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Cesar's Dues, or Our Duty to Civil Government.

BY REV. J. R. JONES.

"Render, therefore, unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's." Matt. 22: 21.

This text, which is a part of the reply of Jesus to a question propounded by the Pharisees, with which they hoped, but did not succeed, to "entangle him in his talk," suggests the subject that I want to consider. Caesar in this passage represents civil government. Let us notice the fact,

I. THAT WE ARE UNDER OBLIGATION TO CIVIL GOVERNMENT.

This is true because of the benefits we derive from it. Its object is to protect our rights, our lives, property and liberty, and to help us in many ways. But for its protection there would be for us no security, no peace, no happiness. We retire at night to rest and sleep without fear, or even thought of being molested and harmed during the night, because the government has placed around our homes a strong and ever watchful guard. Our sleep is sweet and refreshing, because we fear no danger. At every corner of our possessions, it has stationed a sentinel who says to the would-be intruder: "Thus far shalt thou come and no further;" and he dares not approach nearer for fear of arrest and punishment. We have rights that are natural and sacred that are protected. It says to him who attempts imposition or infringement upon these rights, "Hands off." And so about them is set a hedge that cannot be crossed without punishment to the offender. For these and other benefits the government has claims upon us, that we as citizens must satisfy or be untrue.

II. WHAT ARE THESE CLAIMS?

1. *Obedience.* It would hardly seem necessary to stop at this point, but there seem to be some loose notions in regard to obeying laws held, even by people who are considered clever citizens, such, for instance, as this: "The law is a bad one; I was opposed to its being enacted, and did what I could against it, and, therefore, I do not feel under obligation to keep it." With feelings of this sort, some can, with easy consciences, run illicit distilleries, or deal in unstamped tobacco, or violate other laws. Whether the laws are what we would have them be or not, so long as they do not interfere with conscience in religious matters, we are bound by considerations of the best interest of the country, and the fact that such obedience is enjoined in the Scriptures, to obey them. For the general welfare of the country, obedience to a bad law is better than its violation. Paul in his letter to the christians in Rome says: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers: for there 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." (Rom. 13: 1, 2.) Again, he says: "Therefore, ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but for conscience' sake." (Verse 5.) In his letter to Titus, he writes: "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work." (Titus 2: 1.) The Apostle Peter, in his first letter, exhorts the brethren as follows: "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king as supreme, or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him." (1 Peter 2: 13, 14.) In view of this instruction, I cannot see how any reasonable person, especially a christian, can be otherwise than entirely submissive. From these Scriptures we learn that law is to be obeyed, not only because it is best for the country, but on the ground that government is an ordinance of God, and that it is to be obeyed not only from fear of punishment, but for conscience' sake. To violate law, then, is not only to sin against government, but against God, and to do violence to conscience. Personal objection to law does not give the right to violate it. Laws are made by our representatives and are our laws, and whether they suit our own notions exactly

or not, to be good and worthy citizens, we must obey them. Let us all, then, in respect of obedience, be faithful and true to Caesar.

2. *Honor.* Peter, in his letter to christians, exhorts them to "honor the king." That for us means to honor the government. This must be done if for no other reason than that it is an ordinance of God. To dishonor it is to dishonor God. All conduct, therefore, that reflects upon the honor of our government should be rebuked by all good citizens. I am sorry to see that lynching is becoming more and more common in our country, and that encouragement is given to it by some of our respectable newspapers. "Lynch law" is a most palpable reflection upon our government, and in a high degree dishonoring to it, and when carried to its logical results, would destroy all law and order and bring anarchy and ruin.

The same is true of "mob law." No man nor band of men has the right, under any circumstances where there is law, to take the law into their own hands and take the life of a fellow citizen. I know that now and then a crime is committed that seems to justify lynching, but it does not. And whatever some men may think of such a proceeding, I believe that in the eyes of God it is murder. We have laws to reach all crimes, and as we value security and good order, and respect the laws of God, we must let these laws take their course and bring offenders to justice and to punishment. Public sentiment, instead of winking at such a crime in any way, should crush it down and out of existence if possible. No good citizen should ever utter a word that can be interpreted as favoring it.

There are other ways of dishonoring government that might be mentioned, but I will not do it now. I have said this much on the crime of lynching because its toleration is such a black spot on our civilization.

