

Brooklyn, Sept. 8, 1838.

My dear brother May:

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Several weeks have elapsed since a most affectionate and truly interesting letter was received from you, full of the spirit of brotherly kindness — of peace on earth, and good will to all mankind. At the time it came to hand, (July 27,) I was too busily engaged in writing my New-York address for the memorable first of August, to answer it instantly; and on my return from the commercial Babylon, I found Helen quite ill with a fever and violent cough, from the effects of which she has scarcely yet recovered. She had a narrow escape from pleurisy or lung fever. Her cough was almost incessant, day and night. I carried her through five or six courses of the Thompsonian medicines, (having a complete supply on hand,) and succeeded in removing her complaints. Our house, for some time past, has resembled a hospital. Every member of the family has been under medical treatment. During my trip to New-York, I took a violent cold, and on my return shall have taken to my bed, had I not found Helen in a worse condition than myself. My necessary attendance upon her, and the care of the children during her illness, have consumed so much of my time, that I have paid no attention whatever to the subject of peace, and shall go to the Peace Convention wholly unprepared to take an efficient part in its proceedings. Doubtless, there will be speakers enough without me; and yet I did hope to be able to express my views on some of the topics that might be presented for consideration. But you know that I shrink from extemporaneous discussion. Perhaps something will be elicited from me, but it will be a random fire. As to the Report you desire me to draw up, I can hold out no encouragement that I shall prepare it. I trust the other friends, to whom particular topics have been assigned, will not be found delinquent. What will be the result of the Convention, we cannot foresee, but have every reason to believe it will be for good.

We shall probably find no difficulty in bringing a large majority of the Convention to set their seal of condemnation upon the present militia system, and its ridiculous and pernicious accompaniments. They will also, I presume, reprobate all wars, defensive as well as offensive. They will not agree so cordially as to the invisibility of human life. But few, I think, will be ready to concede, that Christianity forbids the use of physical force in the punishment of evil-doers; yet nothing is plainer to my understanding, or more congenial to the feelings of my heart. The desire of putting my enemies into a prison, or inflicting any kind of chastisement upon them, except of a moral kind, is utterly eradicated from my breast. I can conceive of no provocations greater than those which my Lord and Master suffered unresistingly. In dying upon the cross, that his enemies might live — in asking for their forgiveness in the extremity of his agonies — he has shown me how to meet all my foes, ay, and to conquer them, or, at least, to triumph over them. Henceforth, then, I war with no man after the flesh. I feel the excellence and sublimity of that precept which bids me pray for those who despitefully use me; and of that other precept which enjoins upon me, when smitten upon the cheek, to turn the other also. Even in this, the yoke of the Saviour is easy, and his burden is light. We degrade our spirits in a brutal conflict. To talk of courts of justice, and of punishing evil and disobedient men, — of protecting the weak, and avenging the wronged, by a posse comitatus or a company of soldiers, — has a tinkling sound; but it is hollow in my ears. I believe that Jesus Christ is to conquer this rebellious world, as completely as the Spirit of Evil has now possession of it; and I know that he repudiates the use of all carnal weapons in carrying on his warfare. There is not a brickbat or bludgeon, not a sword or pistol, not a bowie knife or musket, not a cannon or bomb-shell, which he does not suffer his Universal Joe to use against him; ~~but~~ <sup>and</sup> which he does not forbid his soldiers to employ in self-defence, or for aggressive purposes. If, then, the spirit of Christ dwell in me, how can I resort to those things which he could not adopt? If I belong to his Kingdom, what have I to do with the Kingdoms of this world? "Let the dead bury their dead."

You allude, incidentally, to the Sabbath in your letter, and say you cannot accept of my opinions respecting it. How far we disagree, I know not. By your observing the first day of the week, instead of the seventh, it is evident that you do not consider the fourth commandment as binding under the gospel dispensation, at least so far as the seventh day is concerned. I find no new commandment on the subject, altering the time of worship, or the sanctification of a special day, in the New Testament. Without a "Thus saith the Lord," what men may say ~~about it~~ <sup>about it</sup> is of no weight. The soul that is sanctified, sanctifies all time. Restraints and observances are for those who cannot fully apprehend what is spiritual freedom - not for those who have obtained complete enfranchisement. It appears to me, that there is much confusion of mind, respecting the sanctity of one day in seven, in consequence of our confounding the Old and New Testaments as of equal obligation. It is the last will and testament of a man, and that only, that is of binding force. In giving us his, our Lord and Saviour has superseded all other preceding instruments. Now, ~~has~~ <sup>has</sup> ~~he~~ enjoined upon any of his disciples the duty of observing a particular day, in a particular manner? No. Was not the Sabbath a part of the first covenant? Certainly. Are we not living under a new and better covenant? Yes. Does the new covenant provide for the observance of one day in seven? I think not. - "Let no man, therefore, judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath." But "whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, let all be done to the glory of God." Amen.

Bro. George will leave Brooklyn on Tuesday, with his wife and children, and sister Sarah, on an excursion of three or four weeks to Massachusetts and New-Hampshire. He expects to arrive in your village on Thursday evening next, when he will spend a few days with his wife's relations. If perfectly convenient, sister Sarah will stay with you. She and bro. George will attend the Peace Convention. I shall leave Brooklyn on Saturday next with my family, for Boston, via Providence.

Helen and all the household unite in sending their choice regards to you and Mrs. May - in which joins, of course,  
Your loving friend,  
Wm. Lloyd Garrison.

Brooklyn Ct  
Sept 8

Single. - Paid.

Paid 1/21

Samuel J. May,

South Scituate,

Mass.

Mr. J. L. Garrison  
Apr. 8. 1838