

then, that were it possible to find a majority among us inclined to subvert our constitutional government, the attempt would be *criminal* on any other ground than that its provisions were incompatible with essential justice, and contrary to the end for which all government is instituted. But if life and property be secure, if righteous laws be impartially administered, if the grounds for which civil government is instituted be fully secured, such a constitution ought not to be changed at the beck of a majority, in the face of the protestations of their fellow-subjects opposed to them. For as a people we are united under certain constitutional principles; we owe allegiance to certain constitutional rulers; we are pledged to support a common form of civil polity; our feelings, our habits, our associations are all moulded into a conformity with our civil institutions, and any fundamental change in them, would be doing violence to our best feelings, to say nothing of any more material injury we might sustain. Besides in every established society personal and corporate rights are acquired, that revolution always tends to unsettle and destroy. Hence to subvert constitutional law is treason, the highest crime known to the law. It will not justify the act that a majority be in favor of the change. Were a majority of partners in any copartnership to resolve that they would disregard the conditions on which it had been formed, and deny the other partners their stipulated rights, nothing could justify their unprincipled conduct. Now our constitutional charter embodies the principles on which we are united in the social compact; the very fact of our settling in the country that has adopted it, must be held as our pledge that we have agreed to submit to its conditions, and to defend them as the bulwark of justice and order. Should it ever happen that we come to think them imperfect and capable of amendment, that must be done in the manner prescribed, and in conformity with the rights and interests of all concerned. But should any one, or any number, converted to some new political theory, deem our form of government fundamentally wrong as measured with their new theoretical opinions, then the proper steps for such to pursue, is to separate themselves in peace from the community, to abstain from every proceeding that might disturb others contentedly reposing under their own vine and fig-tree, and to seek in some other land for institutions more agreeable to their wishes. Should such unhappily adopt another course, should they attempt to carry out their theoretical views by promoting fundamental changes in the civil institutions of the land, should they league with such as are not unwilling to employ force and to shed blood in the attainment of their object, it must be clear from the principles above laid down, that they are guilty of sin as disregarding the authority of God, that they are guilty of treason in attempting to subvert established government, and that they render themselves justly obnoxious to the punishment of this sin, and that crime.

It will not be considered as any valid objection to the principles we have now advanced that they are equally applicable to any constitutional form of govern-

ment, however different it may be in its structure from ours. These principles are as well fitted to guide the republican whom fortune may have placed under a monarchy as the monarchist who may have found a home within a republic. They constitute that spirit of conservatism which is the proper antagonist of anarchy wherever it may arise, which like Satan on the fiery flood, is always struggling to lift up its monstrous head from the waves of ignorance and wickedness that deluge the world. They are in perfect conformity with those noble principles of political duty which come to us with the stamp of divine authority:—"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For their is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake. For, for this cause pay yet tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour." Rom. 13, 1-7. In these words the supreme ruler rebukes the spirit of insubordination to constituted authority so characteristic of the age, and inculcates the duty of supporting legitimate government, of defending it against the lawless, of upholding it for the good it confers and the evil it prevents, of submitting to those imperfections incidental to all human things rather than hazard the subversion of established order in the pursuit of merely conceivable excellence. If the house be suited to the wants of its inhabitants let it alone. You may put yourself to the inconvenience and expense of pulling it down and building another, and after all discover that you have gained nothing by the change.

If these observations have any weight to induce us to maintain the constitution of the country and vindicate the supremacy of its laws, on the supposition that from views of self-interest or theoretical excellence a majority were disposed to subvert them, how much more forcible will be their application if it should appear, that the great mass of the people are averse to fundamental change, that they deliberately prefer our paternal connections and institutions, and are honorably ambitious of rearing up and perpetuating on this continent, a political fabric that shall rival the excellence of the far-famed model on which it is framed. That a popular attachment to our constitution, and to our connection with the British empire remains in vigour, notwithstanding the means that have been long and insidiously plied to root it out, is a fact that the events of the last eighteen months most amply con-