

PREFACE.

The writer of the following pages was early in life impressed with the idea that God as the Creator, and preserver of the world, was its only rightful law-maker and ruler. And that all the evil that afflicted humanity and the world, had arisen from a failure on the part of man to whom the rule of the earth had been committed by God, to maintain in its purity and sovereignty the authority and dominion of God as the only rule of this world. From the Bible he learned man had sinned against God, that an element of discord and confusion had hence entered into the world, and the world was out of harmonious relations with God and the universe. This being true, it early occurred to his mind, that the one sure and sovereign remedy for these evils, was the absolute submission to God on the part of man, and a restoration of his authority and rule in all the domains of the world. In the study of the Bible, he saw the one purpose of God, as set forth in that book, was to bring man back under his own rule and government so to re-establish his authority and rule on earth, that God's will "shall be done on earth as it is in Heaven."

To this end, man's duty is to learn the will of God, and trustingly do that will, leaving results and events with God. It became a fixed principle with him, that in religion man must in faith do what God has ordained he should do, what he has declared would be well-pleasing to him; and then leave all in the hands of him who overrules the universe.

While I failed to see then as I now see, that religion embraced every duty and every relation of man and moulds every thought, purpose and action of his being, the feeling would creep into my mind that even in political affairs man should do only what God commanded him. Finally the years of sectional strife, war, bloodshed, destruction and desolation swept over our land, and the spectacle was presented, of disciples of the

Prince of Peace, with murderous weapons seeking the lives of their fellowmen. Brethren for whom Christ died, children of him who came to heal the broken-hearted, to be a father to the fatherless and a husband to the widow, were found imbruing their hands in the blood of their own brethren in Christ, making their sisters widows and their sisters' children orphans. It took but little thought to see that this course is abhorrent to the principles of the religion of the Savior, who died that even his enemies might live. He had plainly declared that his children could not fight with carnal weapons even for the establishment of his own Kingdom. Much less could they slay and destroy one another in the contentions and strivings of the kingdoms of this world. It took but little thought to see that Christians cannot fight, cannot slay one another or their fellowmen, at the behest of any earthly ruler, or to establish or maintain any human government. But if he cannot fight himself, can he vote to make another fight? What I lead or influence another to do, I do through that other. The man who votes to put another in a place or position, is in honor, bound to maintain him in that position, and is responsible for all the actions, courses or results that logically and necessarily flow from the occupancy and maintenance of that position. A man who votes to bring about a war, or that votes for that which logically and necessarily brings about war is responsible for that war and for all the necessary and usual attendants and results of that war.

But some may say, It is a Christian's duty to vote against war and against that which will produce war. Yes, but how can he know which course will, or will not bring about war? Many men voted for secession of the States South, with a view that that was the only way to prevent war. Some thought separation, as between Abraham and Lot's families, would end the strife that would be interminable within the Union. Others thought, argued and voted, If the Southern States show a united front there will be no war. If we are divided the division will invite war. So voted for secession to avoid war.

With these difficulties, inconsistencies and troubles lying in the way, I determined to take the Bible and as a wholly new question study the origin of human government, its relations to God, to man, to the church of Jesus Christ, and the connection of the Christian therewith and his duty to it. It did not take

PREFACE.



me long to reach a conclusion, which is given in the following pages. The study and constant review of the subject, the criticisms made of my writing on the subject have strengthened the conclusion, and leave me not a doubt as to its truthfulness.

The substance of this book was published in the *GOSPEL ADVOCATE* in the years 1866-67—and again in *Christian Quarterly*, of current year. With the request that each reader will carefully and prayerfully examine the Scriptures of sacred truth, to see if these things are true, and if true accept the truth and courageously maintain it, the writer commends this volume and those who read it to the God of all grace and love.

DAVID LIPSCOMB.

THE ORIGIN, MISSION, AND DESTINY

—OF—

CIVIL GOVERNMENT,

—AND THE—

CHRISTIAN'S RELATION TO IT.

We use the term "*Civil Government*" in this book as synonymous with *human government*, in contradistinction to a government by God, or the *Divine Government*. The design in writing this book is to determine definitely the origin, mission, and destiny of human governments, their relation to God, and the relation the Church and the individual Christian sustain to them.

In the beginning God created the earth and all that therein is. Over the material world and all the lower creation, he gave man control.

"Let us make man in our own image, after our own likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." (Gen. i: 26.) "And the Lord God commanded the man." (Gen. ii: 10.)

