I exhort, therefore that, first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.—1. Timothy 2: 1, 2.

It is a conceded point that the scriptures of truth, the old and new testaments, are replete with instruction to the children of men, for whose benefit alone they were written. It is also admitted that as they are the dictates of inspiration, they are consistent with themselves and worthy of their Author. What Moses recorded in the Pentateuch, the prophets who succeeded him never condemned; that which the prophets taught, was approved by our great Redeemer; and his apostles, who were under his instruction during the three years of his public ministry, after their Master was removed from the ken of an ungodly world, continued to urge and enforce upon that generation, the same heaven-born principles, taught by the Redeemer of the world. These same principles, have formed the basis of all law, where their brilliancy has been reflected upon the understanding; or their benign influence operated upon the hearts of the children of men. Upon these principles, in all countries denominated Christian, are predicated the civil laws and the penal code. The Christian world have, therefore, affixed to them their seal of approbation, and as did the God of the Universe when he beheld the world emerge from chaos in obedience to his behest, hesitatingly, they have pronounced them good. Therefore, while we pursue a course stamped with the approbation of heaven, we are not like the mariner who has lost his rudder and compass and is left exposed to all the dangers incidental to winds, rocks, quicksands and waves: But the assurance, that we have the polar star of truth to guide us, heaven's own laws to regulate our conduct, lights up a smile even in the aspect of woe, and makes the man imbued with, and actuated by those principles of which we have been speaking:

"Thank heaven, that ere he drew his breath, And triumph in the thoughts of death."

We are prepared now to receive this as an axiom that cannot be weakened by argument or evaded by sophistry: That, God is the same immutable being he ever was, and requires the same implicit obedience to his commands he ever did: And we think we shall not do violence to the truth if we say that man, frail man, is much the same now as he has been in every age since the fall of Adam. We find on looking over historic pages both sacred and profane, that man left to himself invariably violated those sacred principles, of which the whole Christian world professes to think so highly, and that it has been a part at least, of the business of inspired men in all ages, when there were any, to urge and enforce upon mankind an adherence to those principles. The great apostle of the Gentiles, who is the ostensible author of the epistle of which our text forms a part, charges his son, Timothy, with all the feelings of a man of God and the pathos of a legate of the skies. That, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks be made for all men, and then as if he would not only not be misunderstood, but emphatically impress the idea upon his mind, he adds, "for kings, and for all that are in authority that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." In this idea is included either directly or indirectly, nearly the whole relative duty of man. It presupposes that he is a social being, not a solitary, misanthropic recluse, but that from inclination or necessity, or both, men will become members of civil society and have certain rights in common, one with another, "among which are, life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." It presupposes laws by which the conduct of men is to be regulated. It presupposes rulers and governors to administer laws. The idea of rulers and governors, presupposes that man, from necessity and the better security of some of those rights he holds most dear, gives up, or yields a part of those he holds less sacred, for the better security of the more important ones. Thus our readers will see, without going farther into detail, their duty as saints of God, towards all men,
especially toward our rulers. The sacred penman does not say we shall think or act as do our rulers, but plainly says we shall pray for them, that they may rule in righteousness and govern in equity. The apostle whose words we are contemplating, was well acquainted with the history of man, having been brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, a Doctor of the Law, and from the warnings, rebukes, admonitions and exhortations he gives the churches, we are fully sensible he had the same restless disposition in his fellow man with which to contend, that now manifests itself in the day and age of the world in which we live. The churches built up by him and his compatriots, were composed of frail mortals like ourselves.

Sometimes we find him reasoning with them as if they were the most profound philosophers and logicians, sometimes pleading with them in language the most pathetic, at other times he comes out in censure the most severe, calculated to impress the reader with the idea that: "he taught as one having authority," and the force of his expressions, the very power of the Most High that accompanied them, were directly calculated to fill him with awe and veneration, and make the heart of the wicked or hypocritical, quail before their withering influence.