3. *Financial support.* No government can be administered without expense. Men who give their time and labor to it must be paid for their services. Navies must be kept up, public buildings erected and kept in repair, public schools supported where there are any, and also other public enterprises; and all of these things are to be supported out of the public treasuries. Now the money that goes into these treasuries must come from the people, and it is the duty of every citizen, except such as are exempt, to pay his proportional part into the treasuries. When the government is economically administered, the benefit we get from it fully compensates us for its cost. To dodge the tax-list and collector, and in this way get out of paying taxes, or to fail to render a full account of our taxable property for taxation may be considered a sharp trick, but it is cheating the government out of its just dues, treating our fellow citizens with injustice, sinning against God, and wronging our souls. Cheating is cheating whether an individual or a government is the victim. We are to "pay tribute to whom tribute is due, custom, to whom custom." (Rom. 13: 7.) Government should be economically administered, and no more money than is actually necessary to run it ought to be required of the people. An extravagant disposition of public funds is unjust to the taxpayers, and when disposed of for party purposes, it is a shame, a disgrace, a crime, and a sufficient reason to put the party so using it to the blush. But when an amount necessary to run the government properly is called for, we ought not to mind paying our part of it. Indeed, to be honest, we must do it.

4. *To make the government the best possible.* If God has ordained that civil government shall exist, it is man's duty to render it as pure and efficient as possible. He has not ordained any particular form, but that best suited to the people to be governed accords with his will. Now the only way to make our government pure and efficient is to fill its offices with men qualified in heart as well as in head. I want to see the time when our affairs of State shall be intrusted to only good men, men honest and true, large-hearted and brave, men who lose sight of party and self-interest in their concern for the welfare of their country when intrusted as public officers with its interests. Now I hear somebody say, "You will never see that day." Well, it may be that I shall not, but for such a day we ought to work. No man who is full of sectional or partisan feeling is fit to make laws, nor is he fit to execute them, and no such men are worthy of being brought to the front in political affairs.

At this time when political excitement is so great, and party feeling or prejudice is coming to the surface, there is danger of being more interested in the success of party than in the welfare of the country. We want good laws, but we cannot depend upon bad men to make them. We want these faithfully executed, but we cannot depend upon bad men to do it. Good men make good laws, and good laws honestly executed make good government and happy people. "When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn." (Prov. 29: 2.) So let us act wisely in the exercise of our suffrage, and try to select only good men to be our law-makers and rulers. Now and then you will come across a person who says he has quit voting. Politics have become so corrupt, and times get no better whether one party or another is in power, and so he has become disgusted with the whole thing and quit. Now that is not wise or right. It is true, if we are christians, our "citizenship is in heaven"; but so long as we live in this world and in this country, we are American citizens, too; and as bene-

ficiaries of the American government, we are under the most binding obligation to be faithful and true to it in every particular, and nowhere do we have a better opportunity to correct its errors than at the polls. Yes, let us in every proper way use our best efforts to make the government the best possible and thus discharge our duty as citizens and christian citizens. If there is corruption in the government, let us try to get it out.

5. *Our prayers.* In his first letter to Timothy, Paul said, "I exhort, therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." (1 Tim. 2: 1, 2.) For all the officers of our government from the lowest to the highest it is our duty to pray, and frequently pastors should, in their public prayers in church, lead the congregations in such prayers. The responsibilities on many of them are heavy, their duties laborious, and to some of them temptations to do wrong are great and not easily resisted. Let us pray for their health, their lives, and that they may be able to resist every temptation to evil, and be divinely guided in the discharge of duty.

Yes, we are indebted to Caesar: let us render unto him the things which are his, and thus be true and faithful citizens; and may God help us so to do.

Letter from Rev. G. P. Bostick.

Dear Bro. Bailey—I have read in the Recorder of March 30th Bro. Durham's account of our resignation to the Foreign Mission Board and his reasons for the step. Will you kindly allow me a statement regarding the whole matter in your paper, including my reasons for the course I have pursued.

Bro. Durham says that a meeting was held in Shelby, March 25th, to consider my proposition. Bro. Sproles, the Secretary of that meeting, gave me the names of twenty-three churches out of thirty composing the Association, as represented in said meeting. On the copy of the resolutions sent me, he said, "This settles the matter."

This led me to some study as to whether that meeting was representative or not. I see that the meeting only recommended to the churches. The local churches, to which I addressed my appeal, have an aggregate membership of more than four thousand. I think the meeting in Shelby could not have had more than four hundred in it, perhaps not so many. But perhaps it was a delegated meeting, and so really represented the churches. Thirteen, however, out of the twenty-three churches, said to be represented, hold regular monthly meetings, according to the minutes of the Association, only for the first or fourth Sundays in each month and Saturday before. The Shelby meeting was held on Friday before the fourth Sunday in March, and my appeal to the individual local churches of the Association reached Shelby on Thursday before the first Sunday in March. So that all these thirteen churches could not have ordered any action at a regular meeting, and there were seven other churches that were not even claimed to be represented. But perhaps the pastors and brethren felt at liberty to act for these churches, but does that certainly settle the question for me? It does seem to me that for me to appeal to the local churches is more in accordance with the New Testament idea as understood by Baptists than was the action of "the few brethren" in Shelby. I ask Baptists to judge for themselves. It seems to me at this distance that there was some unwillingness to allow the subject to come before the local churches. It also seems to me that matters were hurried in order to have Bro. Durham in the meeting; at any rate, that no member of that meeting has the right to accuse me of acting hastily in the matter. I decided a year ago to take this step ere long, and took the step after most earnest, candid, prayerful consideration of the question for six months. My father, S. E. Bostick, knows that I wrote him last October my intention to resign and depend directly upon the churches. Bro. Bell also knows that I gave intimation to him nearly a year ago of the same intention. Now the action of the Shelby meeting was just twenty-one days after my letter reached Shelby, and it must be first printed and distributed to widely separated churches.

