

Thy Word Is Truth”
The grandest works of man grow old and crumble and fall,
But the Bible bears the marks of high divinity.
Trampled upon by rage, scorched by the fires of persecution, moth-eaten by neglect,
Its pages sprinkled by the blood of martyrs, yet still fresh and vigorous, it goes on spreading in the earth
And is forever settled in heaven.
— Selected.

GOD and WAR
by
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In defence of the truth.
DEDICATION
TO OUR FATHERS IN THE FAITH WHO HAVE ENDURED THROUGH MANY TESTS AND
HAVE GIVEN TO US THE SCRIPTURES
BY TRANSLATING THEM INTO LIFE, THIS TREATISE IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.
“I have given them thy word.”

Introduction

Every Christian, at some time in his experience, faces the question of meeting his obligations to Caesar in the light of the Scriptures.

The conclusions reached vary widely, as seen in the positions taken by various Christians and Christian groups.

In this treatment of the theme of God and War, the author attempts to define clearly the consistent Scriptural position for the Christian in his relation to his government, especially as it pertains to the matter of warfare. The conclusions reached are based largely upon an interpretation of scriptures which show God to have used His people in Old Testament times to inflict physical punishment, even the death penalty, on offenders, while in New Testament times God uses the state, entirely separate from the Church, as His minister in taking vengeance on evildoers.

In this treatment, many will find a clear and logical answer to the old question of why God used and blessed His people in war during one dispensation and now forbids the Christian to have any part in it, as well as to the more imminent question as what part, if any, Christians should take in carnal warfare.

A. J. Metzler.

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CHAPTER I

Differences of Thought in the Christian World on the Question of Peace and War

Today, living as they are, in a war-torn world, all Christians are faced with the question of their individual and group attitudes toward war and peace. This question has been before them all the time of the Christian era and the demand for a solution has confronted every generation. The historic records show that their creeds and practices during that time have gone the range from wholehearted support of war to non-participation in war in any form, excluding any service under the military arm of the government. Most Christians seem to believe that God is a God of love, and that the way of peace is the best way of life, and that war is sin.

The following quotations are typical of what men say of war:

“War is the sum total of human villainies.”— John Wesley.

“A wicked, hateful, abominable business.”— Menno Simons.

“War is contrary to the teaching and spirit of Jesus.”— Robert E. Speer.

“War is the world’s chief collective sin.”— Executive Committee of the Federal Council of Churches.

“I am a pacifist with the accent on the last syllable — fist.”— Bishop Theodore Henderson.

In some this faith in the love of God and the way of peace is, however, not of sufficient strength to keep them from helping to fight when such precious things as home, liberty of conscience, safety of life and friends, seem to be threatened, or when by propaganda — the thought of the masses has been swayed until they believe that the present war, whatever it is, is justified. This was demonstrated again in the World War 1 when many Christian’s were in the army and Christian ministers urged their members to fight. Others could not fight and were detained and held as pacifists or non-resistant “conscientious objectors.”

In the light of this history and present-day reality, a question that naturally arises in the minds of both Christians and non-Christians is, Why this difference of opinion? Why do not all Christians think alike on so great a question?

I believe these differences of Christians in their attitude toward war are in part due to different approaches to the question, “What is God’s will for me as a Christian?”

We will state four possible approaches and evaluate them.

1] The group taking the first approach doubtless do not think much about the ethics of the question, but simply go the way of *least resistance*. Their only thought is this: “Which is the easiest way for me?”

But since war involves such a tremendous cost in money, materials, human suffering, and life, it surely demands the most careful and serious study.

And for the Christian, war presents a moral problem which should be faced and considered in the light of Bible ethics and decision made on that ground. Indifference to the will of God is a great sin in itself, “for every one of us shall give account of himself to God” (Romans 14:12). Therefore, this approach to the question is wrong, and we shall not consider it further.

2] The attitude of those taking the second approach is likewise not the result of a study of the right or wrong of the question, but is produced by the *influence of the thought and conduct of other Christians*. They see their fellow Christians bear arms and take life and reason that if these can fight or approve of military service surely it is not wrong for them to do so also. There is more apparent excuse for the position of this group than there is for the first. God has set forth leaders and teachers in the Church whom we should respect and follow, and by nature we are creatures of influence. But in spite of this, we are taught that “we ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29). Therefore, it is wrong for us to accept the teaching or influence of others independent of God’s will for Christians as revealed in His Word. So we conclude also that this approach to the question is wrong.

3] Third, men’s attitudes may be based on the questions of *expediency and stewardship*. They are living in a world of sin and sinners, where there is injustice, oppression, hatred, violence, and plunder, and since their possessions are the gifts of God and the result of thrift and industry, they think it would be wrong not to defend them when threatened by others. They may also reason that the Sermon on the Mount is not for those who live in this dispensation. Their creed is not that might makes right, but that right and stewardship of possessions call for the use of human might to defend them.

This approach seems reasonable, for as stewards of our possessions, including life, we are responsible to God who gave them. God does charge us to “provide things honest in the sight of all men” (Romans

12:17), and it is right to do all we legitimately can, to preserve the things God has given to us. But we notice two fallacies here. First, modern warfare has developed such effective weapons and strategy that it destroys more of the good that God has given to us than it preserves, and it is more dangerous than the evils it is supposed to remedy. Second, it is wrong to accept the results of human reasoning in regard to stewardship for our guide in conduct, rather than God’s will revealed for us in His own precious Word. Because of these fallacies, we also reject this approach to the question.

4] The attitude of the fourth group may be the result of a *conviction born in them from a study of the Bible* in the search of God’s will for them and an honest endeavour to make its teaching practical in time of war, as well as in time of peace. Even here there is a division of thought among Christian groups. Some in their study of the Bible do not recognize a difference in the covenants and administrations of God. So accepting the commandments of God as given in the Old Testament and the example of Old Testament saints as their criteria, they take part in war, even as these did. Others accept literally the teaching of the New Testament concerning the change of covenants, and take its teaching and the example of Jesus as being for them, and in force now. This, therefore, becomes their rule of life, and they cannot do violence to men.

