



## The *Pulpit Exchange*

It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe (1 Corinthians 1:21). So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading (Nehemiah 8:8). Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend (Proverbs 27:17).

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### God's Thoughts — Psalm 40:5

You may open your Bibles to Psalm 40. I would like to think a little bit about God's thoughts to us-ward. I am planning to look at a few Scriptures briefly here. God's thoughts. We hear God's thoughts when we come to worship services expressed through the messenger and as we read the Word. I am glad for that. We are a very privileged people.

Psalm 40:5 tells us that, "Many, O LORD my God, are

thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered." We cannot count them all. We cannot understand them all even. We cannot contain them all. They are beyond our limitations because God is infinite. We are merely finite beings.

There are more than can be

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written up in order. Yet, at the same time I am glad to testify to the fact that we can know enough of them to receive salvation and know how to order our lives in a way that would please Him. As we consider the subjects of this day, the idea of nonresistance, we know that the call of man does not necessarily respond in a non-resistant manner. Even to those who are Christians and are children of God it takes the power of God to respond rightly.

We need the thoughts of God in us so we can do that. We have them in the Word of God (may God be praised for that) sufficiently so that we might understand His will and ways enough to please Him. The Bible, as I mentioned, is considered the thoughts of God to us-ward in its entirety.

Psalm 12:6, 7 says, “The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. (7)

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Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.” They are pure. They are free from defect or anything, any flaws. The words of the Lord stand the test of time, stood the test of time and they are here for us today to apply to our hearts and lives.

The thoughts of God to us-ward can be our constant daily companion, and they need to be our constant daily companion. What is it that enables Christian victory? Is it not when we have the Word of God “hid in [our] heart[s], that [we] might not sin against [Him]” (Psalm 119:11)? That is what enables Christian victory. That is what enables us to please God, because He is living in us. Yes, it is through His Holy Spirit showing us what that Word is and helping us to apply it.

In Isaiah 55:8, 9 God is speaking, “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. (9) For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.” Notice again the thoughts of God are beyond us. They go beyond our natural tendencies and actions and reactions. So much higher as the heaven is higher than the earth are God’s ways

than our ways. Is there then any hope? Well, there is hope if we are interested in knowing God’s ways, and aspiring unto them, reaching unto Him for help.

The God of mercy and grace is continually reaching down to reach our hands that are stretching up to reach to Him and to understand His thoughts and His ways better.

Psalm 139:17, 18 says, “How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! (18) If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee.” The thoughts of God are they not precious to us? I trust they are precious to us. We open our Bibles and have our personal devotions and we consider what God is saying to us and how it applies to my life, the difficulties that I may be facing or simply a general encouragement that I need. The thoughts of God are precious. It is as the psalmist says here, “they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee.” What a precious thought that we can be with God and be strengthened for the duties at hand.

Yes, we testify and recognize that we often fall short and yet where is our heart? Where is our goal? Where is our aspiration? I

hope and I trust that it is to become more like Him as we read of His thoughts. God's thoughts reach far beyond our comprehension. God's movings will not always follow our preconceived pattern of logic in any given situation that we may be facing. Sometimes we do that. We have an idea about how we think it should work, and how the end result will be. Nevertheless, believing the fact that God's ways are higher than our ways, believing that fact and that He understands and overrules in His sovereignty in the best interests of His people and for His plan and program will increase our faith. We realize that God is so much higher. We simply submit ourselves and allow ourselves to follow Him. Then there is peace and victory.

I would like to turn yet to Jeremiah 29:11-14. Again uniquely here it is God speaking. In focus here are the children of Israel when they were in Babylon, or at least pointing forward to that time. Then, in verse 11 it is God speaking. "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. (12) Then shall ye call upon me,

and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. (13) And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. (14) And I will be found of you, saith the LORD: and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the LORD; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive."

