

## *An Indictment of the Sins of the Three Percenters (III Percenters).*

*Introduction.* As Christians hunger for some meaning to the chaos which is American politics today, they may come across some appealing remedies on the internet blog sites of various patriot Americans, some of whom call themselves the Three Percenters. While many of these patriot Americans have aligned themselves with the United States *Constitution*, along with the political and moral creeds and axioms of the Founding Fathers, nevertheless, parts of their ideology will contradict what the Bible clearly and emphatically has commanded and promised in regards to the Fourth and Fifth Commandments, that is, regarding the matters of obedience to government, rebellion, and self-defense.

Moreover, their ideology will consist not merely in a sincere zeal to return our country to its constitutional republican foundation against un-American usurpers in public office. It will be made willfully and consciously in the face of the clear commands of Romans 13, 1st Peter 2, and Ephesians 6, for instance. Hence this is simply one more example of the lawlessness that has become widespread in the unbelieving hearts of Americans today because of their rejection of “repentance and the forgiveness of sins” (Luke 24:47) in the genuine biblical sense. Furthermore, this ideology calls down God’s anger and punishment, for God threatens to punish all those who contradict his commandments.

Therefore, a warning and an indictment are in order: An indictment of those who stubbornly would

contradict God’s holy Word, and a warning to Christians that, though this intent, creed, and practice of the Three Percenters may have a strong appeal to the Christian’s flesh, genuine believers must be warned that they must not become a participant in other men’s sins (1st Timothy 5:22), call down God’s anger (Ephesians 5:6), and be punished under “the mighty hand of God” (1st Peter 5:6).

What would be wrong with the patriot movement today which would include the Three Percenters?

What would be wrong with the beliefs of a number of patriot Americans today as they have stated it in their comments and creeds on their websites?

(1) It is when patriot Americans erroneously would believe that the basis of the current problems in America is political, not spiritual. It also is when they would propose man’s solution for the mere symptoms, while they would reject God’s solution for the core problem.

(2) It is when they willfully would refuse to see the truth that God is in a punishing mode; that he also is punishing patriot Americans for rejecting his gospel of salvation, for instance, by withdrawing the constitutional freedoms which he gave them, by withdrawing peace and prosperity from them, and by sending them a tyrannical government.

(3) It is when they willfully would blind themselves to the truth of and reject the maxim that “As the people are, so will the ruler be.” That is to say, if the rulers

would be lawless, immoral, and criminal, it will be because the citizens, including the patriot Americans, have been lawless, immoral, and criminal toward God. Moreover, since the people would refuse to change, the governmental officials, which come from the pool of citizens, will never get any better.

(4) It is when they would quote the maxim of John Adams favorably, but willfully would refuse to acknowledge the implications of his statement, "We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion. Greed, ambition, revenge, or gallantry would break the strongest cords of our Constitution as a whale goes through a net. Our Constitution is designed only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate for any other."

That is to say, since the rule of law of the *Constitution* has undergone change lately it is because patriot Americans and the rest of the American people no longer are a moral and a religious people. As a result, according to Adams' correct deduction, Americans now will have to put into place a different rule of law in order to deal with their irresponsibility, or, as the Bible puts it, with their lawlessness.

(5) It is when they will engage in idolatry by which they erroneously would trust solely in man's power by the use of firearms, not trusting in God's power to deliver them from worldly harm, by rejecting God's biblical promises, and by considering him to be impotent.

(6) It is when they flatly would reject God's command in Romans 13 and in 1st Peter 2 for all citizens to obey in all civil matters the current government which God himself has put into place.

(7) It is when they would invent the man-made anti-biblical idea that God will want them to obey only just rulers, but that he will want them to rebel against bad rulers, when such rulers would want to outlaw firearms, restrict their freedoms, or act criminally, for example.

(8) It is when they would charge that Christians who would obey Romans 13 also will become informants to the government against the patriot Americans; that, consequently, these Christians should be targeted; that by obeying Romans 13, these Christians actively support directly or indirectly the unconstitutionality, immorality, and the criminality of the government.

(9) It is when they would believe in fatalism, luck, and the survival of the fittest, not in God's commands, nor in his protection promises. It is when they would look for guidance and assurance from movie scriptwriters, science fiction works, and contemporary novels which dream up a new mythology, instead of being versed in the plain biblical commands and promises of God.

(10) It is when they actually would look forward to starting a war with the government; that it would be better to have all of our communities bombed and ruined; to have our land filled with bloodshed, widows,

orphans, famine, disease, and death in the hundreds of millions, than to tolerate an infringement of their freedom, which infringement is a punishment sent by God, instead of returning to the Lord in repentance and in faith, depending on his protection pledges, and patiently waiting for his will to be done.

During the Civil War a Louisiana father wrote to his son, "This war was got up drunk but they will have to settle it sober." Today passionate talk just as drunk is getting up yet another civil war.

(11) It is when they would assert that, "God hates tyrants," but willfully would ignore the biblical fact that, "God hates rebels as well"; or, to be more precise, "God hates tyrants in all ranks who would bully others and rebel against God in their speaking, doing, and thinking, all of whom he will surely punish."

(12) It is when believing that, "endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights," they hold that their Creator has given them not merely the inalienable right of self-defense, but the inalienable right as well to the ownership of property in the form of firearm.

(13) It is when patriot Americans would turn a political matter into a moral matter by asserting that firearms are a must for a proper self-defense because citizens must be entitled to weapons of their preference in order to have a fair chance, or entitled even to superior weapons that would give them an advantage over the aggressor, according to the natural law of self-defense (the Fifth Commandment).

(14) It is when patriot Americans would believe that they have the right to use deadly force in self-defense against those in government who would confiscate their firearms, because the confiscators will be using deadly force.

(15) It is when patriot Americans would display the presupposition that legislation regarding the possession of firearms is not a political matter, but a moral matter, thus dragging God and his Fifth Commandment (regarding self-defense) into their argument in order to justify their rebellion against government.

(16) It is when they would profess, in regards to the *Second Amendment*, "Give me liberty, or give me death!"

(17) It is when they would promote their "law of unintended consequences," in which, according to their usage, the plans of evil men in governments will be interrupted and will not succeed; and, furthermore, that evil men in government will get punished.

(18) It is when patriot Americans believe that, according to the creedal proposals of John Locke, they (1) are absolved from any further obedience to government, and (2) may have a clear conscience also in rebelling against a government which has become tyrannical, since both of these responses would be allowed by God's will.

**Conclusion:** A movement with a creed and intent such as the above is not biblical, godly, nor Christian, but a rebel movement against God and against his commands. As a result, not only could it not possess any assurance of his blessing, it could and should be assured of his continued and of his final punishment because this movement clearly displays malicious sins of unbelief. As a result, God will surely punish, not only on Judgment Day, but starting already in this life, as he has threatened. Hence “do not... participate in other people’s sins!” (1st Timothy 5:22.)

As God continues to punish America pitting an immoral government against immoral citizens, man cannot do anything in his power to stop God from carrying out his punishment of using tyrants to punish other tyrants. In his providence the Almighty may give success to one side temporarily in order to punish the other side temporarily. Yet his undisclosed and unknowable providence is not for us to guess. We are commanded emphatically by him to abide by his biblical rules, and to do our religious duty to obey them.

To put it even plainer, it would be this: God will continue to punish the Three Percenters intentionally and specifically through a tyrannical government until he is through.

*An Indictment of the Sins of the Three Percenters (III Percenters) with Annotations.*

(1) *It is when some patriot Americans erroneously would believe that the basis of the current problems in America is political, not spiritual. It also is when they would propose man’s solution for the mere symptoms, while they would reject God’s solution for the core problem.*

Patriot Americans have noticed the great political evils practiced by our government, and have sought for a political solution to it, and only a political solution. They have thought that in order to eliminate America’s problems, all that we would have to do will be to eliminate the bad policies of bad governmental officials. Then all would be well again.

Thus they would refuse to acknowledge that there is a more serious spiritual evil of which our citizens are participants. Until the spiritual condition of our citizens would be changed, not only the political, but the social and the economic as well never will be set straight. These conditions are all connected to the spiritual. Indeed, they are fruits, results, or symptoms of the spiritual. For example, you could not clean a muddy stream by dipping out its muddy water on the banks, but by going to the muddy source, and by cleaning it there.

What would be God’s solution for cleansing the source, that is, for the core problem? It will be what it always has been for all citizens of all countries: to be sorry for their sins, and then to believe in God’s gospel pledge for their salvation. After that, God will suspend his national punishments, and will bless those citizens with peace, prosperity, and good government instead.

Thus some patriot Americans are hypocrites, for they easily could see the evil which the government does

toward them, but not the evil which they practice toward God. "They have dealt treacherously with the Lord" (Hosea 5:7). "Why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck out of your brother's eye!" (Matthew 7:3 & 5).

Yet many patriot Americans reject the gospel, and refuse to believe it even after being informed of God's solution.

Just the same, even if they would lack the biblical knowledge of God's solution, their suffering alone under bad government could and should move them to appease God in order to suspend his punishment. For instance, any sufferer could and should cry out, "What must I do to end my suffering? I am strongly motivated to do so. Yet nothing which I have tried seems to work." By experience alone they could and should conclude that they must have been addressing only the symptoms, and yet have not removed the core problem. Nevertheless, they would need enlightenment from an outside source - the Bible - which alone could inform them with truthfulness and with divine certainty as to what the core problem will be: their gospel unbelief, and what the solution for it will be: repentance and gospel belief.

Yet in their adamant self blindness they neither will consider this nor attempt this. Moreover, if someone would point this out to them, the majority will reject it.

*"If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their*

*wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and will heal their land"* (2nd Chronicles 7:14).