Without reference to what the command was, this indicates that while God committed the government of the under-creation to man, he reserved to himself the right and prerogative of governing man. God would govern and guide man; man would govern the under-creation, and so the whole world would be held under the government of God, man immediately and the under-creation through man.

But, man refused to be governed by God. First as an individual he violated the specific command of God. "A

little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." This leaven of disobedience wrought the rejection of the Divine government, and was transmitted from the individual to the family, to the tribe, to the race. "While men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way." When man was off his guard the enemy of God and man implanted the seeds of distrust and disaffection, and the heart, the mind and the life of man became disloyal to God.

"The serpent said unto the woman, ye shall not surely die; for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods knowing good and evil." (Gen. iii: 4, 5.)

The act of individual disobedience culminated in the effort of man to organize a government of his own, so that he himself might permanently conduct the affairs of earth, free from the control of God, and independent of God's government. The first account we have of organized human government, is (Gen. x: 8.)

"And Cush begat Nimrod, he began to be a mighty one in the earth. * * * The beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar."

Nimrod was the grandson of Ham, and the founder of the first government organized outside of the family institution, ordained by God from the beginning. Nimrod made other families tributary to himself, and established a kingdom of which he was the head. The declaration, "Let us build us a city and a tower whose top may reach unto heaven, and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the earth," (Gen. xi: 4), shows the animus and the spirit of the movement, and that it was intended to resist the purpose of God to govern them and to distribute them over the face of the earth, and to maintain themselves in a government of their own organizing. The effort to unite themselves more closely than God's rule united them, resulted in the confusion of their language and their division

and dispersion. The design and purpose of this beginning of human government on earth was to oppose, counteract, and displace the government of God on earth.

The institution of human government was an act of rebellion and began among those in rebellion against God, with the purpose of superseding the Divine rule with the rule of man. Its founder was Nimrod, the grandson of Ham, whose family was accursed. In accordance with a well-defined principle of God's over-ruling providence, the family of this founder has been the greatest sufferer by the institution which he originated. Josephus, with whatever credit he may be entitled to in reference to matters so remote, says that "Nimrod, the founder and leader, appealed to them that it was too humiliating and degrading for wise human beings capable of forming governments of their own, to submit to the government of another." Josephus B. 1 ch. iii says,

"When they flourished with a numerous youth, God admonished them to send out numerous colonies, but imagining that the prosperity they enjoyed was not derived from the favor of God, did not obey him. Now it was Nimrod who excited them to such affront and contempt of God * * * He also gradually changed the government into tyranny, seeing no other way of turning men from the fear of God, but to bring them into a constant dependence on his own power."

This is quoted to show the government existed before Nimrod, else he could not *change* it. Undoubtedly the government instituted by God—the family government—existed. He changed this by subjugating a number of families and tribes into one government under himself. The quotation so far as Josephus is authority in the matter, shows that the human government and dependence upon that government for good—was the means adopted to wean them away from fidelity to God and his government, and it was instituted for the purpose of supplanting God's government.

It is clear that human government had its origin in the rejection of the authority of God, and that it was intended

to supersede the Divine government, and itself constituted the organized rebellion of man against God. This beginning of human government God called *Babel*, confusion, strife. It introduced into the world the organized development and embodiment of the spirit of rebellion, strife and confusion among men. God christened it *Babel*. It soon grew into the blood-thirsty, hectoring Babylon, and subjugated the surrounding families, tribes and kingdoms to its dominion, and became the first universal empire of the earth, and maintained its sway until the days of Daniel.

When we consider that God and the early inhabitants of the earth named things, persons, and institutions from their chief and distinguishing characteristic, it cannot be doubted, that God intended in calling this first government established by man "confusion," and in so speedily confusing the language of its founders, to foretell that the chief and necessary results flowing from the displacement of the Divine will and the establishment and perpetuation of human government, would be confusion, strife, bloodshed, and perpetual warfare in the world. The results have vindicated the truth of the prophecy couched in the name. The chief occupation of human governments from the beginning has been war. Nine-tenths of the taxes paid by the human family, have gone to preparing for, carrying on, or paying the expenses of war.