We appreciate this last approach and believe an honest and careful study of the Bible to determine the will of God for us today should be undertaken by every Christian. This we shall endeavour to do in the following chapters and we invite the kind reader to consider the evidence submitted with an open mind. Let us think together with a prayer to God for Holy Spirit guidance, and proceed in our search with a determination to conform the practices of our own lives to the will of God as revealed in the Scriptures.

CHAPTER II

The Sacredness and Value of Human Life

War involves the taking of human life. It is reported that twenty-six million lives were taken and three times as many more persons were wounded or otherwise partly incapacitated in the World War. Since God is the source of human life, how does He look upon war with reference to this destruction of life, or the reducing of man’s usefulness by mutilation of the body, or by impairing the powers of the mind, as by shell shock or gas?

Man's estimates of the value of human life vary greatly with different people and in different times. In parts of Africa a woman may be sold for a tusk of ivory or a few cows, according to her beauty or age. In America, we place a greater value upon life. In case of death by accident, the payment of some thousands of dollars may be required. Even then there are thousands of lives sacrificed each year to the gods of speed, lust, and greed. Many others die at their own hands by suicide. Does this indicate that we do not regard the value of life to be greater than can be computed by material values, and that we have a right to destroy it at will?

The Christian position must ever be that God, the Creator and Father of all mankind, must also be the Revealer of the true values of life, and of His will concerning its destruction. This revelation He has given in the Scriptures, and both Old and New Testaments agree in their evaluation of life.

How may we know God's evaluation of man's life?

We may know this by His revelation of the nature of man's being. Man, different from all other creatures, was made in the image and likeness of God, a moral being. God gave to man a spirit that has the faculty of fellowship with God in His three persons (Romans 8:16; 1 John 1:3). Man was also given a conscience, which condemns him when he does that which he believes to be wrong, and approves of his action when he does that which he believes to be right. For this reason human life is the highest form of life on earth, and; being so highly endowed, it was right for God to give man dominion over all His creatures (Genesis 1:28) — and in this way separate man from the other creatures as to the value of his life (Psalm 8:6).

The value of life may also be known by God's revelation of His purposes for man. Man is to glorify God by spiritual worship. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). This spiritual worship brings man into a relationship with God which is described as knowing Him. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3). These powers of man were doubtless in the mind of God before the creation of the world began. "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love" (Ephesians 1:4). Since man is endowed with such wonderful abilities, and since God has for him such a lofty purpose, He values human life above the life of any other creature. "Ye are of more value than many sparrows" (Luke 12:7b).

Again we may know the value God places upon life by observing the commandments He has given concerning the preservation or destruction of life. It was only when man sinned that the sentence of death was imposed upon him, which sentence was given because God's justice and moral government must be maintained. But because of His love of human life, God promised to provide deliverance from this death for him even before any man died (Genesis 3:15). When Cain, the first-born man, took the life of his brother, Abel, by an act of violence, God came to him and said, "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground" (Genesis 4:10). Because Cain had destroyed human life, God cursed him with a curse that caused him to cry out, saying, "My punishment is greater than I can bear."

After man's great failure and the judgment that came upon him in the Flood, God gave a new view of His value of life by stating a general law concerning the shedding of blood, when He said, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man" (Genesis 9:6). Evidently the relation of man to God by creation is the reason why God would require the blood of a man at whose hand another man had been killed. Without a doubt God intended this law and judgment upon the murderer to serve as a restraint, and so to prevent man from taking human life which is precious in His sight.

Later, when God had chosen the Hebrew nation to be His own peculiar people, and was developing them into a nation, He gave to them a statement of His great moral law. One of its fundamental provisions was the command, "Thou shalt not kill" (Exodus 20:13). This commandment takes from man the right to will the death of another, regardless of whether he is innocent or guilty. And in the Old Testament covenant when any one would kill another by his own volition he was counted guilty of blood. See the following examples: Cain (Genesis 4:10-11); David. 2 Samuel 12:9.

In order that this law should be remembered and human life safeguarded, God commanded that the murderer should be put to death (Exodus 21:12–14). God experiences, no pleasure caused by the suffering or death of the murderer or any other criminal. “Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked” (Ezekiel 33:11a). God’s only pleasure when wicked men suffer or die is in righteousness and its vindication. “I know also, my God, that thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness” (1 Chronicles 29:17a).

We conclude that human life is so valuable and sacred in the eyes of God that He has never in the Old Testament Covenant permitted a human being to will the death of another. We as men share this feeling that human life is valuable. Who among us would not recoil from the idea of beholding the destruction of a single innocent person by an act of violence? Were one who stood by us in the full measure of energy and health to fall before us a lifeless corpse by some, deadly aim, we would feel how strong within us are the protests of nature to so violate a death. O, tell me, soul, is there enough of the divine spirit in you that you could not endure to cause by your own will the dying agonies of one innocent man?

CHAPTER III “Ye Shall Stone Them with Stones That They Die”

In our consideration of the question, God and war, we shall frankly face the fact that God in the Old Testament Scriptures commanded His people to take the life of men. Sometimes the commandment affected man in his relation to man. At other times it concerned the officer and the criminal, or again God commanded His people to engage in war as a divinely sanctioned way of administering justice to nations. God’s first definite pronouncement as to what shall be done with the man who takes human life was, “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed” (Genesis 9:6). In this passage God, who alone has the right to judge sin, fix the penalty, and administer the punishment, declared the penalty for murder to be the death of the murderer and delegated the right to administer the death penalty upon the murderer to man in general.

A few hundred years later when Israel was being moulded into a nation and was given a code of moral and civil laws, God charged them with the solemn duty to put the murderer to death. An officer, who was called the “avenger of blood,” was assigned the duty to administer the penalty, as soon as the sin of murder was established with witnesses (Leviticus 24:17, 21; Numbers 35:30, 31). In case one was found slain and the murderer unknown, the guilt was to be placed upon the nearest community, and the sin was to be taken away by the shedding of the blood of an heifer and certain ceremonies connected with it (Deuteronomy 21:1–9).

