

NON-RESISTANCE ASSERTED

OR THE

KINGDOM OF CHRIST AND THE
KINGDOM OF THIS WORLD

SEPARATED

AND

NO CONCORD BETWEEN
CHRIST AND BELIAL

IN TWO PARTS

BY DANIEL MUSSER

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“But I say unto you that ye resist not evil.” Matthew 5:39.

“Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor.” Ephesians 5:1-2.

PREFACE

I have little to say by way of preface to the following pages, or apology to make for presenting them to the public. We have each a never-dying soul entrusted to our care, the preparation for whose eternal welfare is the highest duty that the Lord enjoins upon us in his word. When we remember that it is impossible for this soul to be eternally happy, except that we, in this life, submit ourselves to the will of God as declared in his word, we cannot fail to be painfully impressed with the indifference with which that word is generally regarded, even by those who profess the religion of Jesus Christ. The desire to awaken interest, incite inquiry, exercise the understanding, and impress the mind with a sense of the truth and unchangeableness of God's word is the only apology I have to make; and I desire hereby to request in advance the reader's earnest attention to the doctrine and argument contained here.

In order to make truth perceptible and clear, it is necessary to expose error; in doing which we must necessarily take notice of such doctrines and practices as we conceive to be erroneous and detrimental to truth. In doing this, the originators of those doctrines, or their friends and adherents, may feel themselves aggrieved. To unnecessarily wound or irritate the feelings of those with whom we disagree is unjustifiable and injurious. Prejudice bars the heart against conviction, and makes the presentation of truth vain to the understanding. But whatever is necessary for the vindication or support of truth needs no apology. While I have withheld nothing which presented itself, which I thought would be calculated to accomplish the object proposed, I have yet endeavored to use no language which would be offensive or, by creating prejudice, stand in the way of conviction. I am a firm believer in the truth of what is here presented, and know I must answer for it at the bar of God; and, if I know myself, I have not been influenced by any other motive than that of love in presenting it to the public.

After the completion of the first part, I was induced, by the solicitation of my brethren to undertake the second part of the work. If this had been designed originally, it might, perhaps, have been differently and more advantageously arranged.

With these remarks I will commit the work, with the reader and myself, to the Lord, praying him to bless it and make it effectual to the end for which it was designed.

DANIEL MUSSER
Lampeter, Lancaster Co., PA
March 1st, 1864.

TRANSCRIBER'S NOTES

Daniel Musser, a Reformed Mennonite, wrote this lengthy pamphlet at the height of the American Civil War, and much of what he had to say was in specific reference to that conflict. This is one of the works that Leo Tolstoy highly praised in his *Kingdom of God is Within You*. Much of what Musser had to say is, indeed, praiseworthy and still valid. His major themes include a complete theology of man's relationship to God in its pristine created state, after the fall, under the Mosaic Law, and in the power of the Holy Spirit; and the related topics of God's immutability, His commands given in, and specifically intended for, each of these four states, and the importance of being different from the rest of the world. "The love that the disciples bear to each other must then be something different from what the world shows; otherwise, it would not distinguish them from others." I should point out that whenever he used the word *resist* or *resistance* by itself, he had *violent resistance* in mind.

I have had to edit this work more than others that I have transcribed. In many places his grammar and sentence structure were simply poor. In other places I consider his logic and theology to have been flawed. Still, I have tried to minimize my changes to grammar, archaic style, and words too far out of modern usage, and I have tried to be careful in all cases to preserve the original sense of the text. All of the footnotes are mine; they were not part of the original document. I have added them to clarify certain passages and to point out areas in which I consider Musser to have been inconsistent or incorrect. I do not claim them to be anything more than my opinions. Please bring any mistakes to my attention so that I can correct them. This transcription is under no copyright protection. It is my gift to you. You may freely copy, print, and transmit it, but please do not change or sell it.

Many of Musser's views are very rigid, and I do not endorse everything he wrote. I guessed that his must have been a very small church – and I was right.¹ The *No Concord* section is dedicated to defending his right to criticize Christians who resist, why those who would resist or criticize him are not really Christians, and why he ought to shun them. I consider that self-righteousness instead of humility. In his mind our relationship with the world is an all or nothing affair. This has led to a separation of such communities that has severely limited their ability to evangelize the world. Instead of being "in the world, but not of the world," they have chosen a position apart from and outside of the world.

One of his stands, which I find particularly difficult, is that true Christians must not vote. This presents a dilemma for the conscientious Christian, for just laws and the general welfare of society can be promoted through voting. Perhaps the mistake is made when Christians think they can further God's kingdom by voting. If it is not wrong for a worldly man to hold office and govern, may I vote for him as long as I have the expectation that all he does will be for worldly benefit, and as long as I also work for his conversion, which would mean his resignation from office? In my mind, choice is always between two or more worldly persons – independent of whether they profess to be "Christian" or not – because, if they seek worldly power and authority, they are being worldly. But, there is benign worldliness and evil worldliness, and tyrants and incompetents can work much mischief if allowed to come to power.

Tom Lock

¹ See www.gameo.org/encyclopedia/contents/R4454ME.html. It never had more than 2500 members, and currently numbers less than 300.

NON-RESISTANCE ASSERTED

“But I say unto you that ye resist not evil.” Matthew 5:39

“Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor.” Ephesians 5:1-2.

It is well known that there are great numbers of people in the United States who profess to be conscientiously opposed to war. They are mostly called non-resistants, or defenseless Christians, and refuse to defend their country or take up arms at the call of the Government to go forth in battle against its enemies. Until now, this conscientious scruple has been respected by the Government in this country, and those claiming it have been relieved or excused from this service. Since the commencement of the present civil war in the United States, the public mind has been unusually agitated on this subject.

It is not unreasonable that such persons as feel it to be their duty to go forth and endure the hardships of camp life, and imperil health, life, and limb in defense of their country and Government, should feel some jealousy of those who have, with themselves, long enjoyed the protection and benefits of the Government, and yet, in the hour of its need, refuse to share the burden of its defense and protection. Neither is it strange that such a position should be looked upon as most unreasonable and monstrous, and those who hold it are regarded with some suspicion.

The true principles of non-resistance are very imperfectly understood by a large proportion even of those who profess to be conscientiously opposed to war. No wonder, then, that such a position should be looked upon with suspicion, as being unreasonable and unjust to those who discharge their duty to the Government and country.

Many able speakers and writers (no doubt with honest intentions and good disposition) have raised their voices and pens to refute the idea of non-resistance as both unreasonable and unscriptural. This is not to be wondered at, seeing those who profess the principle and do not possess it or correctly understand it act inconsistently, and thereby bring the profession into disrepute and contempt. However much misapplication or abuse of a principle may prejudice the minds of those who are unacquainted with a subject, it is yet no argument against its truth.

These considerations have induced me to undertake (by the help of God) to set forth the true scriptural grounds of the non-resistant profession, so that those who profess the defenseless doctrine and do not fully comprehend its meaning may be induced to compare their profession and practice with the truth, and thereby be enabled to perceive their error; and those who contend that the principle is unscriptural may also have an opportunity to learn the true grounds of our profession, and be enabled to act understandingly.

Everyone who professes the Christian religion will acknowledge that the Bible must be the rule of life; and when man, either with or without human authority, attempts to impose a duty upon him which is contrary to, or inconsistent with the teaching of the Bible, it is his duty to refuse obedience, even though to disobey would cost him his life. “Judge ye, whether it is right to obey man rather than God,” said Peter and John. The truth, then, of the principle of non-resistance rests on the Bible. The Bible is consistent. No position that is inconsistent can be maintained by the Bible. If it can be shown that the

Bible teaches non-resistance, it must be admitted to be both just and reasonable; and we must subscribe to it or be found to “fight against God,” for “the Scripture cannot be broken.”

The Bible consists of the books of the Old and New Testaments, which were given to man as a means whereby he might know the will of God; and that part of it containing God’s commandments to man is written in such plain and comprehensible language that men of common capacity, or common natural understanding, can comprehend so much of it as is necessary to the working out of their souls’ salvation. In studying the Bible, there are certain truths to be borne in mind. We must receive it as the word of an unchangeable God, and harmony must exist throughout the whole work. When its different commands *seem* to conflict, they must be made to harmonize – not by rejecting one or rendering it nugatory, but by reflecting upon all the attendant circumstances and relations attending the command, aided by the light which Revelation has imparted in the different ages of the world, and the circumstances under which the command was given.

The Old Testament does, very plainly, command and countenance resistance of evil; and if the taking away of life, or war and destruction, were necessary to make that resistance effectual, it was justified and commanded. This no one will pretend to deny. But that the New Testament, equally as plainly, commands non-resistance of evil, and passive submission to injustice and wrong, and that the whole tenor, as well as the spirit breathed throughout the Gospel, is as plainly inconsistent with war, every candid mind must also admit. If the Old Testament had never existed, is there a man in the world who could gather the shadow of a pretext from the New Testament to justify him in resisting evil by violence? These two Testaments must be made to harmonize, not by disregarding one and rejecting its commands, but by making them agree and be consistent with God’s immutability, without making one of His declared attributes do violence to the other.

There is but one way in which non-resistants can be consistent. That is by entirely separating the kingdom of Christ and that of this world. By this separation I do not only mean that the Government does not control the Church, or the Church the Government. But I mean that those who constitute the Church do not take any part in, or exert any influence over the Government, either individually or collectively.

I have observed that the true principle of non-resistance is imperfectly understood by large numbers of those who profess to be conscientiously opposed to war. This arises from their not being truly and thoroughly converted, which alone can bring man into possession of this principle. They read the New Testament and there perceive that the duties taught by Christ and his Apostles are inconsistent with war; hence they conclude it is wrong to fight and they are conscientious non-combatants. Great numbers are sincere, and truly conscientious, and would rather sacrifice their lives than violate their consciences by going to war. They look upon God’s command as being imperative, but they do not perceive the principle on which the command is based. God does not give any arbitrary commands. There is a principle underlying every command of God. To be zealous and strenuous in adhering to the command, without possessing or understanding the principle, is legalism, and begets inconsistency. It was this principle which the Savior so severely reproved in the Jews, telling them they strain at a gnat, but swallow a camel; and, by their traditions, violate the spirit of the Law. Paul also said that they abhor idols but commit sacrilege; and have zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.

True and thorough conversion brings the soul into possession of the love of God. To be possessed of this is to possess the divine nature. This is the principle that underlies the command not to fight or to resist evil. Those who possess it walk in love toward all men, either friend or enemy; it looses us from the world, places our treasure in Heaven, and leads us to show, by our walk and conversation on earth, that our treasure is above. That which we love, we will contend for and defend. We cannot serve two masters; either we will love the one and hate the other, or cleave to the one and despise the other.

Scripture calls those who are unconverted “the world,” because they love the world – their affections and their chief interests are there. They show their attachment to the world by an eager pursuit of those things which are in it. They contend, strive, and fight for them. Government was ordained for the protection of life and property, and, as these belong to this world, it is called the kingdom of this world; and as the unconverted have so deep an interest in this kingdom, they show their attachment and interest in it by laboring and contending for such Government and officers as will secure to them the largest share of this enjoyment; and the more devotedly they labor in this direction, the more love and attachment they show to the things of this world, and the stronger their attachment grows also.

We are all by nature of the world, and our inclinations are as above stated; but Christ has chosen his disciples out of the world and, by changing their hearts and renewing their minds by conversion, has set their affections on things that are above. He said they “*are no more of the world,*” their “treasure is laid up in Heaven,” their hearts are there, and “their lives are hidden with Christ in God.” Christ is their head and king; they follow, obey, and keep His commandments, by which they show their love to him. These constitute the kingdom of Christ. It would therefore not be consistent if His subjects would labor, strive, contend, and fight for earthly things, or those of the kingdom of this world, out of which Christ has chosen them; and the doing so would tend to weaken and destroy the principle on which His kingdom is founded.

Government is established for the security of justice and the protection of life and property, and Paul said it is an ordinance of God. All government is based on the law of justice, and its laws are presumed to be consistent with this principle.² Law is the means by which Government acts, it implies the presence of power, and power consists in the sword. Law, without the sword, would be worthless. No law would restrain the lawless or unjust if it were not for the sword behind the law. There is, therefore, no difference in principle between civil and military law. It is customary to make a distinction between civil and military law, and men who are conscientiously scrupulous about taking the sword and going to battle will yet appeal to civil law for the protection of their rights. But analyze civil and military law, and they are brought together in the executive branch, which must exist in every Government, and without which all law is worthless and Government cannot exist. If a man takes away my goods, or does me any other injustice, and refuses, upon my personal application, to do me justice, and if I appeal to the law for the redress of grievance and take out a warrant to have the offender arrested, he may resist the officer. The officer may call in assistance and, if necessary to enforce the law, deadly weapons may be used, blood shed, and life destroyed. What is this but war? In the case of refusal to pay a debt, it is the same; if it were not for the military behind the civil law, the unjust would no more regard the civil process than they would the individual request of the creditor. Civil law is only an arm of the military power, and when we threaten a man by an appeal to the law, we point to the sword and threaten him with its vengeance. Therefore, as there can be no Government without law, so there can be no law without the sword. By the sword Government is almost universally set up, by this it stands, and by this it almost universally falls or perishes again.

Every intelligent reader knows that among those who profess to be conscientious in bearing arms, some will serve offices in the kingdom of this world. They will appeal to law if a man refuses to pay them a debt which he owes, or refuses to do them justice in any transaction between them; or if property is stolen, or injury is done to their person or estate, they will appeal to the law for redress. They will serve as legislators, jurors, arbitrators, etc., and will vote at elections for any and every officer elected by the people.

² There is abundant evidence that this assumption is not always correct. When laws and government are contrary to God’s justice, the believer’s duty is to disobey them.

I have observed that those who profess non-resistance and do not understand the principle, act inconsistently, and thereby bring the profession into disrepute. When men enjoy the honors and emoluments of office in the kingdom of this world, assist as legislators to make laws, vote for and thereby appoint men as their representatives to make laws for them, petition them for the enactment of laws favorable to their interests, appeal to law for justice and protection, and then, after having made and used the law and sued for and enjoyed its protection, to plead their conscience in the way of defending or supporting that law in its hour of danger, is certainly very inconsistent, and is a position which cannot be supported by the Bible. I would further ask this class of non-resistants with what consistency a man could say it would be wrong for him to fight, and yet sue or prosecute a man for debt or crime, when he knows that he is appealing to the sword for justice and, if the offender persists, that open war and bloodshed will be the consequence? Or with what consistency can a man serve as a legislator, and assist to make laws, and then say it is sin to enforce those laws? Or with what consistency can a man sit as a juror or arbitrator, decide the penalty or award due to a party, and then say he who enforces the award or penalty commits sin? Or with what consistency can a man vote to place another in an office that imposes an executive duty upon him, and then say he does wrong in executing that duty?

The Chief Magistrate of these United States is the head of the army. The constitution and law, by authority of which he holds his office or position, has strictly specified his duties, and ordered that, before he takes his position, he shall bind his conscience by an oath to be faithful to the discharge of every duty that the constitution and law prescribes. One of the chief of these duties is to be Commander-in-Chief of the Army, to repel invasion, and to quell insurrection. He bears the sword, and it is fair to presume that every man who voted to place him there desired him to use that sword,³ and the whole power of the army and navy, in the discharge of this duty in the event of its becoming necessary. At least, every man who voted for him did so with this knowledge, and thereby delegated to him his share of authority; and it would be very unreasonable that, as a conscientious man, he should place him there, and desire or expect that he would perjure himself by disregarding his oath. Those who cast their votes for the President placed him in office and put the sword into his hands, and I do not see how anyone can contend that it is sin for him to use it, and not for them to give him power to do so! Or how can they deny that it was their *wish* that he should do so! He could not have done it if they had not given him power. When a President is elected, there is a virtual understanding between him and his constituents. He promises that he will be a good and faithful officer; they, that they will be good and faithful subjects. He, that he will be the head of the army; they, that they will compose that army. He promises that he will protect them in their rights and liberties, repel invasion, and quell insurrection. But no one understands him to promise, or expects him to do this, by his own arm. Everyone expects and knows that, if necessary, the President will call upon the people to discharge their duty by responding to his call for troops to enable him to discharge *his* duty. This is as distinctly implied and understood as the President's duties are. Then, when they have placed him in this responsible position, with as full an understanding of duty on the one part as the other, they certainly act very inconsistently, and are as unfaithful to the trust they have themselves assumed, as the President would be if he neglected or refused to discharge his duty.

A year ago last fall, Thaddeus Stevens was the avowed war candidate for Congress from this county – pledged to support the Administration in a vigorous prosecution of the war. Great numbers of young men voted for him on this ground. At least, it was with that knowledge, and it is fair to presume that they desired him to do as he promised. Shortly after the election, the first draft for men to supply the

³ This presumes that it is wrong for a Christian to vote for the lesser of two evils in order to promote the general welfare, even when the Christian understands that it will not directly benefit God's kingdom. Also see the transcriber's notes.

army came off. There were numbers of these same young men, who had so voted, who came forward and affirmed that they were conscientious and could not fight! Their spiritual teachers and guides testified that they were members of their "Church," and that these conscientious scruples are embodied in their tenets. Was this consistent? Or is it possible that these teachers could themselves have had a clear and consistent view of the true principles of non-resistance?

At the last election for Governor of this State, very large numbers of these "non-resistants," both young and old, voted for Governor Curtin; but if a call were to be made on them to take the sword, they would plead their conscience in the way. Yet they voted to place the sword in his hand, knowing that he was an earnest advocate of an active and vigorous prosecution of the war; and that he had, on different occasions, called upon them to come to his assistance, armed and equipped, to repel the invading enemy and rescue the Commonwealth from his grasp. I do not intend this as any reflection on the policy or principles of either our Governor or Congressman. I have not a word to say against them, or any other officer. They are officers in the kingdom of this world, and acted consistently with their position and profession; but those of their constituents alluded to did not. Neither do I think that their voting for the opposite candidate would have been any more consistent. I only cite these particular cases because they serve to elucidate my position, and may serve to lead men to inquire into truth. Whenever a person seeks to influence or control the kingdom of this world, or mold it according to his interests or fancy, and then, in the hour of its need, refuses it his support, it is no wonder he should be looked upon with suspicion and disgust.

Every person professing to be a Christian must acknowledge that there are two classes of people in the world: converted and unconverted. The Bible recognizes this distinction, and every Christian acknowledges it. Great numbers of those who are unconverted are moral, just, humane, and honorable; but a very large proportion, also, are the reverse. They are unjust, immoral, and dishonorable. If there were no government in the world, the latter class would bring ruin and destruction on the former. For the purpose, then, of restraining those evil-disposed persons, and preventing them from corrupting those of better disposition, God has appointed government, as Peter said, "for the punishment of evil-doers, and the praise (or protection) of those that do well." Therefore, every Christian must acknowledge that government is a Divine institution – that it is his duty to honor and obey it in all things, except when it asks that of him which God has forbidden.

The whole Bible must be recognized by the Christian as being a declaration of the will of God to man. When men read the Bible they perceive that, in the part called the Old Testament, God has countenanced, sanctioned, and even commanded war and destruction and that, in the New Testament, He has taught a doctrine quite the contrary, and altogether inconsistent with war. This seems to many as a contradiction, and gives skeptics a pretext for rejecting the Bible altogether. Others, who regard the Bible as the Word of God, fail to make the proper distinction between Law and Gospel, and make the New Testament yield to the Old. They perceive that God did clearly command war in the Old Testament and, as the whole Bible declares God to be immutable, and as war was right then, so it must be now; and thus are guilty of the inconsistency of making the New Testament subservient to the Old. These constitute the "combatant Christians." Others again, perceive the inconsistency of the idea that the Old Testament has precedence of the New, inasmuch as every new revelation of God to man gave him a clearer and more perfect testimony or declaration of the Divine will, and that which had been previously given must be subservient to the last – so the New Testament must be more binding, and consequently war, which is so manifestly contrary to the teaching of the gospel, must be wrong. These constitute the "non-combatant Christians." But a very large proportion of these non-combatants are not possessed of the spirit of the gospel, and do not perceive the principle upon which non-resistance is founded. These, consequently, do not separate the kingdom of Christ and that of this world; and the

consequence is the different degrees of violation of the true principles of non-resistance mentioned before, with its whole train of inconsistencies.

I have observed before that the Bible is consistent. It must be so, for it is of God, and He cannot be inconsistent. Therefore, if we are born of God, we must be consistent with the Bible; otherwise our inconsistency is evidence that God's work of true conversion has not been wrought in us, and we consequently have no promise of eternal life.

All God's dealings with man have respect to the condition he is in at the time. His commands to man are in accordance with man's necessity. In order, then, to perceive the perfect harmony and agreement with the perfect consistency of the Old and New Testaments, or of the Law and the Gospel, it becomes necessary to take a view of the different states or conditions that man was in at the time in which God gave His different revelations.

In relation to God, man can stand only in that of saint or sinner, at peace or enmity, in his love or under his wrath, in the spirit or in the flesh. In one of these two conditions every man in creation stands. God's commands to man have relation to these two conditions, and are in accordance with them. In his primitive state, man was possessed of the spirit of God. The love of God and the Divine nature were consequents of the possession of this spirit. This spirit and love of God is what constituted the image of God, in which man was created. In this state man needed no government. The influence of the spirit of God would lead him to do what was right and just. God gave him but a single command, which was designed, and was sufficient (if it had been obeyed), to preserve him in his blessed and happy state.

When man fell by disobedience, he lost this spirit and its consequent life and love; and, in its stead, love of self and carnal desires were infused into the heart, and became the motive power or principle which influenced his actions. Here man's condition and relation to God were changed; the spirit of God had forsaken him; he was defiled with sin, and unfit to be the temple of God, as the Holy Spirit could not dwell in a heart of sin. Man had no power to cleanse himself of sin, or to change his relation to God; but God gave him a promise of the "woman's seed" which would bruise the serpent's head. This was a present promise of a future good; but all the comfort it could bring was the hope of a prospective favor. The "woman's seed" would restore man to the state from which he had fallen by restoring the lost image or love of God. Until that time, man must be content to remain in his destitute condition, and in faith wait for the promised Redeemer, or Deliverer.

By the voluntary act of man, in transgressing the command of God, he yielded himself into the service of Sin; and as the love of God wherein he was created was the image of God, so the self-love which took possession of the heart in the fall may be said to be the image of Satan, whose servant he now became.

Without self-love, there would be neither injustice nor violence; but where this principle reigns, strife, contention, injustice, and violence are sure to follow. Consequent upon this principle, which man imbibed in his disobedience, all manner of evil speedily followed. Man had fallen from the spirit to the flesh, and the works of the flesh became so manifest that "the Earth was filled with violence, and every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was evil continually."

Man, by his transgression, did not fall beyond the power of God to restore him, as the fallen angels did. He lost the love and image of God; yet the Divine impress was not wholly extinguished. There still remained a "seed," consisting of the law of God, written, stamped, or impressed on the heart, together with a degree of sympathy and affection for his fellow-creature. Those persons who obeyed this law and impulse, acted justly and rightly towards their fellow man. Many did not obey this Divine impress, but followed the lusts and desires of the flesh and mind, which led to the commission of acts of injustice and violence; and, as they would not be restrained by the law which God had written in their hearts, or the sense of justice which he had impressed on their minds, it became necessary for God to establish

government on earth and put in its hands the sword, by the fear of which those who regarded the law of justice written in their hearts could keep the lawless and violent in subjection. Otherwise all order and decency would have been subverted, great misery and distress would have ensued on earth, and the species even would have become extinct.