Even *Black's Law Dictionary* records this maxim: "Human things never prosper where divine things are neglected."<sup>1</sup>

(2) *It is when they willfully would refuse to see the truth that God is in a punishing mode; that he also is punishing patriot Americans for rejecting his gospel of salvation, for instance, intentionally by withdrawing the constitutional freedoms which he gave them, deliberately by withdrawing peace and prosperity from them, and expressly by sending them a tyrannical government.*

While a natural disaster with its accompanying consequences assuredly will be a punishment of God, by nature it will be impersonal, and, therefore, it could not be held accountable. On the other hand tyrannical government could be held personally accountable. It will be run by high-profile public personalities who will assert major laws and policies with which they have identified themselves, and for which they could be held accountable. For this reason, and since tyrannical government would affect everyone, patriot Americans have been more vocal about their suffering from bad government than from any other source.

While patriot Americans believe that tyrannical government desires to take away what they call their

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<sup>1</sup> Henry Campbell Black, *Black's Law Dictionary*, Fifth edition (Saint Paul: West Publishing Company, 1979), page 965B.

“natural” and “constitutional rights,” some of them reason that God would want them to keep the natural rights which have been given to everyone. Furthermore, they reason that God must be angry at tyrannical government for its attempted robbery of these rights, on the one hand, but pleased with those who would rebel against tyrannical government in an attempt to right matters on the other hand. Hence they refuse to believe that God himself is the one who actually is taking away their natural and constitutional rights as a punishment, and is doing it through tyrannical government.

Thus patriot Americans will believe that their suffering under bad government will be a result of man’s doing, not God’s, and therefore, its undoing must be done by man, namely, by those with the will to do it: patriot Americans.

Hence patriot Americans believe that man is in control of his destiny: that he could get himself into trouble and could get himself out of trouble. In practice, therefore, they would reject the fact that God is almighty; that he is in control of all human events; and that God will send a nation peace or punishment depending upon whether or not that nation would embrace or reject his gospel.

Since most patriot Americans know neither their Bible nor these biblical facts, they will try to find another reason for their suffering under bad government other than in the Bible. They will search for an explanation for this cause and effect in political theories, for instance. As a result, they never will be able to delve any deeper in finding a solution to their core problem.

Furthermore, bad government is just a symptom. It is not the core problem. Thus the attempt by patriot Americans to overcome by armed force an outward symptom, bad government, will not solve the core problem, for the outward symptoms will just keep on returning. Will you not see this?

Consequently, their solutions to bad government, no matter how strongly they may be advocated or believed, never will work, for these people are blind to the core problem. The core problem is not political, but spiritual. At the close of the Second World War General MacArthur noted: “Military alliance, balances of power, League of Nations, all in turn, failed.... The problem basically is theological.” A few years after the First World War Woodrow Wilson admitted, “Our civilization cannot survive materially unless it be redeemed spiritually. It can be saved only by becoming permeated with the spirit of Christ and being made free and happy by the practices which spring out of the spirit. Only thus can discontent be driven out and all the shadows lifted from the road ahead.” Correct the spiritual first, then the political will be corrected. Indeed, God himself will bring it about in spite of man’s weaknesses, shortsightedness, and failures.

Furthermore, patriot Americans, as unbelievers will approach the problem of bad government in an entirely different spirit than the one which it would take to address it properly. Only a genuine Christian, who practices biblical repentance and faith, will have the proper spirit under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

What is more, in his Bible God has revealed and offered this explanation as to the current sufferings of the

citizens of America: God has threatened to punish gospel-rejecting citizens by means not only of a lawless government, but by means of a lawless society as well until he would be finished with them. Hence realize that bad government and bad society are not only symptoms of a much greater problem, but that they will be used by God as punishments of each other as well!

Moreover, no matter what men cleverly may plan with all of their armed might to thwart God's punishment of them through these symptoms, God still will frustrate their attempts until he would be finished punishing them. See this!

Thus God will keep his threat to send punishment not only by political means (bad government), but also by social means (civil unrest, crime), economic means (depression, inflation), religious means (Islam), and so-called natural disasters (droughts, floods, tornados) as well, ever increasing the intensity of the misery of these things as time progresses. Such divine punishments will be in addition to the self-inflicted misery which gospel-rejecting citizens bring upon themselves as a result of their "lawlessness," as the Bible puts it.

What is more, whenever the citizens of a nation would turn their backs on God's saving gospel and would reject the gospel faith of their fathers, God no longer will bless them with peace and with prosperity, but will withdraw these blessings as a further punishment.

Moreover, God deliberately will target those earthly pleasures on which citizens have set their hearts, and will ruin their enjoyment of them.

Be aware also that God is not bound to punish a thief only by holy means! In the past he has punished one thief by another. Indeed, if citizens would insist on electing thieves into their government, God will use thieves in government to punish other thieves.

Though patriot Americans commonly will distance themselves from the immoral, criminal, or unconstitutional acts of their fellow citizens, and declare, "I cause no one trouble," they still will be subject to God's punishment since they themselves personally have brought down God's punishment on America because of their gospel unbelief. God demands more than outward good behavior. He looks at the heart. If a man's behavior would not proceed from a love for God and for his saving gospel, even if he would claim, "I just want to be left alone, to live my life as I see fit, and in the process taking nothing from anybody," all of his behavior still will be damnable (Luke 12:16-20). Moreover, God will condemn him for doing nothing to bring God's law and soul-saving gospel to his neighbor (Ezekiel 3:18).

Furthermore, neither the possession of firearms, nor the skill in using them against bad government could ever protect anyone from the punishing hand of God. Resistance to God's punishment will be futile. Admit it!

*The nation and kingdom that will not serve you will perish (Isaiah 60:12).*

By declining to repent of their sins, and by rejecting God's gospel promise, many patriot Americans refuse to pledge allegiance to God; they commit spiritual treason; they are guilty of sedition, insurrection, and rebellion

against him; they rob God of thanks and honor due him; they tempt, mock, and defy God; and they are traitors to him. Is it any wonder that God is at war with them? Yet patriot Americans have not yet made up their minds from the plain evidence that God is at war with them since they have declared war on him.

Furthermore, no amount of God-sent misery in the form of tyrannical government, no amount of withdrawal of God-given rights and liberties has awakened them to this fact. Instead, they wish to kill the messenger: tyrannical government. To alleviate their misery they blindly would attack the symptom: tyrannical government, not remove the cause: their rejection of God's gospel.

*(3) It is when they willfully would blind themselves to the truth of and reject the maxim that "As the people are, so will the ruler be." That is to say, if the rulers would be lawless, immoral, and criminal, it will be because the citizens, including the patriot Americans, have been lawless, immoral, and criminal toward God. Moreover, since the people would refuse to change, the governmental officials, which come from the pool of citizens, never will get any better either.*

One of the most noticeable symptoms of what is wrong with our country is our bad government. Hence it is the most complained about by the citizenry. That is, officials in various levels and departments commonly do things that are unconstitutional, criminal, and immoral, causing misery to the citizenry in various degrees by way of unconstitutional or criminal arrest, detention, and

prosecution, excessive taxation, violation of constitutional rights, or loss of income from selfish, governmental economic policy, for instance.

Just the same, there is a Latin saying that "As the people are, so will the government be" (*Ut rex, ita grex*). That is, if the government would be lawless, criminal, and immoral, it is because the citizens will be that way. Thus gospel-rejecting patriot Americans are the ones responsible for their own bad government, since by their gospel unbelief they have contributed to a lawless, immoral, and criminal society from which governmental officials have been taken.

Look around you! Crime in society has become more common and more violent. Divorce, lawsuits, restraining orders, and other acts of selfishness by citizens are occurring generally. Disrespect for the law is common.

If you would doubt this, consider the lawlessness of the majority of citizens in regards to this: one of the simplest laws on the books; one that is based not on any political bias, but on a sound common sense principle that is fair to all - the speed limit! This law serves a serious practical purpose. Moreover, it is marked in clear large unmistakable figures. Yet the speed limit is broken everyday by many drivers for no other reason than their lawlessness: they think that they are above the law. They willfully and persistently refuse to obey this law, with some drivers resenting vehemently any suggestion that they should do so. As the saying goes: criminals do not obey laws.

John Adams, one of the Founding Fathers, once stated truthfully: "Our Constitution was made only for a

moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other." Think this over carefully! His statement had implications. It contained certain conditions.

Thus, for instance, when patriot Americans would want our government today to return to the constitutional republic which it once was, they must face the fact that it simply could not be done until the American people themselves would return to being a moral and a religious people. Will you not see this? Will you not understand?

Yet there is no spiritual will on the part of the vast majority of Americans to return to God; to return to being a Christian nation once more. Indeed, there is a marked revulsion and a studied hatred to the whole idea. Thus our original constitutional republic "is wholly inadequate to the" governing of the current citizenry who insist on being an immoral and an irreligious people.

What is more, the solution would not be found in removing the entire government by force by an armed band of patriot Americans who would march on the nation's and the states' capitals and eject the government by force, for the next day the majority of citizens simply would reelect a government just as lawless as what was removed because "as the people are, so will the government be."

Then why would patriot Americans advocate a return to our former constitutional government? It will be because of the personal benefits which they would derive. Just the same, they will not want to pay the high

price for it, that is, they will not want to be a moral and a religious people.

Likewise those contemporary clubs calling themselves "Christian churches" also lack a fear of God, repentance of their sins, and belief in the saving gospel in the true biblical sense. To be sure, they have a sense of spirituality about them, but not the kind which the Bible demands. Their spirituality consists of wanting God's power solely so that they could serve their own sinful flesh in regards to health, to wealth, or to power, for instance.

So what could and should be done about our country? Obviously our country must return to God with a repentance of its sins, and with a belief in God's saving gospel in the true biblical sense.

