Bro Ballou. On my return recently from an anti slavery mission, I noticed on looking over the Practical Christian a letter from Father Henry in which he asks. "Can a non resistant take out a Writ of Habeas Corpus to rescue a slave without a violation of his principles"? The question to have been pertinent to the case intended should have been "Can a non resistant ask the judge the agent of the Commonwealth of Mass to do justly ~~according to~~ in the manner according to the personal form of the Commonwealth. ie issue the Habeas Corpus to deliver the spoiled from the hands of the spoiler without a violation of the non resistant or Christian principle?

Let us look at this whole matter in the face & what is wrong forsake & what is right do. For then it would seem that Mass in order to partially atone for her sin ~~that~~ she committed in her union with slavery, & her guarantees to it, in the high handed outrage in the states which have established laws & practices contrary to the general government has passed a decree "in charity" to the slave owner when he brings his slave into this state. that the slave shall have the benefit of the common law. the principles of natural justice & be allowed to leave him & be protected as a citizen of Mass in contravention of the will of his claimant. ~~this~~ this thus it is good. Again when a slave owner comes into the state and contrary to the decree of the Commonwealth restrains his slave of his or her liberty or right to go out free. it has authorized its Agent to issue the Habeas Corpus. & have it served by another agent. by taking the slave from ~~the~~ claimant & bringing him before the judge, that he may proclaim liberty to go free anywhere in the states. This he may do on his own personal knowledge of a man or woman being restrained of liberty. or on complaint & proof of any other person. Here is a moral first principle applied by the Commonwealth of Mass against slavery in ~~this~~ Commonwealth.

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all this is good. But now comes the way of executing the will of Mass. It by a peaceable serving of the precept on Habeas Corpus. Showing the slave what the will of the Commonwealth is. and summoning the ~~master~~ claimant to appear if he sees fit & show why he restrains the slave. both parties ~~the~~ the ~~slave and his claimant~~ are notified to appear before the Commonwealth's Agent. the one to have liberty proclaimed unto him. the other to show why it should not be done. This is an exact statement of the case as it occurred in Catharine Linda. There was no brute force exercised. every thing was conducted ~~strictly~~ according to the principles of not rendering evil for evil. no punishment was inflicted on any one. nor asked for. No punishment inflicted on the claimant. or on the person of the slave or retainer of the

But government believes it right to make provision for enforcing its provisions its deems if worst comes to worst. if the slave claimant resists the agent. in seizing the slave. then the agent resorts to another class of means to ~~secure the~~ ~~[illegible]~~ rescue the slave i.e. carnal weapons.

Now I protest to the Commonwealth against its using such means. But so far as its laws are in harmony with the principles of natural justice. & its means of applying its laws are such as are not in violation of the Christian principle I have no objection to the government.

Now what did I do that was a violation of Christian principle? I did not ask the government to injure the slave, but apply its moral just principles and. express the will of the public that she should be free. I did not ask the government to injure the slave claimant. to render any evil to him for the evil he was doing to the slave. but to notify him to appear & show why on what pretext he was restraining the slave contrary to his or her will. This was all I asked the government to do. This was all the government did. The agent did just what prayed him to do. & no more.

was there any violation of Christian principle in my asking the government to do this – was there any violation of Christian principle in doing what it did – what I prayed it to do?

Here my responsibility rests –

But, says one you know the government had no scruples against the use of bloody deadly weapons, and furthermore that it would have used them for the rescue of the slave if it found them necessary. There was a possibility of the slave claimant resisting the agents of the government, in which case the government would have resorted to the use of immoral anti Christian means to do the will of the Commonwealth in the premises – That asking the government to make use of those means which were moral, might ~~put in operation~~ furnish occasion for it to use those which were immoral in case the wicked slave holder resisted. Even then the agents might have held the resistant as some suppose is right.

Well. Are we never to ask a man who believes that self defence is the first law of nature – who believes it right for him to fight his enemies, who does occasionally do so – who keeps deadly weapons about his person – ~~not~~ to do a moral a just act ~~for~~ knowing that there is a possibility that in attempting it he may be resisted & then will do a wrong act – (or) & responsible for his wrong acts – because I put a moral & just machinery in operation – am I responsible for the immoral machinery that may be put into operation which would in all probability might not otherwise have resorted to? I think not.

May we never ask a wicked man who holds to some just & some unjust principles and measures, to do a good act – because there is a possibility of his doing evil in the mean time? The government a great man in whom public opinion is concentrated – has some good principles & some bad. Some good means & some bad – Do I recognize its authority its rightfulness – & become any way responsible for its immoralities – because I ask it to do good & in attempting to do the good it does the bad. Surely I am responsible for that only which I ask it to do: not what I am opposed to its doing. tho that is in some measure

Every citizen of the U.S. Gov has agreed that the citizens of every state shall enjoy a republican form of government.