It is easy to perceive here that it was man's self-love that made government necessary, and to keep it in subjection God has established government on earth. It is therefore God's ordinance and institution – it is good, and will be necessary *until the cause that made it so is removed*.

I wish the reader to bear these general principles in mind. It is certain that man, before the fall, needed no government and, in possession of the principle that he there lost, would never have needed any. It is certain that self-love is what made it necessary, and that it was for the restraining of this principle that government was instituted or ordained. It is also certain that self-love was infused into the heart of man in his fall, and that it is the work and offspring of the Devil.

Government was founded and established on the law of justice, which I have observed was stamped or impressed on the heart of man; and was good and effectual in proportion as those who exercised it had clear perceptions from this law of what was right and wrong, and were themselves willing to allow this sense to control their self-love and carnal desires.

The mere impression of this law upon the mind does not seem to have given man in general so clear a perception of its force as was necessary for its proper effect, nor does he seem to have been properly aware of the consequences of its violation until God, in his infinite mercy, engraved it on tablets of stone so that it could be the more clearly embraced by the understanding; and also attended it by the declaration that the curse, or death, should be the reward of his transgression. We do not, therefore, have any account of any well-defined code of general law, or of any just and equitable administration of it, until after the giving of the Law to Moses from Mount Sinai. Here God gave to man the first well-defined code of laws we have any account of,⁴ as well as the most strictly just one that has ever been enacted.

The calling of Abraham and the choosing of Israel formed a new era in the history of the world, but it did not change man's relation to God. The virtues of Abraham, Moses, David and others, were highly commended. Abraham was called the friend of God, Moses was faithful in his entire house and the Lord spoke to him face to face, and David was a man after God's own heart; but these characteristics did not change their relation to God. Their faith gave them confidence that they would someday be delivered; but they, in their lifetime, were still in bondage. The additional revelation God made to them, and the promises he gave them, did not change their relation to God from that which believers were in before this revelation and promise were given. Adam, Enoch, and Noah stood in the same relation, in every respect, as they did. They had fallen with the whole world under sin, and nothing but the blood of Christ could wash away that sin. The justice of God required the suffering of death and, until that was accomplished, it was not satisfied. Christ was their surety, they knew he would pay the debt, and God knew that his justice would be satisfied; but they were not released until after the debt was paid. Herein lies the difference between Old and New Testament believers, between believers before and after Christ's suffering. Christ gave John the Baptist the testimony that he was *more* than a prophet, and that of all that had been born of woman, there had not risen a greater than he; notwithstanding, he who is *least* in the kingdom of Heaven is greater than him.

It is argued that David, and other Old Testament believers, stood in the same relation to God as the New Testament saints did. But this cannot be done without doing violence to God's attribute of justice, and rejecting the teaching of the Apostle Paul. A man who is imprisoned for debt, and knows that his

⁴ The code of Hammurabi, which predates the Mosaic Law by 300 years, was not discovered until 1901.

creditor will hold him bound until the debt is paid, and knows, also, that he can never acquire means to pay it, may feel a degree of comfort and consolation under a promise that his debt will be paid, and he released. If he feels a full assurance, and no doubt that it will be done, he may feel joyous in hope, but he must still feel a higher degree of bliss when it is paid, and he is led out of prison, and can enjoy the pleasures of liberty. God's justice must be satisfied, and this is not done until payment is made.

The Lord foretold by the prophet Isaiah that he would send Christ to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and to proclaim the opening of the prison to those who are bound. Who were those who were captive and bound in prison? Was not the whole human family thus bound? And was there ever a deliverance or opening of the prison until Christ came? Christ said, "*This day* is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears." Therefore, David and all Old Testament believers were still captives, and this is what made them desire to see the days of Christ; because they knew they would be released. Sin gave Satan power to hold them bound until Christ took away their sin and overcame him who held the power of death.

There are many expressions in the Old Testament in relation to the forgiveness of sins, and promises that their sins shall be forgiven, and are forgiven; but we cannot understand this as changing their relation to God, or relieving their souls from the guilt of sin before God. Nothing could take away sin but the blood of Christ, and this was not yet shed; consequently, it could not have taken it away. If it had been possible that the devil could have brought Jesus Christ to sin and fall under the curse of the Law, where would David and the patriarchs have been? Certainly death would have held Christ, and, with him, all those who had died in hope and faith in him. Paul said, "If Christ is not risen your faith is vain, and ye are yet in your sins, and they that have fallen asleep in Christ are perished."

David in his 51st psalm expressed his penitence for sin and prayed to the Lord to have mercy on him, according to his loving kindness, and according to the multitude of his tender mercies, to blot out his transgressions – to wash him thoroughly from his iniquities, and cleanse him from his sin. "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean. Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy holy spirit from me."

In this prayer, no doubt David looked unto Christ and the offering that he knew he would make for his sin, and desired the interest in the blood and merits of Christ, which would make his soul whiter than snow. But it must be evident that the blood of Christ could only do this when it was once shed; for without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.

Paul, in speaking of Noah, Abraham, David, and others in Hebrews 11, said, "They obtained a good report through faith, and all died in faith, but they did *not* receive the promise." If David had his sins forgiven in the sense in which New Testament saints have, and received the same Holy Spirit (as is contended he did from his expression in this psalm) that the disciples of Jesus did, what was the promise that he did not receive? And what were those better things, which Paul said in this same chapter, that were prepared for them? Paul said, "God having provided some better thing for us." Christ said that Abraham saw his day and was glad; and David said that his heart was glad, and his flesh would rest in hope, because the Holy One would neither see corruption, nor his soul be left in hell. David also said, and Paul quoted and verified it in Romans, that God looked down from heaven to see if there were any who did good, but the answer was that they had altogether become filthy and there were none that did good, no not *one*. Paul, arguing this same point with those who thought they were clean from sin because of their obedience to the Law or its righteousness, said, "Are we (the Jews) better than them (the Gentiles). No, in no wise, for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin." And again, "God has included all in unbelief that he might have mercy upon all."

I have observed that the expression of David in the 51st Psalm, that God should not take his holy spirit from him, does not imply that David was in possession of, or under the influence of, the Holy Spirit in the sense in which the New Testament saints enjoyed it. We find the word “holy” applied to many Divine operations, or things connected with Divine worship. And it may be said that anything and everything that is of God is holy. God is a spirit, and all his influence must be spiritual and holy; but it is not the same holy influence that Christ promised to his disciples, which he said they could not receive unless he went to the Father. The law that God had written in the heart of man was an operation of his spirit, and was holy. This law David had violated, and he felt that God might justly deal with him as Paul said he did with the Gentiles, who, when they knew God, did not honor him as God. He gave them over to hardness of heart, and his spirit ceased to strive with them. This spirit looked most holy to David in view of his own unholy act; and he saw that if this spirit were taken from him, he would be in a most deplorable situation. Therefore, he prayed to the Lord not to take that holy spirit from him, which would cause his conscience to accuse him when he violated its precepts.

God said by the prophet in Jeremiah 31 that the day would come when he would make a new covenant with the houses of Israel and Judah; but not according to the one he made with them when he took them by the hand and led them out of Egypt. He would “forgive their iniquity, and remember their sins no more.” God here expressly said that the new would not be like the old covenant in this thing; that he will in it, or under it, *forgive sin*. This shows plainly that, under the old covenant, sin was not forgiven.

Those who under the old covenant had obtained a good report were under the Law. They had transgressed it, and it declared the curse and sentence of death against them. Jesus Christ became their surety. In the fullness of time he would shed his blood, and lay down his life for them. This, though it did not take the sin away, gave the confidence that it would do so in time; and made the possessor of the faith comfortable and happy. God also could, through the mediator, look upon those who believed in Him with joy and delight. These died in faith, but did not see their hope realized in their lifetimes. Therefore, the relation of these men to God was not changed by the Law, commandments, and promises of Israel. To Adam it was said that the woman’s seed would bruise the serpent’s head. To Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the promise was renewed, and said, “*All the families of the earth shall be blessed by him.*”

The Law, ordinances, and ceremonies of Israel, therefore, made no change in man’s relation to God; they could not take away sin, neither did they destroy self-love in the heart, nor restore the lost image of Divine love. The Law gave them a better knowledge of sin, and a clearer revelation of God’s design in sending the woman’s seed, and assurance that he should come of the seed of Abraham, from the loins of David. But still Israel was not changed, only in so far as they would let themselves be instructed through these revelations would they be more just and faithful in their relations to their fellow-men, and act their faith more firmly on the promises of the seed which was to come. The great majority, however, did not regard these advantages, and allowed the flesh, with its lusts and desires, to rule them, and had to be kept in subjection by the means that God had appointed for this purpose from the beginning.

The chief part of the history, as well as of the commands and promises contained in the Old Testament, is in relation to Israel, and mainly relates to Israel’s external state. The chief events of this history are instructive to the Christian as being literal figures and types of spiritual operations that must transpire within us. Paul said of some of them that they happened as examples to us, and are written for our instruction.

The first ordinances commanded in the scripture that have relation to Divine worship are in connection with this people. They are called by Paul “carnal ordinances.” But they are especially typical of the true spiritual service that every true believer must render. The promises under these

commands were chiefly of a temporal character. It is worthy of special observation that, under the old covenant, God gave great promises of earthly blessings; while in the Gospel, it is quite the contrary. The reason is obvious: Israel was carnal. They could not comprehend spiritual things and their kingdom was an earthly one, while that of Christ is a spiritual kingdom, as his subjects are spiritual and spiritually minded. As the kingdom of Israel was a natural earthly kingdom, and their blessings natural earthly blessings, they could not be established or maintained by any other than natural means, which is the sword. The kingdom of Israel was established on the same grounds and principles as all other governments were, and differed from them only in God having given them a clearer knowledge of those principles. God called the people of Israel his people, a peculiar people, etc., but their peculiarity consisted only in an outward observance of the Law he gave them. So long as the rulers were faithful and obedient, and kept the nation in subjection, they continued under all the blessings God had promised them. If they committed some trespass, they had to bring their trespass offering, and their sin was forgiven. But this related only to the outward natural consequences, curse, disadvantage, or disability it would entail upon them. It would not take away the sin before God; for God had no pleasure in offerings, burnt offerings, and sacrifices for sin; nor was it possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin.

These offerings were types of the offering of Christ's body for sin, but yet they served for the personal purification of those who brought them. That is, they were absolved from the disabilities that would attach to their transgression. This was the case, whether those who offered them had knowledge of the spiritual significance or not; or whether they believed in Christ or not; their outward obedience entitled them to the benefit of outward absolution. The revelation that God made to Israel was only preparatory to the perfect will that he would reveal in the Gospel.

The state of mind man was in under the Law and Jewish dispensation, and the impossibility of his comprehending spiritual things, may be very clearly perceived by the feeling that the Apostles evinced during the public ministry of the Savior. They went in and out with him, and companied with him continually from his baptism until the time of his departure from them, when he ascended into Heaven. They heard and saw all that he said and did, and he spoke as no man had ever spoken; and still they could not comprehend his teaching. They could understand and do any natural thing he would direct; but they could not comprehend the nature of his kingdom. Their minds were carnal and could not comprehend spiritual things until they received the Holy Spirit. It is fair to presume that the Apostles were at least as far (if not further) enlightened, as any of those whom Paul mentions as having obtained a good report. Christ spoke to them of the nature of his kingdom, of its joys, of Heaven, and of eternal life; but still all their hopes and aspirations were for a natural kingdom, and enjoying distinction in it. And when he would speak to them of spiritual things, they would put carnal constructions upon them; and so soon as Christ was crucified, they were filled with sorrow and their hopes ended.

Is it not very plain that man's state under the Law was very different from that under the Gospel? And that this is the reason why God gave different commands under the one, from what he did under the other? The Law could not give the Holy Spirit, which would change and renew the heart. John said when speaking of this spirit, "For the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." And Jesus himself said that if he did not go to the Father, the Holy Spirit would not come to them; and he said that he had many things to say to his disciples, but they could not bear them then; however, when the spirit of truth came, he would guide them into all truth. Why could they not bear them? Because they were yet carnal! Man could not overcome the flesh, or the deeds of the body, without the spirit of God; and therefore God did not require it of him until God endowed him with the power to accomplish the work.

God's purpose was to prepare man for the reception of Christ and the benefits of his mission, and so he established an earthly kingdom with such laws and statutes as would tend to impress the mind with a just sense of what is right and good; which, in itself, should be instructive in the kingdom of Christ, which he designed to establish afterwards and of which the first was a type or figure.

In this figurative kingdom, it was said, if they would "hearken diligently to the voice of the Lord their God, and observe and do all the commandments which the Lord commanded them," that he would "set them on high above all the nations of the earth. Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store. Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out. The Lord shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face. They shall come out against thee one way, and shall flee before thee seven ways. The Lord shall command the blessings upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thy hand unto; and he shall bless thee in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." The opposite of all these blessings was threatened as a curse for disobedience of God's laws and commandments.

Because this kingdom was earthly and natural, and the promises to Israel for obedience were earthly and natural, the means by which it was established and maintained or upheld must of necessity have been of the same nature. Their dealings with each other, as well as with their neighbors and surrounding nations, were to be characterized by justice and righteousness. They were promised to have the victory over their enemies. Under the Law which God gave them they could do no injustice to individuals or nations; consequently, their enemies were such without cause; and when they would come out against Israel, they must act unjustly and God's blessing would be with Israel, so that they would scatter them seven ways. If they did any injustice to a neighboring nation they had no such promise, but the contrary. They should be dispersed seven ways. Consequently, the Jews could have no unrighteous war with God's approval. Neither could an individual do any violence, but in a just cause. God commanded Israel to take the sword and to use it, but in no other case except in defense of right and justice; and, whenever they unsheathed the sword in any other cause, God was not with them; and it being in violation of his command would bring them under his displeasure, and under the curse which he declared would follow disobedience. Therefore, it would ever be impossible for true Israelites to fight against each other, or in an unjust cause with anyone.

The purpose, therefore, for which God ordained government is very clear. God designed that order should be preserved in the world, and, as man had fallen from the spirit under the flesh, and would not be controlled by the law which was written in his heart, God ordained government for the purpose, and gave to it the sword as a means by which to keep the lawless and violent in subjection. And when it became necessary to this end, He commanded man to use the sword against offenders, whether they were individuals or nations.

There was no such ordinance before the fall; and that God commanded it after the fall in man's altered relation shows no change in God! Man had changed, but God was still the same. Under the Mosaic dispensation, man's relation to God, or his fellow man, was not changed from what it was before. The same cause existing, the same remedy had of necessity to be continued. But Moses, by whom the Law was given to Israel, spoke of another Prophet whom the Lord would raise up, and him they should hear "in all things whatsoever *He* shall say unto you." Is this not as truly a confirmation of what had gone before as the promise of a change in the priesthood? Man's relation to God was changed by the coming of the Prophet spoken of by Moses, and it argues no change in God to change his Law under this altered relation, any more than it does that he imposed new duties on him after he had fallen from the relation in which God created him. All the duties of the ceremonial Law ended with the

establishing of the Gospel, and it proves no more change in God, that He should absolve the New Testament believer from certain moral duties, which he was subject to under the Law, than that he should be absolved from the ceremonial duties he was under obligation to perform then.

What God said in the Law and Prophets (or what He there commanded), He said to man under the Law, but therein He spoke of another law, covenant, or kingdom, which He would establish afterwards. Moses, in the Law and the Prophets, spoke of and referred to Christ as higher authority than they. Moses spoke of the Prophet who God would raise, as already observed. And Peter said that Prophet was Christ. "All the Prophets from Samuel, and those who followed after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days." In this Prophet, and in those days, there was made a change in the priesthood, and Paul said, "there must of necessity also be made a change of the Law." Evidently this was so because the change of priesthood made a change of circumstances. Does this then argue that God is mutable? The Prophets, in speaking of this new covenant and kingdom, these times and days, spoke of them as being of grace and love, peace, and unity.

Christ came to restore the lost image in man, establish the kingdom of Heaven within him, and bring him under the new covenant or relation spoken of in the Old Testament. This change was accomplished by Christ coming into the world, being put under the Law, and fulfilling all its righteous requirements. Taking the sins of the world upon himself, he offered himself upon the cross to satisfy the justice of God for the sins man had committed. The virtue and merit of Christ's life and death became that of the believer, and justified him in the sight of God. Here was a changed relation of man towards God. The virtue of Christ's death purified his soul from sin, and, being clothed with his righteousness, he was pure, holy, and acceptable in the beloved.

The Savior had made a special promise of the Holy Spirit to those who believed in him. But no one received this spirit until after Christ's death and resurrection. This Christ plainly told them. He must first be glorified, and if he did not go hence, the Comforter would not come. This promise was not made to Old Testament believers, nor to those who believed while Christ was yet in the flesh on earth, for the reason that their souls were not yet purified from sin. The love of self and the world was yet in possession of the heart, and the spirit and love of God could not dwell with it until the heart or soul was purged by the blood of Christ.

The reception of this spirit is what finished the work of conversion. By it the lost love and image of God was restored, and man received power to overcome the flesh, or carnal desires. Before this he was earthly minded, but now he became Heavenly minded. This is very plainly discerned in the conduct and conversation of the Apostles before and after they had received the Holy Spirit. They now stood in a new relation to God, and a new influence took possession of them and brought forth new fruits.

This is where Christ's kingdom had its origin in the hearts of those true believers who were wrought by the spirit into the image of Christ.

Christ plainly told his Apostles, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven." This amounts to a plain declaration that they were at that time not yet converted in that sense in which the Savior applied the word. This position is denied by great numbers of professed Christians; and to explain myself briefly, is the reason for this digression. In the first place, the plain declaration of the Savior should be enough to set the question at rest. He was speaking to his Apostles, and he said "ye" – that is, they to whom he was speaking "except ye be converted." If they were at that time such converted persons as the Savior had in view, he could not have addressed them as he did.

We all know that the word "conversion" signifies change. When applied to man, it means that his views, sentiments, or faith is changed. But every such change in man is not the conversion that the Savior had in view. The language of the Apostles plainly shows that they had no conception of the

nature of the kingdom that Christ was about to establish. And it also plainly betrays the self-love that dwelt in the heart. I do not allude to their language on this occasion only, but to their language generally while the Savior was with them in the flesh. The kingdom of Christ is a spiritual kingdom, and spiritual things must be spiritually discerned. The Apostles at that time had not yet received the Holy Spirit; consequently they could not discern the kingdom or the Savior's description of it.

The greatest and most marvelous change in the mind, sentiments, or affections of man, which is recorded in the Bible, is that which was wrought on the Apostles and disciples by the power of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, as well as what followed on other believers afterwards. From that time we do not observe a single expression betraying ignorance of the nature of Christ's kingdom, or betraying self-love in themselves. The love of God in the heart was displayed in all they said and did, and their love to the brethren, and even their enemies, was perceptible in their actions. There was no asking who was to be the greatest, no asking who should sit on the right or left in the kingdom, no asking if they should smite with the sword, or if they should pray for fire to fall down from Heaven and consume their enemies. They prayed to God while being stoned to death, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge," and when they were buffeted, they went away rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Jesus. This was the change or conversion that I believe the Savior had in view when he addressed the Apostles as quoted above, and without which they could not enter into the kingdom of Heaven. God winked at the times of man's ignorance, but now the time had come when the true light appeared, and he commanded all men everywhere to repent. The kingdom of Heaven was set up in the heart by the power of the Holy Spirit, and I conceive the change that the Savior alluded to was not wrought until this was done.

The reason why Christ said to his disciples that they could not bear those many things which he had to say unto them, was, because they were yet carnal; their hearts were not yet changed by the Holy Spirit. But when this spirit would come, he would lead them into all truth. This is the reason why God did not give man the commands under the Law, which he did under the Gospel. They were still carnal; they could not bear or comprehend Gospel commands. Their hearts were in the world, and to direct them in a way in which they would be required to sacrifice worldly interests would have deprived them of all comfort, and would have made them miserable. They could not "bear" it. Therefore, they had to be directed in such a way as to make them as happy as the circumstances of their condition and relation to God would permit them to be made. For this reason they were directed in such a way under the Law as to improve their material condition, yet still directing their attention to some future good and advanced condition far surpassing their present state.

It is very evident that Christ did not come into the world to improve its political condition, to advance worldly wisdom, to favor external interests, or in any way to improve the material condition of man. Every question having relation to any such end was evaded, and answered so as to tend to the spiritual welfare of man and the salvation of his soul. Man's inclinations were already too strongly bent in this direction, and Christ's teaching and instructions were to draw him from it, and to direct him to the attainment of a higher, better, and more enduring substance. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all other things shall be added." He told us not to care for what we shall eat, or what we shall drink, or with what we shall be clothed. Rather, enter into life lame, maimed, or with one eye, than having all our members and be cast into Hell. And again, fear not those who kill the body, but after that can do no more. These were his teachings in a general way, and they show clearly the purpose that brought him into the world. The blessings, which are among the first of his recorded promises, are of a spiritual or eternal kind. I do not believe the blessings promised in the beginning of Christ's Sermon on the Mount are intended to be bestowed on anyone who is possessed of only one of the traits of character named therein, and destitute of all the others (if indeed this could be so). But I think the whole taken

together is intended to form the complete character of a Christian, who from a motive of love to God obeys the further commands given in this sermon.

Moses, the Law, and all the legal ordinances and ceremonies could not take away sin or give the spirit of God. Christ did this, showing that His power far exceeded that of the Law. Christ, as the son over his own house, having given Moses the Law and ceremonies (as his servants) all the authority they possessed, could very properly at his coming assume higher authority than they possessed; and especially as he only authorized them to act until he came; and they by his authority spoke of his coming, and referred the faithful to him for a better knowledge of the will of God.

Christ at his coming said, "Of old it was said, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy.'" By that "of old," He evidently meant that statute of Moses, which was under the old covenant based on the Law (for there it says so). But I as the new lawgiver say unto you, "love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you." He also said, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say unto you, that you resist not evil. But whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also; and whosoever will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also." Christ told us why we should do this. He wishes the children of God to be distinguished from those of the world. He said, "that ye may be the children of your Father which is in Heaven, for He maketh his sun to rise on the good and on the evil, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." He will have us show our parentage by this, and how it distinguishes us from others. "For if you love them which love you, what reward have you? Or if ye salute your brethren only, what do you more than others? Do not even the publicans so?" Christ will have his disciples to conduct themselves so as to distinguish them from the world, and to show that they partake of the Divine nature.

All will admit that Christ did give commands, and that we must obey them. I would ask, what those here cited are, if they are not commands? Is there a single command given by our Savior that sounds more imperative than these here named? It was said of old, and they acted accordingly. *But now I say unto you, do thus.*

Christ told his disciples plainly that they would have to suffer. But he told them if they were persecuted in one city, they should flee to another. When his Apostles showed their self-love by asking who should be the greatest in the kingdom of Heaven, he reproved them severely by telling them in very emphatic language that, unless they were converted and became as little children, they could not enter into His kingdom at all. And when several of them asked Him whether they should pray for fire to come down from Heaven and consume their enemies, He told them they did not know what manner of spirit they were of. When Peter drew his sword, the Savior told him to put up his sword in his place. All Christ's conduct and actions were in accordance with these teachings and declarations. "When he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to Him that judgeth righteously." Peter said that He left us an example that *we should follow His steps*. I would ask our opponents, *what is the example of Christ, which we are to follow?*

These are Christ's direct teachings, and they are as plain as I would know how to make language. If the Savior did not mean this, I am at a loss to know what the purpose of His language was. Every syllable of His teaching was in this spirit of passive submission and non-resistance; and every action of His life was in accordance with the same spirit.

