

## A SERMON ON POLITICS.

"There is no power but of God. The powers that be are ordained of God."—Rom. 13: 1.

There is to be a General Election on the 22nd of February, and, as the Word of God is the only rule of faith and conduct, let us inquire in view of that event what it has to say as to the duty of the Christian citizen.

We will look *first*, at the truth taught in these verses, and *secondly*, at some lessons from it.

I. The Truth taught, viz., that  
CIVIL GOVERNMENT IS A DIVINE INSTITUTION.

One of the grandest of all truths is, that *God Reigns*. The Lord is King. He reigns both by right and by might. Thine is the kingdom and the power.

But, though He gives commands as is His right, and though He has power to compel obedience to these commands without any other means, yet, as in the spread of the gospel, and the salvation of man, He is pleased to work by human agency, and to this end He has ordained civil government as one means of securing outward obedience to His laws.

The Queen might issue laws for her vast dominions, but if she did no more than that, there are multitudes of lawless subjects who would give no heed to her commands, and the Empire would be a scene of anarchy, unrest, and strife. There would be no safety, no peace. The law merely on paper would be no law. To secure obedience she has officers to execute her laws, governments within governments, down to that of the smallest district or village, and the law is enforced in all. This may serve to illustrate one aspect of the Government of God.

He is King among the nations. He has given His commands, His laws, and He does not choose, so far as man's relation to his fellow man is concerned, to use His Almighty power in compelling obedience to these laws. He leaves men free in that respect. A man may oppress, or wrong, or rob, his neighbor, and yet prosper in this world. And if God were to rest satisfied with merely giving laws, such as the fourth or sixth or eighth commandment, and were to do no more, reserving punishment for disobedience for the next life, what would be the result. Multitudes would not obey His laws. The world would be a scene of strife in which

might would make right. So long as a strong man armed could keep his house his goods would be in peace, but whenever a stronger than he would come, he would spoil his house. There could be neither righteousness, justice, nor peace upon earth. But the great law-giver has devised a plan of securing obedience to his laws, in this world, so far as that law refers to the rights of our neighbors. He has established civil government, as a means of establishing and enforcing peace and justice and order among men, so that lawlessness may be restrained. "The law is not made for a righteous man but for the lawless and disobedient."

Just as our Queen, nominal head and law-giver of the Empire has governments and rulers in every part of that Empire, so the Great Ruler has governments in all parts of His dominion that we know. It is all one grand scale. We begin at the lowest and smallest, the government of some small village or town. Above that there is the government of the county. Then that of the province, over both county and town. Then the Dominion over all three. And lastly the British Government over all, the centre of authority for the Empire. Is that the highest? Nay, even as a government, it is but a part of the government of the King of the Universe. It is one grand ascending scale, and each step but a part of the one grand whole. "No power but of God. The powers that be are ordained of God."

Do that which is good, and the ruler "is the minister of God to thee for good." Do that which is evil and that same ruler "is a minister of God, an avenger for wrath to him that doeth evil." The great Ruler says "Thou shalt not kill," but if He had no means of enforcing that command in this world it would be much more of a dead letter than it is. He has instituted civil government for that purpose, to enforce obedience. Whoso sheddeth man's blood by man shall His blood be shed. He has thus sanctioned the right of men so protect themselves, and especially the weaker and helpless, from the strong and lawless. He has given the command, He has ordained powers, governments, to carry out that command. The law against murder on the statute book is not a mere human law; it is a Divine ordinance, and the ruler who enforces obedience to that law is "a minister