*(4) It is when they would quote the maxim of John Adams favorably, but willfully would refuse to acknowledge the implications of his statement, "We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion. Greed, ambition, revenge, or gallantry would break the strongest cords of our Constitution as a whale goes through a net. Our Constitution is designed only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate for any other."*

*That is to say, since the rule of law of the Constitution has undergone change lately it is because patriot Americans and the rest of the American people no longer are a moral and a religious people. As a result, according to Adams' correct deduction, Americans now will have to put into place a different rule of law in order to deal with their irresponsibility, or, as the Bible puts it, with their "lawlessness."*

Rulers of countries routinely have found that they actually have had to pass more restrictive laws and to introduce more police enforcement in order to hold in check their lawless, non-Christian citizens, because their lawlessness would provoke problems ranging over the whole spectrum. John Adams once related that a client of his, whom he previously had defended in court on criminal charges, was glad that Adams and company had started the Revolutionary War and, in so doing, had gotten rid of the British courts, for now he could pursue crime without being held accountable legally.<sup>2</sup>

For example, in a predominately moral and religious society there will be nothing wrong if a man would exercise his First Amendment right responsibly in love, with a view toward edifying his neighbor spiritually and toward helping him in his need. Yet in an immoral and an irreligious society, in which selfishness commonly would control the souls of that society, there will be many cases of citizens publicly abusing their First Amendment right by becoming annoying, offensive, obnoxious to common decency and order, disturbing the peace, and being intimidating.

For instance, citizens, newspaper editors, columnists, authors, and classroom professors will abuse their First Amendment rights when they selfishly would ruin a citizen's reputation by a campaign of studied insinuation, being careful all the while not to break any libel laws. On the other hand, a moral and a religious citizen, who would obey the Ten Commandments in a

good faith effort prompted by the Holy Spirit, will not set out to ruin a person's reputation. He will not be irresponsible with his civil rights, but will exercise restraint from the temptation to abuse those rights for selfish purposes. As the legal maxim urges, "Use your own property and your own rights in such a way that you will not hurt your neighbor, or prevent him from enjoying his."<sup>3</sup>

In other words, as he would live among society, the moral and religious citizen will show reasonable care in order not to disturb common decency, peace, and order in public, at work, and on the highways. He will show patience with and even will suffer the ill effects from the common mistakes, faults, and weaknesses of his neighbors. For example, whenever someone would step on his foot, instead of protesting, "You violated my rights. I demand justice now!" he will deal with it in a way that he would prefer it to be handled if the roles were reversed.

Martin Luther once described those people who would not be meek by saying, "They refuse to put up with anything or to yield an inch, but they tear up the world and the hills, and want to uproot the trees. They never listen to anyone, nor excuse them for anything. They immediately buckle on their armor thinking of nothing but on how to take vengeance and hit back."

Thus only genuine Christians will fit the definition of a genuinely moral and religious people, for only they will live lawfully under government prompted and moved by the Holy Spirit as a religious duty out of

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<sup>2</sup>William E. H. Lecky, *The American Revolution*, editor James A. Woodburn (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1908), page 223f.

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<sup>3</sup>Henry Campbell Black, ("*Ita utere*") *Black's Law Dictionary*, Fifth edition (Saint Paul: West Publishing Company, 1979), page 747A.

gratitude for their Savior without the selfish intent that demands: "My rights! I insist upon my rights!"

To be sure, "Liberty has not existed outside of Christianity" (Lord Acton's other axiom).

In the first centuries A.D. the conscientiousness of the Christians was the talk of the world. The heathen preferred to deal with Christian merchants because of their acknowledged honesty; they would have none but Christian slaves in their homes, Christian nurses during their illnesses, and Christian overseers for their young. Roman emperors surrounded themselves with a bodyguard of Christian soldiers; their chief advisors were believers; the most important posts of duty were in the hands of Christians. Christian morality in practice, powered by God through his biblical gospel pledges, presented to the heathen something which they could never produce by the ethical teaching of their wisest philosophers.

That Christian phenomenon has not changed. For instance, during the golden age of Christianity in America, in 1947, Bremen, Kansas, had not witnessed a single arrest nor one court action in thirty years. Why? The community was made up almost entirely of Lutherans who believed in the gospel promise of Christ. In fact, their two Christian day schools made public schools unnecessary. In the same year Frankenmuth, Michigan, had never had a crime of violence in the 102 years of its existence. During the previous twenty-five years its jail has been entirely empty. Throughout the great depression in the 1930's not one person was on the public relief rolls. Since its founding Frankenmuth had been first in the State of Michigan to report all of its taxes

paid in full. What would be the cause for this remarkable record? It will be simply this: Frankenmuth was 95 per cent Lutheran.

"All who are not Christians belong to the kingdom of the world and are under the law. There are few true believers, and still fewer who live a Christian life, who do not resist evil and indeed themselves do no evil. For this reason God has provided for them a different government beyond the Christian estate and kingdom of God. He has subjected them to the sword so that, even though they would like to, they are unable to practice their wickedness, and if they do practice it they cannot do so without fear or with success and impunity. In the same way a savage wild beast is bound with chains and ropes so that it cannot bite and tear as it would normally do, even though it would like to; whereas a tame and gentle animal needs no restraint, but is harmless despite the lack of chains and ropes.

"If this were not so, men would devour one another, seeing that the whole world is evil and that among thousands there is scarcely a single true Christian. No one could support wife and child, feed himself, and serve God. The world would be reduced to chaos. For this reason God has ordained two governments: the spiritual, by which the Holy Spirit produces Christians and righteous people under Christ; and the temporal, which restrains the un-Christian and wicked so that - no thanks to them - they are obliged to keep still and to maintain an outward peace. Thus does St. Paul interpret the temporal sword in Romans 13 [:3], when he says it is not a terror to good conduct but to bad. And Peter says it is for the punishment of the wicked [I Pet. 2:14]."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Martin Luther, "Temporal Authority," translator J. J. Schindel, *Luther's Works*, editor Walther I. Brandt (Fortress Press: Philadelphia, 1962), volume 45, page 90f.

*(5) It is when they will engage in idolatry by which they erroneously would trust solely in man's power by the use of firearms, not trusting in God's power to deliver them from harm, by rejecting God's biblical promises, and by considering him to be impotent.*

Patriot Americans have three reasons for this intent: (1) they sincerely believe that only firearms in the possession of citizens and the use of them would be a sufficient threat to stop the government from taking away their constitutional rights; (2) they sincerely believe that their possession of firearms and the use of them will dissuade or prevent the government from arresting and putting them to death at any time for their political beliefs; and (3) some of them, in theory at least, may acknowledge the existence of an almighty God, but in practice they will ignore this and believe that a powerful force of men will decide the victory over bad government. To them, if God would exist, it would be merely to stand by and to watch. He would be impotent to affect the outcome.

Yet the Bible contradicts this with emphasis and teaches that God is not impotent. "God works all" (1st Corinthians 12:6), that is, he is in control of all events (1st Chronicles 16:31; Isaiah 45:6-7; Colossians 1:17), not men. "Shall the axe boast itself against him who chops with it, or shall the saw magnify itself against him who saws with it?" (Isaiah 10:15.) "Unless the Lord would build the house, they who will build it will labor in vain" (Psalm 127:1). "If there would be calamity in a city, will not the Lord have done it?" (Amos 3:6.) For example,

governmental rulers will be tools in his hands (Proverbs 21:1; 2nd Chronicles 36:22; Isaiah 10:12-15). God will punish nations by defeating them through war (Psalm 136:15; Psalm 46:6-10; Exodus 15:3), for instance, by disabling their strongest military defenses, by making their great economic wealth worthless, by compelling their military alliances to become useless, and by paralyzing their intelligent decision-making, which will cause the bravest of their soldiers to lose courage (Obadiah 3-9). Indeed, the reason for bringing down the terrible scourge of war upon any country will be for its unbelief in God's saving gospel. The synonymous expressions "not serving God" (Isaiah 60:12), "forgetting God" (Psalm 9:17), "not doing the Father's will" (Matthew 7:21), "practicing lawlessness" (Matthew 7:23), and the "evil" of the world and the "iniquity" of the wicked (Isaiah 13:11) all refer to the wicked rejection of the gospel in unbelief (Mark 1:15; Mark 16:16), and to its supportive sins, which are the cause for God's punishment in these passages.

In addition, human trust should never be placed in the might of man (Psalm 44:3; Isaiah 10:12-13), which would be idolatry, but in the divinely certain, powerful promises of God. "Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength. Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord" (Jeremiah 17:5 & 7). "Man will not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4).

Moreover, the intent of many patriot Americans is not that which is described by Cromwell when he urged, "Put your trust in God; but mind to keep your powder dry!" that is to say, "Put your trust in God's providence

of this situation, even if events would turn out adversely for you, for all things work together for good for those who love God. However, do not tempt him by doing nothing while expecting him to do everything for you by miracles! Do your God-given duty also!"

In their swaggering and strutting remarks patriot Americans do not qualify their boasts with "If it would be God's will," nor in humbleness do they pray to him for his help and blessing.

Reduced to the simplest explanation, it will be this: Man in his lawlessness wants to enslave his fellow man in his thinking, speaking, and doing. Thus every man by nature wants to be a tyrant whenever he could. Firearms are power. They are just one more power which lawless men possess to accomplish this. God is punishing gospel-rejecting citizens by using his agent, the government, to take away their powers (liberties) one by one, especially the ones dearest to them, in order to make their punishment be felt all the more keenly, and to shut down their lawlessness. To be sure, the moral and the religious citizens will have to suffer under this, also. The only control for this tyranny would be a genuine conversion of the populace through repentance and through saving faith in the gospel (Mark 1:15), after which the believers will discipline themselves morally, motivated and powered by God's powerful gospel pledge to do so.