In view of the charge of Moses, that we shall hear Christ, and His own repeated declarations that we must obey His commands and do the will of the Heavenly Father, it is highly important that we form correct conclusions in regard to what He did teach. "Not everyone that sayeth unto me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven. Why call ye me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not the things which I say." And again, "He that hath my

commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me. He that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings. If ye love me, keep my commandments. The Father which hath sent me, gave me commandment what I should say, and what I should speak; and I know that His commandment is life everlasting.” What are we to understand by His commandment, if those here alluded to are not such? Go into the world and preach, and baptize is His command, but what are we to preach? Evidently what He preached and taught; and as He said, “Teach them to *observe all things whatsoever I command you,*” the first question with us should be, what are His commands? Then the Old Testament, reason, and necessity all must yield to Him, for Christ is supreme commander. The Old Testament, sound reason, and necessity – all harmonize with Christ’s teaching, if examined and directed by the spirit of God; but if it should be dark to us that we cannot bring them to harmonize, we must yet give Christ supremacy, for we are commanded to take every thought captive under obedience to Him.

Paul said that the mind shall be in us, which also was in Christ Jesus. How are we to know Christ’s mind if not by His words and actions? The Scribes and Pharisees evidently understood the Savior to teach non-resistance, or else they would not have concluded as they did: “If we let this man thus alone, all men will believe on Him, and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.” The Christian nations are the greatest warriors known, and it is often asserted that the best Christians make the best soldiers. If this is so, why did these wily and sagacious Jews come to the conclusion they did? If Christ’s religion made them better soldiers than they were before, why could the Romans more easily take away their place and nation than if they were not Christians? The same argument is made use of now against the non-resistant doctrine. “If all men would do so, what would become of the country and nation?” they say.

So long as the Apostles hearts were not changed by the Holy Spirit, they could not rightly understand the Savior’s doctrine or comprehend his meaning when He spoke of His kingdom, hence the expressions before alluded to. But after they had received this spirit, we hear them make no more such expressions, but all their teachings, acts, and deeds harmonize and agree most perfectly with this self-sacrificing non-resistant spirit. Paul said in Romans 12, “Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath, for it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay,’ saith the Lord. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.” Doesn’t the Apostle here show an exact agreement with our idea of what the Savior taught? Again, Paul said in Ephesians 5, “Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and *walk* in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet smelling savor.” This is very exactly to the point of Christ’s expression, when He commanded his disciples to love and do good to their enemies. He said they shall do so, “that they may be the children of their Father in Heaven,” who deals so graciously with the children of men as to send rain and let His sun shine on good and evil. The evil and unjust are God’s enemies. The expressions of Paul and Christ are very nearly in the same words and surely mean the same thing. “Be ye followers of God as dear children.” The more obedient a child is to a parent, the dearer he or she is; and parents do address them with expressions of endearment. But such children as are disobedient are not usually addressed as *dear* children. Children who love their parents and are attached to them usually imitate their good example. Therefore, the Apostle addressing his fellow believers said that, as dear children, they shall obey God. Since they have been made children of God by faith, and partakers of the Divine nature by the spirit of God, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, He will have them show their birth, nature, and nationality by displaying in their deeds and actions the distinctive attributes of the parent. But Paul said further, we shall “walk in love.” What is walking in love? We have all experienced a sense of love, and know what it is; but this is a thing that we cannot command in ourselves, nor can others command it in us; and, if we do experience the

sensation, it is not walking in it. We read a great deal in the scriptures about walking: walking in the ways of the Lord, in the Law of the Lord, in the ways of their Father; walking in the ways of the ungodly, in sin, in unrighteousness, etc.; and walking before the Lord, with God, worthy of our vocation, etc. It is evident, therefore, that to *walk*, in the sense here intended, is meant our words, deeds, and actions. These shall be in accordance with the idea expressed by that in which we are said to walk. To walk in love, then, is evidently intended to mean that we shall speak, do, and act the part which love would dictate. But towards whom shall we thus conduct ourselves, or *walk*? Evidently towards all men – even our enemies. Christ especially mentions them, our friends he need not mention. Nature will teach us this, for even the Gentiles do so. But the Apostle makes his meaning very plain by telling us how we shall love and walk. He said, “Walk in love *as Christ also has loved us*, and gave himself for us.” Christ loved us when we were His enemies, and showed His love by giving himself for us! While we were acting in defiance to the spirit of His grace, He loved us and gave himself for us, and washed us in His own blood! Is it not evident, then, that if we walk in love, as Christ loved us, we cannot take the life of any man? The Apostle’s language is in complete agreement with what Christ taught in His Sermon on the Mount. We can take no other sense out of it without doing violence to plain language. People sometimes say “they can love a man and smite him, they are not angry with those against whom they fight in battle, and by prosecuting a man for crime, they are doing him good.” But it would be hard to convince a man that you love him, when you are thrusting at him with a sword or bayonet. At least it would not be “*walking in love*” towards him. Christ did not walk thus towards us. He could have prayed to his Father and He would have given him legions of angels to punish His wicked and malicious enemies. He gave Himself for us, our sins pierced His soul, and the wrath He was under for our sins caused Him to sweat blood. Thus he loved us, and thus He walked towards us; and the Apostle will have us to lay down our life, rather than take that of another. John said, “If we say we know God, and do not keep his commandments, we lie and the truth is not in us. But if we keep his word, then verily the love of God is perfected in us.” And again, “Herein is the love of God manifested towards us, because God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.” To follow God and walk in love is evidently then to manifest our love, by our deeds and actions, in the way that God manifested His love towards us: namely, by His dealings with us.

The Epistles and Acts of the Apostles, throughout, breathe this passive non-resistant spirit, and without doing violence to their language, no one can gather anything else from them. Their actions, or walk, and conduct throughout as well, show how they were led by the spirit, and how they understood the Savior. Paul said, “Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat; we are made the filth and off-scouring of all things unto this day.” Not a single instance of resistance of evil is recorded, or a command given that can be tortured into such an idea.

One of our opponents, endeavoring to prove “non-resistance a false doctrine,” says, “I grant that the Gospel, adopted and followed out, would prevent war.” This is all we assert and shows that the language of the Gospel is so plain, and our position so strongly maintained therein, that even our opponents are constrained to admit its truth! Whoever adopts the Gospel and follows it out will not engage in war. But this will not prevent those who do not adopt and follow it out from doing so. No worldly Government can adopt and follow out the Gospel. Government is founded upon law and justice, and this must have the executive power of the sword. The Gospel is founded on grace and mercy, and the lawless and violent will not regard this. This same author says, “Christ teaches the *individual*, and not the State.” And again, “Governments have no future beyond this life, therefore they are not directly addressed by the Gospel message.” This we admit, therefore it was not expected, nor intended, that Government should “adopt and follow out the Gospel.” But, can anyone deny that it was intended that those who *are* addressed in the Gospel should also adopt and follow it out? The

individuals are addressed, and it is intended and expected that they will “adopt and follow out the Gospel,” and what then? Why, according to the Author’s own admission, “war will be prevented.” I would ask the Author whether there ever was a Christian who did not “*adopt and carry out the Gospel.*”⁵

The mass of mankind did not receive or accept the benefits of Christ’s mission, and their relation to God was consequently not changed by the Gospel. “He came to his own but his own did not receive him, but as many as received him, he gave power to become the sons of God.” To those who did not believe on him, he said that they shall die in their sins, and where he goes they cannot come. They shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides upon them; their sin remains and they are condemned already. Christ came to restore the lost image in man, and establish the kingdom of Heaven within him. Everyone can perceive that this work was only wrought in those who received Him, who believed in His name, or who were converted. But the condition of those who did not believe was not changed. They remained in their sins under the Law and condemnation where all men, both Jews and Gentiles, lay before the advent of Christ, or even before the giving of the Law or the choosing of Israel. Their relation to God was not changed, their hearts were the same as before, and their self-love was not destroyed. Consequently, they still remained where they had been since the fall of man. These have no new command under the Gospel other than the invitation to repent and believe the Gospel, but as long as they did not accept the invitation, God could give them no better command than that which He had long since given them, and under which they could enjoy all the happiness they were capable of enjoying in their present condition and relation. Christ is not their priest until they embrace Him by faith. Consequently, to them there is no change of the Law.

All those who truly believed on the Savior were cleansed from their sins and received the gift of the Holy Spirit, by the power of which their hearts were renewed, and the lost image was restored by shedding the love of God abroad in the heart. Self-love was destroyed, as injustice and violence are the effects of self-love, and so, the cause being removed, the effect must of necessity cease, and, as the principle of Divine love which took its place would lead its possessor to walk in love to all men, there would as a consequence be no necessity for Government. But as a vast majority of mankind did not believe, they could not receive the spirit, and their hearts continued unchanged, so that among these there will ever be unjust, lawless, and violent persons who need Government and the sword to keep them in subjection. The Savior labored to convict these unbelievers of their sins, and He grieved because they would not know the things that were for their peace. He gave them no commandment except that they repent and be converted. There was no necessity for any other commands to them, for obedience to no other command could change their relation to God, and this was the whole object of the Savior’s mission. Besides, they had all the moral commands in the Law.

Before the coming of Christ, the whole world, Jew and Gentile, moral and immoral, just and unjust, were under sin. Their relation to God was the same, except that those who believed had the promise of justification through what Christ would do at His coming. Their faith brought consolation and hope with it, but they did not realize their hope in this life. Those who did not believe in Christ’s coming stood in the same relation to God as if there had never been a promise given. Yet they had the same law

⁵ A fairer question would be, was there ever was a Christian who did not “adopt and carry out the Gospel” and who, in the very act of not carrying out the Gospel, was at that moment following Christ? Unfortunately, not all “Christians” follow Christ perfectly all the time. “If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.” There are good Christians, bad Christians, and Christians that make me want to say, “If you are going to call yourself a Christian, then please call me something else!” I leave it up to Him to decide whether or not each person who says, “Lord, Lord,” is truly a Christian, for only He is qualified to judge the heart. In the mean time, I will not hesitate to call certain actions un-Christian.

written in their hearts as the others had, and if they obeyed its moral teaching they enjoyed the natural reward of earthly prosperity and happiness, which was promised to faithfulness under the Law. Thus, after Christ came, those who did not believe were not benefited by the Gospel. Their relation to God was not changed. They remained where they were before in the world and under the kingdom of this world, and were in no way relieved from any duty or deprived of any privilege, interest, or reward that faithfulness to moral duties entitled them to before.

Christ's kingdom is not of this world; therefore, He did not interfere in the affairs of the world. He recognized the kingdom of this world and its authority, as one King recognizes that of another kingdom or nation. But he gave the kingdom, or those in it, no command except the one before alluded to. He came to establish His kingdom, and as there may be said to have been only one kingdom on earth previously (all nations and kingdoms together composed the kingdom of this world), He had to take the subjects who would compose His kingdom out of that of this world. To these, having been brought into a new relation, and their circumstances changed, Christ gave new commandments. All the commands Christ gave must be considered as given to His disciples only.⁶

God had created man in a supremely happy state. This happiness consisted in the love of God and fellowship with Him. This love and fellowship was restored to the believer and constituted a source of exceeding joy and comfort to Him. Christ said that we cannot serve God and Mammon. God will not dwell in a heart filled with the world or worldly care. Therefore, He purges the heart of these, and gives such a law to His subjects as will preserve them from the evil influence the world would exert upon them. If we invest a person with the principles and virtues that Christ commanded to His disciples, is the image not divine? God is love, and those who love dwell in God, and God in them. These commands are all in love, and show to what stature we must be wrought if we bear the image of Christ.

The Holy Spirit imparts the love of God, and brings us into fellowship with God and His Son, Jesus Christ; and this affords infinitely more happiness than all the world can give, and enables its possessor to be joyful under persecution, affliction, scoffing, derision, or whatever the world may inflict upon us. In short, no man can take this joy from us. To show that we prize the love of God higher than anything in the world is an honor to God, and to obey Christ's command of not resisting evil, or contending for earthly treasures or worldly honors, shows the value we set on heavenly things. If Christ had enjoined on His followers the duty to defend their personal rights and liberties, to serve office, to exert themselves to uphold the Government, or to discharge obligations that our opponents would impose upon us; what anxiety and distraction of mind would it not create, and just in proportion would it draw the heart and affections away from God. But if the heart and affections are above where Jesus is, and we hold our earthly possessions as though they were not ours, then, when they are taken away, we can say, "The Lord hath given and the Lord hath taken away." If all things work together for good to those who love the Lord, then whatever befalls us must be for our good,⁷ and we will commit all to the Lord who judges righteously. Must not this state of resignation and submission to the will of God be the happiest that he could have devised? In short, doesn't the plan and all that is connected with it prove that it is Divine?

The ground on which we propose to prove non-resistance to be consistent with the Bible, and the Old and New Testament to be consistent with each other, and both to be in harmony with the idea of God's immutability, is, that God had created man in such a state that he possessed a principle within him, which would have preserved order, decency, justice, and righteousness on earth (however great the number) without any Law or Government. This principle within man, which constituted God's image,

⁶ This must be the case. Otherwise, people would be expected to obey *before* they believed.

⁷ The key phrase here is *all things work together*. There is no situation that the Lord cannot redeem.

was his love, and was both government and law to man. This principle was lost in the fall. Consequently, he lost the governing power, and in its stead self-love, which is a principle of disorder and confusion, was received in the heart. As it was the will of God that order should be preserved on earth, and a governing influence had to be exerted, He established Government with all its necessary attendants of law, and the sword to exert this controlling influence over the restive, unholy, and unruly principle of self-love. This was made necessary by man's change, is perfectly consistent with God's immutability, and is a confirmation of God's unchanging love to man. In love God had created man, and his unchanging love and good will to man induced Him to give man government as the only means which would control him until he was brought back again to the state from which he had fallen. From the fall of man to the coming of Christ, all men stood in the same relation to God, and were in the same condition and circumstances. By the coming of Christ, and the sacrifice of His body on the tree of the cross, all those who embraced His merits, by faith, were restored in their relation to God to the state they were in before the fall. They are made partakers of the Holy Spirit, by which the love of God is shed abroad in the heart, and, as Peter said, are made partakers of the Divine nature, which is the image of God. Here man is brought into a new relation to God, his sins are washed away, his circumstances and condition are changed, and God also changes his law. It is God's unchanging love that induced Him to send His son into the world, and to give himself for man's redemption. Having redeemed him and brought him into this new relation, He gives him a spirit and law with commandments consistent with his changed circumstances and condition. These now need no outward governing influence of law or commandment to lead them to do what is right.⁸ They will do right and obey the law of love written in their hearts, regardless of Law or commandment, either of God or man. That is, not because God's word commands it, but because of the love they possess in their hearts, they would be constrained to do so if God never had given the command.

As these now stand under a new relation to God, by which their condition and circumstances are changed, it is no violation of God's immutability to change the law that is to govern their conduct and actions. The Old Testament gave man the Law that should be his rule of life in the condition he was then in, but spoke of a change that was to come. The New Testament, or Gospel, gives the law that is to be the rule of life under the changed condition referred to in the Old Testament. There is therefore no disagreement between the Old and New Testaments, or any violation of God's immutability.

But all men were not changed in their relation to God by the coming of Christ and the institution of the Gospel. Those who did not believe remained in their sins and under the Law, and were not affected by the Gospel until they believed and embraced it. Consequently, the principle of self-love was not destroyed, and this being what made Government and Law necessary, they had to be continued in the world the same as they had been before the coming of Christ.

The commands in the New Testament are therefore not given to the unconverted. They still stand where man did before the Gospel was promulgated, and are under the same influence. This is the reason why Government is still recognized in the New Testament. Because there is a very large portion of mankind that does not accept the Gospel offer, God still needs to continue government in the world, and He has so ordered that there can be no conflict⁹ between the kingdom of Christ and that of this world. Whenever Christ spoke of the world and its institutions, He spoke of them as something foreign. Of His disciples, He said that they are not of the world. If they were so, the world would love them; but now He has chosen them out of the world, and therefore the world hates them. When his disciples showed

⁸ "The man who obeys God needs no other authority over him." – Petr Chelčický.

⁹ The words "no conflict" do not make sense here. Perhaps Musser meant "no incompatibility," not in the sense that they are in harmony with one another or anything like one another, but in the sense that both can exist at the same time.

their self-love and the spirit of envy, He called them to *Himself* and told them very affectionately, “Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. *But so shall it not be among you.*” This shows that Christ separated His kingdom from that of this world, as His commands make it impossible for those of His kingdom to take part with that of this world. They are in the world, but they are not of the world.

When man fell by transgression, he was placed under the Law. Paul said that as many as are under the Law are under the curse. All men must have been under that curse until Christ came, became a curse for them, and thereby delivered them. Our opponents say all men are under the Law. Then, according to Paul, all would have to be under the curse. But Paul said, “Ye are not under the Law, but under grace.” Certainly those who embrace Christ by faith are made free from the Law. But those who do not believe remain under the Law and under its curse. Under this Law God commanded Israel to fight, and the opponents of non-resistance say, because God approved it then, it must be right now also. In one sense this is true. To all who are now in the same circumstances, or in the same relation to God now that those were then, it is right. They to whom it was right then were under the Law. To all who are under the Law now it is still right. But it does not follow, because it was right for those who were under the Law then, and is also right for those who are under it now, that it must be right for those who are under the Gospel. It is urged that “right is right at all times, and in all places.” This is true, but the inference drawn from it is not true. It is a misconception that, because it was right for the Jews to fight, it is right for the Christians also to fight. I would ask the author of that sentiment whether it is right for us to eat swine’s flesh, and whether it was right for the Jews to do so; whether it is right for us to wear garments partly of flax and partly wool; and whether it was right for the Jews to do so. Is God then mutable?

Moses permitted the Jews to put away their wives for certain causes, which our Savior did not approve in his kingdom. Jesus told us there is but one cause that would justify such an act.¹⁰ If Moses allowed this or gave the Jews this precept, it was certainly not sin for them to do so. But can anyone say that it would not be so for a Christian now? In the beginning there was no such liberty; “from the beginning it was not so;” but when man’s relation to God was changed because of sin, and the flesh was weakened and the heart hardened, God permitted it. But when man’s condition was improved, being made partaker of the Divine nature, and his relation to God changed, Christ, as the perfect lawgiver, restored the ordinance to its primitive state again. It might perhaps be said, speaking strictly, that neither war, nor the Jewish mode of divorce were right in themselves; but man’s condition made it a necessary evil or the lesser of two evils, one of which was inevitable. God permitted it with Israel, but Christ forbids it in man’s altered relation under the Gospel. When I say “man’s altered relation under the Gospel,” I always mean those who are truly converted. The relation of the unconverted is not changed.

One of our opponents says, “Non-resistants fail to see any law in the Gospel, yet there it is with all its majesty, demanding *repentance* or death.” We do hold that there is no other law in the Gospel except the law of love. The Gospel does not demand *repentance* of those who are under the Gospel. It demands it of those who are under the Law. The children of God, who are in the kingdom of Christ, are not demanded to *repent*. They have nothing to repent of, unless they fall into sin. Their sins are forgiven and washed away, and they are completely clean. But those who are under the Law, who, though they believe in Christ, are yet ashamed to confess Him, or are afraid of the persecution, or do not believe in Him, or have said in their hearts they will not have Christ to rule over them, these are invited to repent and come over to Christ’s kingdom and receive His favor.

The kingdom of Christ and that of this world are certainly distinct. The unconverted compose the kingdom of this world. The converted compose the kingdom of Christ, Kingdom of God, or Church of

¹⁰ Tolstoy, in *What I Believe*, makes a good case that even this one justification is not the correct interpretation of the Greek.

God. Those of the kingdom of this world certainly have no lot, part, or interest in the kingdom of Christ. The law of Christ's kingdom, or the law of love, as necessarily prohibits those of the kingdom of Christ from taking any part in the affairs of that of this world. This mystery is dark to great multitudes, but how can it be otherwise? No one can be a citizen of two kingdoms at the same time; he cannot serve two masters. The kingdom of Christ and that of this world might be compared to two natural kingdoms whose authority was over territory that lay in contiguity with each other. The laws of these two kingdoms might be very different, yet the subjects of each would be satisfied that they have justice done them, and so would be happy. But the King of one of the powers offers those of his kingdom a very exceeding rich reward or treasure, at some future period. He also offers or makes it known in the other kingdom that any of its subjects who will leave their King, and come over to him, shall be considered as his subjects and receive the reward equally with his own subjects. Those who would refuse to accept this offer would of course fail of the reward, but they would not fail because they obeyed the laws of the King whose subjects they were, but they would fail because they did not come over to him who offered the favor. They are not censured for obeying the law of their King; only they cannot expect to receive the favor of him, whose offer they have rejected. Thus Christ came and established His kingdom, and invited those in the kingdom of this world to repent and be converted to Him, and they should have the reward of eternal life. But those who are contented with the reward of this world will not heed His invitation, and we cannot find a single promise to them of eternal life, on any other condition. We confess that God had made those things duties under the Law which our opponents claim, and it is their duty still, so long as they are subjects of the kingdom of this world. But if Christ is our King, we must hear Him. No one will be condemned for doing those things which are duties under the old Law. There are numbers of unconverted persons who are as moral, honest, upright, and faithful in the discharge of all their moral and social duties, as any disciple of Jesus Christ. Even an infidel may be this. These enjoy their reward of natural prosperity, comfort, and enjoyment of the blessings of this life. But it is not possible they can enjoy the love of God, unless they are converted and receive the Holy Spirit.¹¹ Neither have they promise of eternal life. If this were not so, salvation would be obtained of works without faith. These men may be officers in Government, may be Generals in the field, or soldiers in the ranks, and commit no sin in those duties, and will not be condemned for them any more than they will for any other moral duty they perform. It is asked, "Is there one law for sinners, and another for Christians?" I say yes! Sinners are under the law of justice, where all men were before Christ came. Christians are under the law of grace and love, where Christ put them. The others are where Christ left them, because they would not obey His call.

There are great numbers of persons whom we must esteem very highly for the excellence of their moral virtues and honorable principles, who would yet be as the young man was, very sorrowful if they must sell or give up all the respect and esteem they have in the world to become a disciple of Christ. But as I have said, an infidel may be all this, so that these virtues, however estimable, do not make a Christian.

One of our opponents says, "The law of God allows the individual to defend himself except in one case, that of persecution for righteousness sake. I am permitted, yes even enjoined, to *resist all evil*." If by "the law of God" the author means the Mosaic Law, there is this error in it that the Law alluded to makes no exceptions for righteousness' sake. It plainly says, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a

¹¹ Musser's theology is a bit murky at this point. He previously stated that those under the Law before Christ, who believed that he would come, were "justified." He also said that *all* men were under the law of justice before Christ came, and *all* would include the entire nation of Israel. They were not converted in the Christian sense, and they certainly did not receive the Holy Spirit, and yet God unquestionably loved them.

tooth,” and there are no exceptions made. And if by the “law of God” is meant the commands of Christ to his disciples, then the other part is without warrant. Christ plainly said that we shall “*not resist evil*,” and there are no exceptions made in regard to the *evil*. Christ said, “If they sue thee at the law, if they take away thy goods, if they smite thee on the cheek.” He here notices three different kinds of evil, legal injustice, theft, and personal violence, in none of which we shall *resist*. There is neither command nor precept in the whole Gospel that says *we shall resist evil of any kind*.¹² If a man attacks me with intent to kill, no matter what the object is, it is an evil; and if I choose to kill him (as the author says) to prevent him from killing me, I certainly resist that evil. In such a case I recompense evil for evil, and Paul said that we shall do this *to no man*. Man may argue that it is no evil to kill a man under such circumstances, but Paul’s meaning is clear, for he afterwards said in the same chapter, Romans 12, “Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath, for it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay,’ saith the Lord. Be not overcome of evil, but *overcome evil with good*.”

