

**Articles and Sermons :: Non-Resistance Asserted by Daniel Musser Part 1****Non-Resistance Asserted by Daniel Musser Part 1 - posted by pastorfrin, on: 2007/8/11 17:04**

NON-RESISTANCE ASSERTED

by Daniel Musser

Part 1

“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. 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 wea

apons 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.

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, 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. Every one 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 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 o

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 to 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, 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 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 s

ubjection 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.

Edit: added footnotes

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.

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.

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