In addition, patriot Americans ignore the obvious fact that God is in a punishing mode today; that resistance to God will be futile. He will keep his threat to scatter the proud in the imagination of their hearts, and to put down the mighty by using one tyrannical group:

the government, to punish the other tyrannical group: the citizens. Neither does the thought ever enter their minds that they must put themselves on the Lord's side, and then, patiently await the Lord's providence, and bear willingly whatever event he might send in the meantime.

Let me stop right here! I do not know how much stronger I could point to this obvious fact: God is in a punishing mode. Moreover, he will not quit until there is no one left to punish. Realize this! Understand this! Accept this! Affirm it! Adjust your thinking according to it! Flex your future plans malleably around it, and determine your subsequent actions accordingly! It would be foolish to proceed with any man-made plans, and wishfully think that your plans will succeed. They will not. God is in a plans-dashing, might-smashing mode toward anything which would attempt to interfere with his punishment. Will you not see this? It is time to pray Ezra's and Daniel's prayers (Ezra 9:6-10, 13-15; Daniel 9:4-19).

In light of this it could be asked if it would be senseless, then, for a genuine Christian to rally with or to lobby with others for the restoration of his constitutional rights, for instance? What good would it do? Who could fight God?

The biblical answer will be: Do your duty, and trust in God's providence! As with sickness, reverses in your life, and other adversities which God will send to you, he does not want you to give up, and succumb to them in helplessness, but to do your duty and to overcome them with the means which he has provided, which you have at hand, if it would be his will to bless your efforts with success. For example, if it would be his providence, you

will recover from the sickness which he has sent you after you would pray for a recovery, and would use the means which he has provided for you: doctors and medicine, for instance. Just the same, if you would not recover in spite of your efforts, it will be his providence that you should suffer it for the time being, and to accept its adverse effects, during which time he will give you, the gospel believer, his strength to bear it, not for your punishment, but for your spiritual good. All things work together for good for those who love God (Romans 8:28), the biblical promise assures you, including the political, social, and economic hard times which God will send you for a time with varying intensity. Thus with earthly matters such as political, social, or economic matters, Christians may use political and legal remedies with the qualification: If it would be the Lord's will to bless their efforts with success. Though genuine Christians are not guilty of unbelief in the gospel, they still will be sinners until they would be taken to heaven. Hence daily they will need to confess their sins, and to ask for God's pledged gospel pardon. They will admit also that their daily sins are an offense to God almighty, and will plead with him not to punish our land on account of them.

*(6) It is when they flatly would reject God's command in Romans 13 and in 1st Peter 2 for all citizens to obey in all civil matters the current government which God himself has put into place.*

Patriot Americans have no command or promise from God to rebel against tyrannical government, even if

it would infringe upon their *Second Amendment* rights, for instance.

In 1st Peter 2 the apostle Peter "exhorts all Christians to be obedient and subject to secular authorities and to keep whatever they establish, order, institute, and command that is not contrary to God, and to do it for God, whose children we are. He wants authorities to be obeyed and the common peace supported. Since not all men are believing and godly, but rather the majority is unbelieving, wicked, and wanton, God so ordained that authorities should bear the sword to punish the wicked and to protect the upright, lest men consume and destroy each other. And though by Christ we are freed from all human laws that bind the conscience, we should nevertheless obey the laws and ordinances of those in authority, insofar as they are not contrary to God, not under compulsion but voluntarily, to please God and serve our neighbor."<sup>5</sup>

In Romans 13 the apostle "shows the duties which every person owes the government, and in which the Christians will lead all others with a cheerful sense of duty.... Every person, without exception, within a community, state, or country is spoken of and addressed in this command. He should be subject to, submit himself willingly, without the application of force or restraint, to the existing powers or authorities, to the persons that are invested with power, to the incumbents of the governmental office. The governmental powers vested in these people by virtue of God's providence or permission gives them a position in which they excel us in dignity and authority; they are our superiors in the sense of the Fourth Commandment. This is expressly brought out: For

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<sup>5</sup> Johann Spangenberg, *The Christian Year of Grace*, editor and translator Matthew Carver (Saint Louis: Concordia, 2014), page 186A.

there does not exist an authority except by God; but those that exist are ordained by God. If a government is actually in power, whether tyrannical or otherwise, its existence cannot be explained but by the assumption that it is due to God's establishment, either by His providence or by His permission. It would be impossible for any government to keep evil in check if the almighty hand of God were not the sustaining power.... This being the case, therefore, whosoever, every one that, resists the power resists the institution of God. If any person refuses obedience to the government to which he is subject in any point left free by God's express command or prohibition, he rebels, not only against the lawful authority of the government, but incidentally against God Himself, who established government. And they that resist will receive to themselves judgment, the sentence of condemnation.... They will be looked upon and treated as rebels by God, who will not have the authority vested by Him disregarded....

"The government, according to God's will, is the guardian of law and order, including external morality....If a hostile government uses tyrannical measures to suppress the work of the Church, Christians will not assume a rebellious attitude, but will try to gain their object by legitimate means, by invoking the statutes and the constitution of their state or country. It is only when the government demands anything plainly at variance with the revealed will of God that the Christians quietly, but firmly refuse to obey, Acts 5, 29."<sup>6</sup>

Rulers "sit in God's seat, and God calls them gods (Ps.82[:1])."<sup>7</sup> That is, authority is God's very image.

Patriot Americans who would disobey Romans 13 along with 1st Peter 2 will not be prompted by the Holy

Spirit to do so. The genuine followers of God in biblical times were prompted by the Holy Spirit to obey their rulers, even those rulers who, at the time of Christ, for example, ignored the laws of their own land, ruled by whim at times, and committed atrocities, such as Pontius Pilate and Herod.

Just the same, Acts 5:29 commands, "We ought to obey God rather than men." In other words, the Bible has put bounds on governmental authority in regards to God's will. That is, God will not allow the government to overrule God himself. If the government ever would pass a law which would amend or suspend Christian morality, then Christians will have to obey the clear biblical maxim of Acts 5:29, and obey God's law and not the government's law which would contradict it. That is to say, Christians should not comply with such a law. In order to accomplish this, they may even have to flee the locale or the country. Nevertheless, they are not actively to overthrow their government.

This Acts 5:29 maxim of noncompliance would be different from rebellion in this way: the Christian would continue to comply with God's law, but would decline to comply with the newly enacted governmental law. This noncompliance would consist neither in an attempt to use physical force to resist compliance with this law (insurrection), nor to overthrow the government which enacted this law (rebellion). Just the same, instead of repealing this bad law, the government actually may view the Christian's noncompliance as an insurrection or rebellion, legally pronounce it as such, and prosecute it. In this case the Christian either should flee the locale, or bear the consequences of it willingly, as the Lord looks

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<sup>6</sup> Paul E. Kretzmann, *Popular Commentary of the Bible*, New Testament volume II (Saint Louis: Concordia, 1922), pages 69A&B, and 70A.

<sup>7</sup> Johann Spangenberg, *The Christian Year of Grace*, editor and translator Matthew Carver (Saint Louis: Concordia, 2014), page 352.

down upon him (Acts 7:55), sustained by the examples of his biblical predecessors, and much more by God's gospel pledges of support.

Furthermore the maxim of Acts 5:29 does not mean that a Christian should not obey the government whenever the government itself would act immorally and would commit criminal acts, but only after the government by law would command the Christian to act immorally and to commit criminal acts which would contradict God's biblical commands.

It has been argued that rebellion against governmental tyranny is moral and justified, because tyranny itself is immoral. That is to say, any loss to the citizen, up to and including the loss of his own life, such as the loss of life of a drafted soldier in an unnecessary war, which has been due to gross negligence, to malice, or to fraud on the part of government, will be immoral and will constitute tyranny.

John Locke followed this line of unbiblical reasoning. He turned tyrannical civic, legal, and political acts of government into moral matters. Then he argued that fighting these immoral acts by means of rebellion would be the moral thing to do; or, as Thomas Jefferson more strongly put it, "It is their right, it is their duty to throw off such government" (*Declaration of Independence*).

Nevertheless, in his biblical commands and promises God has not laid down the principle that whenever anyone, whether your peer or whether anyone in authority (parents, employers, or government, for instance) causes any loss to you, you have a moral right to retrieve that loss by whatever means available. Rather, it is just the opposite.

For example, when the shade from your neighbor's tree falls over your garden and causes a loss in crops, not only the Bible, but even *Black's Law Dictionary* advises, "It is better to suffer every ill than to consent to ill."<sup>8</sup> Even Jefferson observed: "Mankind are disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves" (*Declaration of Independence*).

To be sure, in a loss significant enough for the courts to recognize, that has been due obviously to gross negligence, to malice, or to fraud, a Christian citizen, in order to protect himself, may ask for compensation through legal or legitimate channels, not through personal reprisal. Nevertheless, despite any loss incurred by the Christian citizen at the hands of his government which he is not able to recover through legal or legitimate channels for the time being, the Christian is to obey his government, pay his taxes, and not to recover his loss by reprisal or rebellion.

(7) *It is when they would concoct the man-made, anti-biblical idea that God will want them to obey only just rulers, but that he will want them to rebel against bad rulers, that is, against those rulers who would want to outlaw firearms, to restrict citizens' freedoms, or to act criminally, for example.*

Citizens have no command or promise from God to rebel against good or bad government. Yet patriot Americans will assert a right to rebel against and to kill

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<sup>8</sup> Henry Campbell Black, *Black's Law Dictionary*, Fifth edition (Saint Paul: West Publishing Company, 1979), page 887B.

tyrants in government, based on the unbiblical statements of Thomas Jefferson, for example. However, they will deny their children that same right to rebel against them at home with deadly force whenever they would act as tyrants; or against a tyrant at school, a tyrant in the neighborhood, or a tyrannical driver on the highway.

If many patriot Americans would be asked if they would trust that God will keep his pledge to protect his Christians even if they would obey a governmental order to turn in their firearms to the authorities, they will answer, "No."