This argument shows that the author does understand that Christ forbids resistance to some kinds of evil, but where is his warrant for confining it to that of persecution for religion only? This is certainly a clear assumption! Christ named the most aggravated cases of evil. To sue one by law and take away their coat is certainly very oppressive. There can hardly be a case imagined which would be harder than this. To strike one in the face is as great an indignity and insult as could be offered. To take our goods by stealth is very provoking, and persecution for righteousness’ sake is the most unjustifiable of all persecution. To persecute from motive of interest would not seem to be so utterly diabolical as for *righteousness, doing good*. This is so unreasonable, so fiendish, that no man will admit it. They will always frame some pretext for an excuse. Christ has evidently mentioned the most extreme and aggravating cases for some purpose. Is it reasonable that we should not resist in such aggravated cases of evil, and yet do so for some minor or trivial cause? Christ could not mention every individual species of evil, so he mentioned the most aggravated cases, knowing that if these must be borne, there are no others that could justify resistance.

It is said, “The key to the whole scope of the New Testament is that Jesus Christ teaches the individual and not the State. Governments have no future beyond this life, and are incapable of immortality. Christ teaches the individual duty to the individual.” Assuming that all that the Apostles taught is the same as if Christ had taught it himself, it is evident that we are taught more than individual duty to individuals. He taught all the duty we have to perform. It is true, Christ and the Apostles do not teach the state, or any individual their duty as a servant or officer of the State. Families have no future, nor are they capable of immortality; yet we are taught in the Gospel what is the duty of the husband to the wife, of the father to the children, of the master to the servant, of the wife to the husband and children, of the children to the parents, and of the servants to the masters. These are highly important duties and cannot be violated or neglected with impunity, and serious consequences may result even to society from their neglect. But how much more important is the duty of the governor of nations, or the fate of vast armies, where one man often has the comfort and even life of thousands of persons in his hands. The highly important trust of many officers of Government, and the many allurements attending their positions, would certainly call for some warning and wholesome instruction to enable them to escape the dangers to which they were exposed. Is it not singular that Christ and his Apostles should have omitted giving any instructions to the believer in such important positions and dangerous exposures, if it were, as is often asserted, the duty of Christians to serve their country in the ranks, or as an officer in the field, according as he could best serve the interest of his Government, or to serve in

¹² Musser is speaking of violently resisting evil, and in other places encourages passive resistance. We are certainly to morally and spiritually resist evil. “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”

other positions in the Government, when they pointed out their duty in so many positions of so much less importance? Their duty *to the Government* is especially dwelt upon, but never a word about the duty *in the Government*.¹³ This, in connection with Christ's commands, is conclusive evidence that Christ never designed they should occupy a place there.

This absence of direction in regard to duties in the Government also shows very conclusively that none of Christ's commands are given to the unconverted. They had the Government, and he left it to them with the directions they had before, which were all they had need of.

It is said, "Non-resistants fail to recognize any organizations but their own contracted sects," and that they "ignore the authority of the United States as far as they dare." This is an error. True non-resistants admit the authority of the Government of the United States and admit that it is God's ordinance to man for good. *Not one* will ignore its authority or resist its power, even if they had opportunity or ability to do so. They acknowledge their duty to honor and obey it in all things, except where a duty is attempted to be imposed which is contrary to the teaching of the Gospel. Here they think they should obey God rather than man, but in no case resist. We are told to "read the 13th chapter of Romans, and open our eyes to the light of Heaven." The Apostle Paul is here speaking to his brethren and has no allusion to the unconverted. Every soul of them is commanded to be subject to the higher powers. The Apostle evidently does not intend here to assert that his brethren should obey the powers when they would make an unscriptural request of them. No professed Christian will assert this, and it would be at variance with the Apostle's own practice. Then it proves nothing for our opponents, until they prove that the Gospel makes it a duty to fight. More than this, we may refuse to obey and still be subject. If the powers ask that which we cannot conscientiously perform, they can but attach a penalty for disobedience. We submit our body and our all to them; they may impose a fine, confiscation of property, imprisonment, or death upon us. If we submit without resistance, we are still *subject* to them.

The Apostles Peter and Jude disapproved of those who speak evil of rank and title. Peter likewise said that we shall be subject to every ordinance of man for the *Lord's sake*, and Paul said that he would not have spoken evil of the high priest if he had known that he was ruler of the nation. Of these things, true non-resistants make conscience.

We freely admit that there is no power but of God and that the powers that be are ordained of God. And also, that whosoever resists the power resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist shall receive to themselves damnation. Non-resistants do not resist the Government when they refuse to fight. What have they done? The Government first called for volunteers. No true non-resistant could respond to the call. They remained at home and pursued their peaceful avocations as before. The powers next ordered a draft for men, but generously offered to exempt such as were conscientiously non-resistant. The non-resistants are not responsible for the conduct of knaves who perjured themselves. Next, the powers again ordered a draft without exempting any for conscience sake. The request was personal service or money – three hundred dollars. The personal service they could not render. The money belongs to the kingdom of this world, and they had a right to demand it as their own. Paul said that we shall pay tribute and custom to whom it is due, and said we shall do so because of the duties the Government has to discharge. They now ask for our person or the money. The latter is theirs and we

¹³ This is a weak argument, as are all arguments based on *silence*, and Musser should have known better. We should keep in mind that, although the scriptures were also intended for *our* instruction, they were also written for a specific, living audience. That audience simply did not include rulers and governors, and the evangelists were not in the habit of writing, "This does not apply to you now, but when it finally does, do this..." It is always better to argue from what Jesus and the Apostles *did* tell us. Their explicit commands are enough to clearly and easily support non-resistance.

make conscience of the duty to pay it, and feel that it would be wrong to refuse to do so.¹⁴ But suppose the powers would order a draft and refuse anything but personal service. Then there would be no way but submit to the consequences of refusing to obey, whatever the consequences would be, but resist the power we could not.

The commands of the Gospel are founded upon a different principle from what those of the Law are. The Law holds out a promise to those who are under it, that they shall receive a reward for obeying its commandments. The Gospel invites those under the Law to embrace *its* principles and receive its favors, and prompts those under *it* by a principle of love, to obey its commands out of gratitude for the favor already bestowed on an unworthy object. The motive of obedience under the Law is to receive reward. These Paul called servants. But the motive of obedience to the commands of Christ in true New Testament believers is gratitude for the favor God has already bestowed. These Paul called sons. The true believer does not inquire so much what is his duty to do to be saved, as what he can do to honor God for saving him. The one is the legal principle; the other is Divine love.

The kingdom of Christ is founded on the principles of love, forbearance, patience, and passive submission to injustice, wrong, and evil in any shape. The kingdom of this world is founded on the principles of justice and resistance of evil. The kingdom of Christ is composed of truly converted or new born souls, who have received the spirit of Christ and who must be actuated by the same principle which influenced Christ, and moved him to come into the world to save sinners who were his enemies. It is plainly to be perceived that this spirit or principle is directly opposed to the principle that must rule in the kingdom of this world. The first is that of love, returning good for evil, long-suffering, forbearance, and in short, what Paul terms the fruits of the spirit. The latter is an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; punishment of evil by retaliation or overcoming evil by coercion. The believer, being in possession of the spirit of Christ, and under the influence that actuated Christ, must of necessity be prompted to the same course of conduct and actions towards his fellow man as Christ was. It is plain then that this would forbid him to take any part in an institution, organization, or ordinance in which he must of necessity violate the principle on which his own kingdom is founded or the spirit of which he is born.

This is the ground upon which non-resistance is based. It is the spirit that influenced Christ, and if the spirit of Christ is not in us, then we are not His. To be consistent, then, we must be in this world as pilgrims and strangers. A pilgrim or stranger has no rights, and does not belong to the country or kingdom where he stands in that relation. A pilgrim or stranger is ineligible for office, and is not fit, by reason of some disqualifying principle which is attached to him, to discharge the duties or trust of an officer of the Government. Thus the children of God, by reason of the principle above referred to, are disqualified to discharge the duties of office in the kingdom of this world, and are said to be pilgrims and strangers on earth. They live in the kingdom of this world by tolerance only, and hold possessions or property only by permission of the powers that be. When one is in a strange country, so long as their affections and interests are in their native land, they are satisfied to bear the disadvantages they labor under there. They do not feel concerned about the laws or institutions of the country wherein they are strangers. They have no right as a citizen to vote in elections, to seek to influence legislation, or in any way to control the policy of the Government; and if they have any petition to make, they make it through their own government or its accredited agents. Thus it is with non-resistants. They are disqualified to discharge the duties of office in the Government by reason of a responsibility they are under to obey a higher power, and to discharge duties which are inconsistent with the best interests of the Government.

¹⁴ Musser had the advantage of living in Pennsylvania and must have thought the Union cause was just. Would he have been as happy to pay the same fee in Georgia, knowing that it promoted and preserved the evil of slavery?

They have higher interests at stake than they have in the kingdom of this world, and they are satisfied to suffer the disadvantage of being aliens in view of the attachment, or affection and interests, they feel in the land of their birth. They are commanded to pray for Kings and all in authority, that they may have a peaceable and quiet life. Thus if they have any petition to make, they make it through the head of their own Government, who has promised to protect his own, and they have the confidence that he will protect them; not in property and person, but in spirit, and in the joy and comfort which believers enjoy by the love shed abroad in their hearts through the Holy Spirit. If God sees fit, he can move the hearts of those in power to grant a peaceable and quiet life to his people, which they are in duty bound to receive with gratitude from his hand.

Government is bound together by mutual interests, and is established for the good of the community on the ground of mutual benefits, and mutually to bear the burdens attending its support. For anyone to seek to influence or control the authorities or laws for their advantage, or claim the protection of the power, and then refuse to bear their proportion of the burden of defending the power, is inconsistent and dishonest. Strangers have no right to come into a country unless the authorities permit them. Neither will they allow them to do so – unless it is their interest they should do so. If they permit or invite them to do so, they yet have no rights but what are given them, until they renounce their allegiance to their native land and swear fealty to the land of their adoption. In that case they not only obtain rights, but are also under all the obligations of native inhabitants.

No government can exist without the sword and occasionally having war, and the idea of having government without it is an absurdity. Therefore, if we will not use the sword, we must separate ourselves from the kingdom of this world. Otherwise, we are inconsistent and liable to censure and suspicion. Foreigners who would claim exemption from military duty, and who would yet criticize the acts of those in authority, seek to control elections, shape the laws of the country, or influence the policy of the government and nation would be looked upon with a great deal of suspicion.

True non-resistants do not censure the present Chief Magistrate for the policy he has adopted, or the measures he is endeavoring to carry out. It may be the very best for the country that he could have done. Neither have they any right to censure his predecessor. Neither of them claims to be infallible in judgment, and it is fair to presume they both acted from honest convictions. The Lord himself said that he “rules in the kingdoms of men, and gives them to whomsoever he will,” and Solomon said, “Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the Lord pondereth the hearts. The king’s heart is in the hands of the Lord; as the rivers of water, he turneth it whithersoever he will.” If nations are just, upright, and faithful to the law on which government is founded, God will also give them wise and prudent rulers, and they will enjoy peace and prosperity. But if they become proud, arrogant, unjust, and unfaithful, God also has ways to reach them with the rod of affliction and vengeance. Our nation in time past has been signally favored and blessed. It has grown and prospered, almost beyond precedent. It was called a Christian nation and boasted of the number and splendor of its churches, but where was the spirit of Christ? There was little of the contrite heart and humble spirit, with which the Lord delights to dwell; or the trembling at God’s word, to which He will look. But there was in the heart of man much of that spirit which made Nebuchadnezzar say, “Is this not great Babylon, which I have built for the house of the kingdom.” King Nebuchadnezzar was visited with an awful judgment from God to make him “know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.” The king was warned of God and advised to break off his sins, do righteousness, and show mercy to the poor so that it might tend to the lengthening of his tranquility. Must we not admit that our nation has long been warned? Has not the threatening rod long been held out over us? But, we may say, no man regarded. True, days of fasting and prayer were appointed and observed; but were they such fasts as the Lord chooses? Did any break off their sins, and work righteousness? They acknowledged with their

mouth that they are sinners, but in their hearts they continued in pride, folly, wantonness, and all unrighteousness, as they did before. Let no one therefore look to the powers as being the cause of this calamitous war or to bring its end; but everyone look to his own heart, break off his sins, and do righteousness, and there will assuredly be a lengthening of tranquility where it yet exists, and a speedy return to it where it has been lost.

Whenever there is war, one part must be on the side of injustice and wrong. Both may, but one must be. This must be the case in our present civil war; yet we must all believe that very great numbers, even on the unjust side, honestly and sincerely believe that their cause is just. Great numbers of men, with the highest order of intellect, and enjoying favorable opportunities for forming correct conclusions, after giving the subject in dispute their most careful attention for years, have arrived at very different and opposite conclusions in regard to the side which is right and just. It is fair to presume that numbers on either side are honest in the views they hold. The judgment of the most able men is liable to be influenced more or less by their interests, and all are by their surroundings. We of the North mostly think the northern cause is just; perhaps if we were in the South, under different circumstances, we would think differently. One of these parties must be wrong, and if well-informed men of good minds do thus err in their judgment, how are the masses, who are less favored with natural gifts, and are less intelligent, to be expected to judge correctly in such intricate and complicated affairs.

There are hundreds of thousands of men here, on either side, arrayed in deadly strife against each other, most of whom do not know that they are fighting in an unjust cause. One party must be, and the majority are ignorantly slaying their fellow-creatures, who are contending for right and justice. This is truly lamentable, yet in all wars it is unavoidable. Let any candid mind ask itself whether it is possible that God could place his children in a situation in which it would become their duty to kill, or try to kill their brothers or fellow-creatures, who are fighting for justice and right. The first and highest interest of a child of God is in Heaven, about which their minds are most engaged, and it is not to be expected that they should be able to form correct conclusions about the complex affairs of state, or the intricacies of international law. Certain facts may come to their knowledge, and from these they may make conclusions of what is right and wrong; but when they know that there may be circumstances connected with the case of which they are ignorant, they do not pretend to be competent to form conclusions upon which they can rely for truth. Some of our opponents admit that it is wrong to fight in an unjust cause. But how are we to know certainly that our cause is just, so that we might not be found to fight against God. Look at those of every denomination who take up arms in self-defense. There is brother arrayed against brother; no doubt each thinks he is right; and even in the North, among our own neighbors, we find one brother denouncing the other as disloyal, and using the most vile epithets that language can invent to make each other odious and hateful. This is unavoidable under the doctrine they advocate, and must ever be the case. But God has so provided for his children that, whether North or South, or under whatever external influence they are placed, their duty is plain. They are called, or chosen, out of the world. Their duty is to suffer wrong rather than to resist evil; and so they are not perplexed or harassed about political questions. There is no impediment in the way of union and harmony between them, and nothing to hinder the world from seeing the love that exists between them. Christ told his disciples very frequently that they shall love one another, and that the world shall know them by the love they have for one another. Peter said that they have purified their souls unto *unfeigned* love of the brethren, and charged them to love one another with a *pure heart, fervently*. John said, "Beloved, let us love one another," and he said, "We shall love, not in word, but in deed and in truth." Is it reasonable that God should impose such a duty upon us as to fight, maim, and kill our brother? We cannot get past this. The doctrine will place us in this position. But take the true non-resistant doctrine, and see how beautifully it harmonizes with the Gospel teaching, and how free and untrammelled it leaves us. It ever leaves the way

open, and the poorest, most illiterate, or least-informed disciple of Jesus has a sure and unerring guide in the most difficult and intricate questions of state that can arise. They are commanded to submit to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake; to obey magistrates, not speak evil of dignities, pay tribute, custom and honor to whom it is due; fear God and honor the king, and give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, but to God the things that are God's.

In religion, we must have a standard. There must be supreme authority, and everything else must yield to it. The New Testament is this authority in the Christian religion. To this all other things must yield and become subservient; reason, necessity, and even the Old Testament must yield to and be subordinate to the New. In studying the New Testament, the principle or spirit that pervades its teachings must be observed. This, with its chief and plain commands, must form the ground of explanation for those that are darker or more obscure in their meaning; and our reasoning, our conduct, and our life must be in accordance with this spirit, principle, or plain command. Any person who reads the New Testament with attention, and an unprejudiced mind, must be convinced that its general tenor of instruction is that of submission to injustice and wrong, and non-resistance of evil. But this doctrine is at variance with our carnal nature and will. We desire to convince ourselves differently, and so call in the Old Testament, and make it take precedence over the New; and then necessity and uncaptivated reason are called to the assistance of the carnal will, and those passages in the New Testament, which can be wrested so as to favor the idea, are construed so that the plain declarations of the Gospel, with its evident spirit and principle, are made subordinate to carnal reason and necessity.

Thus it is with the passage referred to in Romans 13. The Apostle said there, "Let every soul be subject to 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." We all know that there are times when certain laws are enacted which are offensive to certain communities, and they threaten to, or in fact resist the execution of such laws. If we had non-resistant brethren living in any such infected district, or if we had knowledge of any residing in the South, at the time when the present rebellion broke out, and who we feared might be carried away by the current of popular feeling, I know of no language more suitable to address to them than the words of the Apostle here quoted. I have before observed that Christ and the Apostles give their commands to believers only. This is especially to be borne in mind in considering this command of Paul. These words must be made to harmonize with the general tone and spirit of the Gospel, and they can only be made to do so on the true ground of non-resistance. Scripture must be so construed, as never to close the way to the humblest believer, or to bind one and loose another. The Gospel is given to serve every creature alike. God is no respecter of persons, and is unchangeable; and, as He is unchangeable, so must his religion be. It has been the misfortune of popular religion to change with popular opinion; but the religion of Jesus Christ is the same everywhere, and at all times and places.

For some centuries before the Reformation, the Catholic religion was almost universal in what was called the Christian world. The ecclesiastical and temporal powers were united, and the Catholic religion was the national religion of all Christian nations. This was popular opinion, and popular opinion also favored persecution of those who dissented in their religion from the established creed. After the success of the Reformation, and the national religion of different powers had changed to that of Protestantism, the popular feeling of favor to a union of Church and State, and persecuting those who dissented from the established religion, still continued; and we find Calvin, with many other great and learned reformers, countenanced and advised it. These are facts, proven by history, and cannot be denied. In our day, I suppose none of their professed followers would justify persecution for religion under any circumstances. How was it that these learned and enlightened men did not discover this principle of the Gospel? It may be urged that mankind has advanced in light and knowledge since then,

and they should be excused on account of the “semi-barbarous” age in which they lived, having just emerged from Papal darkness and superstition. But why is it that for several centuries before, and at that very time, there was a poor, despised, and persecuted people who were comparatively ignorant as regards literary attainments and worldly knowledge, who had this light, and protested so strongly against this spirit of persecution as being anti-Christian and diabolical? The Albigenses and Waldenses, for several centuries before the Reformation, and the Mennonites in the days of Luther and Calvin, professed this same non-resistant doctrine, declared persecution to be contrary to both the letter and the spirit of the Gospel, and insisted on an entire separation of Church and State. Popular opinion then did not favor religious toleration, or the separation of Church and State, and popular religion was with it. But now, several centuries later, popular opinion has changed, and so has popular religion. Religious persecution is now denounced everywhere, and no man dares support such an idea. In some of the nations of Europe, there is still a national Church or religion, and Church and State are partially united; but in our country it is unpopular, and professed Christians generally protest against it as being contrary to the spirit of the Gospel. How does it come that it took these great and learned men a whole century to discover what these poor, illiterate, despised, and persecuted people had discovered so long before? All admit now that it is truth, and how does it come that the spirit of truth did not lead men into it? Christ’s promise must have failed, or these men *must have been destitute of it*; for he made an absolute promise that it would lead men into *all truth*. This would look as if Divine truth could not be received until natural light revealed it.

At the time of our Revolutionary war, popular opinion made it a virtue to resist the government of Great Britain, which, at the time, was the power referred to in Romans 13. Then almost every pulpit in the land resounded with calls to arm the colonists and to overthrow the power. In our day, popular religion, with one breath, eulogizes the Fathers of the Revolution for resisting and overthrowing the powers; and in the next breath the passage of Paul is referred to, to prove that those who resist shall receive damnation! Can such people believe it, or do they know what they say, when they say God is immutable? I question whether one of the clergymen who preached up the duty of Christians to support the colonies in their Revolution ever once quoted Romans 13.

The Declaration of Independence of the colonies sets forth the right of the people to revolutionize and change their form of government when it fails to accomplish the purpose for which it was established. But now I ask, how can this be done in agreement with Paul’s instruction in Romans 13? He said there, “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.” It will not do to say, “the power may become corrupt, oppressive, and destructive of the end for which it was established.” That the “Government of Great Britain over the colonies was so at the time they rebelled.” This does not meet the difficulty. Paul said every soul shall be subject and not resist, for “*there is no power but of God*.” Then, to whomsoever this command is given, it is impossible to resist the government without violating Paul’s instruction. No government or power is here excepted; whether good or bad, it is of God, for “there is no power but of God, and whosoever resisteth it, resisteth God’s ordinance, and shall receive to himself damnation.” Certainly, if this command is given to the Church, then it can take no part in any revolution. If it is given to the world, then *it* cannot. Then the Gospel would not recognize any revolution at all. But separate the kingdom of Christ and that of this world, and the solution is easy. The command of Paul here is to Christ’s kingdom, and does not concern the world or the unconverted at all. They are left where God had long before placed them, under the Law, and in the kingdom of the world, which is under the power of the sword – yet ruled by the Most High, who rules in the armies of

Heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, gives the kingdom to whomsoever he will, and sets up over it the basest of men.

Among the Jews and heathen nations of old, who were all under the Law, when a government became wicked, unjust, and ungodly, God raised up adversaries and punished them; or He divided their territory, or overthrew their government and gave the power to others. It is expressly said that the Lord raised up the adversaries, and when Israel was separated from Judea, the Lord said it was “*from him.*” Thus the Lord sets up the king, and removes him again. These were under the Law, and the unconverted are there still, under the same principle as they ever were, and under the same control as they ever were. The government of Great Britain was corrupt, oppressed the colonies, and subverted the end for which God established government. God raised up an adversary to the power of Great Britain in the hearts of the people of the colonies, and they rebelled against the government, overthrew its power,¹⁵ and established the government of the United States in its stead.¹⁶

We are accustomed to look upon the “Fathers of the Revolution” as being models of virtue, patriotism, and honesty; and, in this respect, I am ready to accord all that is claimed for them. They may have been just, honorable, and faithful in the discharge of their duties in all the relations of life. I admit that they were instruments in the hand of God to accomplish this particular purpose. They were faithful in the discharge of their duty in the kingdom of this world, and God bestowed upon them those natural blessings which such faithfulness has promise of. When we assert what we believe the Scripture to teach, that Christians cannot fight or resist evil, we are met by the objection of Washington and his comrades being Christians, and yet they fought. With all our reverence for the character of Washington, can we compare him with Christ? Or must we not still look to Christ as our guide and director, who alone has words of eternal life? And when we find his example and the teaching of Christ to disagree, can we hesitate to choose Christ as our leader? Certainly no one will pretend that all the services rendered to the country by the patriots of the Revolution would of themselves prove the patriots to be Christians. One at least of them, who rendered most signal service to the country, and who showed a most self-sacrificing spirit, was an avowed infidel. It is not our purpose, as it is no part of our duty, to criticize the religion of those who have departed, any further than to meet the objections which are urged against what we believe to be truth, and to point our readers to the true test of undefiled religion.