As we have had occasion to speak of man's surrendering a part of his natural rights for the better security of the remainder, we will here take the liberty to remark, that he never, without compulsion, surrenders the right of self preservation, and the defence of his own household. It is clearly asserted in so many words, that he that provides not for his own household has denied the faith and is worse than an infidel. Let us here inquire;—Is it reasonable to suppose, that to procure food alone for one's household, covers the whole ground intended to be covered by the sacred writer when he penned this sentence? Certainly not. If he provide food and clothing, has he yet answered the demand of the divine law? We think such an idea would be preposterous? It will be readily admitted that he is under an obligation almost or quite, equally imperative, to shelter them from the peltings of the pitiless storm. These are relative duties and are not in ostensible opposition to any principle sanctioned by divine authority. These ideas are certainly in accordance with that of praying for all men, for Rulers and ruled. They are not contradictory to those urged by the Savior in his sermon on the mount.

Here then is no controversy. We have yet no opposition, for we have come in contact with no man's principles. We will here take the liberty to digress a little for the sake of illustrating and enforcing our own ideas. And 1st. By way of query we ask, if when our Eastern, Western, Northern or Southern border, has been invaded by merciless savages, laying waste the fair portions of our country, if even the most fastidious, does not feel justified in the sight of God and man in meeting force with force and repelling the invading foe? We think you will. Certainly, then, when the footsteps of the foe are marked with the innocent blood of our women and children, it would be an imperative duty. Apathy would become a crime, indifference would be infamous, and every bosom that did not swell with indignation when contemplating such scenes, covers a heart too black with treachery and crime, to deserve our sympathy, or is too cowardly and effeminate to dwell in the breast of a man. Remember that prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks are to be made for all men; for rulers and ruled. There may seem, on a superficial view, to be some collision in the sentiments we have advanced relative to national defence, and the ideas embraced in our text.—But we think there is none. There is a perfect harmony existing between the idea of depracting the wrath of an enemy and in repelling his ruthless assaults. There is no discrepancy in principle and practice, in that case; our faith and our works harmonize. We evince our implicit belief in the Lord of Sabaoth, therefore, we pray, and our willingness to provide for our own households, therefore, we protect and defend them. Consider for once that God is the same, and we have not disputed the immutability of his laws or his right to govern his subjects. Abraham, the patriarch Abraham—whose very name we venerate as the father of the faithful, and whose praises we sing, armed his domestics and went himself to the slaughter of the kings who had not even set set foot upon his
soil, but they had invaded the territory of some of his neighbors, taken his nephew a prisoner and confiscated his goods. And on his return from the bloody contest, and for aught we know, while his garments were yet stained with gore, Melchisedec the priest of the most high God, met him and blessed him in the name of the Lord. Let not your feelings revolt at this idea, kind reader, God is God and he is the same and changes not, therefore what he approbated in Abraham he approbates now.

This same Abraham, appeared to owe allegiance to no human governor or ruler; the government to which he submitted, was a Theocracy, and he acknowledged no authority but the King of heaven and earth. He communed with the Most High and had intercourse with the upper world. God revealed himself to him, and made many great and precious promises to him, before this event, of which we have been speaking, he revealed himself to him afterwards, renewed the same promises, and eventually confirmed, ratified and fulfilled them. and never, no never, of which we have any account, did he express or manifest any disappearing of that act. We see nothing in this transaction inconsistent with the idea of praying to God for all men, that he would restrain their anger towards us, and turn their bitter hatred into tender love.

We have abundant testimony to prove that God commanded his servants, anciently to fight their enemies and destroy them. He even commanded Saul, the king of Israel, to go and utterly destroy Amalek, spare him not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.—And this for no allledged crime of which that generation had been guilty, but four hundred and twelve years before, when Israel was journeying from Egypt to Canaan, Amalek came out against Israel in Rephidim to battle, and because Saul disobeyed the commandments of the Lord, in sparing Agag and the best of the spoil, he rejected him from being king, and Samuel, that prophet of the Most High, took Agag the king of the Amalekites, a helpless, defenceless, unarmed prisoner & hewed him in pieces in cool blood. And yet he was a prophet, and the Lord spake through him to the children of Israel, and we have no account that the Lord ever manifested any displeasure toward him, for that transaction.

