wilderness; so the Church, composed of all tribes and peoples and nations and tongues, goes down into baptism many nations, but rises up one nation, with all national, racial, fleshly distinctions obliterated for ever, drowned: for "through the cross"—set forth in the ritual death—"the world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. vi. 14). "They might have returned; but now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly: wherefore"—for it is the pilgrim whom God supremely loves—"God is not ashamed of them, to be called their God, and He hath prepared for them a city":—*He will see to it that we are not pilgrims for ever.*

Meanwhile, however, the Holy Nation, a nation within a nation, remains the salt of the earth and the light of the world. "The situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord seeth: but the water is naught, and the land miscarrieth" (2 Kings ii. 19). The growth of the Christless every year is greater by many millions than the growth of the saved; *the cities of the world were never so full of the lost as they are to-day.* So Elisha said, "Bring me a new cruse and put salt therein." The waters are the multitudes of mankind (Rev. xvii. 15): disciples are the salt,—"*ye are the salt of the earth*" (Matt. v. 13). God reaches souls through the saved; the impact of life flashes to the unsaved through the saved; it is God's Salt which heals the world. Even the worldly statesman can see the wisdom of the method.

¹That State is most unwise which, by filling its goals with good men, to some degree lifts from prison-life its moral stigma, and confuses the public sense of right and wrong. "For those appealing to me on conscientious grounds," said Abraham Lincoln, "I have done and shall do the best I could and can, in my own conscience, under my oath to the law."

"The hardest task for the reformer," says M. Clemenceau, the French statesman, "is not that of creating the future city, but of making the men who will make the city." "I am trying to build up new countries," Cecil Rhodes said to General Booth, "you and your father are trying to build up new men; *and you have chosen the better part.*" In a ripe maturity of political experience second to none, Mr. Gladstone said:—"The welfare of mankind does not now depend on the State, or on the world of politics: the real battle is being fought out in the world of thought; *and we politicians are children playing with toys in comparison to that great work of restoring belief.*" For conversion is the marvel of the ages. "There is no medicine, no act of parliament, no moral treatise, and no invention of philanthropy which can transform a man radically bad into a man radically good: science despairs of these; politicians are at the end of their resources; the law speaks of 'criminal classes': conversion is the only means by which a radically bad person can be changed into a radically good person." An ounce of regeneration is worth a ton of political or social effort: *therefore let us concentrate on regeneration.*

So Elisha "cast salt therein." The wealth of a city, in the eyes of God, is according to the number of the righteous in it; every new soul regenerated, so long as it abides in a city, is a fresh guarantee against the judgments of God (Gen. xviii. 26). Therefore our supreme civic duty, that on which turns the very life of a fallen city, is to multiply the righteous in it: little though the guildhalls and council-chambers know it, the godly are their final safety. But the salt will not always be in the city. "Now ye know"—Paul says, after foretelling the removal of the Church out of the world—"that which *restraineth*" (2 Thess. ii. 6). Salt checks corruption and arrests rottenness: we salt that which is dead, not that which is living: the Church, by its mere presence, arrests the decay and ruin of the world. Wherever the Gospel has flourished, unconscious but mighty in its effect on the entire community, law and order have appeared as a reflex effect. A public opinion has been created which has supported law, and shamed

lawlessness; in a limited measure, an atmosphere of discipline and duty has been formed; above all, GOD has been unveiled, as a God of law and order, to whom all account must ultimately be rendered by every human soul. Thus ripe lawlessness will mean the imminent revelation of the Lawless One. The removal of the still salted Salt—the savourless Salt is left to be trampled underfoot of men (Matt. v. 13)—will be the breaking of a vast dam; the loosening of a rock that blocks the rush of a cataract; the lifting of its preservative out of the world's corruptible flesh.

But the world is to be healed at last. "Thus saith the Lord, I have *healed* these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or miscarrying." Secularism and Socialism is rooted in the unconscious ignorance of a Saviour who is coming back to reform the world. "Sir," said a Crimean soldier, a personal friend of my own, many years ago to Mr. Bishop, the secretary of a Secularist Society in Nottingham, "I doubt not that you have often read the Bible to find its 'contradictions'; have you ever searched it to find its *confirmations* of itself?" "I cannot say I have," was the answer. "Then sir," the soldier replied, "I beg you to read Psalm xxii., Isaiah liii. and John xix. consecutively, and to tell me the result." "Very well, if it will please you, I will do so." Four days later the soldier returned. "Have you read the passages, and consecutively?" "I have." "And with what result?" "*I never saw such truth in my life,*" the secretary replied; passing there and then under the powerful regeneration of God, he severed his connection with the Secularists, and lived for Christ. Thus the First Advent saves the individual: *the Second Advent will save the world.* For "the Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom *all things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity*: THEN SHALL THE RIGHTEOUS SHINE FORTH AS THE SUN IN THE KINGDOM OF THEIR FATHER." (Matt. xiii. 41).