My purpose is to show what Christ and the Apostles taught as the duty of the believer. The commands that they taught are imperative, and no one may dare either to reject or disregard them, because of what any man has believed or done, however bright his moral virtues may shine. If Christ and his Apostles teach us that we shall not resist evil, then non-resistance must be the believer’s duty, even though all the great and wise men in the world should disregard it. I yield to no man in admiration of moral virtue, but Christ must still remain the rule of my faith. Can a man be a Christian (in the true sense of the word) and not obey Christ’s and the Apostles’ commands? Then, if Christ teaches that we shall not resist the powers that be, how can they be true Christians who resist and overthrow their government? I again assert that it is not my purpose to criticize the religion of any man, whether living or dead. The natural desire to retain the friendship and good-will of man would forbid allusion to the

¹⁵ More often than not, when a brutal and oppressive government is overthrown by violent revolution, it is replaced by another brutal and oppressive government.

¹⁶ Musser failed to realize that there is a third way. Most believe that helpless obedience and violent rebellion are the only alternatives. Mohandas Gandhi proved that non-violent non-cooperation could drive out an oppressive colonial occupation. Martin Luther King, using the same means, did not bring down the US government, but did bring it into better agreement with the purpose for which God established it. Both were prophets to their nations, disobeyed their governments’ immoral laws, spoke and acted against the systemic evil and corruption therein, and even bore the consequences – and the world was a better place.

wise and great men of the present or preceding ages, whose religious opinions we cannot approve, if duty did not constrain us to assert what we believe to be truth. Our opponents make these allusions necessary by urging the opinion and practice of popular men, and we may not shrink from the consequences of meeting whatever force there is in such argument (if it may be called argument). We are accustomed to boast of our manhood and independence, but I am unable to perceive either manhood or independence in the idea that because a thing is popular, it must be true, or because certain men, however high their standing in society, believe, say, or do a thing, it must be right.

Our opponents admit that the New Testament teaches a higher morality than the Old; and yet they would impose duties on Christians that were held to be immoral under the Old Testament. The Law that God gave the Jews forbids the use of the sword, except to defend or vindicate justice. Under this Law, it could not become the duty of one faithful Israelite to fight against another faithful one. This could not be – they could not fight without cause, and if they were faithful to the Law they would give no cause. But, if we take the view of Romans 13 that our opponents say is the meaning of Paul, it would become the duty of one Christian to fight against and try to kill another! And it would even become the duty of one to take up the sword, knowing that the cause is unjust, and go forth and kill his brother, who is fighting for right and justice! Paul said that “every soul shall be subject to the higher powers,” and they say this makes it the duty of a Christian to obey the call, take up arms, and go forth to battle when the power calls for or demands our services in the battlefield. If this were Paul’s meaning, he would not teach a higher morality than the Law, for it provided against this immoral and unreasonable occurrence. I expect that our opponents will admit that there are Christians in England, France, or Germany. Suppose that war should break out between one of these powers and our own. Our powers would issue a call for men to arm in defense of our rights. The opposite power would do the same, for Paul speaks to one as well as the other. One side must be wrong; therefore this view of Paul’s teaching would make it the duty of one Christian to fight and kill another, who was contending for right and justice. The position of our opponents makes this occurrence unavoidable. Is this consistent? Is it reasonable? Or, is there anything of the spirit of the Gospel in it?

It may be said that we should not engage in an unjust war; but this will not do, as Paul makes no exceptions, and this would overthrow their own position. And if this exception were admitted, what would it amount to? They would differ in opinion, as they always do. One would say, “It is just,” and would fight; another would say, “It is unjust,” and would refuse to obey the power – and, by their own argument, they would place themselves in the position we stand on. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 1, “Not many wise, mighty, or noble are called, but God hath chosen the foolish, weak, and despised to confound the wise and mighty.” Persons of this class are but little acquainted with international law and disputes; consequently, they could not be expected to make correct decisions. Therefore, the difficulty and danger could not be avoided.

To prevent all such difficulty, inconsistency, and embarrassment, as well as to preserve the hearts of his children from anxiety and distracting care, God has chosen his children out of the world to serve him in spirit and in truth, in singleness of heart, and has said that they cannot serve God and mammon. He has commanded them to labor with their hands in the things that are good, so that they may have to give to those who are in need. For this reason, it is the duty of every Christian to follow some calling, trade, or profession so that they may be useful to their fellow man, and not to eat the bread of idleness. Care and idleness are alike unfavorable to devotion, and God has so ordained that his children shall be preserved free from either. The Savior said that we shall make our first care be for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all other things shall be added unto us. He does not intend that the things we need for our natural life shall be given to us without our labor or effort to obtain them, or He would not have commanded us to labor with our hands. But He will have us to do our duty and commit the rest to

God without care for the consequences, for with all our care we cannot change the result. Who, by care and thought, can add a cubit to his stature, or make one hair white or black?

God desires the undivided affections of his children. He has given them his spirit, which sheds his love abroad in their hearts, and has separated them from every duty that would tend to alienate or divide their affections. The world has this tendency, and for this reason God has separated his children from it, so far as it is possible. The various and exciting duties of office in the kingdom of this world, suits at law, and politics all have a tendency to distract the mind and draw the affections away from God, and things pertaining to life eternal. Therefore, the Lord has denied them these privileges so that he may retain their affections; and their separation from them may show to the world that their treasure is in Heaven, and their affections there also. While consistency requires that they should take no part in and not seek to shape or influence the laws of the worldly kingdom, God needed, nevertheless, to give such direction so that his children should not come into collision with the world. Christ told his disciples the children should be free, but to avoid offence He commanded them to submit in a matter that involved no principle. He told them to give to Caesar the tribute-money bearing Caesar's image and inscription; and Paul said that we shall be subject to the powers and not resist, and pay them what is due to them. Peter said that we shall submit to every ordinance of kings and governors, for the Lord's sake. Neither of them intended that we shall obey, regardless of what Christ has taught. They suffered martyrdom rather than disobey God or violate the principles of the Gospel.

Government is necessary; it is right and good; it cannot exist without law; and law must be supported by the sword. No law would be regarded without the sword being with it. All officers in the government are supported by the sword, and their duties are discharged by virtue of its power. It is plain, then, that if the New Testament forbids the use of the sword to Christians, it must also forbid them to hold office in the government; for these all belong to the same kingdom and are supported by the same power. If they cannot exercise this duty themselves, then they cannot consistently delegate it to another. If they cannot themselves use the sword, they cannot consistently put it into the hands of another to use for them. The true principle of non-resistance, therefore, separates its possessor entirely from the kingdom of this world. They are in the world, but not of the world; and as they are not of it, so they have no right to take part in its affairs, or seek redress at its hands for any grievances they may have suffered from any source or from any cause. It would be unreasonable that they seek protection, or assist in electing officers, or make and shape laws, or direct the policy of a foreign power, especially if they will not share the burden and responsibility of its support or defense in the hour of danger. They live in the kingdom of this world by its tolerance; and if the world thinks them worthy to dwell in peace, and to let them enjoy the rights and privileges of citizens, they accept the favor with gratitude, and are duty bound to be obedient to all their laws and regulations, and to pay all taxes, duties, fines, or whatever rates or levies the government may see fit to impose upon them. This duty, the apostle Paul said, we shall make conscience of – not from fear of the penalty that would follow a refusal, but for conscience sake. The kingdom of this world has power over the things of the world, and whatever portion of its goods we have possession of, when they ask it of us, it is our duty to give it. It is theirs, and they only ask for what is their own when they demand it of us. We recognize and acknowledge the authority of the government over our bodies and all we possess. When government demands our personal service in any matter that is contrary to what God's word teaches, we may resign our bodies into their hands to bear whatever they see fit to visit upon us. Resist, we dare not, since it would be contrary to Paul's teaching; and obey them where God has forbidden, we cannot; therefore submission is the only course they can pursue.

I have said before, we find no fault with the Government for the course it has pursued, or is now pursuing. We do not pretend to say whether its policy toward the South has been just or unjust. Herein

the wisdom of God is displayed. The duty of His children is the same, whether they live North or South; or whether the Government has dealt justly or unjustly; or whether the rebellion is justifiable or unjustifiable. Their duties cannot be affected by what the world does. We have until now been well contented under the power that has dominion over us. We acknowledge that it has been an ordinance for good to us, feel grateful for the favor it has until now shown us, and feel it to be our duty to pray to the Lord for His blessing upon those who have been instruments in His hand in dispensing this great favor; and that He will further endow them with wisdom and discretion, so that they may be able to discern what is right and just; and, above all, that He may give them grace to know His truth, and a willing mind to obey it.

But to pray for the success of any measure or policy of the Government, or to pray for the success of the army, North or South, I find no warrant for in the Gospel, either in letter or spirit. God sees not as man sees; His ways are not as our ways, nor His thoughts as our thoughts. No man can stay His hand, or say, "What doest Thou?" It may appear very desirable to us that the Union should be restored, slavery abolished, and other reforms instituted under the restored Union, but God may have higher objects in view than it is possible for man to divine. No one can be otherwise than pained at the thoughts of the effusion of blood this war has induced, and at the great suffering consequent upon it. Our sincere and earnest prayer should be that His object may be speedily accomplished, and that men everywhere, both friend and enemy, may turn to the Lord with all their hearts, and find grace and favor with Him.

We do not recognize those as true non-resistants who profess to have conscientious scruples about bearing arms, and yet identify themselves so far with the kingdom of this world as to appeal to the powers for protection from suffering or to redress any grievance they may suffer, who will serve what are called civil offices under the powers that be, who will vote for officers to make or execute laws in the kingdom of this world, or such as will not go to the battle-field themselves, but will hire substitutes to go and do that for them which, they say, they dare not do themselves.

True non-resistants do not put their trust in an arm of flesh. God has promised to care for them, and in him they trust. They do not profess to believe that God will protect them from suffering, but He is able to do so, if it is His will; and if it is not His will, man cannot prevent it. If He wills it, He has a purpose in it, and we should pray to the Lord that His purpose may be attained in us, and we may only be made worthy to suffer for His name, and not to do anything whereby God may be dishonored. They know that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong; they glory neither in their wisdom, in their might, nor in their riches; but they glory in this, that they know the Lord, who exercises loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. Their life and worldly goods are in the hands of the Lord; He gave them, and He has many ways by which to take them away again. Their concern is not so much how they may preserve these, as it is to preserve the life that is begotten in the soul by the power of the incorruptible seed of the Word of God. They look upon the commotions in the world as being in the hand of the Lord, who can control them according to His pleasure; and the interest they might take in them, or the efforts they might make to control them, could have no effect, except the effect it would have on themselves, in drawing their minds and affections away from more important objects.

Those in the world do not have this trust in God; their all is in the world. Their treasure is earthly, and their hearts and affections are with their treasure on earth. To preserve this treasure is their object, and as they are carnal, so they resort to carnal means to accomplish their end. This is natural and reasonable, and, so long as they resort to fair and honorable means,¹⁷ are not at all to be censured.

¹⁷ Musser appears to contradict his earlier position, which was that Christians should not criticize government at all. He previously said, "[Christians] ... who would criticize the acts of those in authority ... would be looked upon with a great deal of suspicion," and, "The duty of His children is the same ... whether the Government has dealt justly or unjustly." Later he

Since the commencement of the present war, when the War Department called for fresh levies of troops, and when our State was threatened with invasion, people have collected money to arm and equip militia for local or State service, and also for bounty to induce men to volunteer in the National service. This is not inconsistent for the world, or such as profess that it is the duty of Christians to take up arms in defense of their rights and country. But it is certainly inconsistent for those who profess to be non-resistant to pay or arm others to go and do what they say is wrong to do themselves.

The principle of non-resistance is that God is the portion of the believer, and no harm can befall those who trust in Him. If He allows them to be robbed, plundered of their goods and property, they do not look upon it as necessarily being harm to them. God has said that all things must work together for good to those who love him. This consideration induces an exercise in their minds, which will bring peaceful fruits of righteousness from the chastening of the Lord. God has given them the Holy Spirit, and this affords joy, comfort, and consolation under any bodily affliction or deprivation with which they can be visited. They can therefore thank God that he has given them a treasure which man cannot take from them.

It would be a very gross violation of this principle for non-resistants to show their reliance in or dependence on an arm of flesh by joining in with the world to contribute money for bounty to induce men to volunteer, or to arm and equip men to go forth and defend their person and property.¹⁸ They are weak flesh, with all other men; and this flesh will ever shrink from suffering. Their weak and timid nature may suggest the desire to see a strong army stand between them and danger, and even feel a secret wish, or be gratified, to see men enlist for defense. These are the natural promptings of our perverse nature, at which every faithful believer will be alarmed and will be more concerned about resisting this evil, or more fearful of being overcome by it, than they will be about the enemy of the State. They will pray to God to enable them to overcome this enemy and deliver them from its power; and also that, if it is His will to permit the enemies of the country to inflict any injury on their person or property, that He would give them grace to bear it in true Christian submission, and in all trials to walk worthy of the Lord. It would be very inconsistent to indulge or gratify this weakness by yielding ourselves up in obedience to the flesh. Christ said that we shall “be wise as serpents, but harmless as doves.” The dove will flee from the falcon until it is captured, when it submits without resistance. It would seem as if the disciples of Jesus might use their natural reason, or ingenuity, to escape capture or injury by their enemies, but must be harmless when captured, and never prevent capture by defense – to flee or hide themselves, but never to resist evil.

There is at the present time quite an excitement in the country on account of the pending draft. Meetings have been held in the different sub-districts to devise means to induce men to enlist, so as to make up the quota of men required for each township. This is all right and proper, in men who do not profess to be defenseless; and many are induced to engage in it from motives of humanity or consideration for the feelings of their neighbors, upon whom it would operate seriously. But how can those who profess to be disciples of Jesus Christ, and who say as such that Christ has forbidden them to fight, join in with our opponents and pay men to go and fight for them, or in their stead? It is said, “It is to avoid the draft,” but by what means? By inducing other men to go in our stead! Anyone can see that there is no consistency here. If it is wrong for me to go, it is wrong to pay another to go for me. One of three motives must induce men to engage in this course: to place men in the army to fight, to avoid the

says that we must pay any tax or give any material thing that the government may require, irrespective of what the government intends to do with it.

¹⁸ Musser condemns this contribution because it was made voluntarily, as he subsequently explains. The three hundred dollar commutation fee and other war taxes were compulsory.

inconvenience of fighting, or to save money by getting the substitute cheaper than the commutation fee. True reliance upon God (which every Christian should have) will cause us to adhere closely to His word or commandments, with a full assurance that He will make a way to escape without violating the principles of His Gospel. But in saying God will make a way to escape, I do not wish to be understood that He will make such a way that we will escape without personal inconvenience and suffering. God has allowed some of His most faithful children to be severely tried by personal affliction, but yet He sustained them in faith and love so that they could overcome and bear what, to our natural sense, would seem impossible to endure. The work that God has wrought in the soul of the believer is what He has promised to protect. This is the believer's most precious treasure, and he is willing to sacrifice everything else rather than lose this, or dishonor his God by transgressing His command or violating the principle of His Gospel. God has brought the highest honor to His name by the suffering of His children; and should we shrink from anything that would bring honor to the name of our God? If we have not the confidence that God will support us in faith, and strengthen us so as to enable us to be faithful, we dishonor God by unbelief; and if we are not willing to endure the loss of all things for His sake, we cannot be true disciples of Jesus Christ.

It is alleged that, when we pay the commutation fee and the war tax, these are used for war purposes, and that the case is parallel with that of paying to induce volunteering, or buying substitutes. The world does not profess to be willing to suffer loss and inconvenience if it can be avoided by personal resistance or defense. When they take such measures, as before alluded to, they act rationally and consistently. The government is founded on this principle and cannot exist without the sword, and, whenever necessity requires it, must use the sword. Paul said that for this purpose we also pay tribute. It is due to the government, and we shall pay to all their dues. The commutation fee and what is called "war tax" are no more a "war tax" than any other tax we pay to keep up the government; and I am no more violating my non-resistant principles, if I pay one, than I do if I pay the other.

I have said before, all the estate or property we own, we hold only by the tolerance and authority of the powers that be. The powers have authority over all property, and have right to demand so much of it as they have need of. This we acknowledge, and have no right to refuse giving it to them, or to ask what use they intend making of it. If I buy property with a ground rent, or lien of any kind on it, that part or amount is not mine any more than if I had not bought the property. I have no right to withhold the payment of that money any more than I have a sum of money that I have borrowed, or other debt that I have contracted. Thus it is with land, and all property. The government originally owned all the land. It sold it to settlers, under its patent; they hold it on condition of paying such rates and levies as the Government may demand. Then, when we pay whatever tax is asked of us, we only give to it its due, as we would pay any other debt due; and for this reason Paul said we shall do it for conscience' sake. Every honest man makes conscience of withholding anything which is due to another, and so every true Christian makes conscience of returning his property, fairly and faithfully, to the officers of government, and punctually paying what it requires of him, with as little right to ask or inquire what use they design making of it, as they have to ask what use the person proposes to make of the money he has lent to us. There is therefore a very great difference between what we pay voluntarily, or without sanction of law, and what we pay on demand of the powers. If a person comes to me, and solicits a donation to give as a bounty to induce men to volunteer in the army, or to equip men to go and fight, by giving it I testify that I am interested in the cause and desire it to progress – when, at the same time, I do not know that I am not arming men to fight against what God designs to do. But if I owe a man a sum of money as a debt, and he comes and demands it, and tells me he intends it to arm and equip himself to go to war, I have no right to withhold payment. It is his, and he has a right to do with it as he pleases.

I would make no difference between paying a man to go to war, and going myself. I would not consider that I would any more violate the spirit of the Gospel in one case than the other; neither do I consider that I am any more violating the command of the Savior if I serve as a General in the field, or a soldier in the ranks, than I do if I serve as sheriff of the county, or justice of the peace, or cast my vote for member of Congress, Governor, or President of the United States; and would not make one iota more conscience to one than the other. I say more: those who vote for officers in the government, and use its power and authority to protect their rights and property, or appeal to law for justice, and yet refuse to defend the government in the time of need, are neither faithful to the kingdom of Christ or that of this world.

There are great numbers of professed non-resistants in the land who have never experienced the work in their souls upon which non-resistance is founded, and are, consequently, ignorant of its operation and power. They have, perhaps, read the Gospel, and heard the subject argued or treated upon, and perceive that war and violence are forbidden, and so embrace the doctrine in a legal spirit, but do not discern the spirit or principle contained in the command, or never experienced the work upon which the command is based.

No observance of outward commandments, however strict, will make us children of God or heirs of the promise. The religion of Jesus Christ consists of a living principle, begotten and born in the soul, the fruit of which is obedience to his commandments. The fruit must follow the birth, and where it does not exist, it is positive evidence that the principle does not exist; therefore the Savior said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments," and, "Why call ye me, 'Lord, Lord,' and *do not* the things which I say." Paul said, "In Jesus Christ, neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but *faith that worketh by love.*" Love is the principle that dwells in the soul of the believer, and the fruits of obedience must flow from it, or it is evidence that the principle does not exist. All the commands of the Gospel are to be considered fruits of the spirit – fruits of the work of conversion, or new birth. To take it in any other sense would be to make a law out of the Gospel.

The summary of the foregoing argument is that God created man in the beginning in such a state of purity and holiness that he was fitted to enjoy communion or fellowship with God. The image in which he was created consisted in the spirit or Divine love, which the soul possessed. In this state man needed no external law to govern him. The spirit and love of God influenced him, and led him to do what was right and just.

Man fell from this state by transgression. His soul was defiled by sin, and he thereby rendered unfit to stand or dwell in the presence of God. Here his relation was changed, from saint to sinner. He died to the image in which he was created, and, becoming the servant of sin, may be said to have received a new image. Instead of the influence of the love of God, he fell under the influence of self-love. This corrupted as well as defiled him, and violence and injustice followed as fruits. In consequence of these changed circumstances, government became necessary, and God, in mercy to man, instituted it. God promised man restoration, but the promise did not change his relation until the promise was fulfilled. In the meantime, God gave man a Law suited and adapted to his circumstances, but promised him a better law in time. The interim Law, with all the commandments, could not cleanse man from sin or change his nature or relation to God, but only served to make him more aware of his want. Those who believed had the promise of future favor; but those who did not believe were, and remained, in the same condition as if no promise had ever been given.

Christ, the promised woman's seed, came in the fullness of time, and shed his blood for the sins of the whole world. Those who believed on Him were changed in their relation to God by having their sins washed away. They were now sinners no more, but were called saints. They were made partakers of the merits and virtues of Christ, and in this changed relation were fitted to stand in the presence of God and

enjoy fellowship with Him. The gift of the Holy Spirit was promised to these, by which their natures were changed by the shedding abroad of the love of God in their hearts. These now were brought into the relation to God in which man was before the fall. Self-love (that work of the Devil) was destroyed, and the love of God was shed abroad in the heart in its stead.

As the Law and commandments in the Old Testament were given to suit the circumstances, nature, and relation of man at that time, it is quite reasonable that, when this was so completely changed as to lead the Savior himself to call it a “new birth, a renewed, converted, or transformed” state, He should give him a different law and commandment from what he was under before. The first was not suitable to his present circumstances, and God gave him such as was suitable – and still does. God had given man no government before the fall. He needed none. Because he gave it to him after the fall is no proof that God had changed. Man had changed, but God had not. No more is it any proof that He changed because He gave man a new law in his new relation under the Gospel. That which made government necessary was taken away, a self-governing principle was reinstated, and His people needed government no more.

All men did not believe the Gospel. These were not changed. They remained under the old Law and relation they were in before Christ came. To these, government was still necessary, and they remained under the old Law and commandment, as they were before. Christ’s commands are not given to these. This is the reason why the Savior and the Apostles still recognized government. But they mention nothing of government among themselves, and nothing of the conduct or duty of a believer in the government.

This is the reason why people lose their way in the Gospel. They look at the commands in the New Testament as though they were given to all men equally, and because government is recognized there, they cannot see how it can be conducted on non-resistant principles. But leave the government to those in and of the world, under the command that God gave them, and separate the kingdom of Christ and that of this world, and the solution is simple and easy. Christ has chosen his disciples out of the world. They have no promise of temporal good or happiness, but the contrary. Their promise is in the world to come. The spirit that they possess renders them happy and contented in any sphere of life. So long as the world tolerates them, they are contented; but if the world will not let them dwell in peace, they flee to another city or place; and so they are true pilgrims and strangers on earth, having no certain abiding-place. Their hope and prospects are in the world to come. They are well contented that the dead may bury their dead, if they are only permitted to follow Christ.

NO CONCORD BETWEEN CHRIST AND BELIAL

“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits.” Matthew 7:15-16.

“Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry. I speak as to wise men: judge ye what I say.” 1 Corinthians 10:14-15.

As there is a principle underlying the command of non-resistance, so there is the same principle underlying every outward duty or command in the Gospel. Obedience to these outward commands does not bring us acceptance with God if we are not in possession of the principle that underlies them. This principle is the spirit and love of God, which we come to possess by conversion; and for this reason the Savior so earnestly urged the necessity of being born again. By the fall, man lost this principle and fell under the power of the flesh, or carnal will; and, by conversion, this evil principle of the flesh is overcome or destroyed, and the divine nature, or love of God, is again restored. So long as we are not converted, the flesh reigns supreme. We are carnal, but when we are converted, the spirit gets the ascendancy and the flesh is kept in subjection by the power of the spirit. “The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other.” If we are not in possession of this spirit, we have no promise of eternal life. Paul said in Romans 8, “So then, they that are in the flesh *cannot please God*. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the spirit of God dwelleth in you. *Now if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His*.” Paul further said in the same chapter, “For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye, through the spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God.”