God's thoughts are not merely unproven ideas or whims that men sometimes have come up with. God's thoughts are proven. "I know them," He says. They are solid. They are sound. They are established. They are "thoughts of peace." Thus, even though God's people are called to go through some difficulties, God's thoughts are thoughts of peace and He has something in mind. He has a goal to give us all an expected end, an expected end with Him, if we are found with Him. In verse 14 He promises that we can be found and that He will be found if we seek Him with all our hearts.

I trust that the service today will be a means further to help us find our God and to walk with Him more closely.

## Nonresistance: Jury Duty and Law Suits

We look at a title like this and I am sure there are people here wondering what exactly do these two terms mean? For those of us who are older with a little more experience, we might have a little bit better idea what they mean. It is possible that there are young people here who wonder what is jury duty. Jury duty has its roots in British law. The US and Canada both have their basic political beginnings with British law. British law basically stated that an individual accused of a public demeanour, or a public crime, had the right to be judged by a panel of twelve of his peers, of those of equal society with him. Therefore, it was a protection. Possibly a judge might have a personal agenda. He might be very negative to certain people. Therefore, it was the right under British law for individuals to be judged by a panel of twelve peers.

The first thing that happens in jury duty is that the court system sends out letters and requests for individuals to attend the court as a panel to draw from to serve as a juror. If it is a criminal case there can be up to one hundred fifty that are called to select those twelve from, if it is a matter of murder or something like that. If

it is a matter of a lessor degree, then there may only be seventy-two people that are called to serve as potential jurors.

I will to give a few stories from local experience to help make it practical. A number of sisters in our congregation were called to serve. It was unique that the five who were called they were all sisters in that particular time. They attended the court. One sister, her name was called and she testified she could not serve because of religious convictions and the judge asked, "Is this your conviction?" She said, "Yes," and he said, "You are excused."

A second sister's name was called. She also asked to be excused and the judge left her sitting, I suppose, in the public place. He looked at the rest of the people there and said, "How many more people here have any particular reason to ask to be excused?" I think there were only one or two hands that were raised. Then, the judge said, "On the basis of the fact that we have a large pool to draw from, you are excused." Thus, that was not a religious excusing.

At one time we could go to the local sheriff. In Canada the sheriff is not the police officer like the US sheriff is. He is an officer

of the court. You could go to the local sheriff and asked to be excused and he would normally do that. Presently, that is not happening. Our jury duty notices are coming from a central place in Ontario and they are simply (I suppose) computer generated. You need to answer those jury duty summons and go in and ask for excusing.

The CMCO [Conservative Mennonite Churches of Ontario] churches, as a bishop board, wrote a letter to the Attorney General asking if they could be excused as a group. The answer came back, "No, we cannot excuse you as a group." There is exemption under the Jury Duties Act that a person may be excused under section so and so, of the Act for religious conviction. It is good for us if we are ever called for jury duty that we research some of these things. It is right and honourable for Christian people to appeal to the judge on the basis of the particular section of the law, possibly as a last resort.

If we are called into a place of serving as a juror, we need to remember a number of things. One is that we give no connotation of any political overtone in our asking to be excused. It may be something that we may even make comment about innocently.

Let us be careful that there is no political overtone in anything that we say. The best basis is the basis of the Scriptures.

The first basis that we want to consider is the fact that Jesus said "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight" (John 18:36). The letters that we receive from the government say, "I want to stress that the jury system is one of the most important elements of our justice system. Jurors are responsible for determining, with the guidance of the judge, questions of fact in either civil or criminal court proceedings. Service as a juror is one of the most valuable contributions members of our society can make."

Statements like this certainly appeal to our sense of right and wrong, do they not? The criminal system would say, "You are not doing your Christian duty by refusing to serve." We again need to remember that we are not of this kingdom. "Our citizenship [conversation] is in heaven" according to Philippians 3:20.