After many years as a constitutional republic, our original federal government unfortunately and, for a number of decades now, gradually has become what is known as a "government *de jure*," that is to say, "a government of right; the true and lawful government; a government established according to the constitution of the nation, and lawfully entitled to recognition and supremacy and the administration of the nation, but which is actually cut off from power or control. A government deemed lawful, or deemed rightful or just, which, nevertheless, has been supplanted or displaced."<sup>9</sup>

In its place the original federal government has been supplanted or displaced by a "government *de facto*," that is, by "a government actually exercising power and control, as opposed to the true and lawful government; a government not established according to the constitution of the nation, or not lawfully entitled to recognition or supremacy, but which has nevertheless supplanted or displaced the government *de jure*."

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<sup>9</sup> Henry Campbell Black, *Black's Law Dictionary*, Fifth edition (Saint Paul: West Publishing Company, 1979), page 627B.

A government deemed unlawful, or deemed wrongful or unjust, which, nevertheless, receives presently habitual obedience from the bulk of the community."<sup>10</sup>

In other words, contemporary voters in America continue to elect and to reelect representatives to government who believe and carry out in practice unconstitutional policy; who, by their beliefs and practices have amended the *Constitution*, not formally, properly, and legally to be sure, but informally, improperly, and illegally, all with the consent of the majority of voters, who, by count, overwhelmingly have opposed and rejected for decades, for instance, the constitutional platforms of various third party candidates. Hence the current federal government in America is a "*de facto* government," that is, it is one that must be accepted for all practical purposes, though it is illegal and illegitimate according to the original *Constitution*. Thus the voters in America themselves repeatedly have determined what should be "the lawful authority of the state"; that this authority will not be exclusively the authority of the *Constitution*, but whatever would be the ongoing interpretation of the *Constitution* held by the currently elected representatives.

Nevertheless, throughout biblical history God has recognized *de facto* governments as true governments in power. In fact, the case could be made that throughout history it has been a common occurrence that governments that were *de jure* tend to deteriorate over

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<sup>10</sup> Henry Campbell Black, *Black's Law Dictionary*, Fifth edition (Saint Paul: West Publishing Company, 1979), page 627A.

time into *de facto* governments to a greater or to a lesser extent as the case may be.

What is more, Romans 13 and 1st Peter 2 do not make a distinction between a government *de jure* or *de facto* in their commands to obey governments. To be sure the government of the Roman Empire at the time these New Testament Scriptures were written was in fact a *de facto* government.

Indeed, from the time of the birth of Christ until his ascension into heaven, Pontius Pilate and the various kings named Herod engaged in impulsive acts as rulers in Palestine which were both illegal and bloody. Nevertheless, there were no divine calls or commands for human retaliation or for rebellion.

Just the same, some patriot Americans would object to the contrary that the Founding Fathers in their personal writings spoke of and recognized the right to firearms in the *Second Amendment* in order that Americans could use them successfully to rebel against a tyrannical government. However, that purpose for firearms has not been spelled out clearly where it would count, namely, in the *Second Amendment*, despite what various judges since have ruled the "core principle" to be.

On the other hand, there would be nothing wrong if an American Christian, or a group of them, would advocate, with a sense of urgency, the desire to retain the right to bear firearms, as the *Constitution* recognizes and guarantees it, and, through the advocacy of new laws or by the repealing of old laws, would prevent that right from being infringed upon by government. However, all the while that such an attempt would be made it should

be kept in mind that this would be a political matter, not a moral or a biblical one, in which case this qualification should be observed: the Lord will bless non-spiritual efforts with success only if it would be his will.

Thus it could and should be kept in mind that God may override any or every effort by citizens, whether Christian or not, to preserve their constitutional liberties, in order that his punishment on godless Americans may extend even to his revocation of every right enumerated by the *Bill of Rights*.

Nevertheless, there is wording in the constitutions of thirty-five of our states that guarantees the right of their citizens to rebel against government, which wording does not specify whether at the federal, at the state, or at the local level. Hence these states would recognize and guarantee their citizens their state's authority to rebel against and to depose a government legally. How would a citizen's obedience of the biblical commands in Romans 13 and in 1st Peter 2 figure in with this?

The simple response would be this: Who would be authorized to make the decision to rebel, or not to rebel? Think about that! For example, could any citizen authorize himself at any time to rebel? Could any group of citizens comprising a minority in that state rebel, such as in Shay's Rebellion (1786-1787), in the Whiskey Rebellion (1791-1794), or in Fries' Rebellion (1799-1780), in which, by the way, the Founding Fathers were active in putting down the rebellion? If so, then you will have anarchy, random anarchy, though legal anarchy. However, according to legal hermeneutics, it could not have been the intent of the framers of these thirty-five

state constitutions to contradict themselves: to advocate the demolition of their very building plans, that is, to promote random anarchy. Then, what had they intended to promote constructively? Supposedly, it was constructive rebellion, as opposed to destructive rebellion.

Nevertheless, the only proper authority in these thirty-five states to make such a decision authoritatively, that is, the one that would be binding on all citizens, yet would not usurp authority, would have to be the state itself. That is to say, according to American legal custom and precedent, the only proper authority would be the government of that state, either comprising, at the minimum, a simple majority of the state legislators, according to its state constitution, or, failing that, a simple majority of the voters.

What if a Christian citizen still would prefer to live his life as much as possible under the original *Constitution* and its rule of law, and not under the new rule of law in the United States? What could he do? He could move to a jurisdiction where the county sheriff has made it known that he intends to uphold his oath to the *Constitution*, and, as a result, will not enforce any unconstitutional laws, but, in fact, will arrest anyone who would cross his county line in an attempt to enforce them. In the United States the sheriff is the highest law enforcement authority in any county. In the early Apostolic Age, after the martyrdom of Stephen and during the first persecution, many Christians moved to other districts and countries where they would not be persecuted (Acts 8:1, 4).

The fact that for the third time now in American history government has risen up against government, and brother against brother, looming toward yet a third civil war, is not a good sign, but simply another act of lawless men which God is using to punish lawless men.

Indeed, not only county sheriffs, but entire states soon may have to admit the unthinkable, and to concede that the only way that they properly could protect their citizens from federal outrages and criminal acts ultimately will be to secede from the union until such a time as the federal government would be reformed. At this time, however, there is no political will to do so, yet.

*(8) It is when they would charge that Christians who would obey Romans 13 also will become informants to the government against the patriot Americans; that, consequently, these Christians should be targeted; that by obeying Romans 13, these Christians actively will support directly or indirectly the unconstitutionality, immorality, and the criminality of the government.*

It will be wrong logic to assert that since a Christian, in obedience to Romans 13 and moved by the Holy Spirit to do so, would obey willingly a lawless, immoral, and criminal government, it will be because he would approve of such behavior in government; or that he will not be doing his civic duty when he would refuse to rebel against an evil government.

It must be remembered that: (1) genuine Christians have never prayed to have an evil government installed in America; (2) God has sent it as a punishment on account of those Americans who have rejected his gospel;

(3) Christians recognize this fact clearly from what God has threatened in his Bible; (4) God has given instructions on the proper way to handle evil, including the punishment which he sends; (5) The wrong way would be to rebel against or to kill every evil person in the world every time that he would act like a bully or a tyrant in the neighborhood, or even in the home.

In the early centuries AD a legion of soldiers, consisting of about 6,000 men, were all Christians. It was called the Theban legion. Roman emperor Maximian ordered them to march to Gaul to assist in fighting against the rebels of Aquitania. Before engaging the enemy Maximian ordered a general sacrifice. He also commanded the men to swear to assist him in driving Christianity out of Gaul.

Each soldier of the Theban legion refused either to sacrifice or to take the oath prescribed. This so greatly enraged Maximian that he ordered the legion to be decimated, that is, every tenth man was to be put to death. When the surviving soldiers stood firm a second decimation was ordered.

By the advice of their officers the remaining soldiers sent a letter to Maximian, stating, "Our arms are devoted to the emperor's use, and shall be directed against his enemies; but we cannot stain our hands with Christian blood; and how, indeed, could you, O Emperor! Be sure of our fidelity, should we violate our obligation to our God, in whose service we solemnly engaged before we entered the army? You command us to search out and to destroy the Christians; it is not necessary to look any farther than ourselves; we ourselves are Christians, and we glory in the name. We saw our companions fall

without the least complaint, and thought them happy in dying for the sake of Christ. But nothing shall make us lift up our hands against our sovereign; we would rather die wrongfully, and by that means preserve our innocence, than live under a load of guilt. Whatever you command, we are ready to suffer; we confess ourselves to be Christians, and therefore cannot persecute our brothers nor sacrifice to idols."

In response the emperor became enraged, and commanded the whole legion to be put to death.<sup>11</sup>

In response to bad government, Christians will not seek revenge or retribution; they will not return evil with evil, but with good. They will love their enemies.

However, though some patriot Americans have declared loudly that they will not be serfs to government; that they will not obey unconstitutional laws which infringe on the Second Amendment, but will resist, unlike the "self-serving 'Romans 13' bunch of Pharisees," the "Render to Caesar types," they themselves are inconsistent in their practices and creeds.

First of all, they have not rebelled against the government outwardly, specifically in regards to those infringing *Second Amendment* laws that already have been enacted nationally and locally. They honor those laws. Secondly, they have invented their own infringements on the *Second Amendment* when they publicly advise others, for example, that "open carry rifles in public is unsafe – should not be practiced." Or: "Firearms instructors and law enforcement professionals... reasonably worry that

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<sup>11</sup> John Foxe, *Foxe's Christian Martyrs of the World* (Chicago: Moody Press, no date), pages 98-99.

constitutional carry would allow the completely untrained, unvetted, and uneducated to carry firearms.”