Here the Word of God makes a very clear distinction, or separation, between flesh and spirit, or between the carnal and the spiritual mind. “The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God; neither indeed can it be.” And “to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.” The Apostle Paul set forth the same principle that Jesus Christ advanced to the women of Samaria. Jesus said in John 4, “The *true worshippers* shall worship the Father *in spirit and in truth*, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a spirit, and they that worship Him *must* worship Him in spirit and in truth.” It must be clear to everyone that no one can worship in spirit who does not possess the spirit, and according to what Christ teaches here, those who do not have the spirit cannot then be true worshippers. If they cannot be true worshippers, then they must be untrue, or false. Since all false worship is idolatry, then it follows that the worship of all carnal, unconverted, or spiritless persons must be idolatrous.

For this reason, truly converted persons, who are in possession of the spirit and love of God, as the principle that underlies all the commands of the Gospel, cannot unite to worship or commune with such as are carnal and walk after the flesh. Those who are converted and possess the spirit are called believers, and Paul said in 2 Corinthians 6, “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers, for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with

idols?” Paul addressed these words to his brethren as fellow believers, and said, “Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, ‘I will dwell in them and walk in them, and I will be their God and they shall be my people.’” It is very plain that Paul makes out the believer to be righteous, to be in the light, and to be in Christ; while he makes out the unbeliever to be unrighteous, to be in darkness, to be in concord with Belial, and to be an infidel who is in agreement with idols.

The principle of love, with which the believer is possessed, must then have the effect upon him so as to induce him to bear the strongest testimony against his unbelieving friends that he has in his power; and for this reason the Apostle told him to “come out from among them, and be separate, and not touch the unclean thing.” Again, he said, “Dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.” If believers would join in worship with such unconverted idolaters, would they obey the command of Paul given here? Would it be fleeing from idolatry? Or would it be coming out from among them? Paul said that we shall have “no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.”

Among the nations of old, God never countenanced any idolatrous worship, or approved any service of the Israelites that was not in accordance with what he had instituted. They might be as zealous as they would in their exercises and sacrifices, yet God would not countenance any other than that which he had instituted. He called it abomination, and said they should do away with it. Neither did his faithful prophets and priests join in their idolatrous worship. They separated themselves, and would take no part with the multitude. When Elijah thought he alone was left of those who were faithful, the Lord told him He had yet remaining seven thousand men *who had not bowed their knees to Baal, or kissed his mouth*. Will our friends, who charge us with being self-righteous because we cannot unite with all other professed worshippers in their service, charge Elijah, and these seven thousand men, with being self-righteous and uncharitable? There is no difference between the two; the unbelieving or spiritless worshipper has not a whit more promise in the Word of God than the worshipper of wood and stone. Pure and undefiled love, or charity, constrains its possessor to deal plainly with all men, without respect of person. Those who profess, as well as those who do not profess, shall be reprov'd, rebuked, and exhorted with all long-suffering and doctrine. If an assembly of wicked and immoral men would be encouraged in their wickedness by our going in among them and being silent spectators of their games or frolics, then an assembly of unconverted men, who falsely profess to be engaged in worshipping God, would also be encouraged in their unconvertedness by our going in among them and being silent spectators – and much more if we were to join with them in their exercises. Would it not be more consistent with love or charity to protest against their course and reprove them so that, by the blessing of God, he might make them aware of their error, and lead them to repentance and life? The Lord told the prophet of old, to “cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins.” Israel and the house of Jacob professed the same doctrine and worship as the prophet Isaiah did; was it then uncharitable for the prophet thus to declare?

If the position is made out, that it is consistent with love, and is the duty of a child of God, to reprove, in the most pointed manner, those who they *know* are destitute of the spirit of God, and yet ignorantly or hypocritically pretending to worship God, it only remains to enquire whether we have any criterion whereby we *may know* that they are such.

God has withheld from man both the power and the right to judge. Nevertheless, Christ has told his disciples the way in which all men should know that they are such; and he also gave them a rule by which *they* should know whether those who profess to be, really are disciples. These rules must be infallible. Christ said to his disciples, “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” It must be the will of God that both these facts should be known – known to the world that the believer is a disciple, and known to the disciple that the tree is not good, or the wolf in sheep’s clothing is a false prophet.

The world loves its own also, and Christ said that the publicans and sinners love and do good to those who do the same to them. The love that the disciples bear to each other must then be something different from what the world shows; otherwise, it would not distinguish them from others. Love can only be known to exist in others by their deeds and actions. Nothing can convince one man that I love another, but my conduct towards him. John said that we shall “not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth;” and, so that we may not be deceived in regard to what constitutes true love, Christ and the Apostles have given us such precepts, by which we can distinguish between true and feigned love. Christ knows that we are weak and erring creatures, that one brother would trespass against another, and that the enemy of all good would take advantage of this to tempt and excite us to breaches of love. Therefore, he gave the plain directions that “if thy brother trespass against thee, tell him of his fault *between thee and him alone*; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And, if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but, if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican.” Paul said, “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” John said, “*Hereby* perceive we the love of God, *because* He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.” If brethren walk faithfully in this rule, they show a distinguished love, and man must close his eyes to the force of reason and truth if he does not recognize a principle in them that the world does not possess. Paul’s command here makes it the duty of one brother to labor to restore another, whether the fault was committed against himself, or whether it in any way concerned him personally, or not. The world does not usually concern itself to reform one who commits an error. They may talk about it and spread the fault abroad, but they do not labor to recover the erring; and, if the fault is committed against themselves, they usually complain and speak to others about it, much rather than to the offender; and, if they speak to him at all, it is rarely in a meek and gentle spirit. The believer, who is in the true love of God, cannot pass by; and, however much it may go against his natural feelings, he is constrained by love of his brother’s soul to address him in such manner and spirit as he deems most likely to win him, or work conviction on his mind. John said, “Whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?” Therefore, when they do good, communicate, and suffer for their brother, even to the laying down of their life for him, they show the fruits of love, and men can comprehend it as such.

This spirit, faithfully and honestly obeyed and carried out, *must* work conviction in the heart; for it is said that by it *all men shall know* that we are his disciples. The world may reproach, defame, malign, and persecute the children of God as much as they will. They cannot help it, and in their hearts they do still bear witness to the power of truth; for Christ has said that *all men shall know*, therefore they *must know*.

Christ further told his disciples to “beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye *shall know* them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so, every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree *cannot* bring forth evil fruit, *neither can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.”

Christ must have intended that his disciples should know false prophets, or he would not have told them to beware of them. And to beware of them, they must also know them, or they could not do this. To know them, they must have evidence by which to do so; and in so important a matter, this test must also be a certain one. Therefore the Savior gave them an unerring rule. “Ye *shall know* them by their fruits; a good tree *cannot* bring forth evil fruit.”

In saying to the disciples that they should beware of false prophets, Christ must have intended that they should make some distinction between them and the true prophets. The prophets taught the people what was the will of God, and if the disciples *knew* any to be false, and were told to beware of them, what would be more natural than to withdraw themselves from hearing them? And especially as Christ further said, “Take heed that no man deceive you.” The fruit that the Savior here speaks of as being the test of its producer’s quality must evidently be the fruits of the spirit. “Every tree (the Savior said) *is known* by his own fruit.” “A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man, out of the evil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is evil.” By nature we are all evil and carnal, walk according to the flesh, bring forth its fruits or works, and are represented by a corrupt tree. We fell from the spirit and under the flesh by the transgression of our first parents; and we are in the flesh as long as the works of the flesh manifest themselves by our words, deeds, and actions. The evil treasures of the heart are our self-love, carnal affections, and will, which have emanated from the Devil and forbid the carnal mind to be subject to the law of God. From this principle or spirit, the works of the flesh flow, or are brought forth, and are called its fruits. In those who are converted, this spirit or principle of evil is subdued; and the spirit and love of God, which was lost in the fall, is restored and now controls the believer. This is the good treasure of the heart, and now, since the Holy Spirit has the control of the heart, and has power to overcome the evil treasure, the good fruits of the spirit must be brought forth.

This is the infallible test that the Savior has given to his disciples, by which they shall know the false prophets and everyone who professes faith – for “*every tree* is known by his own fruit.” The false prophets to whom the Savior alludes cannot be of a lewd, vicious, and immoral character. They “come to you *in sheep’s clothing*.” That is, they appear in the garb of sanctity. They are decent, moral, and upright in their dealings and association with man; but still there is an infallible test in their fruits, by which the disciples “*shall know* them,” and yet, they are forbidden to judge.

The purpose of the enemy of all good is to hinder the work of God from prospering by every way he can, and he has no better way to accomplish this purpose than by preventing obedience to the commands of the Savior. Therefore, he seeks to screen his false prophets from the light in which they may be known, by hiding them behind the command not to judge. What is the reason that there is so much holy horror expressed at the thought of judging, and never a warning given to beware of false prophets? The Devil is the prince of darkness, and his object is to keep man in darkness, for there he can carry on his work to purpose; but as the light makes manifest, he shuns this, and tries to keep his emissaries from coming to the light, so that their deeds are not reprov'd. Christ said, “Everyone that *doeth* evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that *doeth* truth cometh to the light, that his *deeds* may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.”

To “know a man by his fruits,” cannot be judging him, for Christ commanded the one and forbade the other. There must, therefore, be a distinction. Paul said of Timothy, he “professed a good profession, before many witnesses.” Thus, a man might make a good and sound Gospel profession that no one could object to; but, if we would know that he was immoral in his conduct or led a life inconsistent with that profession, we would know by these fruits that he could not be what he professes.¹⁹ By saying so, or telling him that, in the course of life he is leading, he cannot be saved, we

¹⁹ May we make a distinction between someone who has rejected the truth and someone who is ignorant of the truth – someone who simply has not understood it yet? Not everyone is suddenly infused with all Christian knowledge and understanding at the moment they become a Christian. Some people learn at a painfully slow rate – but they do eventually learn. Is it fair to shun them until they do? We live in a society that glorifies the military and that is saturated with violence. Is it any wonder that some might become Christians without immediately understanding the truth of non-resistant principles?

would not be judging him. By his fruits we would know him, as the Savior has commanded. But if there was nothing in his walk and conversation inconsistent with this good profession, and we would yet undertake to condemn him, or say he is not a disciple of Jesus, then we would judge and transgress the command of Christ. But if one comes to us and is moral and of good deportment, so that he might in his outward conduct resemble a disciple of Jesus, and would yet profess a doctrine that is not according to godliness, or would not profess the doctrine of Christ, we *must* know that Christ has not sent him. The fruit of his lips would prove that he is a false prophet, and we would not be judging him by shunning him; for God's word has already judged him, and we would only be obeying what Christ has commanded. A little reflection must convince every candid mind of the importance of rightly understanding the intention of the Savior in giving these two commands. If his disciples should undertake to make themselves judges of motives or intentions, much evil and injustice might be done to innocent persons. And the door of his house would be shut, or closed against some of Christ's little ones. Again, if they did not observe the precaution to take heed to the doctrine and life of those who profess, what leaven would be introduced into the church! And the wolf in sheep's clothing would soon kill, destroy, and scatter the lambs of Christ.

But it is objected that we thus make ourselves judges of what Christ does teach, reject the opinion of all other men, and say we are right and all others wrong. But what then did Christ mean when he said, "Beware of false prophets who come to you in *sheep's clothing*, but inwardly are ravening wolves. By their fruits ye *shall know* them"? Paul said to the Romans, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the *doctrine* which ye have learned, and avoid them. For they are such as serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." The Lord Jesus Christ taught, prayed for, and insisted on unity in the Church, and such a unity as could be comprehended by the world; for, in his prayer to His Father, Christ desired that his disciples should be one, as He and the Father are one, "that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me." John said that Christ "died to bring together in one the children of God that are scattered abroad." Any doctrine that would cause division is contrary to Christ's doctrine. Therefore it is false, and Paul told his brethren to avoid them. Why? Because such do not serve the Lord Jesus Christ! They are none of His. In our day, the popular church is very much divided, and the teachers are very numerous who countenance it, and say that it may be so, and still be right. They tell people only to embrace religion, and unite themselves with any of these numerous "branches," as they are called. Is this not contrary to Christ's doctrine? And, according to Paul, they should be marked and avoided. Paul also charged Timothy to instruct the Ephesians to "teach no other doctrine," and he himself would "take heed unto himself, and to *the doctrine*." And John said, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed; for he that biddeth him God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds." Does this not agree with what Christ said? And show how John understood Christ? "Beware of false prophets, which come to you," said Christ. John said "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not." This shows how John taught us to "beware," and what the consequences will be to such as greet them with God speed. In order to carry out these instructions of Christ and the Apostles, we must have a sure rule or guide, so that we may certainly and surely know what the doctrine of Christ is.

That evil principle, which I have observed is the cause of bringing forth the fruit in the unbeliever, is self-love. It is the cause of our obeying the lusts and desires of the flesh and the mind. Jesus Christ was manifested to destroy the work of the Devil, and this principle being one of the chief of his works, and antagonistic to the work of the Lord, he levels some of his chief denunciations against this principle.

Christ did not deal much with special sins, but leveled his shafts against the principle that is the parent of sin. In denouncing the principle, he denounced every species of irregularity that arises from that source.

Among the first of Christ's declarations, or at least prominent among them, is "Deny thyself, and take up thy cross. He that would save his life shall lose it, but he that will lose it, for mine and the Gospel's sake, shall find it." Not a single command did he give, but what is at variance with self-love. Not a single sentiment did he utter that will in any way harmonize with this principle.

The good principle, which constitutes the good treasure of the heart, from which the good fruit flows, is the love of God shed abroad in the heart of those who are converted by the Holy Spirit. Upon this principle, all the commands of Christ are based; and, as Christ does not deal so much in special sins, so He does also not dwell so much on special virtues, but a great deal on the principle that commends the virtues to God. The same act may be sin and abomination to God in one person, and pleasing and acceptable to Him in another. One person may contribute to relieve the necessity of another from a motive of vanity, to be seen by men and have their esteem. This proceeds from the reprobate principle of self-love before alluded to, and it is displeasing to God. Another may contribute to relieve the same necessity from a motive of love to God, and its consequent fruit of good will to men, and the act is a sacrifice with which God is well pleased. Those who possess this good treasure, or Divine principle, do by its influence detect every approach of Satan through their flesh, by which he would influence them with this evil spirit, and by the power of the Holy Spirit they are able to overcome the deeds of the body, keep it in subjection, and take their thoughts captive under the obedience of Christ. Self-love is the cause of all strife, quarrelling, contention, war, and bloodshed. James said, "From whence come wars and fighting among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?" And Peter said, "Dearly beloved, I beseech you, as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." All extravagance in fashions, and fashionable diversions, are for the gratification of this principle, and proceed from the flesh. Let anyone pause and reflect: what is the ground that causes people to adopt modes or fashions of dress, which serve no kind of useful purpose, but are oftentimes exceedingly inconvenient, and besides so expensive as to make their cost inconvenient also, and burdensome? Is it not the principle of self-love, which the Savior has said we must deny? This is certainly a command of the Savior, and when we violate it, we show an evil fruit! When we see men do those things which cannot be prompted by anything else than this evil principle, we cannot help but *know* them to be such, as the Savior has commanded us to beware of. Those who, by painful experience, have learned to know this evil principle cannot fail to know what its fruits are, for Christ has said they *shall know* them.

As love is the evidence by which all men are to know the disciples of Christ, "All men shall know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." As I have said, this love must have something to distinguish it from carnal love, and *must and will* convince the world of the truth also, however much they may desire the contrary conviction; then the contrary must convince, or prove the opposite. The absence of this love must prove that they are not his disciples! When one brother can see another err, and not use the means of love which Christ has given for the purpose of restoring him, he cannot love him; and the disciples of Jesus may know, by this fruit, that he is not in possession of the spirit of God. When Christ has commanded us to love our enemies and do good to them, and we see men, contrary to this command, fighting and killing them, there can be no difficulty in determining that these are fruits which flow from the evil treasure of a man's heart.

The Apostle Paul, in his epistles, was more specific in naming the different acts that constitute violations of the principle that underlies the chief commands of the Gospel. That which the Savior termed the "evil treasure of the heart," the Apostle usually called the flesh; and the "good treasure of the heart," he called spirit. In other places, they are distinguished by light and darkness. Paul said in

Romans 8, “For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the spirit do mind the things that are spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God; neither, indeed, can it be. So then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But *ye* are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the spirit of God dwell in you. Now, *if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His*. And, if Christ be in you, the body is dead, because of sin; but the spirit is life, because of righteousness. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die, but if ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For the Holy Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. And, if children, then heirs: heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.”

If we read this testimony of Paul, and believe it to be true, we can have no question in our minds that those who are destitute of the spirit, or live after the flesh, cannot be disciples of Jesus Christ, nor can be true worshippers. There is no question but what the Apostle intended we should know, and prove both others and ourselves by the directions he here gives. For our conduct is to be entirely different towards the two classes. The one we are to have fellowship with, the other we are to avoid because the flesh causes divisions and offences. The one we are to comfort, encourage, build up, and confirm; the other we are commanded to reprove, rebuke, exhort, and warn. How could we obey these commands, if we cannot distinguish? Or what purpose would they serve us, if we cannot know by them what our own and the relation of others is towards their God? Here is the fruit to which Christ has called our attention, by which *all men shall know* the disciples, and by which the disciples shall also know the false prophet. But the Holy Spirit has left nothing to uncertainties. He has left the enemy no advantage over those who are seeking for truth with a truly upright heart, and hungering and thirsting for righteousness.

Paul, in Galatians 6, said, “Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting.” In the 5th chapter of the same epistle, he said, “This I say, then: walk in the spirit, and ye *shall not* fulfill the lusts of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary, the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that we would. But if ye be led by the spirit, ye *are not* under the Law. The works of the flesh are *manifest*, which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envying, murders, drunkenness, reveling, *and such like* – of which I told you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. Against such there *is no law*. And *they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh*, with the affections and lusts. If we live in the spirit, let us also walk in the spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another and envying one another.”

The Apostle here made a very clear distinction and separation between the flesh and the spirit, self-love and the love of God, the evil treasure of the heart and the good treasure of the heart. He pointed out numbers of special acts, which he designates as proceeding from the flesh, and said that they “are *manifest*.” Whatever is manifest is and may be publicly known. So the works of the flesh may be known, and the Apostle desires us to know that those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. It is evidence that they do not possess the spirit of God, for Paul said, “They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh, with its lusts and desires.” Then, when they do such things, it is evident that they have not “crucified the flesh, with its lusts and desires.” As a consequence, they cannot be Christ’s, for they are not led by the spirit, and “they that have not the spirit of Christ, are none of his.”

Everyone knows that numbers of the sects of Christendom live in open violation of what Paul teaches here. I am not aware that any of the so named churches openly avow that there is no harm in adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, murders and drunkenness; but it is well known that numbers of those of high standing in the church are guilty at least of being drunken very frequently, and there is no notice taken of it by the church or its minister. In regard to hatred, variance, wrath, strife, and the like, the common occurrences are too well known to need more than merely to refer to them. How far are they from bringing forth the fruits of the spirit, which are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, meekness, and temperance? Paul said, "If we are in the spirit, let us also walk in the spirit." Emulations and reveling are here named among these works of the flesh, or fruits of the evil heart, and that those who do them "shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Emulation is defined as a desire to "equal or excel." It is, therefore, emulation that leads persons to follow the fashions of the world. If we look at the style of dress, mode of life, luxury and extravagance among the wealthy and fashionable churches, the style of their houses and furniture, and even the churches and decorations, who can doubt that pride and vanity do not have a large share in the motive which prompts them to such a course? If persons should even argue that they have no pride in their gay, fashionable, and expensive dress and equipage, and deny the desire to excel, they must at least have the desire to *equal*, or they would not follow fashion when it is so often attended with great inconvenience. Paul said in Romans 12, "Be not conformed to the world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of the mind." The carnal mind seeks conformity to the world, but the spiritual mind is transformed in its renewal. Besides this, the Apostles have given us express commands, showing clearly their view of the spirit or principle that induces persons to pursue such a course of life. Besides the manifest violation of the spirit of the Gospel, which everyone who has the least desire to ascertain the design of its expressions can see, Paul expressly said in the 1 Timothy 2, "I will, therefore, in like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shame-facedness and sobriety; *not in broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array*, but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works." The Apostle Peter also bore the same testimony, in nearly the same words, in 1 Peter 3.

The word "reveling" is defined to mean "feasting with noisy mirth." It is well known that many members of the popular churches attend parties and balls, and dance and play, where there is usually eating and drinking to excess, noisy mirth, and nothing but vain amusements and frivolity. This is well known to the whole congregation, countenanced, or at least connived at, by their ministers, and is advocated by many as innocent or harmless.

The Apostle, at the conclusion of this catalogue of vices, which he enumerates as proceeding from the flesh, intimates that these are not all the violations of the principles of the Gospel that might be named. After naming those as he did, he added, "*and such like*," plainly indicating that all actions or deeds, prompted by the same principle which prompts those there named, are under the same reprobation. Paul also said, in Ephesians, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the Holy Spirit." He also said, "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil-speaking be put away from you, with all malice." Again he said, "Filthiness, *foolish talking, and jesting* shall not once be named among them, as becometh saints." These are of the same "like" as those named in Galatians. And now, let any candid mind reflect upon what the Apostles and Christ taught in those Scriptures here quoted, and they *must* admit there is no comparison between the children of God as represented in the Gospel, and these popular churches. Let everyone ask himself, how can we obey those Scriptures, which command us to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, and not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers? How can we withdraw ourselves from every brother that walks disorderly, if we are not to *know* a corrupt tree from a good one? If it was not the intention of

Christ and the Apostles that the believers should *know* the true from false prophets, and a true believer from one who is only nominally so, why did they give such directions and commands?

I have mostly named only those corruptions which are defended and supported by these popular churches; but may we not well and truly say of them, as the Apostles did of the Gentiles, "It is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret." And here let me ask everyone candidly to reflect upon what he himself knows of these things! Look at the great structure of popular religion – at the fighting, bickering, backbiting, and slandering – how they call each other liars, traitors, scoundrels, and every evil name they can invent. And, when we say they cannot be Christians, they charge us with judging! Is this not amazingly inconsistent?

Christ said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments," and, "Why call ye me Lord, and do not the things which I command you. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me. He that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings." John said, "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments," and, "He that sayeth, '*I know Him,*' and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him," and "If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth."

Doesn't all this prove that those who live according to the flesh, and bring forth these evil fruits, are carnal, destitute of the spirit and love of God, and in darkness? It is our rebellious, stubborn hearts that prevent us from obeying the commands of Christ, because his commands are at variance with our self-love. Samuel said to Saul, "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as *iniquity and idolatry.*" God never countenanced any worship of old which was not in accordance with his command. Whenever the Israelites departed from the command of God, He rejected their sacrifices, however rich or numerous they were. "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts. Your appointed feasts my soul hateth; they are a trouble to me; I am weary to bear them." All this was because they did not regard the word of the Lord in His commandments. Saul was commanded to destroy Amalek. He should have spared nothing, utterly destroying "man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass." But Saul spared the king, and kept the best of the oxen and sheep, and the chief of the things, to sacrifice to the Lord. But Samuel asked him, "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord?" This act of Saul had a semblance of desire to honor God, but it was founded on a delusive idea. Whenever we depart from the word of the Lord, our devices and imaginings are vain, and cause us to be rejected, as Saul was rejected for rejecting the word of the Lord. God had given him a command, and he did not obey. This was stubbornness, and the prophet said it was as idolatry. Saul had set up an idol in his heart, in conceiving a sacrifice or offering contrary to God's word. This was idolatry. Thus Paul said, "Covetousness is idolatry." This is because there is an object in the heart, which is prized or worshipped above God. Whatever we love more than God is therefore our idol.