We also candidly face the fact that the commandment to take human life involved other sins besides murder, some of which are here enumerated.

Those who offered their children to Molech were to be stoned to death (Leviticus 20:2).

Likewise, those who had a familiar spirit (Leviticus 20:27).

When one blasphemed against the name of the Lord, he was to be stoned to death by the congregation of Israel (Leviticus 24:14–16).

Of the man who gathered sticks on the Sabbath Day, the Lord said unto Moses, “The man shall surely be put to death” (Numbers 15:35).

The one who encouraged the people of Israel to worship idols was to be stoned to death (Deuteronomy 13:6–10). The same was true of the stubborn and rebellious son (Deuteronomy 21:21).

When adultery was committed both parties were to die (Deuteronomy 22:21–24).

For the sin of kidnapping men were to die (Deuteronomy 24:7).

We will let this suffice, though other passages could be cited.

We shall also notice some of the times when God either approved of His people fighting or commanded them to administer the vengeance of God by waging war on nations who had sinned against Him. Note the case of Israel against Amalek (Deuteronomy 25:17–19). Again Israel was to destroy Jericho and Ai

(Joshua 6:21). Saul was sent against the Amalekites and commanded to destroy their people and possessions, and when he failed to obey God by doing so he lost his kingdom (2 Samuel 5:22–25).

All who will take the simple statements of the above passages at their face value cannot deny the proposition that God commanded His people, in Old Testament times, when acting as a civil power exercising the function of enforcing law and as a nation going to the field of battle, to minister the vengeance of God, to take human life.

There is no moral conflict between the commandments, “Thou shalt not kill,” and “Ye shall stone them with stones that they die.” In the former commandment God denies the right of any man to take human life at his own volition, and commands that in case one murders he shall be killed by man as a just penalty for his sin. In the latter, God, who has given life and has revealed what is morally right in His government in the world, and what is justice to those who sin, commands that the criminal who has violated righteousness shall die by the hand of man when He so commands.

We conclude then when man wills the death of another it always springs from an evil heart. Abel’s offering was accepted of the Lord and Cain’s rejected. Cain with jealousy in his heart, slew his brother, “And wherefore slew he him? because his own works were evil, and his brother’s righteous” (1 John 3:12b). It was the jealousy of his heart that caused him to murder.

Ahab saw the vineyard of Naboth and desired to buy it. But Naboth could not sell it because it was his inheritance. Ahab coveted the vineyard and pouted because he could not get it until Jezebel, his wife, plotted Naboth’s death and had him killed. It was the covetousness of Ahab’s heart that caused the murder of Naboth.

When David sinned with Bathsheba, then had Uriah her husband killed in the army, God through the Prophet said to him, “Thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword” (2 Samuel 12:9). In each of these cases it is evident that in murder it is the guilty man who kills and in killing he sins against God, because he takes life which he had no right to take and which he cannot restore.

On the other hand, when God wills the death of man He is acting within His own prerogative, for He has given life and when man violates the moral law by which God governs the world, God has a right to fix the penalty for man’s sin and to administer the punishment which he deserves even unto death. Also if God chooses to use man as the instrument of that punishment, and specifically commands him to execute it, he is under obligations to God to obey Him and is not committing murder by the act. So when the Old Testament saints took life at the command of God they were not counted murderers but were called the servants of God. When they failed to carry out His commandments, to administer justice, even if it involved the taking of life, they became guilty before God, and were themselves liable to punishment.

We should also note here that God made provisions for the safety of a man who should kill another accidentally, for in such case he was not counted guilty of murder, for he had not willed the death of another (Numbers 35:9–15). So the command, “Thou shalt not kill,” is absolute only in forbidding all men to originate within themselves the will to kill for any cause, but in any case it permits the taking of life by the command of God.

We should close this chapter by observing that all our discussions in it have had to do with the plan of God for His saints under the Old Testament Covenant, and that we will search the New Testament to find His will for His saints in New Testament times.

CHAPTER IV

Love and Vengeance Exemplified by Old Testament Saints

In an unbiased search of the Old Testament one discovers that very early in human history some men, when they were mistreated by their enemies, returned good for evil. This way of life follows the example and teaching of Jesus for New Testament saints. We also discover that these same saints also on occasion showed a spirit of vengeance and meted it out on the enemies of God, as well as their own. Can we find the reason for this difference in the same men?

Abraham shows this difference in his conduct. Who does not admire the generous spirit of Abraham who, when there was strife between his herdsmen and the herdsmen of Lot, his nephew, offered to Lot the privilege of choosing his own pastures, either those of the well-watered plains or of the drier mountains and proposing to take for himself what was left? Lot, inconsiderate of his uncle's generosity, chose the best pastures (Genesis 13). Years later when Lot was in trouble in Sodom and about to suffer the judgments of God, Abraham prayed God to spare the life of Lot, which prayer was heard (Genesis 18), thus proving his love for Lot, even though Lot had taken advantage of him. However, previously when Lot had been carried captive from, Sodom by four kings, Abraham pursued after them and smote them, killing some and delivering Lot with his household and possessions. See Genesis 14.

Or take the case of Isaac and his wells in the valley of Gerar. When the herdsmen of Gerar would strive for a well which Isaac's herdsmen had digged, he would give it to them and move to another place and dig another well. Twice his wells were taken from him. Finally; by digging the third well, Isaac had peace and God met him and blessed him.

Again David on two occasions proved his love for Saul. Saul, jealous of David, because of his victory over Goliath and the popular esteem in which he was held by the people, attempted to murder David. David came into the presence of Saul when he was sleeping and could have taken his life. In fact, his counsellors advised him to do so. But David left him unharmed, taking only enough of Saul's possessions to prove that he had been in his presence. This same David, who spared Saul's life and whose conscience smote him because he had cut off a piece of his skirt, went out against the Philistine giant Goliath with intent to kill and deliberately did so.

Also in the Psalms we have recorded many of his imprecatory prayers that are permeated with the spirit of vengeance. See Psalm 9:3-8; 59:4, 12, 13; and many others.