Whose action, then, was most hasty? I want just here to say, too, that my action was not the result of the Board's resolutions, but only hastened by them. The idea has been put forth that I resigned because of these resolutions. This is utterly untrue. I decided to resign before I wrote the article that gave rise to the resolutions.

Bro. Durham says in regard to the resignation: "Bro. Bostick went to China three years ago, and was, from the beginning of his work there, as it seems, under the influence of the erratic Dr. Crawford. Dr. Crawford for about six years has not been connected with our Board." In this language is contained two erroneous statements: first, that I have from my arrival here been under the influence of Dr. Crawford; second, that Dr. Crawford for six years has not been connected with our Board. As to mistake first, I desire to say that I reached Tungchow July 18th, 1889, and Dr. Crawford reached America about the same time, and I never saw him till he returned July 8th, 1890; and had no communication whatever with him except a short note left in Yokohama in which he did not mention mission methods. Mistake second. I do not know why Bro. D.

said this, but I know that it is not correct, because (1) the same mail that brought Bro. D.'s accusation brought also a letter from Dr. Tupper to Dr. Crawford, informing him that his name was dropped because of a tract "Churches to the Front," which he had recently written and circulated; (2) I am now treasurer of the missions and find in the books that regular appropriations for salary and work were made by the Board for Dr. C. up to end of 1890. He did resign his salary and responsibility for regular work early in 1891, but he has since done much regular preaching, which has been reported to the Board; (3) he has been chairman in our mission meetings most of the time since he returned in 1890.

I desire now to say that I and the other young missionaries coming here recently have come with an idea that Dr. Crawford was about half crazy, and I believe that all of them would unite with me in saying that this aged servant of God is badly misunderstood and grossly misrepresented at home. With me this idea that he was wrong was strengthened by a remark made to me by an officer of the Board the day I was received to the effect that Dr. C. was not in harmony with our work, but that by special effort I could get along with him. All this made us glad that we were to get to housekeeping before he returned. This we had arranged to do early in June, 1890, but a few days before that, God called my dear wife up to her home on high, and so I was left by this providence in the home of the Crawfords for another year and a half. I was surprised to find that I could get along so easily with him. This erroneous idea about Dr. C. seems to be in the atmosphere at home, and somebody is responsible for it. I do not believe that the simple proclamation of his views would give such an idea. I wish to say that coming in contact with him, strongly prejudiced against him as I was, and having lived with him for a year and a half, gives me a right to an opinion about the man. Certainly it does seem that I should be as well qualified to speak as those who have never seen him, or at most only for a few days, and yet who speak so strongly against him. He will soon go up to heaven to await the coming of those who have said so many harsh things about him. I do feel that if many others could have lived with him for a time they would have been saved from many unkind and I think untrue words about him.

Bro. D. says: "Bro. Bostick's resignation is only the culmination of a number of unfortunate circumstances for which the Board in Richmond and the churches of the King's Mountain Association were in no way responsible and over which they had no control." I do not certainly know exactly what he means by "unfortunate circumstances," but I suppose he means the death of my wife and the consequent separation from my only darling child. If that be his meaning, then I am just finding out that God's children are to look upon the dealings of a loving Father as "unfortunate circumstances." My creed is different from that. Those were days of deep sorrow, and yet I know that I realized the precious presence of the Holy Spirit as I never did before. If I know anything, I do know that in those days I was drawn nearer to God, and that those "unfortunate circumstances" did turn out to my spiritual good. It all made me more anxious to know and do God's will. My days of purest joy have been my days of keenest sorrow. Now, if my resignation "is the result of all these circumstances," then I shall be all the more assured of God's guidance in it all, and thank God for the circumstances.

Has he any arguments against my position? Then why not use them? I know it is much easier to cry an individual down as "erratic," "crank," and thus cover up his cause, than to meet with arguments his arguments, but I have not found such the most Christ-like nor the best logic. Let us come to this question with arguments, and not thrust off the discussion by a few words like "crank," "hasty action," "soured," &c. If my statements in "circular letter" are wrong, who is willing to prove them incorrect? If they are false, somebody can show them to be so surely.