All worship, therefore, that is not dictated or instituted by God is idolatry. Man's devices and commandments were ever declared to be abomination to God. True worship, under the Law, was that which adhered closely to God's command, for without faith it is impossible to please God, and faith would bind its possessor to the Word of God. Under the Gospel, the true worshippers worship God in spirit and in truth. Those who were destitute of the faith of old could not worship in faith, and those who are destitute of the spirit now cannot worship in spirit. The true and faithful Israelites would not take any part in the idolatrous worship of their people. The Lord said to Elijah, "I have left me seven thousand in Israel, *all the knees of which* have not bowed unto Baal, and *every* mouth which hath not kissed him." Every knee that had bowed unto Baal, and every mouth that had kissed him, were not the

Lord's. If every transgression and disobedience under the Law received a just reward, how shall we now escape, if we refuse to hear Him who speaks from Heaven?

Paul told the Corinthians, "Dearly beloved, flee from idolatry. The things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God." The Gentiles were idolaters, but they did not generally worship or sacrifice to devils professedly; yet the Apostle classed them all together, and said that the things which they sacrificed, they sacrificed to devils. But it does not matter what the object was of which they made images, or what it was which they sacrificed to – it was a devilish spirit that actuated them. There might be said to be but two spirits, one of God and one of the devil. John said that there are many spirits that have gone out into the world, but still there are only two sources from which they emanate, and are still in reality only two. The spirit of God, or the Holy Spirit, would not prompt or lead anyone to sacrifice to, or worship idols. All the idols, false worship, or commandments of men that have ever been instituted, are by the instigation of the devil. Hence the Apostle said, "What the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God."

All false and erroneous worship is dictated by the same spirit as the sacrifices of the Gentiles were, and may in truth as well be said to be, a worshipping of devils, as the other is a sacrificing to devils. The Israelites, as a nation, never fell so deeply into idolatry as utterly to deny and forsake the worship of the God of Israel, or to acknowledge the heathen deities as being the only true Gods. They always valued themselves as being the children of Abraham, and God as having brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and having done them such signal favors. They made images and idols, and erected altars in groves and upon hills, contrary to the command of God; but they still had some of their own peculiar rites and ceremonies of their distinctive service attending it. Yet God complained more of their idolatry and abominations than He did of the Gentiles'. The same spirit that had led the Gentiles into their gross idolatry and abominations, had taken possession of Israel; and their service was of the same character in the sight of God.

The Apostle Paul said of the Gentiles, "When they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image. *Wherefore*, God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves." When the same spirit, which led the Gentiles to become vain in their own imaginations, took possession of the Jews, it led them into the same vain and sensual life, and even though they did not utterly deny the God of Israel, and still retained His name and a part of His rites, yet God complained of their idolatry, and said "it is abomination in His sight." And even when the Lord did not complain of their corrupting the ceremonial service, and it seemed as if they were very zealous in it, yet, on account of their transgression of the moral Law, God told them He was weary of the multitude of their sacrifices, and rejected their solemn feasts. (Isaiah 1) And when the Lord Jesus was in the flesh, He did not charge the Pharisees with open idolatry, but yet He said that they were of their father the devil, and his lusts they would do. Their adherence to the name and form of the service did not alter the character of the service, when the spirit that dictated the service was lost.

And now, let anyone read the New Testament, and compare the instructions the Holy Spirit gives there with the popular religion of the present day, and then ask his own heart whether it is not as far from the spirit of the Gospel as ever the Jews departed from their commandment in the Law. They are even much further than the Pharisees were when the Savior was on earth, and yet the one is called abominable idolatry and the other children of the devil! Look at the war and bloodshed, look at the contention and strife, ambition, avarice, pride, hatred, and variance; the vain ostentation in their churches, their luxury and extravagance, their amusements, plays, parties, theatres, circuses, fairs and

social pastimes, and then enquire whether there is more of the spirit of the Gospel in it than there was of the Law in Israel's service, at the time of their corruption.

Jesus Christ said that we shall come to Him and learn of Him, for He is "meek and lowly in heart. But where is the evidence of our modern popular worshippers having been with Jesus, or that they have learned these virtues of Him? I would ask: in what way do they differ from those who do not profess Christianity? Is there more difference between those who profess and those who do not, than there was between Jews and Gentiles? Do those who profess as a body not show as much carnality, as much self-love, envy, vanity, irritability, and, in short, do they not live as much after the flesh as the mass of those who do not profess? Can we then conclude that they are under any other spirit than that of the world? Jesus Christ and the Apostles have given us the command to beware of false prophets, and not to be yoked together with unbelievers, and said, "by their fruits we *shall know* them." This, then, we hold, is not judging, but Jesus Christ has already judged and given us his judgment.

The reason why we can take no part with these worshippers, or acknowledge them as brethren, is because we look upon it as being a spiritless exercise and nothing less than idolatry. The same spirit that led men into idolatry of old, and the Jews to depart from the Law of the Lord, has led to this carnal, irregular, service. We feel constrained, in obedience to the command of the Savior and his Apostles, to withdraw from their worship and reprove them, and bear a protest against all the unfruitful works of darkness, no matter under what guise or pretences they are practiced.

We are accused of being selfish, uncharitable, and self-righteous. The latter principle is highly offensive to God and man. No Christian can be self-righteous, for they cannot be Christians until their own righteousness becomes as filthy rags to them, and they, as humble beggars, come to cast all their own virtues away, and accept the merits and righteousness of another. They can continue to be Christians only so long as they continue to cast away their own and depend on the merits and righteousness of Christ. True charity is that which cries aloud, and spares not, regardless of person and profession. It reproves, rebukes, exhorts, and admonishes with all long-suffering and doctrine. Self-love or selfishness seeks the favor and good will of man. We confess that we feel this in the flesh as well as all other men do, and if we would let this influence us, it would lead us to such a practice as would secure us the good will of man. There is no practice in our profession that brings us so much reproach as this; and self-love, if it influenced us at all, would certainly not lead us to a course in which it has to suffer so much mortification. If we would even protest against the popular religion of our day as strongly in all respects as we do, yet would attend their worship and service occasionally, and only relax this one feature of our profession, it would secure us a very large degree of their friendship and favor, and also secure large accessions to our church. It would seem to me, therefore, that natural reasons would show that this cannot be the motive. But this we will admit, that if the motives attributed to us by our opponents influence us, then our religion is vain. The destruction of this principle is the very object for which the religion of Jesus Christ was instituted, and it will accomplish this purpose; and where this purpose is not accomplished, there is also none of his religion, for they are antagonistic principles, and can no more exist together in the heart than light and darkness can commune.

I have said in the foregoing part of this work that the religion of Jesus Christ is reasonable and consistent. Every man who rises to preach the Gospel, does by the act make a virtual profession that he is a converted man, and under the influence of the Holy Spirit, who directs him what to teach. One teaches that it is our duty as Christians to take up arms and defend or fight for the country; another tells us the Holy Spirit teaches him that it is sin. This will suffice for my purpose. There might be many more such differences cited, but I will forbear. Can any reasonable person believe that these can both be instructed by this Holy Spirit? This is neither reasonable nor consistent. Then it cannot be the religion of Jesus Christ, or else His religion is not consistent. Paul said, "We are ambassadors for Christ, as

though God did beseech you by us.” If any two or more men would come to our President, professing to be ambassadors from any foreign power, and would represent the will of their Sovereign in a very widely different manner, what would our President do? He would evidently refuse to have anything to do with anyone, until he would apply to the power to know whom, or whether any of them, was his accredited agent. Thus every sincere and upright person must do. Apply to Jesus and His Word, and there he will find an infallible guide.

Christ said in John 10, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, is a thief and a robber; but he that entereth in by the door is the Shepherd of the sheep.” Christ is here evidently speaking of the visible church. Into this, unconverted persons have climbed from the beginning of its institution. The invisible church no unconverted person can enter. The visible church is here compared to a fold of sheep, the shepherd or pastor of which must also have entered into the fold by true conversion through Christ the door. To such a shepherd the porter (or Holy Spirit) opens. He goes before, and the sheep follow him, for *they know his voice*, “and a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him, for they know not the voice of strangers.”

Isn't the Savior's meaning here very plain? He told us as plainly as it is possible for language to do, that every unconverted person who enters the visible church of Christ is *a thief and a robber*; and especially such as assume to preach the Gospel. Let the expression sound as offensive as it will, we must take it, as it is the *word of Christ*. You and I, whoever we are, whatever we may think of ourselves, or whatever the world may think of us, if we have not been truly born again or converted, and thereby entered into the fold of Christ through Him, we are a *thief and a robber*. Turn it which way we will, we can make nothing else out of it; it sounds the same awful warnings in our ear.

All who enter into Christ are brethren of one family, and are here compared to sheep of one fold. The shepherd is the minister, or teacher, or spiritual guide of the external or visible church or fold. It can be very easily comprehended that it is important that he should himself have entered into Christ by true conversion; and that by a life of humility and self-denial, he also continues in him, so that Christ, by the Holy Spirit, may direct him what to teach. “To him the porter openeth.” The Holy Spirit opens the word of eternal truth to the true shepherd of Christ, so that he may lead and direct the sheep of Christ into the living pastures, and to the pure fountains of the living Word of God. The sheep, those who have entered the fold through Christ, those who have been truly converted, know his voice. They have themselves experienced the work of conversion, have felt what sin is, have also felt what the love of God is, and, being thereby made partakers of the divine nature, they know its influence and they are also enabled, by this light, to distinguish what is truth and what is error. Therefore, when their shepherd speaks of these things, they do not sound strange to them; the voice is familiar; they have themselves experienced them. When the shepherd speaks to them of the mode by which Satan seeks to lead them away from the simplicity of Christ, and teaches them their duties, these all agree with the spirit they have received, and they know the voice. Natural sheep know their shepherd, they also know his voice, and they follow him wherever he leads them. Thus the true children of God will follow their teachers. “He goes before them,” said the Savior. He sets them a good example, and they follow after him, as he does the shepherd and bishop of their souls, Jesus Christ.

The stranger is evidently intended to mean one who has not entered the Church or fold through Christ, but has climbed up some other way, and is also a thief and a robber. These are called strangers, because they are not “fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.” They do not belong to the “household of faith,” and are therefore strangers. Whenever there is a family of children, born of the same parents, any other one in the house, who does not stand in the relation of a child, is called a stranger. He is of strange blood, and cannot be heir with or enjoy the rights of a child. Thus those who

enter into the church, and are not born again by the incorruptible seed of the Word of God, are not of the household, or heirs of God. They are strangers, and when they speak, their voice is strange. They speak of things that the children have not learned of Christ. When they teach a doctrine differing from what Christ taught, it is strange to them. They “have not so learned Christ,” and they *will not hear* it. They will *flee* from him, because they know not his voice.

“The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy.” The thief is the same as the stranger. He is not born of God, is a stranger, and is dangerous besides. He is a false prophet and an unbeliever, has a strange voice, and by this fruit the sheep know him; and so will not hear him, because they know he is come only to steal, kill, and destroy. He is disobedient and stubborn, and the Devil has his work in him, as it is said, he works in the children of disobedience. This is as witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and *idolatry*.

Reflect well on these words, and mark what Christ said: “He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, is a thief and a robber.” This refers to and includes everyone who is not born again. It matters not how honest and well meaning he may be, if he is himself deceived, and truly imagines he *is* called of God to preach the Gospel, he is nevertheless a thief and a robber, even though he is deluded. He is blind at the best, and if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into the pit. Many of the Gentiles may be in a measure innocent, yet “what they sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God.” These not having entered in through the door are thieves and robbers; they are strange and dangerous, and the Savior said that the sheep *will not hear them*; they will flee from them, because they know they steal, kill, and destroy. They may not steal any earthly treasure, may not kill or destroy the body, but they steal the heavenly treasure of love to God by infusing false doctrine into the mind, and instilling ideas and views which tend to the gratification of the flesh and the mind, thereby robbing the soul of the love of God, and poisoning it with false doctrine, so that the soul must die. Thus they steal, kill, and destroy.

If Christ had not given the sheep evidence whereby they could surely know the stranger and hireling from the good shepherd, they would not know how to make this distinction here referred to. But Christ said that they *will not hear a stranger*, but *will flee*. How could they flee, if they do not know? Then it is evident that where there is a strange voice, those who do not flee are not sheep, for *they will flee!*

The Savior further called this stranger, thief, and robber “a hireling,” and said, “He careth not for the sheep.” Christ gave His life for the sheep, and those who have been converted and entered into the fold through Christ, the door, are made partakers of the divine nature, receive the mind of Christ, and have the love of God shed abroad in the heart through the Holy Spirit. These love the souls of their brethren, and would run any and every risk to secure the safety of the flock over which the Holy Spirit has made them overseers. But the hireling has no further interest in the work he is engaged in than his wages, and when he sees these to be in danger, he will not work. The hireling has no interest in the sheep. He does not care for them. Therefore, when he sees the wolf coming, he will flee. He sees his wages to be in danger, and these he will not risk. The devil is evidently the wolf here spoken of, or alluded to, and it is said that he may be seen coming. “He seeth the wolf coming.” The devil or wolf approaches the flock of Christ by working on the lusts and desires of the flesh and the mind, inclining them to light-mindedness and carnal enjoyments. This is first wrought in the mind and feelings of the individual, unperceived by any other; and if those whom he is approaching would be watchful, and flee to the great shepherd of their souls, the wolf could get no advantage. Neither could he approach close enough for the shepherd to perceive. But when he gets so much hold as to be perceptible in the walk and conversation, then the shepherd can see the wolf coming. This is by any of the fruits of the flesh manifesting themselves. Here they must labor as Christ and the Apostles taught us, for the purpose of making the erring aware of their decline. This is not done by declaiming in a general way against sin and the works of the flesh, but by laboring individually with those who are infected with leaven, as

Christ taught. If the shepherd would see a wolf capturing a sheep, it would do no good to cry wolf; he would have to enter into combat with the wolf if he would rescue his sheep. David said that when the lion and the bear took the lamb out of the flock, of which he was the shepherd, “I *went out after him*, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth; and when he arose against me, I caught him by the beard, and smote him, and slew him.” This was attended with danger to David, but he felt an interest in the sheep, and he did not flee at the approach of the wolf. It is not an uncommon thing, when a brother falls into error, or is captivated by the flesh, if the shepherd labors to make him aware of his sin, the spirit or wolf will rise against *him*. This may bring him into danger and trouble, but the faithful shepherd is not deterred from doing his duty by any personal consideration. But the hireling, who has no interest in the sheep but the wool, who does not serve the Lord Jesus Christ but his belly, fearing he may incur the displeasure of the offender, or his interests or reputation may suffer, passes by, and so the wolf catches and *scatters* the whole flock. How significant is this word, *scatters*. The flock of Christ, or his fold, is a unit. “There are three-score queens, and four-score concubines, and virgins without number. My dove, my undefiled, is *but one*. She is the *only one* of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bore her.” (Songs of Solomon 6) When the flock is scattered, it is evidence that the wolf has caught them. Take the church in its present popular sense, and it cannot be *scattered*. A thing to be scattered must be in some kind of contact or proximity first, but the present nominal church is already so *scattered* that no wolf could accomplish more, and is evidence that the wolf has long since been among them.

In Leviticus 17, the Lord said, “Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him.” Christ and the Apostles plainly instruct us how we shall labor with our brethren, so as not to allow sin upon them; and if they will not reform, we shall hold them as heathen men and publicans. But who does not know that the most shameful irregularities occur in the great popular churches of the present day. Drunkenness, lying, cheating, backbiting, defaming and gossiping are of frequent occurrence, and can not help but come to the knowledge of the pastors; but we hear little of confessions, retractions, or restitutions being made, or even a scriptural rebuke being administered – especially if the offender is a person of respectability in society, or of influence and good standing. I know there are many persons of estimable moral character, amiability, and virtue among them, but these also very well know that what we assert is true of numbers of their brethren. Thus the hireling flees, and the sheep are destroyed.

It is said that Luther was so much disgusted, in his latter days, at the immorality of his people in Wittenberg, that he left the place in disgust, with the intention of spending the remainder of his days elsewhere. There is no doubt but Luther declaimed loudly and earnestly against these immoralities; but had he been a faithful shepherd, taken none into the fold but such as gave evidence that they had entered into Christ, then fed the flock with the pure living pastures of the Word of God, and faithfully defended them against the assault of the wolf, he would not have had to complain so bitterly of them.

John Wesley also reaped the bitter fruits of his remissness, in his latter days. In his writings he bears a strong testimony against the gaiety and fashions of his day. He said, “I exhort all those who desire me to watch over their souls to wear no gold, pearls, or precious stones; to use no curling of hair or costly apparel, howsoever grave. I advise those who are able to receive this saying to buy no velvet, no silks, no fine linen, no superfluities, no mere ornaments, though ever so much in fashion. Wear nothing, though you have it already, which is of a glaring color, or which is in any way gay, glittering, and showy; *nothing made in the very height of the fashion*; nothing apt to attract the eyes of the bystanders. I do not advise women to wear rings, earrings, necklaces, laces (of whatever kind or color), or ruffles, which, by little and little, may shoot easily from one to twelve inches deep. Neither do I advise men to wear colored waistcoats, shining stockings, glittering or costly buckles or buttons, either on their coats or in their sleeves, any more than gay, fashionable, and expensive powdered wigs.” He maintained that

curling the hair, and wearing gold, precious stones, and costly apparel were expressly forbidden in Scripture, and that whoever says there is no harm in these things, might as well say there is no harm in stealing and adultery. In spite, however, of his exhortations, those of his own people who could afford it, “the very people that sat under the pulpit, or by the side of it,” were as fashionably adorned as others of their own rank. “This,” said Wesley, “is a melancholy truth: I am ashamed of it, but I know not how to help it. I call Heaven and earth to witness this day, that it is not my fault. The trumpet has not given an uncertain sound for nearly the last fifty years. I have borne a clear and faithful testimony. *In print, in preaching, in meeting the Society, I have not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God. I am therefore clear of the blood of those that will not hear; it lies upon their own heads. Let your dress be cheap as well as plain – otherwise, you do but trifle with God, and me, and your own souls.*”

This language shows, as plainly as language can show, that Wesley knew that such fruits were not of the kind to give the producer promise, or else he would not have spoken of blood guiltiness. There is no doubt he did speak and write earnestly against them; but still as a faithful shepherd, he had a further duty to perform. These people, who thus violated his rule, were not truly humbled in heart, or they would not have required that he should have to direct them in these things. If it were vanity, or a desire to gratify the flesh, that induced them to act thus, the mere self-denial on account of Wesley’s command would not have made them better. His duty was to convince them of sin, and from where all sin comes. If they could have been made aware of the evil treasure of their hearts, which brought the desire for those things that are sinful, and had been led by this sense away from their gaiety and superfluity, he would not have had cause to complain. There is no doubt Wesley took many a man into his congregation who had been a drunkard before conversion. But he did not receive him into his society on any confession until he saw the fruits of his conversion in the reformation of life. If such a person had made ever so much profession of being converted and blessed, but would get drunk, steal, or commit adultery, Wesley would have said they are either a hypocrite or grossly deceived, and unless they would repent of their sins, they could not be saved. If as he said, we might as well have said there is no harm in adultery or stealing, as to say there is none in such extravagance of dress as he noticed, and he took the one into his society, he might as well have taken the other in also. We are not informed whether these people did once lay off their vain dress, and afterwards took it up again, or whether they never laid it off. But it does not matter. If he thought it was sin, and the word gave him power, then as a faithful sentinel on the watch-towers of Jerusalem, he should have refused such admittance into the house of God until he had better evidence of a change of heart; and if they had given him that evidence before their admission, and he saw them inclining to a relapse into sin, his duty was, regardless of the consequences to himself, to rescue the lamb from the grasp of the lion.

He said, “I might have been as firm (and I now see it would have been far better) as either the people called Quakers or the Moravian brethren; I might have said, ‘This is our manner of dress, which we know is both scriptural and rational. If you join with us, you are to dress as we do; but you need not join us, unless you please.’ But alas, the time is now past.” Wesley noticed the inconsistency of the Quakers in adopting so plain a dress, but being so fine and costly.²⁰ Inconsistency will always be the case where a rule, command, or ordinance, is based on any command of man. If Wesley had adopted such a rule, his people would have run into some inconsistency, and whether or not, they would have been none the better for it. If the principle that underlies plainness in all our deeds and actions is wanting, the adoption of rules, however “scriptural and rational,” will not help us a whit! If the principle is begotten in the soul, the fruit will follow, as naturally as effect will follow cause, throughout all nature.

²⁰ In the quote cited, Wesley praised the Quakers, said that he should have been as firm as they were, and said nothing about their being inconsistent. Musser inexplicably drew a different conclusion.

The late John Hersey, an itinerant preacher in the Methodist Church, protested very loudly, both publicly and privately, against the extravagance and gaiety of the Methodists in their churches, houses, and dress. He was everywhere praised and held in esteem as a very good and pious man; but few, if any, regarded his views in respect to the things he so earnestly protested against.

I suppose both he and Wesley continued to break the bread, and drink the cup, with the people they so severely censured, thereby showing before God and man that they were one body with them. If they were shepherds, who entered in through the door into the fold of Christ, and set their flock a good example by going before them when they led them out, then a very large portion of their flock could not have been sheep. Christ said, "*The sheep follow him, for they know his voice.*" Then, if they did not follow, they could not have been sheep. If they were such shepherds, then they had the binding key of God's word, and when they proclaimed the things they did, they bound their disobedient members on earth, and they were bound in Heaven also. But how inconsistent was it in them thus to bind them with the word, and then to turn about and greet them as brothers and break the bread with them; professing thereby, before God and the world, that they are of the same body and spirit. Paul said, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, being many, are one bread and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread." Paul did not pretend to say that this bread and wine is the body and blood of Christ, or that it is the communion of that body and blood.²¹ But it is the symbol, or represents that they are in communion with God and His Son Jesus Christ, through the merits of this blood and broken body. And as we, being many, are all partakers of this one bread, so we, being many individuals, are one body, and all partakers of, and in fellowship with, Christ by his broken body. Why would these men have excluded a common drunkard, or fornicator, from their communion-table? Evidently because they would have thought, by partaking with them, they would make themselves partakers of their sins, and would be guilty of hypocrisy in testifying to the world what they do not in their hearts believe. But, if the Word of God gives them authority to denounce such practices as they did, and Wesley thought it brought them under blood-guiltiness, what more right had he to commune with the one than the other, or to make distinction because one was a decent sin, and the other an indecent one? By administering the bread and wine to them, he bade them God speed, as plainly as any act he could do; and John said, "He that biddeth them God speed is partaker of their evil deeds." Wesley made a distinction between people *of rank and in office*, and others. The former were allowed to put on gold, and wear costly and fashionable apparel. But doesn't the whole Word of God declare that God is no respecter of persons? I can see no authority for any such distinction. Where do such things as the extravagance and vanity here spoken of come from? Is the devil not the author of it? And did not these men, by their protestations, admit that they believed it to be his work? Then they saw the wolf, but they fled! True, they cried out "Wolf, wolf," but still they fled, and did not stand by and deliver the sheep.