Since the principles are the same in each case mentioned above, we will take only one of them and attempt to discover the reason why these Old Testament saints at times demonstrated the spirit of New Testament peace and at other times demonstrated the spirit of vengeance.

The reason for David's behavior in each case is not hard to discover. In the first case he had no hatred in his heart against Saul, but regarded him as the anointed of the Lord: And in the absence of any command from God to take his life he could not lift up his hand against him, but loved him and desired to do him good. His different behavior in the case of Goliath is in striking contrast. David is convinced, when he hears the oath of defiance of the God of Israel uttered by this profane man, that God is calling him as the human instrument to execute vengeance by taking the life of the Philistine giant.

This feeling in the heart of David was corroborated by former commands of God to Israel to go out in war against the Philistines. Therefore David could go to Goliath and kill him with the assurance in his heart that he was doing God's will.

As we consider the above examples of love and vengeance in the Old Testament, two thoughts press themselves upon us.

1] First, in every case where the love of enemies is manifested in the experience of these men of God, it was in the absence of a command of God to take life or to administer any other form of judgment upon them.

2] Second, only those who lived in close fellowship with God learned by this fellowship to know the love and wrath of God as it was manifested toward them and others. Therefore, those who would do His will and fellowshipped with Him displayed this same kind of love and revenge toward their human enemies as God possesses when He loves righteousness and hates iniquity. This record of men's understanding and practice of the love of God and of their understanding and practice of God's justice does not in any way obligate saints of the New Testament covenant to do the same things. God in His being and attributes never changes, but His will for the conduct of His saints changes with His change of covenants, as we shall see now as we turn to the New Testament Scriptures.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS ON THE OLD TESTAMENT COVENANT AND ITS REVELATION OF GOD

I. The sentence of death, both physical and spiritual, although announced beforehand, was imposed upon man only after he had committed sin (Genesis 2:17).

II. God's holiness, love of righteousness, and rule of justice are revealed by His penalties pronounced upon sin, His blessings pronounced upon righteousness, and His execution of them.

III. Because of God's estimation of the value and sacredness of human life, He has forbidden man to kill another at his own volition, under penalty of the murderer's death.

IV. When man committed sin and God decreed his death as a just punishment for his sin, God at times mostly under limitations specified by law, used man as the instrument of justice and commanded him to administer the penalty, even when it required man to take the life of another. Observe that when a man killed another at the command of God he was not guilty of murder.

V. God's people constituting the nation of Israel were provided with both ceremonial and civil laws which required men to take human life in criminal cases and in war by the will and commandment of God. When they disobeyed and failed to kill as He commanded, they sinned against God. This failing to take life at God's command, became sin to them.

VI. The Old Testament saints who were closest to God in spiritual fellowship showed on occasion a Godlike love for their enemies. Also occasion they showed a Godlike vengeance against sin and sinners.

VII. The heart cries of the Old Testament and the predictions given by God to them, unite as an evidence that we should expect a fuller revelation of God to men. This is found in the New Testament.

CHAPTER V

The New Testament Revelation of God In Christ

Paul, in referring to Old Testament times, alludes to them as the "times of his ignorance" (Acts 17:30a). The New Testament declares Jesus Christ in His earth life as being a new and fuller revelation of God to men. "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9). "Philip saith unto him, Lord shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father" (John 14:8-9)?

This manifestation of God in Christ was so understandable in all its outward manifestations in that it was shown to men by the life pattern of Jesus, that it was hard for men to believe that this was God, and that this was the way He would act among men. Jesus' purpose in His first coming into the world in the flesh was to do the work of atonement and to establish a new covenant with men. He came that He might go to the cross and become the Saviour of men. "Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). See also 1 Peter 1:10-12; John 12:23-33.

To accomplish this purpose Jesus needed to fulfil all the Old Testament law of commandments, which He did perfectly. It was also necessary for Him to obey the will of God in all things that pertain to His work of atonement; including His willingness to die on the cross. This He also did (Hebrews 10:7–9). Again, it was necessary for Him to fulfil all types of the sacrificial law (Hebrews 10:9, 10). Having completely fulfilled all these requirements, He became the Maker of a New Covenant which is stated in its completeness in the New Testament Scriptures and which becomes the law which binds the conscience to Christ.

This New Covenant law carries with it penalties for disobedience, but the execution of many of them is temporarily suspended, for the purpose of Jesus' first coming was not to execute vengeance; that will be done when He comes again. In His earth life He said, "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" and He would not divide the inheritance, (Luke 12:14), but "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thessalonians 1:7, 8), then He shall execute justice.

When Christ shed His blood on the cross He gave the fullest single revelation of the love of God that it was possible for God to give to His creatures. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). The Old Testament states that God loved Jacob, and His love was shown by saving him from the bondage of Egypt, by giving him manna daily for forty years in the wilderness, and by bringing him through the Jordan River into Canaan and driving out all his enemies. But all these Old Testament revelations of God's love and care for man are not to be compared with the picture of the love of God as it is revealed by Jesus Christ when He went to the cross, permitting wicked men to crucify Him, and there gave Himself by a sacrificial death for man. "For Christ hath once also suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3:18).

This revelation of the love of God was so perfect and full that it bound every creature to the moral government of God and forever shut the mouth of every sinner so that he cannot bring any just charge against God, even when the penalty of sin is and will be inflicted upon him (Colossians 1:20). Again, when Christ died on the cross, suffering in man's place that man should escape the penalties of sin, He gave the greatest revelation of the wrath of God that was possible for God to give to man. If God did not hate sin so much that because of His holiness and justice He determined to punish every sin, Christ would not need to have suffered. Or if any other way of escape from its penalties would have been possible, Jesus who was God, would never have endured the excruciating physical pain, the extreme mental anguish, nor the travail of soul and spirit, that were necessary for Him to experience in order to accomplish man's deliverance from sin and its penalties. If Christ could not escape the cross and still be the deliverer of men, how can any man without Christ as his Saviour hope to escape the wrath of God upon sin?