Furthermore, God is well aware of a government that is lying, immoral, criminal, and tyrannical. Just the same, he commands citizens to obey that government because it is his representative which he has installed on earth.

Indeed, man’s own enacted laws recognize that a citizen owes allegiance to his state, just as the state owes him peace and safety. This is an implied, but a real and binding contract. Thus the case is not that citizens “have an inherent need to trust in their government,” but rather that citizens rightfully could and should expect government to fulfill its end of the contract, as the government rightfully could expect citizens to fulfill theirs.

Christians, also, do not “have an inherent need to trust in their government.” Their obedience and allegiance to government is not motivated out of slavish fear, but is a willing service, a religious duty in fact, which they do “as to Christ... doing the will of God from the heart, with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord” (Ephesians 6:5-8).

(9) *It is when they would believe in fatalism, luck, and the survival of the fittest, not in God’s commands, nor in his protection promises. It is when they look for guidance and assurance from movie scriptwriters, science fiction works, and contemporary novels which dream up a new mythology,*

*instead of being versed in the plain biblical commands and promises of God.*

(10) *It is when they actually would look forward to starting a war with the government; that it would be better to have all of our communities bombed and ruined; to have our land filled with bloodshed, widows, orphans, famine, disease, and death in the hundreds of millions, than to tolerate an infringement of their freedom, which infringement is a punishment sent by God, instead of returning to the Lord in repentance and in faith, depending on his protection pledges, and patiently waiting for his will to be done.*

*During the Civil War a Louisiana father wrote to his son, “This war was got up drunk but they will have to settle it sober.” Today passionate talk just as drunk is getting up yet another civil war.*

In their comments some patriot Americans have displayed a spirit of revenge and retribution. By their bravado, saber rattling, and *ad hominem* remarks, patriot Americans would start up a war drunk. They have held up the New England rebels of 1765-1774 as admirable models. Yet think of it! Should Christians imitate the unchristian Congregational churches and clergy of Boston and New England at that time, and continuously look for political reasons to pick a fight with the government, tarring and feathering governmental officials, burning down their houses, threatening them, and throwing stones at armed soldiers? Would this be Christian behavior? “Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you with all malice. And be kind to one another!” (Ephesians 4:31-

32.) "The works of the flesh are...quarrels, a quarreling temper... fits of rage, selfish ambitions... Those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the spirit [Christian mind] is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Galatians 5:19-23). In his beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-10), did the Lord say, "Blessed are the mobs who tar and feather, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven"? "Blessed are those who burn down houses, throw rocks at soldiers, riot, and destroy property for political reasons, for they will obtain mercy"?

Since unbelievers (the government and patriot Americans) wish to fight each other, and start up a war drunk, but have no plans on how to end it (starting a forest fire would be easy, but not stopping it), Christians should not rush to join this parade, but to avoid it.

As with most fights, the current pushing back and forth between government and firearms owners only will become more pronounced while the original intentions will be lost sight of in the dust of conflict. Ultimately, only a bare sense of survival for either will remain.

How could and should Christians react and behave who would live in times similar to those days before the Revolutionary War and the Civil War, both wars of which were gotten up drunk? To be sure Christians are as sheep in the middle of wolves. They need to be wise as snakes, and harmless as doves (Matthew 10:16), not antagonistic, nor looking for a fight. A Christian should not be covetous, for example, he should not aspire to step out in front of the political parade, or to desire to become a martyr for a political cause. However, by not being

ashamed to profess his faith publicly like Daniel (Daniel 6:4-13), a Christian could not help it if he would become a lightning rod spiritually.

(11) *It is when they would assert that, "God hates tyrants," but willfully would ignore the biblical fact that, "God hates rebels as well"; or, to be more precise, "God hates tyrants in all ranks who would bully others and rebel against God in their speaking, doing, and thinking, all of whom he will surely punish."*

"Rebellion to tyrants is obedience to God" was a motto proposed for the great seal of the United States by Thomas Jefferson and by Benjamin Franklin, but was never used. Jefferson eventually appropriated it for his own seal. Actually this phrase was borrowed from the Englishman John Bradshaw (1602-1659) the attorney who served as president of the parliamentary commission which sentenced to death King Charles I. The thesis or axiom "Rebellion to tyrants is obedience to God" has no biblical foundation. Not only is there no command or promise of God for it, but it contradicts the Fourth Commandment.

*Sic Semper Tyrannis* is the motto of the state of Virginia. The picture on the state flag shows a woman in a toga representing "virtue" with a spear in hand and one foot on the chest of a dead king lying on the ground. The full Latin phrase is "*Sic semper evellō mortem tyrannis*," which means "Thus death always comes to tyrants." Nevertheless, not all political tyrants have died violently.

*Sic Semper Tyrannis* was shouted by John Wilkes Booth from the stage of the Ford Theatre after he just had assassinated Abraham Lincoln.

In this connection patriot Americans have advocated that “God hates tyrants” in the sense that “a criminal regime not only need not be obeyed, but we have a duty to our Creator actively to resist them to the uttermost.”

Would this creed be biblical according to the clear commands and plain pledges of God in his Bible? No. Why not?

First of all, would the thesis be biblical that “God hates tyrants”? Yes, it will be. “You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness.... You hate all workers of iniquity” (Psalm 5:4-5). This would include not only those who reject the gospel, but also tyrants. Nevertheless, God’s hatred would not be limited to the political kind. God will hate all tyrants. Since all men are born with an evil heart which produces “evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, extra-marital sex, thefts, false testimonies, blasphemies” (Matthew 15:19), everyone by nature will be a tyrant as much as he could. To state it briefly: Everyone by nature will desire to enslave his neighbor in his thinking, speaking, and doing. Tyranny, therefore, is not limited to the political kind. It is practiced everyday by any bully whom you would meet: bosses at work, neighbors on the highway, parents or spouses in the home, or even yourself whenever you would be selfish.

Secondly, since God hates tyrants, would this mean that we could and should kill any tyrant? God has not given the citizen permission to kill every bully. In fact,

consider this: If tonight at midnight God were to kill everyone who had ever acted as a tyrant, how many of us still would be alive at one a.m.? Just because God hates tyrants, it does not follow that you will have an inalienable right, or God’s license, to go around killing or punishing every tyrant you would meet. God gives the authority to punish to governments, not to a lynch mob, not to a vigilante.

Hence it is neither your God-commanded place nor your God-promised right to take out revenge upon tyrants: political, social, or domestic because your rights have been violated. The Lord does not hand out a permit to you for revenge, but commands, “Do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay’, says the Lord” (Romans 12:19). Thus revenge and retribution are forbidden the citizen. If God would wish to topple tyrants, including those whom he has placed into authority, he will strike them down himself.

What about the area of self-defense? According to the Fifth Commandment, would we not have a duty to protect our own persons and that of our families against those tyrants, political, social, or domestic, who would threaten our lives with deadly and imminent intent? For deadly and imminent threats in the home (domestic) or on the street (social) you may use deadly force to protect yourself and your family when no one in authority is around. Aside from the fact that such self-defense is implied in the Fifth Commandment, the singular biblical example found in Exodus 22:2-3 was simply part of the old civil code binding only on Israel, and only for the Old Testament period. In that example it was lawful to kill a

burglar who was caught at night in the act, but it was unlawful to do so after sunrise.

In the rare case of deadly threats coming from the government, assuming that a person has not violated any common laws of the land, while there is no biblical command that clearly addresses this situation, there are multiple biblical examples on what to do. Moreover, all of these actions were identical: Flee! Go to some other locale or country! For instance, after King Saul wanted David's life, David fled (1st Samuel 20:1; 27:1). So did Elijah (1st Kings 19:2-3), Joseph, Mary, and Jesus (Matthew 2:13-14), the early persecuted Christians (Acts 8:1 & 4), and Paul numerous times (2nd Corinthians 11:32-33; Acts 14:6; Acts 17:10). Just the same, when God allowed the government to arrest Peter for the purpose of putting him to death, God also saved his life by a miracle (Acts 12:5-11).

The most important matter in life is not how to safeguard your rights by force or by politics, but whether or not your soul will be going to heaven, or will be going to hell by your unbelief in Christ's saving gospel.

Yet if any patriot American would object, saying, "But the current government in America is sponsoring the greatest injustice, cruelty, and oppression. This behavior simply demands retribution," the response could and should be: "Since your greatest concern is the punishment of injustice, then, realize that you are doing a far greater injustice to God by rebelling against him, by rejecting his gospel promise of salvation, and by living a life of lawlessness which demonstrates your unbelief. Moreover, God will not be mocked (Galatians 6:7). That

is, God will not be slapped in his face. He will punish you."

In another display of this same spirit which calls upon God solely for political ends, and contradicts that of a genuine gospel believer, some patriot Americans have wanted "to deliver justice to a tyrant through imprecatory psalms, namely, to say prayers for the demise of one's enemies. God knows his evil deeds."

However, genuine Christians, obeying the spirit of the biblical commands and promises with a true heart, such as, "Love your enemies! Bless them that would curse you! Do good to them that would hate you; and pray for them which despitefully would use you and persecute you, in order that you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven!" (Matthew 5:44-45), will pray simply and solely for God's protection from their religious, political, social, and domestic enemies by whatever means God would see fit, including their conversion. There will be an absence of malice, revenge, and retribution in such prayers. To be sure, Christ scolded his disciples after they called for their enemies to be put to death (Luke 9:53-56).