All the wars and strifes between tribes, races, nations, from the beginning until now, have been the result of man's effort to govern himself and the world, rather than to submit to the government of God. I am not intimating in this, that human government is not necessary, I believe that it is necessary, and that God has ordained it as a punishment to man for refusing to submit to the government of God and it must exist so long as the human family or any considerable portion of it refuses to submit to the gov-

ernment of God. Human government originated in the rebellion of man against his Maker, and was the organized effort of man to govern himself and to promote his own good and to conduct the affairs of the world independently of the government of God. It was the organized rebellion of man against God and his government. The essential character of this government, as portrayed by God will be given here-after.

Babylon, the first universal empire of earth, growing out of this rebellion of man against God, continued until overthrown, displaced and superseded by the Medo-Persian Empire. This Babylonish empire, with all its possessions, conquests, and honors, "was left" to the Medo-Persian. The Medo-Persian exercised universal dominion until overthrown by the Grecian power, to whom it "was left" with all of its glories, honors, and possessions. The Grecian succeeded the Medo-Persian, and continued until subdued by the Roman, to whom "were left" its power and possessions. The Roman continued until broken in pieces by the little stone cut out of the mountain without hands. The fragments of this Roman empire remain until the present day. All the human governments of earth are the broken fragments—or the offshoots of these—of the Roman empire. We emphasize this line of descent of the human or civil governments of earth, because it is usually claimed that the civil governments of this day are the successors and offshoots of the Mosaic dispensation, or of the government God ordained among the Jews.

They clearly run back through the Roman, the Grecian, the Medo-Persian, the Babylonian, and for its origin to Babel of Nimrod on the plains of Shinar. The connecting links are few and there can be no doubt as to the line of succession.

On the other hand, God has always kept on earth a gov-

ernment of his own, in contrast and in conflict with these. In Eden the government was direct, individual and personal. God spake directly to man and gave specific commands to be obeyed.

Men multiplied into families. God gave the law to the father and made him the law-giver, the mediator, and priest to his family. When the family of Abraham grew into the proportions of a nation, God gave it laws suited to a national existence. Moses became the law-giver of this nation. He is sometimes called the law-maker. This is a mistake, God was the law-maker. He gave the law to Moses, and Moses gave it to the people. God has never authorized any being or power beneath his own throne to make laws to govern his own people. This is the prerogative he has reserved to himself. God is the only law-maker of his people, the only rightful law-maker of the universe.

This government of God among the children of Israel was corrupted and perverted, but some of the Jews were schooled by it, and trained, as were others, not Jews, by the providence of God, for service in a higher and more perfect kingdom of God. God then took the Jewish national government out of the way, and superseded it with the kingdom of heaven—the Church of God, which was fitted for the service of individuals—few or all—in all nations, and aspires to universal and eternal dominion on earth. It is to embrace all people, all nations, kindreds and tribes, and to mingle and mould them into one universal brotherhood, to break in pieces and destroy all earthly kingdoms and dominions, and fill the whole earth and stand forever. The mission of this Church is to rescue and redeem the earth from the rule and dominion of the human kingdoms, from the rebellion against God, and to reinstate the authority and rule of God on earth through this own kingdom. Through and in it Christ must reign until he shall have

“put down all rule, and all authority and all power.” Then will he deliver up the kingdom to God the Father, and himself be subject to God, that God ruling in and through his restored kingdom on earth, may be all and in all, the only ruler of the heavens and of the earth. These two lines of government, the Divine and the human, reaching from the beginning down to the present day, have been kept distinct and separate by God, often commingled and dove-tailed one into the other by men, with what relations and results to each other we will examine.

THE RELATION OF THE DIVINE TO THE HUMAN.

We have called attention to the origin of human government. It originated among the enemies of God, animated by a spirit of rebellion against God. The human and the Divine each passed through the same stages in reaching its culmination. The individual, the family, the nation, the universal dominion. Abraham, first after the flood, was set apart to raise a holy family to God, and so became the father of a people loyal to God, and furnished a people that would maintain the government of God on earth. He was required to separate himself from his own family and kindred, from the land of his nativity, and from the home and friends of his childhood, and to go forth, a stranger among strangers, in a strange land. He was not to affiliate, or his children to inter-marry with the people of this land. He was to start a family that should be a separate, distinct, and peculiar people among the nations of earth, consecrated to the establishment and maintenance of the government of God among and over men. That it might have no family ties to draw it into alliance with the peoples who sustain the human government, Abram married his own sister. Isaac's wife was the daughter of his mother's brother who lived in a foreign land. Jacob's wives were the daughters of his uncle. From these kindred they were