Compared to the New Testament revelations the Old Testament law is referred to as "a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things" (Hebrews 10:1a). Christ, by virtue of His full obedience to the will of God, and by His revelation of the love and wrath of God, became the Mediator of a New Covenant, which presents new commandments as a rule of life and a new life energy which makes it possible for every one who enters into this covenant to live a life which expresses love to all men, whether they be his friends or enemies.

CHAPTER VI

The New Commandment of the New Covenant

In speaking of the old covenant, when the Apostles were together in the first recorded church conference, Peter says, "Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear" (Acts 15:10). Paul says concerning this same covenant, "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight" (Romans 3:20). Paul concludes his evaluation of the Old Testament covenant by saying, "But now hath he obtained a more excel-

lent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then shall no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them he said, Behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah” (Hebrews 8:6–8). The weakness of the Old Testament covenant was that “it was weak through the flesh” (Romans 8:3a).

The New Covenant as established by Jesus began to be revealed by Him in the Sermon on the Mount. Here He expressly contrasts the New with the Old and establishes changes which indicate that there are fundamental differences between the two. He said repeatedly, “It was said by them of old time, . . . but I say unto you” (Matthew 5:27a, 28a). These statements of Christ show that there were some things that were evil in themselves which God permitted in the Old Covenant that were not permitted in the New. Examples of this are divorce and polygamy. There were others that were right in themselves and which were permitted and in some cases commanded in the Old Testament, but which are forbidden for the Christian in the New. Examples of these last are the taking of the oath and the avenging of injury. The success of the New Covenant in comparison to the failure of the Old is expressed in this language, “For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace” (Romans 8:6). This New Covenant was in force immediately after Christ died. See Hebrews 9:15–17.

Let us examine some of the fundamental New Testament provisions for the Christian and their practical implications in his relationships to his enemies in times of peace and war, and the way in which they are different from the provisions of God for Old Testament saints.

1. We have noticed that in the Old Testament covenant God’s people, Israel, were organized and functioned as a nation, being equipped with a code of civil laws which they were charged to administer. In the New Testament the Church and Christians individually are mentioned as having a New Covenant that does not contain a code of civil law. They are also spoken of as being separate from the Gentile government, with, different rules of conduct. “But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes” (or rulers) “of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you; let him be your minister” (Matthew 20:25, 26). Christians are given certain obligations to the government which show that they have a relationship to but are not an organic part of it. The only organizations of which the Christian is said to be an organic part are the home and the church.

The New Testament recognizes three institutions in the world: the home, the church, and, the state. These three must live together. All are ordained by God and exist by divine sanction.

The Home was established by God at the time man was created and is counted necessary for both Christian and non-Christian.

The Church was born on the day of Pentecost and will exist until the Lord takes Her home at His coming, and:

The State is ordained of God and is necessary to human welfare. New Testament prophetic statements show that sin will be coexistent with the Church; therefore, the state will be necessary as long as the Church remains.

The revelation of God’s will for the Church in Her purpose, function, and government is clearly given in the New Testament Scriptures: In all Jesus’ charges to the disciples, when He was training them to be the first leaders in the church when it should be born on Pentecost, He revealed as His first concern for them that they should be witnesses of Him. Jesus most clearly states His purpose for the Church in this language, “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8). The way in which the Church should function in carrying out this purpose is revealed by the record of the work of the New Testament saints in the book of Acts and the doctrinal statements concerning the Church and her relationships to men as given in the Epistles.

The Christians of the first century remained separate from the state because they were commanded not to be “unequally yoked together with unbelievers” (2 Corinthians 6:14).

Therefore, they functioned as a spiritual body, organized to carry a spiritual message to the world in a way that it seems evident from New Testament revelation would be impossible for the state to operate except in limited cases by mutual agreement. God’s will for the government of the Church is revealed to be the control of its members by spiritual means, such as teaching and feeding them the Word of God and by discipline, reproof, rebuke, and exhortation. If these fail, and a member of the Church sins and remains impenitent that member shall be separated from the body of the Church by excommunication. In no case is the individual Christian or the Church commanded to use carnal weapons or exert physical force for the preservation of law and order in the Church or state or for the control of its members. God’s will for the nation will be discussed in a later chapter.

2. Since the individual Christian receives certain benefits from a government which functions according to the will of God, he is given certain obligations to perform toward the government. The Christian is commanded to pay taxes to the state. “For this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God’s ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore, to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour” (Romans 13:6, 7). We should also honour the king. “Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king” (1 Peter 2:17). Again the Christian is subject to the government. “Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake” (Romans 13:5). “Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well” (1 Peter 2:13, 14).

Thus the Christian becomes a loyal subject of the government, pays taxes and submits to its ordinances, and honours the king and will in no way himself become a party to any attempt to undermine its influence or to overthrow its work. His only reservation is expressed in the statement, “We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29b). In addition to the above, the Christian performs a work which none other can. He comes to God with “supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty” (1 Timothy 2:1, 2). How many times God, because of the intercession of saints, has intervened in behalf of good governments and preserved them from their enemies, remains for eternity to reveal.

3. The Christian is taught to expect persecution from rulers, hatred from men, separation from families, and other hardships, if he lives faithful to his Lord.

“But take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them” (Mark 13:9).

“Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also” (John 15:20).

“These things I command you, that ye love one another. If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you” (John 15:17–19).

“In the world ye shall have tribulation” (John 16:33b).

“Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you” (Matthew 5:11, 12).

The disciples understood this fact concerning persecution so well that when they were brought before rulers and imprisoned they rejoiced “that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name” (Acts 5:41b). When the Lord appeared unto Paul he said of him, “For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name’s sake” (Acts 9:16). The Corinthian Christians were taught to suffer wrong rather than go to law. “Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded” (1 Corinthians 6:7)? Peter gives the same teaching to the church in the following words, “Servants, be subject to your masters

with all fear; not only to the good and the gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if when ye are buffeted for your faults ye shall, take it patiently? But if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God” (1 Peter 2:18-20).