The imprecatory psalms are Psalm 109, Psalm 69:22-28, Psalm 40:14-16, Psalm 35:4 & 26, and Psalm 70:2-3. Similar statements will be found in the New Testament in Galatians 1:8-9 and Galatians 5:12. These appeals are future prophecies in the form of a prayer, foretelling the future punishment of all those who would hate and persecute gospel believers. Since the Bible is divinely inspired, it was God who wanted these words to be written down by his writers (1) to assure his believers of his intent of their defense; and (2) as a most severe

warning to non-Christians. These expressions are not sinful personal prayers desiring revenge and retribution. For example, David, who wrote most of these psalms, twice spared the life of his enemy, Saul, and also the life of Shimei (1st Samuel 24; 25; 2nd Samuel 16:9-10). The inspired writer of Galatians, the apostle Paul, wished he could trade his place in heaven so that his unbelieving countrymen could be there instead (Romans 9:3; see Exodus 32:32). The same apostolic writer was also inspired to write: "Bless those who persecute you! Bless, and do not curse!" (Romans 12:14.)

Indeed, whenever patriot Americans would argue, "It is so dangerous to live in America today. I need the powerful defense of a firearm," they need to be reminded that their rejection of the gospel of heavenly-bestowed peace has brought on this deterioration of safety into lawlessness where now citizens in all walks of life commonly act like tyrants. Thus they are accomplices in this. On the other hand, genuine Lutherans, for instance, have prayed and worked to keep America from deteriorating into lawlessness and tyranny by trying to keep it Christian. They have a set prayer for good government appointed for every Sunday, and they do mission work among their fellow citizens. What have patriot Americans done positively and constructively as opposed to training how to kill, or to shake their firearms in a tyrant's face?

(12) *It is when believing that, "endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights," they hold that their Creator has given them not merely the inalienable right of self-defense,*

*but the inalienable right as well to the ownership of property in the form of firearm.*

However, the slaves of Thomas Jefferson, who was the author of the *Declaration's* creed of "unalienable Rights," were denied the ownership of firearms by an enactment of positive law, although the right of self-defense by "the Laws of Nature" was not denied to them. Likewise during the Revolutionary War the Whigs in every colony made a political decision through an enactment of positive law to deny the Tories, not the right of self-defense, but the right to possess firearms as property. Thus there have been occasions in American history for purposes of protection, that were endorsed by the Founding Fathers themselves, when certain residents did not enjoy an inalienable right to possess property in the form of firearms because of a political decision enacted into positive law, although the right of self-defense itself and the personal possession of other means for self-defense were not denied to them. While this may not be pleasant news to hear; while this may not have been fair, it is still the truth.

Again, at the beginning of the Revolutionary War, one of the first acts of the Whig party in every colony was to disarm the Tories of their firearms, and of their right to bear firearms. This was a political decision made for the express purpose of self-defense. Yet, as a result, the Tories in the New York area, for example, were at the mercy of Whig bandits, of Tory bandits, and even, according to General Washington, of troops from his own army which, "by rapine and plunder [were] spreading ruin and terror wherever they go." If the

Tories ever had appealed to the Founding Fathers that their disarmament was, to use Jefferson's words in the *Declaration of Independence*, against that which "the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them.... to reduce them under absolute Despotism" against the "consent of the governed," they would have argued in vain.

Indeed, in a future civil war would the patriot Americans, for the sake of principle, allow those citizens to keep and bear firearms who would stay loyal to that government which would be fighting against the patriot Americans? On the other hand, if in a state of civil war, the principle of the disarmament of opponents would be justified under the rules of war; and since some patriot Americans already have gone on record as maintaining that a state of war (cold or undeclared) already exists between the government and firearm owners, would not either side then have a duty to disarm the other according to the principle of self-preservation?

According to the *Second Amendment* of the *Constitution*, the right of the citizens to bear arms shall not be infringed. Yet if, in the future, the *Constitution* were to be amended properly by enough states to drop the *Second Amendment*, with the notation: "Citizens may still defend themselves with weapons according to natural law, just not with the technology known as firearms," patriot Americans would have neither constitutional nor natural law grounds to argue differently. The right to own property in the form of a firearm, or in the form of anthrax is, after all, a political decision, whether wise or unwise. To be sure, the responsible ownership of such property by a moral and a religious people will not present a problem. However,

the ownership by an immoral, lawless, and irreligious people always will present society with problems, for whose protection the government is responsible.

*(13) It is when patriot Americans would turn a political matter into a moral matter by asserting that firearms are a must for a proper self-defense because citizens must be entitled to weapons of their preference in order to have a fair chance, or entitled even to superior weapons that would give them an advantage over the aggressor, according to the natural law of self-defense (the Fifth Commandment).*

Yet neither of these assertions would be vital to the definition of what weapon (not to mention means, precautions, behavior, or training) would supply an adequate self-defense, because the question could never be answered definitively: What weapon must be used at minimum or at maximum, under ordinary or under all circumstances, in order to have an adequate self-defense?

Just the same, it could be objected by patriot Americans that for all practical purposes, the possession of a firearm is so crucial to a proper self-defense that a sufficient defense could not be made without one. Moreover, that any "meaningful self-defense would imply the ownership of military-grade firearms" at the very least. However, millions of citizens in Central America, for example, cannot own firearms legally, though they retain the right of self-defense. Still civil matters in these places have not commonly nor generally become so chaotic, as a result, that self-defense could not

be maintained adequately with weapons other than firearms.

Furthermore, it will not violate the law of self-defense if the government would possess weapons which the citizens would not.

Another objection could be the following: "If the government would not give me the capability to fight off a mob of armed attackers, then it indeed would be true that such laws, which deny me the use of firearms, will deny me an adequate self-defense." However, being attacked by a mob would be like getting struck by lightning: It is possible, but not probable. Nevertheless, if you would be concerned, will you be willing to go to the trouble of carrying adequate lightning diversion gear on you everywhere that you went, just in case? Likewise, would you be willing to carry on you, every time that you stepped out the door, enough weaponry to ward off a mob, or, for that matter, to survive an ambush, a crossfire, or an airstrike? These are possible, too. Yet the self-defensive capability that is being proposed here is beyond the realm of a typical and common self-defense. It is the contention to be able to take on an army single-handedly. While politically or constitutionally a person may have access to such grand force, this is far beyond the pale of common self-defense.

In fact, "A firearm would be merely one tool that will allow you to apply self-defense knowledge."

While the defense of the lives and the livelihood of one's family, and, to an extent, that of one's neighbors broadening out even to one's own country, as well, is a duty imposed by God on mankind, especially on the fathers, the preservation of one's own life at all costs is

not commanded, for a man may lay down his life for his friends (John 15:13). Rather what is biblically emphasized and commanded, because sinful mankind is so prone to return evil with evil (1st Thessalonians 5:15); since, according to his sinful flesh over the slightest offense, man is obsessed with seeking revenge, reprisal, and retaliation, is that he must "turn the other cheek" (Matthew 5:38-41) in spirit. Just the same, self-defense is permitted in the Bible (John 18:23; Acts 22:25) when no one in authority is around to do it, when the law of love must be fulfilled, and as long as the spirit of retaliation is absent. Indeed, "all things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful" (1st Corinthians 10:23) in the promotion of "mercy, justice, or faith" (Matthew 23:23). This biblical maxim will determine whether one should preserve his life, or lay it down for his friends.

Perhaps the clearest command in regards to an example of self-defense in the Bible is found in the civil and criminal code for the Old Testament nation of Israel, which was meant only for Israel and only for Old Testament times. It was not intended to be a universal moral command. According to the instructions in Exodus 22:2-3, it would be lawful to kill a burglar who was caught in the act in the dark, but not lawful to kill him in the daylight.

Nevertheless, it also could be objected: "The framers of the *Bill of Rights* explicitly and purposely in the *Second Amendment* used the term "arms" meaning "firearms," and specifically left out any mention of other weapons. This would argue not merely for the common customary possession of firearms by the American people, but for the legal recognition of that possession as

well, especially with the pointed guarantee of that possession: 'Shall not be infringed'." Compare the constitutions of other countries which do not include this guarantee! Back then the bearing of firearms was a legal or political matter when the *Bill of Rights* was adopted, so also now it is a legal or political matter, that is to say, a matter that could be altered by the legal or political process, as the *Constitution* itself allows, if the American voters and their duly elected representatives would wish to do so. The *Second Amendment* is not and never has been a moral matter.

If a person would not recognize clearly that the *Second Amendment* solely is a legal and political matter, not a moral one, neither will he think clearly or accurately when he would need to consider his biblical response should the government amend or even suspend the *Second Amendment*.

In regards to legal and political enactments put into positive law, God wants his believers to be patient with such matters, and to obey the law until it would be changed. If God would be using a foolish law to punish foolish citizens, he will keep it in place until he would be finished.

Moral matters, to be sure, could not be amended or suspended. The Bible has put bounds on governmental authority regarding God's will. That is, God will not allow the government to overrule God himself. If the government ever would pass a law which would amend or suspend Christian morality, then Christians will have to obey the clear biblical maxim of Acts 5:29, and obey God's law and not the government's law which would contradict it. That is to say, Christians merely would

ignore such a law. They would not comply with it. They might have to flee the locale or the country, but they will not actively work to overthrow the government.

*(14) It is when patriot Americans would believe that they have the right to use deadly force in self-defense against those in government who would confiscate their firearms, because the confiscators will be using deadly force.*

The conclusion that should a government ever outlaw or confiscate all firearms, it then will turn around and execute every citizen who ever had possessed a firearm will be a false and an emotional deduction. While such a policy could be possible, it will not be probable. Evil leaders of governments have targeted political enemies for the purpose of killing them, to be sure, but not for the sole reason that they had possessed property in the form of a firearm. For instance, the German citizens, who had possessed firearms prior to the German gun control laws of the 1920's and the 1930's, were not all subsequently executed by the government. Indeed, those who joined the party in power could possess firearms.

Yet what if the government would not act according to this plan? For instance, what if an employee of the county, a polite young man in his 20's dressed in casual clothing, would show up at your front door after parking his white van that says "Community Service" on the side of it, and would inform you, "I am here not to notify you about the sprinkling ban, but to notify you that according to a law recently passed, your property has been condemned, though you will be compensated for it

under eminent domain. Here is your check. See that you move out, for I am the one to take charge of your property!”