This shows how much people will bear, and even praise men for denouncing sin in a general way, if they only do not reprove it in the individual, or do still countenance their way, by going with them, or according to them what they profess. The Scribes and Pharisees would have borne with Christ, and praised and commended him, if he had condemned all the sins which he did, as long as he had not charged themselves with being guilty of them. If it had only been the publicans and sinners that he denounced, it would all have been well, but when he exposed their own hypocrisy, they could not endure him.

The religion of Jesus Christ is based on the principle of love. God is love, and all his dealings with man are characterized by love. In conversion, the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy

²¹ Musser is obviously writing from his own denomination's interpretation of the passage.

Spirit. This influence so changes the heart and mind of its possessor, as to induce obedience to the commands of the Gospel – not because they are commanded, but, being possessed of the principle, the effect must follow as a fruit. This is what forbids them to resist evil and induces them to be just, moral, humble, and meek in their deportment. All these virtues together, or any number more of them, do not make true Christian religion. The strictest obedience to outward Gospel commands does not *make* a Christian. But true Christian religion begets these virtues in the believer and brings forth obedience as a fruit, and where obedience to the Gospel commands does not exist, there the love of God and religion of Jesus Christ cannot exist. The Savior said, “Make the tree good and his fruit good.” If the soul is truly converted to God, then the good fruits of obedience to the Gospel commands must follow as its effect, because “*a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit.*”

War, strife, contention, pride, ostentation, emulation, and reveling, which we have referred to in the foregoing pages as existing among those who profess to be disciples of Jesus Christ, *are not Gospel fruit*. How can anyone, as a rational creature, endowed with only a natural understanding, conclude otherwise than that these cannot be the good trees referred to by Christ? This *cannot* be judging, for this Christ has forbidden, but refers us to the fruits to *know* the tree by.

It is either the duty and the privilege of God’s children to fight, or it is their duty and privilege to walk in non-resistance and non-conformity. This point, then, rests altogether on the fact, whether Jesus Christ and the Apostles taught non-resistance and non-conformity to the world. If they did so teach, then certainly those who teach the contrary are anti-Christian teachers. This position cannot be controverted. I may say with the Apostle Paul, if Christ and the Apostles do not teach non-resistance and non-conformity to the world, “then is our preaching vain, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified that Christ and the Holy Spirit teach it, which they do not teach, if so be.” (1 Corinthians 15) The same must be the case with our opponents, if Christ does teach what we uphold. They must be false witnesses of God, and their preaching, service and worship anti-Christian and idolatrous! That there are many well-meaning, innocent, and deluded souls among them, I do not deny; but this does not change the character of their service, any more than it changed the character of the services of the Gentiles, because there were well-meaning, innocent, and deluded creatures among them. Let every candid and God-fearing reader exercise his own understanding in answering this question: what is it that influences the party, which is in error? That party which is teaching and contending for that which Christ forbids, cannot be under the influence of the spirit of God! They must then be under the influence of the evil spirit, the same as the Gentiles were; and their service must be the same idolatry as theirs was.

The religion of Jesus Christ is not a matter of opinion. The mind of man is so constituted that it cannot be satisfied without religion, and man has fallen into the error of looking upon religion, or acting as if it were only designed to satisfy this want; and, whatever religion men embrace, if it brings contentment, then the end and object of religion are attained. But this is an error. The religion of Jesus Christ is a reality, and nothing short of our possessing that reality can serve the end for which this want was constituted. The great system of popular religion of the present day acts upon the delusive view referred to. They preach and proclaim their own, as the true Gospel ground, and contend against each other, expose their errors and inconsistencies of doctrine and practice, even denounce each other as hypocrites and deceivers, and then turn about and give each other the right hand of fellowship, worship together, and greet each other as fellow-servants of God and joint heirs of Christ. This would make religion a mere matter of opinion. For our strict separation in religious fellowship, we are denounced by all as bigots, Pharisaical, self-righteous, and uncharitable, yet these same persons will unite with *us* in worship, and accord to *us* the credit of what *we* profess to be, children of God. The Pharisees professed to be children of God and teachers of righteousness, but Christ told them they were blind guides,

children of the Devil, and makers of proselytes who were two-fold more the children of hell than they were themselves. If *we* possess a Pharisaical spirit, then *we* must be the same children as they were. If even *our* opponents were right, in their views on those controverted points referred to in the foregoing pages, they would be very inconsistent in giving *us* the hand of fellowship, and thereby comforting *us*, and those deluded by *us*, in *our* erroneous views.

The prophets and holy men of old did not denounce the idolatry and superstition of the Gentiles, and then unite with them in their service and ceremonies, or once, by word, act, or deed, countenance it as a Divine service at all. Daniel, and the men who were cast into the fiery furnace, would not, to save their lives, give the slightest countenance to the worship of idols.

For this reason, we feel ourselves constrained to withdraw from, protest against, and avoid the teaching, service, and worship of those who teach and uphold those things that Christ and His Apostles have so pointedly forbidden. Christ said, "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men." These are the unfruitful works of darkness, which Paul said we shall reprove, and have no fellowship with. They are unbelievers, with whom Paul said we shall not be unequally yoked together. They are strangers; therefore, as the lambs of Christ, *we* cannot hear or follow them, but will flee. They bring not the doctrine of Christ; therefore *we* cannot receive them into *our* house, or bid them God speed, lest *we* become partakers of their evil deeds. But, out of love to the souls of men, and jealousy for the honor of God, His children must ever protest against all false doctrine, and beware of everyone who comes as a wolf in sheep's clothing.

But there are also great numbers who profess to be non-resistants, who protest that it is not right for Christians to fight, and who also hold that we must not be conformed to the world, in following their fashions and customs, but who are plain in their dress and manners.

The prophecies in the Old Testament represent Christ's kingdom or Church as being one of unity and love. All the figures and representations of it are of the same nature. They point to a visible unity. When Christ came, His teaching and commands were of the same import, and He prayed to His heavenly Father that it should be so. When the day of Pentecost was fully come, and the time arrived which had been spoken of by the prophets, the time when he would establish this kingdom, it *was* such a visible unity. They were all by one spirit baptized into one body, and became of one heart and mind. The Church, or kingdom of Christ, agreed with the prophecies and figures represented in the Old Testament. It accorded with the teaching, figures, and prayers of the Savior. "The Scriptures cannot be broken," and the Church could be nothing less or more than what God had declared it should be.

This unity was the work of the Holy Spirit, which, by converting souls to God, makes believers to be of one heart and mind; and all those who allow themselves to be led by the Holy Spirit must continue to be one. This cannot be otherwise, for there is but one truth, the Holy Spirit is called "the spirit of truth," and it is said, "It will lead us into all truth." Wherever opposite or conflicting doctrines are held by professed Christians, one party must be in error, and these cannot be led by the spirit of God.

I have observed that Christ prayed for this unity and its continuance. The Apostles, after the establishment of the church, earnestly urged its preservation and continuance, and severely reproved and condemned those in whom the first symptoms of divisions, or ideas tending to that end, manifested themselves. Paul, writing to the Romans, said, "Now I beseech you, brethren, *mark* them which cause divisions and offences, *contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them.* For they that are such, serve not Our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words, and fair speeches, deceive the hearts of the simple." According to the declaration of the Savior, we cannot be His disciples, or enter into the kingdom of Heaven, unless we observe His commandments, keep His sayings, and abide in His word. The commands of Christ cannot be obeyed and observed in the Church unless there is this visible unity existing among its members. Those who deny the necessity of a visible

unity in the Church, admit that there must be a unity in the “essentials.” All professed Christians hold conversion to be essential, and the idea that it is unnecessary would be rejected as heresy. But, if conversion is essential, are not its fruits equally essential? Conversion is the parent, or cause of unity, and throughout all nature, effect must follow cause. Where there is not unity, there the Holy Spirit’s influence cannot exist. Therefore, unity among believers must be as essential to salvation as conversion itself. To deny the visible unity of true believers is therefore to deny the doctrine of Christ, and is contrary to what true believers have learned. Nothing can tend more to cause offences and divisions among believers than the denial of this principle of absolute visible unity among the children of God. Those, therefore, who deny and reject this doctrine, deny and reject the doctrine of Christ, and cause divisions, contrary to the doctrine which every believer has learned; and Paul said we shall *mark* such, and *avoid* them. They hold a doctrine that is contrary to love, the voices of those who advocate it are strange to the sheep of Christ, and the sheep will not hear or follow those who utter it; for they know not the voice of strangers, but will flee from them.

There are large numbers of those who profess the religion of Jesus Christ, divided among societies of different names, who call themselves defenseless Christians. Many of them also protest against the right of Christians to follow the fashions of the world in dress and style of life. Many of these are plain, unassuming, upright citizens, and their general deportment and character is unexceptionable.

It may be asked why we refuse to worship or have Christian fellowship with these, seeing they are free from the extravagance and folly chargeable to so many others of the great sects of Christendom. We have already shown, in the foregoing part of this work, that they are mostly inconsistent with their profession. They still take part in the kingdom of this world, and show thereby that their non-resistance is not founded on the true principle. There may, perhaps, be some who do not take any part in elections, or hold any office in the worldly kingdom. Of this, I am not certain. But, so far as I have knowledge, they all deny the visible unity of the church. They all reject the idea that the children of God must be of one heart and one mind.²² As I have said before, nothing can tend more to cause divisions than the doctrine these hold. If it is contended that everything that is in the way of union and harmony is from the devil, it will cause those who have the fear of God before their eyes to search diligently for every cause of dissension, and endeavor to remove it. But if it is held that divisions are allowable, such causes as lead to divisions will excite no alarm. The devil will not be resisted, and thus divisions are encouraged or caused. Therefore Paul said to “*mark and avoid them.*” The spirit of disunion is a grievous wolf. The true and faithful shepherds of Christ will be exceedingly alarmed for the safety of the flock where they see him make his appearance, and will labor earnestly to preserve the flock from being scattered. But, if they are told this is no wolf, the sheep may be thrown off their guard, and thus fall a prey to the devourer.

The fruit of this denial of the unity of the Church, or children of God, is confusion and discord, with a great train of inconsistencies. Some of these “defenseless Christians” contend that there is no visible Church on earth! Others contend that it consists of the upright in all the different churches; and others, again, that all the different denominations are different branches of the true Church. Christ said to his disciples that He is the vine and they are the branches. If these are the branches of the vine, Jesus Christ, they must all bring the same fruit. If the fruit is not the same, they cannot be branches of the same vine. Those who hold that Christ and his Apostles teach the doctrine of non-resistance cannot possibly believe

²² Paul wrote that we should “accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters.” There appear to be few, if any, disputable matters with Musser. You must either agree with him on every point, or you must be an idolater. And, even if you agreed on every point, you would still be an idolater because, by not belonging to *his* denomination, you have compromised the unity of *the* Church! These points are probably Musser’s greatest shortcomings.

that those who teach that it is the duty of Christians to take up arms and defend themselves on the field of battle can be called of God to preach. If non-resistance is true, then these must be false witnesses of God. Yet, they will contend that they may be ambassadors of Christ, and that the Lord may bless their labors and work through them. They will worship with them, preach with them, and thus give them the right hand of fellowship, bidding them God speed, and still contend that their doctrine is false! Christ said that we cannot gather grapes from thorns or figs of thistles, yet these contend we may.

Those who deny that the Church is visible at all, thereby condemn themselves. They break the bread and drink the cup of the Lord, and still admit that they are not the Lord's body! If God's Church is not visible, then those bodies which profess to be Christ's Church must be dead. Yet they will worship and preach with them. Do they not admit they themselves to be dead by this? Can a living member of Christ be attached to a dead body? If their own body is not the body of Christ, then they themselves, with all that are in it, must be defiled; for Paul said that a little leaven leavens the *whole lump*. No one can continue in a leavened body without becoming leavened themselves, or else Paul's word in 1 Corinthians 5 is not true.

Some of this class of professed Christians acknowledge that they should not make a practice of attending the meetings and worship of those who are so directly opposed to them in principle. They say it would not be right to go to their meetings on purpose to hear them preach, or worship with them; but on the occasion of a funeral, or if they accidentally come in contact with their assembly, it is not their duty to withdraw. These acknowledge having some perception of the duty of a separation, but make it a partial one. If the worship is idolatrous, or their exercise is displeasing to God, and it is our duty to reprove, or lay off a testimony against them, can the occasion excuse us? Will the sheep hear the stranger's voice, if he chanced to meet him in an opportune place? There is a great deal said in the Scriptures about spiritual fornication. Christ's Church is compared to a chaste bride. But, if the bride of Christ thus has interaction with the world in its idolatrous exercises, does she not lose this comparison? Or would a bride be considered chaste and virtuous if she should receive the advances of a stranger because it was a particular occasion, or she had not sought his society? This all comes from denying the doctrine of the unity of the church, and an indistinct perception of the principle which must govern the true believer, and on which all commands of the Gospel hang and rest.

Christ does not say that his sheep will hear the voice of a stranger at a funeral! Neither did Paul tell his brethren they need not mark and avoid those who cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine, if they fall in their way by chance! Neither did he say that we need not reprove or rebuke the unfruitful works of darkness at funerals. Nor did Christ say that we need not beware of false prophets there.

The great cry about the self-righteousness and uncharitableness of those who separate themselves from the worship of those who do not obey the Gospel of Jesus Christ, charging them with tacitly saying, "I am holier than thou," is all a device of Satan to make God's people appear odious to the world, so that he may counteract the influence of their good example and the reproof they administer to those who yield to the flesh and desires of the mind. Those who truly and faithfully walk in the spirit do not regard this. They could even rejoice in it, and would rather desire it than otherwise, if they did not know that, in their ignorance and blindness, their enemies are treasuring up against themselves wrath against the day of wrath, and the revelation of the righteous judgment of God. Neither would we think it worth our while to attempt to vindicate our cause, if it were not for the hope that the prejudice may thereby be removed from the minds of some, and the way opened for truth to reach the understanding.

The true non-resistants and faithful disciples of Jesus Christ, whose hearts have been thoroughly changed by conversion, and who are led and influenced by the Holy Spirit, will keep the narrow way unflinching, regardless of all the opposition which Satan, the world, and their own flesh can make;

regardless also of the number and size of the anti-Christian sects which may spring up around them. Time and circumstances make no change in their minds or principles. Truth is true and unchangeable; and, however much science or popular opinion may change, truth is still the same.

The great Babylonian structure of the popular system of religion, commonly called “the Church,” may be fitly compared to a chain composed of an almost interminable number of links. The two ends of this chain might be very distant from each other, but still there would be a connection running through the whole; and unless a link was entirely severed from the rest, the extremities would be dragged together, wherever the body would be taken. Those societies, therefore, whose profession and general practices are ever so distant from the most extravagant, and those guilty of the most scandalous disorder, have no association with them. Yet, they still associate with others who are not quite as strict as themselves, and these again with others, until the chain is completed and forms one united body. Therefore, the spirit in Revelation said, “Come out of Babylon, my people, that ye be not partaker of her sins, and receive of her plagues.”

The Apostle Paul said, “A covetous man is an idolater, and “covetousness is idolatry.” Again, “Be not deceived. Neither thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners shall inherit the kingdom of God.” Paul further said, “A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.” If covetousness is idolatry, or makes all the worship or service such a person can render or bring sinful and idolatrous – and if such a covetous person is a member of the Church, and the pastor and congregation have knowledge of it, and they do not purge out this leaven, then they become leavened with him, and are partakers of his sins. They become an idolatrous and impure body, and, as a consequence, their service or worship can be nothing else than idolatry!

Covetousness may dwell in the heart, and others may not be aware of it. For others to know it, there must be fruit to reveal it. So long as our deeds and actions do not convict us of it, those associated with us in worship do not become defiled. But when our business, acts, or deeds reveal the spirit which influences us, the leaven will speedily leaven the whole lump – if it is not purged out. A professed gambler, one who makes any game of chance his business, or one who is in the habit of resorting to games of chance must be easily known to be covetous, for the tree is known by his fruit. Certainly, then, any “Church,” or body whose pastor or members knowingly retain a gambler in their congregation, or communion, must be a dead, idolatrous body. All those who associate with him, in a spiritual capacity, are justly chargeable with his sins.

It has not been a long while since (nearly, if not quite) all the States in the Union tolerated or legalized money lotteries, and in some States they still exist. Numbers of members of the popular Churches, of good standing and influence in the Church, made lottery brokerage a business, to say nothing of those who were in the habit of dealing in tickets, and seeking gain by the chances of the lottery wheel. Even Churches, as a body, resorted to it to raise money to build houses of worship and raise funds for church purposes.

In our own and most other States, the law has interposed and put a stop to the system; but up to the time the law made the proscription, Church members were as actively engaged in the business as others. If gambling is covetousness, and covetousness is idolatry, must not these popular Churches have been a body of idolaters? I suppose there were some clergymen who labored and exerted their influence to have lotteries abolished. In a moral point of view this was right and good, and I rejoice exceedingly, and am thankful to God that he put it into the heart of the powers to abolish so great a moral evil and fruitful source of misery and degradation. But what is the duty of the ambassador of Christ? Can he sit down and cry wolf only, while the wolf is tearing and devouring the lambs of Christ, until the law interposes and delivers them? It is his duty as a porter in the house of God to see that no covetous idolater enters the temple, and if he should creep in unawares, or if he should become leavened by the enemy after he

had entered, to purge the Church speedily of all such leaven, and not allow the whole body to become defiled.

Dr. Bellows, in his letter explaining the correspondence between the standing committee of the Sanitary Commission and the managers of the Metropolitan Fair, on the subject of raffling, speaks of a “rising tide of Christian sentiment.” If the Church, by the light of her example, exerts such an influence on the moral sentiment outside of the Church as to lead men to abandon immoral practices, and thus create arising tide of moral sentiment (or if you choose, Christian sentiment), it is highly commendable and an honor to God. But it may be questioned whether this is an expression which can be applied to the *Church* with propriety. Can there be a rising tide of Christian sentiment in the Church? There may be such in the popular or nominal Church, but can there be such in the true Christian Church? Christian sentiment has never risen above that of the primitive Church, and it is doubtful whether it could ever sink much below it. That spirit which makes us Christians, and reigns in a true Christian Church, is the same which wrought so effectually in the Apostolic Church, and is a spirit of truth, and will lead men into all truth. Covetousness and gambling are not truth, and the sentiment cannot sink so low as to tolerate them, and still remain a body of Christ. It is the Holy Spirit’s influence that makes us Christians. It will bring us into remembrance of all that Christ has taught, and *lead us into all truth*. Where then is the room for this rising tide if we already have the Holy Spirit? And if we have not the spirit of Christ, we are none of his.

I have observed before that popular religion changes with popular opinion or sentiment. For years – I might say centuries – this moral evil was tolerated by popular sentiment. Popular religion also tolerated it. No doubt numbers of the clergy saw and spoke against the evil, but so did those not professing Christianity, for the evil was so glaring that the light of nature could easily perceive it. But still the Churches tolerated and took part in it. I suppose it was, as Dr. Bellows said of raffling, “The objections to it had not taken so clear a form as to give any body the impression *it could be abolished*.” Must the Church then tolerate evil until objections take such form in the public mind as to lead the community to abolish it? And when evils are abolished in this way by law, or even the canon of the Church, the spirit still remains, and will exert its influence in some other form if the root is not exterminated.

My attention was attracted a few days ago by an article in a public journal on the subject of stock speculations. The editor remarked that “much of the dealing in stock and gold, at the present day, is simply gambling, and is only a change of name of the old vice of the lottery system, which was formerly patronized even by the Churches themselves. But, tabooed and proscribed by law, yet the same passion which then found gratification in the chances of the lottery wheel, now takes the wider range in the fluctuations of the stock and gold market.”

The popular Church, which tolerated lotteries to the last, and still later, raffling, now tolerates the same spirit in another shape. There was no actual reform, or rising Christian sentiment. The evil only changed form. What is the difference between an open gambler with cards or dice, and a speculator in gold, stocks, produce, wares, or merchandise? Neither of them renders an equivalent for what they gain. They often cause distress and widespread ruin. They do not “work with their hands, the thing which is good.” Nothing but covetousness can induce men to gamble or speculate. They produce nothing, render no service, and all they gain is taken from others. Conscientious people may raffle, patronize lotteries, and speculate with perfect “*innocence of feeling*,” but does it follow that they are *innocent*, or that God will not hold them guilty of covetousness?

I have observed before that the Waldenses, Albigenses, and Mennonites were far in advance of the great and learned Reformers in their Christian sentiments. I venture to assert that no one ever heard of such a thing among them as a dealer in lottery tickets, a raffler, or a speculator. In later years, when the

Church had degenerated, such things might have crept in; but they were then no longer a true, separate, non-resistant church. Wherever such a true non-resistant church exists, wholly separated from all idolatrous worship, such things as those alluded to are utterly unknown! In worldly wisdom, refinement, and literary attainment, these churches are usually far behind the fashionable churches; yet why is it that they should have been so far in advance in these Christian sentiments? Evidently, because they are born of the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit enlightens them, and leads and guides them *into all truth*. I remember, many years ago, seeing a poor, unassuming shoemaker come into the store of a merchant, who offered him a lot of cheap shoes. The shoemaker replied that he thought the shoes were cheap, and he expected he could make some money on them, but this was not his business, and he feared there might be danger of encouraging a spirit of avarice. The reply of this poor, illiterate man made a deeper and more lasting impression on my mind than any learned and eloquent discourse could have done, and will remain as long as memory lasts. I venture to say that this man would not have had any fellowship with speculators or lottery gamblers. If he would have had any knowledge of a brother taking any part in such things, he would have addressed him personally, and, if he could not bring him to repentance, he would have told the heads of the Church, and, if they had not discharged their duty, he would (to avoid being partaker of their sins, and being leavened) have withdrawn from them, and had no dealings with them.

I mention these things to show how pliable and accommodating a thing popular religion is, and how unchangeable true religion is. Popular sentiment may be what it will; the religion of Jesus Christ cannot change. It is always the same. True Christian sentiment is always the same; and with those who are possessed of this true sentiment, the objection to such evil practices as alluded to always has such form as to give the impression that it *can* and *must* be abolished.

If covetousness is idolatry, and we are to flee from idolatry and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, how can we do otherwise than withdraw ourselves from all such idolatry, and protest as loudly as we can against all such anti-Christian practices? There is no way for us to make ourselves free from the blood of all men, except by withdrawing ourselves from all who do not walk orderly and after the tradition of the Apostles.

With regard to those societies who do not take part in the extravagances noticed in these pages, who profess non-resistance, and who denounce conformity to the world, but, as I have observed, will not entirely separate themselves from this idolatry, but still, on particular occasions, unite and worship with them, and contend against and deny the visible unity of the Church of Christ and its separation from all idolatrous worship – what can we do otherwise than class them with the great Babylonian structure from whom they will not come out? We cannot serve two masters, and he who does not gather together, scatters abroad. There is among the different denominations a regular grade, which, as we have already observed, may be fitly compared to a chain. The two extremities may be far distant from each other, and their separate links not in contact with each other, yet by the intermediate links they are connected, and form one body. What would it profit *us* to be attached as an extreme link; and however remote we might be from the main body, if it would sink into perdition, what could prevent us from being drawn with it into the abyss of destruction?

In conclusion: I wish the grace and blessing of God to every sincere and God-fearing reader, through Jesus Christ. – Amen.