Again, “And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? But and if ye suffer for righteousness’ sake, happy are ye; and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled. . . . For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing than for evil doing” (1 Peter 3:13–17).

In all of these passages the emphasis is placed on the fact that the church suffers at the hands of evil men while doing good for righteousness’ sake, while when God speaks of the state in Romans 13, He says that it is His minister, “a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.” Here is a great contrast in conduct.

Again there is a great contrast in promises. God promised: the Old Testament saints that if they serve Him faithfully He would keep them from suffering at the hands of their enemies and make them to be the head over other nations.

“And ye shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword” (Leviticus 26:7, 8).

“And the Lord shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if thou hearken unto the commandments of the Lord thy God, which I command: thee this day, to observe and to do them” (Deuteronomy 28:13).

The difference in covenant promise in this respect is striking indeed, for to the Church He says, “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Timothy 3:12).

4. Jesus gave the command to love friend and enemy as the heart of all commandments for the New Testament Christian: “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you” (John 13:34). In harmony with this commandment His Word also teaches that “He that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes” (1 John 2:11).

Also, “Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. . . . Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head” (Romans 12:17–20). “And behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest’s, and smote off his ear. Then Jesus said unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword” (Matthew 26:51, 52).

These references are in agreement with the further revelation that “though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds) “(2 Corinthians 10:3, 4). Our heart attitudes and weapons are in conformity with the nature of our warfare.

“Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephesians 6:11, 12). This is in striking contrast to the warfare of Old Testament saints, who fought against nations of men and used carnal weapons at the command of God.

“A new commandment I give unto you” (John 13:34).

What Christian with the love of God in his heart can be the party to ten thousand murderers?

CHAPTER VII

The New Life of the New Covenant

A few years ago, after I had given a number of New Testament teachings that command Christians to love and to do good to their enemies, a fellow passenger on a train said to me, “No man can do that.” This

man was right in this sense. No man unaided by the indwelling presence of God in the person of the Holy Spirit can live the spirit of the New Covenant. But when He indwells the believer “the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us” (Romans 5:5).

In our study of Old Testament saints we found that only those who lived in the presence of the Lord and were moved by His Spirit loved their enemies. Therefore God knew that before men could love their enemies according to the new commandment of the New Covenant it was necessary for Him to make available for His people powers of life and guidance which were not available to the masses under the Old Testament covenant.

Let us consider a number of these new “spiritual blessings which are available to the Christian.

I. All of God’s children under the New Covenant are to be born again. This is brought about by the mysterious and miraculous work of the Word of God and the Holy Spirit in the heart of the believer.

“Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again” (John 3:5–7).

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

“Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4).

By these promises and this work of God in the heart of man he is made to partake of a new life which in nature is like unto God Himself.

II. Under the New Covenant God has poured out upon each one of His children the Holy Spirit which is given to dwell with them and to be in them. “I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you” (John 14:16, 17).

He also fills the heart of the Christian with a new love which is similar in its nature to the love of God: “Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us” (Romans 5:5b).

Notice also how He gives the Christian peace: “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27). He also gives joy: “These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full” (John 15:11).

It is by the Holy Spirit’s presence that Christ dwells in the Christian’s heart and transforms his life, giving him this new nature and power. “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20).

In other words, the Christian is not living his own life now, but it is Christ living in him, and the life of Christ is manifested in what he says and does. For this reason the Christian has life and peace and finds it possible to live the New Testament law of love in a practical way in all of life’s relationships.

Since the Christian is thus equipped with a new nature and love that causes him to react to those who are his enemies in doing good to them with the same sympathetic interest and compassionate concern that was revealed in the earth life of Christ, he today becomes the medium through which God would make known His own love for the lost and His desire to have them saved. By seeing the love of Christ re-enacted before them in the life of a suffering Christian, the love of Christ for them is made real, and they learn to appreciate it and are drawn to Him by it. This is the only practical way that the unsaved man of today can know the love of Christ. “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 5:16).

The Christians today who by this new life are given power to suffer unjustly also become the medium through which God makes known His divine justice. When any man sins, someone necessarily suffers,

and just as the sacrificial suffering of Christ revealed the law of retribution, so the unjust suffering by the Christian reveals this same law. “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the, fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be, glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men’s matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf. For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator” (1 Peter 4:12–19).

The joy of the Christian in suffering is not because of the pain it brings to him, neither because of the fact that some one else is doing wrong that causes the suffering, but his joy is the result of such conscious close identification with the Lord that he hopes the persecutor will be convinced of the Lord’s goodness and also saved.

“Peace does not mean the end of all our striving;
Joy does not mean the drying of our tears,
Peace is the power that comes to souls arriving
Up to the light where God Himself appears:”

“We love Him, because He first loved us” (1 John 4:19).

“Rulers are not a terror to good works” (Romans 13:3).

“If thou do that which is evil, be afraid” (Romans 13:4).

CHAPTER VIII

Civil Government Ordained of God to Preserve Law and Order

The New Testament Scriptures declare that wicked men shall be present in the world throughout the entire period of Church history. Naturally human life and property would not be safe in the world containing wicked men without some restraining force. This restraining power as concerns civil law has been delegated by God to governments.

Jesus consistently refused to become the head of any civil power in the period of His earth life: “When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone” (John 6:15). But at the same time He always respected and honoured those who were in authority, and when any question arose regarding the fulfillment of man’s obligation to the government He taught that man was to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s (see Matthew 22:21; Mark 12:17; Luke 20:25).

He also said concerning Pilate, who was the representative of the Roman government in that day, “Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were *given thee from above*: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin” (John 19:11). These statements and example of Jesus present to us in embryo form the New Testament teaching that civil powers are ordained of God and have a specified function to perform, which doctrine is more fully developed and stated in the Epistles.

The functions of the state for the present day may be known by the teaching of the New Testament from which we glean the following:

Civil governments are said to have human laws. “Submit yourselves to every *ordinance of man* for the Lord’s sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well” (1 Peter 2:13, 14). By implication, therefore, they have the right to enact laws. There is no code of laws for civil powers given in the New Testament. To us it seems that the more nearly the laws of civil governments conform to the civil

laws given to Israel the better the government functions and the more happy its people. Civil rulers, as long as they function in the field of authority delegated to them in the Scriptures, are not a terror to good works but to evil. "Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: for he is a minister of God to thee for good" (Romans 13:3b, 4a).