The grand query now arises how are we to reconcile the precedents given and the principles inculcated by the Saviour in his sermon on the mount, and those couched in our text. There can be no discrepancy in the teachings of the ancient prophets of the Lord and the Redeemer of mankind; both, under similar circumstances would doubtless have given the same instructions. The difficulty then is not yet solved—We must view the Almighty as the moral Governor of the Universe, and consider that his ways are higher than our ways & his thoughts than our thoughts, that we have not yet been able to comprehend all his ways or find him out to perfection. Hence, to our limited view the apparent contradiction between the old and new testament writers. Another idea, the Saviour was teaching his disciples alone, and preparing them to propagate a religion diverse in many respects from any then extant among Jews or Gentiles. He was preparing them to go among their brethren like sheep among wolves, and if the Jews as a nation rejected them, as he knew they would, he had prepared a scourge for them and apprised his disciples of it. Their devoted city was to be taken and sacked, their beautiful temple be thrown down, and such calamities come on them as never come upon any people. Thus we see altho' the disciples were not suffered to be the avengers of their own wrongs, even-handed justice ere long overtook that wicked generation. They would not receive those that were sent unto them, and to cap the climax of crime, and fill up the measure of their iniquity, they crucified the Lord of life and glory. They, the disciples, had their peculiar instructions as individuals.—They were to preach the gospel and testify of the things they had seen, and speak of those they knew. They were to suffer without resistance, and at last lay down their lives without reserve for the cause of their Master. But God had informed them of his just retribution of their crimes which he had in reserve.

The Lord probably allowed Lot to fight in his own defence, but the disciples of the blessed Saviour were not thus privileged. The circumstances were
different. Abraham was permitted to slay the enemies of Lot and release him from bondage, while death only released the disciples of the Redeemer, but mark the tragic end, the miserable overthrow of their enemies which came upon them in about forty years after the crucifixion of the Savior. They experienced the judgments of God according to the prediction of the Savior while he tabernacled with man in the flesh, and according to the declaration of the holy prophets who preceded him. No discrepancy then, nothing very mysterious in either of these occurrences; he had prepared punishment for the guilty in both cases which suited his own purpose.

Nothing transpired in either case, militating against the idea of praying to God for all men, for kings and for all that are in authority, nothing contrary to the idea of praying for our rulers and obeying them, nothing contrary to the idea of defending our country from the wicked attacks of a ruthless foe, nothing contrary to the idea of individually defending our innocent wives and helpless offspring from the rude assaults of any who invade our rights. This is a natural and inalienable right, and let me add, it is never voluntarily surrendered, therefore it is reserved. The principle that will allow of national defence will justify a smaller community cælæs paribis in acting on the same principle. And he who objects to the idea that a man has a right to defend his wife, his property and his offspring, will find himself at war with the best feelings of his own heart, with the established rules of all civilized nations, of all communities, and with very few exceptions, the whole professing Christian world.

A few reflections by way of improvement and we close. And

1st. We have said, and we believe truly, that God is the same moral Governor of the Universe he was anciently.

2d. We have said, and we think truly, that man is the same ruthless, rebellious being against the government of God that he ever was.

3d. We have seen, that in consequence of his restless and rebellion, whenever he was associated in community with his fellow man, a part of what would be his right without reservation, were he alone, he must cessarily resign into the hands of his rulers for the better security of those he holds more sacred.

4th. We have said the right to defend his wife, his children & his own person from the murderous assaults of a ruthless foe, were among his reserved rights, and are never given up to man but by compulsion, nor to God but by express command.

5th. We have expressed our disapprobation, in strong terms of the apathy or cowardice or that wretch who should look complacently on the lawless marauder, or the merciless violator of his domestic rights.

6th. We have said, and we defy contradiction, that what God has commanded one man to do, he will approve in another under similar circumstances, and the only apparent discrepancy in the teachings of the old and new testament writers, arises from our limited understandings and contracted views of the government of God.

7th. We have said that the idea of self defence, was not incompatible with that of praying for all men, praying that God would turn away the anger of our enemies and fill them with love.

Our readers, from a view of all we have said, will now suffer a word of exhortation and we have done.

Nothing we have said should be construed into a justification of crime or the violation of the rules of civilized society. In all cases are you to be good and peaceable subjects of that government that protects those rights you have surrendered for its protection. Fear God, love the brethren, and respect those in authority over you. In short pray for them and for all that are in authority, that you may lead quiet and peaceable lives in all Godliness, even so amen.

W.

2d SERIES—LETTER No. I.

Liberty, (Mo.) June 2, 1836.

DEAR BROTHER:—Since I returned home to Missouri, I have been so constantly engaged in viewing the country, or employed at business of importance, that I could not spare time to write. I have been out on two expeditions examining the regions of the "far west"—and notwithstanding my letters, heretofore published, contain almost all that need be said for or against a prairie country, yet, permit me to add