

It would exceed the proper limits of this preliminary statement to enter into the proof that I have done nothing to give a shadow of protection to the government, or give a shadow of justification to this sort of treatment. I submit a single testimony to that point from one of the truest and most trustworthy, if not the most trusted, of all your military agents in Kentucky, who occupied a position which exalted him, of all other men, to know best, and, therefore, a testimony which outweighs the mere rant and lies of 10,000 such as those who have assailed me. Says a letter from this high official, received by me as late as 1863:—

"I have felt that yours is a peculiarly hard case. For I never heard even your bitterest accusers allege one act of yours which deserved condemnation; and yet I feel sure that you are acting wisely in remaining a fugitive from your family, your congregation and your business." A statement equally honorable to me and disgraceful to your administration.

That I have retained my respect for the constitution and laws, notwithstanding all these outrages, and in spite of the humiliating picture of the government drawn in the last clause of this citation, is surely no doubtful evidence of my fidelity as a citizen. And all this, taken in connection with the fact that I have retained the confidence of the Presbytery, my constitutional overseers, and of a large and intelligent pastoral charge, who to this day have refused their consent to my official separation from them, I think justifies my title to the confidence of the public in speaking freely of the high and solemn issues between me and my assailants.

The whole controversy between me and them is reducible, in its last analysis, to those questions: Is it competent to the Church of Christ to determine secular questions, civil, political or military? And is it lawful either for the Church voluntarily to employ her agencies, in any manner for the support of secular issues or in propagation of political principles, on the one hand, or for the secular government to interfere with the courts and ordinances of the Church on the other? These questions my assailants, directly or indirectly, affirm, I deny; and for this denial am denounced by obnoxious ecclesiasties, persecuted and vilified by the petty minions of the government, and my paper formally suppressed with the high sanction of the administration at Washington. Permit me to set forth—though the limits of a letter require it to be done in mere outline—the grounds on which I have opposed, first, the commitment of the Church to any civil government in general; and, secondly, to the support of such an administration as yours in particular.

The civil government, represented to us, primarily, by the constitution and laws, and secondarily by your administration, so long as its acts accord with the constitution and laws, is undoubtedly an ordinance of God. And therefore by Divine authority you wield

the power of the sword to *coerce* obedience. But another government, in itself distinct and complete, is also ordained of Christ the Mediator among all Christianized peoples, to which government has been committed the "power of the keys," as to you the "power of the sword." As Andrew Melville had occasion to remind a tyrant, Stuart—"God's sillie vassal"—that "there be two Kings and two kingdoms, one the Kingdom of Jesus Christ whose subject James I. is, and of whose kingdom he is neither a king nor a lord but only a member, and they whom Christ hath called to govern his spiritual kingdom have a sufficient authority which no Christian king should control or discharge;" so I may remind you that there are two Presidents and Commonwealths in these United States; the one President Lincoln and the other President Jesus Christ, in whose Commonwealth President Lincoln hath no sort of official function. And I may say this with still more force than Andrew Melville, seeing that beside the Ordinances of Christ in his revealed statute book, the founders of the American civil Commonwealth have, for the first time in history, acknowledged by civil enactments, the independence of the Church, which King James denied. And therefore all utterances and acts, either on the civil or the ecclesiastical side, by which the secular intrudes into the spiritual, or the spiritual into the secular sphere are violations of the civil constitution of the country as well as of the statutes of Christ.

The distinction between these two powers is clear enough to all save those who have a purpose to serve in confounding them. The government which you represent, so long as your acts accord with the constitution, is derived from God the Author of Nature and has cognizance only of the interests that pertain to the present life of men—"Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." The spiritual government of the Church is derived from Christ the mediator, as its source, and can take cognizance only of men's eternal interests. Your government, in common with all civil governments, whether among Christian or Heathen people, has for its rule of guidance the light of nature and reason common to all nations, and equally obligatory on all, whether enlightened by revelation or not. But this spiritual government has for its *only* rule of guidance the positive statute law in the revealed statute book of its great founder and Ruler. Your government, by its Divinely appointed "power of the sword," restrains *overt* acts of wickedness and coerces outward obedience. The spiritual government, by its "power of the keys" for opening the visible kingdom of Christ to the penitent and obedient and shutting it against the impenitent and disobedient, guides the consciences of men and aims at the "thoughts and intents of the heart," primarily, as indicated by the overt acts of the life. Not a whit more absurd is the Mahomedan notion of enforcing religion by the "power of the sword," than the Erastian notion of enforcing political dogmas and