Now I desire briefly to give the developments that have led up to our resignation. My sainted wife and I heard Dr. Y. J. Allen of Shanghai lecture at length in Durham in 1888, concerning his school work in Shanghai. We agreed heartily that his work was not our idea of mission work. The Recorder stated substantially our ideas the next day after he lectured in Raleigh. We reached Japan to find that much of mission work consisted in that like his—free schools run in style, with the graduates often employed to do religious work to save them to the churches. This made ours, to many peculiar views, stronger. In Shanghai we saw much to further confirm us; and we lived in Tungchow by the side of one of the best schools in China and could see for ourselves. Mrs. B. wrote over the *nom de plume* "The Modern Paul" an article for the Recorder, showing how disgusting to her were some of the methods pursued. As my views developed, I wrote them to the Board and to individuals. The usual reply from the Board was to the effect that these matters were none of my business, and individuals would say that these are matters for the Board. So it went on till about a year ago, an officer of the Board wrote me a very strong and earnest letter exhorting me to throw off Dr. Crawford's influence, and making accusations against him which he failed utterly to substantiate. He said

Dr. C. went on attacking the Board in public and private and yet continued to hold a position under and draw a salary from it. It was this last sentence that caused me to decide to sever my connection from the Board. Why? Because I failed to find proof of any of the attacks alleged against Dr. C., unless to express views different from those held by the Board be considered an attack. The officer in his reply to my reply failed still to give any proof of such attacks except his own declaration. I did find recorded in printed document what I think might be construed as attacks on Dr. C. Here, then, was my situation: I must cease to be connected with the Board or decide never to advocate any views different from theirs; or else do so at the risk of being accused of making attacks and still taking salary from them.

My views of mission policy had then become strong convictions—principles which I felt I must advocate. Hence my decision and resulting action. I had not yet written the article which gave rise to the Board's resolutions. Deciding to resign me of course to think what I should do to continue my God-given work. My mind fell upon the plan for churches, or groups of churches, to do their own work. I believed such to be Scriptural, and hence practicable. This plan I wrote to the Board, asking them to turn their attention to bringing such relation between churches and missionaries. The officer to whom it was sent, I suppose, failed to present it to the Board. He replied, "I do not think your plan will work." I wrote this to the Board now about nine months ago. Thus my views have developed. "I believed, therefore have I spoken" and acted. Discuss the question and do not slap at me.

I am curious to see how the people are to account for Bro. D. W. Herring's views, so similar to mine and with which I am in heartiest sympathy, especially since he has neither lost his wife, nor been compelled to separate from his only child nor lived with Dr. Crawford. He lives five hundred miles from us, and communication is seldom.

I ask my brethren to read carefully my statements, and then judge if my resignation is the result of "a number of unfortunate circumstances." I earnestly desire to be and do right.

I should not have said the words about Dr. Crawford I have, but for the fact that he was made responsible for my sins (?). I know his name in this letter so frequently will not give it strength with the people, but I am for truth and justice before success.

I stand ever ready to turn from any error when convinced that I am wrong, but slaps and cuts and utter disregard for arguments are by no means convincing to me, except as they convince me of the weakness of the cause of my opponents.

Praying God's blessings upon all and that we may ever seek and find right paths,
I am yours in Christ,
G. P. BOSTICK.

Chefoo, China, May 16, 1892.

Please Keep Before the People.

RESOLUTIONS OF THE CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION.

[Adopted June 23d and 24d, 1892.]

Resolved, That it is the sense of this Committee that the words "Permanent Centennial Fund of \$250,000," as used in our last report to the Southern Baptist Convention, were not intended to designate an endowment fund the interest of which only shall be used, but a fund for "Bible translation, chapel building, a church edifice fund, and other permanent work." If, therefore, any donor of a special sum shall see fit to direct that his gift be invested and only the interest be expended, his wishes must be sacredly observed, but without such specific directions these gifts will be turned over to the Board for the benefit of their work, and the Boards will be authorized and expected to expend the said funds, as occasion may require, in work of a permanent character connected with their missionary operations.

Resolved, That this Centennial Committee respectfully recommend to the Boards to use all proper methods, by circulars, by instruction to their agents, and by use of their own publications and the denominational papers generally, to make clear to all our brethren that Centennial contributions may be either for the support and enlargement of the present work of the Boards or for the funding permanent work at the option of the donors; and that it is understood that only those contributions specifically designated for the latter fund will be put to the credit of that fund.

Resolved, That the representatives of this Committee be hereby instructed, in advocating the interests and claims of the Centennial, to emphasize the idea of enlarged operations as well as the raising a fund for permanent work, and to strive constantly to uplift our people to a higher plane of being for Christ and giving systematically for the promotion of his cause.

Richmond, Va.

Keeping Christ's commandments that we may have the love of the Father and the Son, and the fellowship of the saints, and the life of the world to come. — 1 John 2: 3-5.