We believe therefore, that the Church and individual Christians in it are protected by the laws of the government and receive praise of the same because they respect its power and submit to every law that does not interfere with their obligations to God. The government need not fear of agitation or rebellion against; it from non-resistant Christians, for it is a religious conviction with them that they should respect authority, laws, and officials, and live quiet and peaceable lives. We notice by these Scriptures that the Christian cannot be a party to a rebellion against any form of civil government though by the partly informed he is sometimes identified with those in rebellion against government when in time of war he cannot for conscience' sake respond to the call to arms.

Another function of the government is law enforcement. Evil men, therefore, need to fear a good government. "But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil" (Romans 13:4).

No society is safe when every man does that which is right in his own eyes. A government that will fulfil the mission which God has given to it will not only enact laws that encourage right moral conduct and restrain men who would do evil, but it provides penalties for the breaking of these laws and sees that the laws are justly administered and that the penalties are inflicted. "For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake. For this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing" (Romans 13:4-6).

Jesus also recognized international relationships among governments, and in His great prophetic messages said, "Ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet: For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places" (Matthew 24:6, 7). However, when we search for a code of international law in either the Old or New Testament we do not find any. The annals of history show that in times of war many international agreements and treaties become "scraps of paper."

When the government renders to God and the Church the service He desires it to render in the preservation of law and order in the world, the Church can best exist and practice the principles of peace and non-violence which are commanded for her in the New Testament. However, the Church has existed for a time in governments that were hostile to her. Therefore, it is evident that civil governments that function according to the will of God perform a service to God, to the Church, and to themselves. And when the Church fulfils the obligations God has given her toward the government by praying, paying, honouring, and submitting, as mentioned in a preceding chapter, the government is repaid by the Church for this service the government renders to Her.

The blessings or rewards the government receives from God for the service rendered to Him and to themselves come to her as a result of the natural laws which operate among men in human relationships. When evil men are restrained by just laws, life and property are safe, society is well ordered, commerce flourishes, prosperity increases, and culture is attained. This is the compensation received by the government for its service. When evil men are not restrained by civil laws, violence, slavery, and confusion prevail.

Men may ask, If, then, the government is the servant of God and ordained of God and given certain powers by God, are not then all government officers and citizens of the state children of God and saved? We answer;

1. All men are children of God by creation and are blessed by the constant providential care of a good and all-wise Creator who provides for the needs of His creatures by making "his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matthew 5:45b).

2. All references to civil governments in the New Testament indicate that being a citizen or officer in the state has no saving merit, but men must be born again to be saved. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again” (John 3:6, 7).

The teaching that making the supreme sacrifice of giving one’s life for the government in time of war brings salvation to men is without Scriptural foundation and is in opposition to all its positive teaching that there is no way to be saved but by the atoning merits of the blood of Christ. Moreover, when any man goes to war or in any other way administers vengeance upon men by carnal weapons he is violating the principles of life given for the Christian in the New Testament covenant. Why should we believe a man will be saved for doing that which God has said His children under the New Covenant shall not do?

3. Jesus, speaking to His own disciples said, “Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake” (Matthew 24:9). Do you notice the sharp distinction Jesus makes between the “ye” which refers to His disciples and “all nations” which are in opposition to them? Again, Jesus in speaking of the end time conditions, says, “There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken” (Luke 21:25, 26).

We conclude then that God has ordained governments with the right to enact civil laws and administer civil justice among men during the time of the New Testament covenant, but that this service rendered by the government brings no saving merit to any man and that this same service is denied for the Christian.

The references to government and war in the New Testament cause one to believe that there is a difference between its normal function of preserving law and order and administering penalties provided by civil law to the disobedient, and prosecuting war, whether it be national or international, for these reasons:

1. In peace a good government functions according to law. In war all parties forget about the law. “When I heard of the sergeant who called out to the lads fresh at bayonet practice, while instructing them how to stab and cut at the vitals of an enemy: ‘Now boys, you must forget all you have learned in Sunday school, I realized that the Sunday school teaches one thing and the army another.’” — William C. Allen, Reformed Church Messenger, August 14, 1921.

2. In war there is attempted mass destruction of the thing God holds to be most sacred and valuable — human life. “The primary object of all war is to lacerate human flesh, to break bones, to inflict torture, to paralyze, and to kill. Every army in the field is out for maiming and homicide, and for nothing else. Armies make prisoners, not because they want to do so, but because they dare not logically carry out their own premises. Every explosive weapon is designed, made, charged, and fired with the definite intention of killing men, of inflicting on them the severest possible disablement, often involving lifelong misery.” — Arnold Bennett.

In peacetime the government tries to preserve life.

3. In the prosecution of war great damage is done to morals. “The deepest evil of war is not suffering, death, ruin of cities, wasting of homes, plagues, famine, or fire; but war depraves as it destroys; it is the moral damage as well as the physical. The murderous desires and frenzy of non-combatants at home are nearly as bad as the work of the soldiers; the brutality of the man in the street, the bloodthirst fostered by teachers, inculcated in schools, preached in churches, and exhorted in the name of the Lord; this saturation of the people at home with murder and hatred is moral shrapnel.” — Former Premier Ramsay MacDonald, of Great Britain.

In times of peace many of these same agencies help to develop good morals.

Since there are the above-stated differences between the normal functions of governments in law enforcement in times of peace, and its prosecution of war, and since there is no specific statement in the New Testament that God has committed the right to engage in war to governments, therefore it is evident that there are even more reasons why the Christian must be separate from the government in the spirit, motive, and act of its war effort than there are why he is separate from its normal functions in times of peace.

“And to reserve the unjust unto the Day of Judgment to be punished.”
“The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations” (2 Peter 2:9).