What would the patriot Americans do then? This young man would not be posing a deadly threat to them or to their property. What he would be doing may seem unfair to them, but it would be legal constitutionally (see the *Fifth Amendment*). This law would not be touching their right to self-defense. Thus the use of deadly force on the basis of self-defense would be out of the question not only legally and constitutionally, but also morally, if you will.

Moreover, in this same connection, what if a law would be passed under eminent domain, for which patriot Americans would be compensated, in which not the whole of their real estate would be condemned, but only a small portion of their property, namely, their firearms? Furthermore, what if the same young man would show up at your door with your check and a shopping cart for your firearms, remarking, “A law has been passed with the consent of the governed,” or even “enough states properly and constitutionally voted to drop the *Second Amendment*.” Patriot Americans could not argue that this new law was not legal, constitutional, or even moral. They could not argue that the law took away their right or their ability to defend themselves. So what would they do? Bury their firearms, or refuse to hand them over? on what legal, constitutional, or moral grounds? This brings us back to the idolatry for firearms.

To be sure, in an act of self-defense we may resort to means to preserve our lives as long as those means are moral and legal, not immoral, that is, not against God’s

biblical commandments; and not illegal (Exodus 22:2-3, for instance), that is, not against the government which God himself has installed over us.

Though it is not stated explicitly, the matter of self-defense is implied in the Fifth Commandment, just as the matters of eating food, of seeking medical help, or of struggling to keep from drowning are implied also. Not to do these things would be a sin because we would not be showing reasonable care as a steward in using the means which God has given us to preserve our bodies. Nevertheless, God in his higher plans and power may override any of our efforts so that, for example, any medical help will not work, any food will not be available, or any effort to keep ourselves from drowning will not work, so that he may take us to heaven.

If God would desire, and obviously he does on account of their gospel unbelief, to take away every freedom which he, the Creator, has given to his creatures, including the right to bear firearms, what will patriot Americans do to prevent him? Will they shoot the messenger, that is, shoot the government? Will they be so shortsighted to believe that by shooting the messenger they would solve their freedom problem?

(15) *It is when patriot Americans would display the presupposition that legislation regarding the possession of firearms is not a political matter, but a moral matter, thus dragging God and his Fifth Commandment (regarding self-defense) into their argument in order to justify their rebellion against government; expecting God to approve of their rebelling with deadly force, as a matter of self-defense, against*

*bad government, on account of its restriction of or confiscation of property in the form of firearms.*

Yet the laws of our government have not denied a citizen the right of self-defense. That right still stands. Neither have our laws forbidden the use of weapons by a citizen in self-defense. That right still exists.

Moreover, it would not follow logically that when a government would deny a citizen access to a firearm, it thereby will deny him access to a sufficient and reasonable self-defense; that is to say, a citizen could not defend himself properly without a firearm. This is not true.

What is more, an ex-felon, for instance, who would behave as an upright citizen after having served his sentence, who would still be forbidden by law to possess a firearm, also could make the argument that he could not perform a proper self-defense without a firearm. Yet neither the government nor any firearms rights group of whom I know, has every expressed any horror over the lack of capability of an ex-felon to defend himself, or of being stripped of his right properly to defend himself.

The point of all of this is to show that (1) American legislation (wisely or unwisely) regarding the possession of property in the form of firearms is not a moral but a political matter; and that (2) patriot Americans are wrong to drag God and his Fifth Commandment regarding self-defense into this matter, proposing that God would approve of their rebelling against the government with deadly force (which would violate the Fourth and Fifth Commandments) as a form of self-defense against the confiscation of their firearms, because

they believe that their possession of firearms for self-defense purposes would be surely a moral matter on the basis of the natural law of self-defense (that is, on the Fifth Commandment).

*(16) It is when they would profess, in regards to the Second Amendment, "Give me liberty, or give me death!"*

Yet such a creed is anti-biblical. Nowhere has the Holy Spirit-inspired Scriptures commanded or urged any man to wish death upon himself if he could not enjoy certain civil liberties. Such a creed would violate God's Fifth Commandment. The Christian slaves, for instance, were never urged by the New Testament epistles to make such a statement, and then to rebel with deadly force in order to realize the "unalienable Rights... of Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness." Rather the Bible urged them to stay and "to serve" their masters, even "the harsh ones," "as to Christ," "doing the will of God from the heart" (Ephesians 6:5-6; 1st Peter 2:18).

*(17) It is when they would promote their "law of unintended consequences," in which, according to their usage, the plans of evil men in governments will be interrupted and will not succeed; and, furthermore, that evil men in government will get punished.*

According to this theoretical law it would be assumed that contained within every plan or event there will be a certain amount of imperfection or chaos which, at random without prediction or warning, will arise and act as an obstacle, frustrating the original intention. This

law would be similar to the theories of fate, luck, or chance.

However, the use of this expression “the law of unintended consequences” will be a demonstration by patriot Americans by which they would (1) deny the biblical teaching that God is in control of all human events, but would believe in such concepts as luck and fate; (2) would reject his protective promises to his believers and his punitive threats to unbelievers; and (3) believe that unbelieving men could outwit the Almighty, catch him unaware of their plans and acts, and frustrate God’s own designs.

How, then, could the providence of God throughout history be explained? Would there be some “law of God’s intended providence” on which the Christian could depend which would make sense to human reason, and be consistent in its outcome as, for example, the law of gravity is?

To be sure, there are biblical maxims of which a Christian could and should be divinely certain, such as, God rules in the middle of his enemies (Psalm 110:2); God upholds all things by the Word of his power (Hebrews 1:3); God is in control of all things; and “all thing work together for good for those who love God” (Romans 8:28).

Just the same, in practice, according to human estimate, God does not always respond according to his protective pledges, as we would like him to do so.

Indeed, children will say the same thing about their parents, and citizens about their government.

For instance, in the liturgical Gospel reading appointed for the Christian churches for the Sunday after the New Year, Matthew 2:13-23, three biblical cases are reported in which believers either had to flee the country for their lives, suffer death, or abandon their home, simply because a tyrant wanted to put them to death. In all of these cases, the reader could be tempted to speculate as to why God did not respond fully with his protective promises; why he allowed evil men to cause so much suffering and cruelty.

First of all, God did not explain why he proceeded as he did in each case. Secondly, you never will be able to see the mechanics of God, that is, how God is working with his power invisibly to accomplish and to fulfill those biblical maxims of his listed above; for instance, to make his will be done, to preserve his church on earth, or to rule in the middle of his enemies. In fact, realize that it will be characteristic of God to array his worldly enemies in battle formation before him, give them time and opportunity to do their worst, and then decisively dash their plans and punish them! In the middle of all of this, Christians have to remain patient and not to fret.

Thirdly, after each of these three events in Matthew 2:13-23, the Bible reports for your assurance, “In order that the Scriptures might be fulfilled.” This does not mean that according to his omniscience God merely was able to look into the future, and to report back to you on

his findings, but that God personally planned these events in the past, told you about them ahead of time, brought it about that they would occur, and now points you back to these prophecies to remind and to reassure you that he is indeed in control of all things. Today you have God's biblical commands and promises with you to reassure you that he is indeed in control of all things. Use them! Even if you were plagued and chastened all day long (Psalm 73:14), you still would have God's personal unbreakable divine assurance that "all things work together for good for them who love God" (Romans 8:28).

(18) It is when patriot Americans believe that, according to the creedal proposals of John Locke, they (1) are absolved from any further obedience to government, and (2) may have a clear conscience also in rebelling against a government which has become tyrannical, since both of these responses would be allowed by God's will.

In his *Second Treatise on Government* Locke confessed the creed that "Whenever the legislators endeavor to take away and destroy the property of the people, or to reduce them to slavery under arbitrary power, they put themselves into a state of war with the people, who are thereupon absolved from any further obedience and are left to the common refuge, which God hath provided for all men, against force and violence." Locke's motive for saying this was to justify a recent rebellion in England. Nevertheless, rebellion against authority is not a case of self-defense, according to the principles of God's law as revealed clearly in the Bible, and thus also according to

"natural law," which law will have to agree in all points with the biblical law of God.

**Conclusion:** Genuine Christians in America need to be warned strongly not to be influenced by political solutions, but by the spiritual solutions.

This is a timeless biblical maxim that needs to be remembered, for not only will the sinful flesh of a Christian ignore the protective promises of God, and will look for solutions to his problems from the political, but his own countrymen passionately will exert their peer pressure upon him to do the same. For instance, patriot Americans will look to the political when they worry about how to preserve their lives through self-defense. So other groups will look to the political as they worry about retaining their possessions, their health, or their power, as if the political were their savior.

This worrying runs counter to the assurance of the Lord, "Do not worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'what will we drink?' or 'what will we wear?'" (Matthew 6:31-32), for this worrying will indicate nothing but doubt of Heaven's promises of preservation and protection ("Your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things"), and the thinking of unbelief ("All these things the Gentiles seek"). Rather than the political, the Lord urges, "Seek first the kingdom of God and of his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you!" (Matthew 6:33.) That is to say, look to the spiritual, not to the political! Look to the protective promises of God not only for your soul's salvation, but also for your body in

this life, and he will carry out in practice his pledge to see to it that your life will be protected from harm, from loss, and from want, even in dark, desperate, and dangerous days!

Do not be shaken from God's pledges!

In this regard genuine Christians need to be warned against the unbiblical intent, creed, and practice of some of those in the patriot American movement today. Though this political intent, creed, and practice could have a strong appeal to the Christians' flesh, genuine believers must be warned in order that they may not become a participant of other men's sins (1st Timothy 5:22), call down God's anger, and be punished under "the mighty hand of God" (1st Peter 5:6).