CHAPTER IX

The Judgment of God Will Come

In preceding chapters we have observed that Jesus taught His followers to expect to suffer unjustly, both at the hands of individuals and governments. Since God is holy and just, we would not expect that this condition should go on forever. As we would expect, God says that iniquity shall not prevail, and that justice will come. Naturally also, the righteous cry for it and the question is not, Will justice come? but, When will it come?

Hear the Psalmist, (Psalm 94:1–15).

“O Lord God, to whom vengeance belongeth: O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, shew thyself. Lift up thyself, thou judge of the earth: render a reward to the proud. Lord, how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked triumph? How long shall they utter and speak hard things? and all the workers of iniquity boast themselves? They break in pieces thy people, O Lord, and afflict thine heritage. They slay the widow and the stranger, and murder the fatherless. Yet they say, The Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it. Understand, ye brutish among the people: and ye fools, when will ye be wise? He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see?

He that chastiseth the heathen, shall not he correct? He that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know? The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity. Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teacheth him out of thy law; that thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity, until the pit be digged for the wicked. For the Lord will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance. But judgment shall return unto righteousness: and all the upright in heart shall follow it”

The fact remains that judgment will come, and the assurance that it will come rests on an unchanging God whose word will be fulfilled. “I am the Lord, I change not” (Malachi 3:6a). “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever” (Hebrews 13:8).

All the attributes of God remain the same. The fact that we have an unchangeable God gives to the Christian poise, stability, and peace, even though he lives in a changing world. It is said of God, “Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us” (Hebrews 6:17-18).

God also remains the same in His eternal purpose. “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9).

However, this unchanging God suspends the infliction of the penalties of sin for a time. The God who is merciful now and extends the physical life of the unsaved when justice would demand that “the soul that sinneth, it shall die” (Ezekiel 18:20), shall in a time that is known only to Himself bring these same unsaved to justice at the return of the Lord. The same Jesus who came to earth once to enact His great love in dying for the unsaved will come to the earth again to enact His justice by bringing judgment upon these same unsaved whom He loved and for whom He died. “Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead” (Acts 17:31).

John saw by divine revelation what would take place in that day: “The kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand” (Revelation 6:15–17)?

The same Lamb that went “to the slaughter” dumb (Isaiah 53:7) shall bring judgment unto victory.

By this we know that the final triumph of righteousness will be a reality when justice is meted up on all those who have refused to accept the salvation from sin made possible by the love and sacrifice of God our Saviour. The individual who despises the love of God now will learn to know the wrath of God then. Present immunity from suffering is no guarantee of a future escape; in fact, present grace declares future judgment. "And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds" (Romans 2:3–6). Those who fail to accept the salvation of God's love and goodness but continue to live in sinful deeds shall, according to this unfailing promise, meet the flaming fire of His vengeance. See 2 Thessalonians 1:6–9.

On the other hand, Christians who suffer here unjustly at the hands of wicked men for Christ and the Gospel's sake shall, according to His unfailing promise, reign with Him. See 2 Timothy 2:12.

A question in the minds of many disciples and asked by Peter is, "We have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matthew 19:27, 28). The disciples who suffer injustice now shall administer justice then. This same promise is made broad enough to include all the saints when we are told, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him" (2 Timothy 2:12a).

To the persecuted and troubled churches of Asia came messages of comfort from our glorified Lord, promising to them who overcome many rich rewards. Possibly the most striking is, "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them, with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father" (Revelation 2:26, 27).

The nations who today are not saved and whose lives are not ordered by the New Testament law given for the Christian shall also at the coming of the Lord receive the ministration of justice. "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. . . . Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:31–41).

Another revelation of coming judgment gives this picture:

"And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever" (Revelation 11:15). "And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead that they should be judged, and that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldst destroy them which destroy the earth" (Revelation 11:18).

Some of the teachings of Jesus which are said to justify war are those which deal with future retribution. He said, "But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me" (Luke 19:27), or, "The Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour when he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 24:50, 51).

These and other parallel passages speak of the day of vengeance which shall surely come upon all the wicked. There is no inference in any of them that the Christian should administer vengeance now. The Church today has rightfully emphasized the love of God and His mercy toward all men. But we believe she has neglected equally to emphasize the coming judgment and wrath of God, but instead has taken a hand in civil affairs and war before the time. In the light of the facts of a full revelation of both Old and New Testaments we must conclude that the way of Christ for the Christian today is the way of love and

peace at the cost of suffering unjustly, and that civil affairs and war belong to the world system as opposed to the Church.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS ON THE NEW TESTAMENT COVENANT AND ITS REVELATION OF GOD

I. The New Testament revelation of God through Christ is more complete than the one given in the Old Testament covenant. This is especially true of the revelation of His attributes of love and mercy, and of His justice and wrath.

II. Jesus, who is the head of the Church, established a New Covenant with her which was sealed by the shedding of His blood and which gives to each of His saints a new nature and the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. All of the New Testament is the Word of Christ and has become the rule of life for each Christian.

III. The law of the New Covenant established by Christ for Christians is the law of love, to God first, to fellow Christians, and to all men, including enemies who have done injury to their persons or possessions.

IV. This law of love forbids the Christian to retaliate or revenge any injury done to him, whether it be between person and person or nation and nation in war. In either case he cannot bring vengeance, either by the process of law or by physical violence.

V. The New Covenant recognizes civil government as serving God in the field of civil authority with the power to enact laws and penalize those who break them. There is no code of civil laws given specifically for nations in the New Testament.

VI. Serving the government does not give any official or citizen any saving merit. The teaching that those are saved who die in the field of battle for their country, is contrary to New Testament teaching.

VII. The institutions of the Church and state are to be separate from each other, performing different functions but serving each other in limited fields which make them mutually helpful to each other as long as they restrict their activities to their own fields.

VIII. The temporary and partial withholding of judgment against sin and sinners will terminate at the return of our Lord to judge the world in righteousness.

IX. The same Christ who brings judgment upon the world will bring eternal rewards for the Christians, which will more than compensate them for all suffering endured here for Jesus' and the Gospel's sake.