One individual was asked to serve and he wrote a letter. I will simply read that. "As defenseless Christians, conservative Mennonites, we are thankful for the peace and freedom which we

and our fathers have enjoyed in this land. We are reminded in God's Word, the Bible, to pray for our rulers and "for all that are in authority" [1 Timothy 2:1] that wisdom may be given unto them that freedom, law, and order may continue here. This we endeavour to do regularly. The principle of separation of state and Church is clearly taught in God's Word."

"As a Christian belonging to the Church of Jesus Christ I cannot take part in civil government (governing or administration of civil or criminal law) since Philippians 3:20 tells us our 'citizenship is in heaven.' For this reason, and the teaching of Jesus as we find in Matthew 5:34 'Swear not at all' and Matthew 5:39, 'That ye resist not evil,' serving as juror would violate our conscience. I request therefore that my name be not included in the jury list."

Let us look at some Bible verses. 1 Timothy 2:1, 2 says, "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; (2) For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." The requirement of the Christian is that we pray and intercede that evil may be

suppressed and that we give thanks for kings. We give thanks for the fact that we live in the land of freedom. However, the main thought is "that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."

What if the court officer accuses you of neglecting your duty because you are not willing to do your part so that we can live in godliness and honesty? Again, it goes back to our understanding of nonresistance. The theme is nonresistance. Serving as a juror and judging is the work of the magistrates. It is the work of the "he," the government that it describes in Romans 13. There was a certain sister in our churches who was called to serve in jury duty. She attended and asked to be excused. She was told, "You are simply being stubborn." She replied, "I cannot serve." She was again told, "You are simply being stubborn." In reply she simply said, "I cannot conscientiously serve."

Then the judge said, "I will ask you some questions, and on the basis of those answers I will either excuse you or not excuse you." And the answers he asked, "Did you ever attend public school?" She was able to answer "No." "Did your parents receive Family Allowance [Child Tax Benefit] for you?" This may be

foreign to the Americans. Canada has a system where if a parent has a child it can apply to the government and every month they will be getting up to \$200 a month for the sustenance of that child. It is called the Family Allowance. It is part of what the government perceives to be their responsibility so that children would not be neglected. They changed that. Now they call it the Child Tax Benefit. It is approximately \$200 a month that is available to the parents of Canada for the sustenance of their family.

She was asked, “Did your parents ever receive any of this money?” Again, she was able to answer “No.” Then, the judge asked, “Did you ever go vote in a public election?” She was able to answer, “No.” On the basis of those questions he said, “You are excused.”

Therefore, it is important how we relate to government hand-outs. It is important in how we relate to the family benefits and to the thought of the right of the child because all these things come back to bear. A certain young man had dropped out of school and the parents were asked to send him to school. They said that they could not conscientiously send them to public school. The government

made this statement. “We have \$19,000 invested in this child. He will be going to school.” The government has kept track of all the family allowance that has been paid on behalf of this child from the day he was born until the present day. They actually said “We have an investment in this individual.” I simply give this for your information so that if you are ever confronted with Social Security or handing out money for the benefit of your children, we do not need it. We cannot afford to take that kind of thing.

Sometimes we hear about “soft discipleship.” As we think about nonresistance, soft discipleship is one that will produce pacifism rather than true Biblical nonresistance. Pacifism is non-violent resistance. Therefore, a pacifist would say that it is in order for you to serve as a juror because you are being nonviolent. You are simply helping to pass judgment. That is not our position.

Let us turn to Romans 13:1–7, “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.” Then, we will go to verse 4 talking about the government. “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. (5) Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. (6) For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing."

In these verses we see a separation of Church and state. We see those who may serve as jurors and those who may not. "For he. . ." that is the government and those who are involved in the government. "Thee" is the Christian. "For he beareth not the sword in vain," that is again the arm of the government. "He is the minister of God," is the force of the law to keep law and order. That is their responsibility. Then, verse 5 says, "ye must needs be subject." The "ye" is again referring to the Christian. Verse 6 says, "for this cause pay ye." This again refers to the Scriptures. Then, when it refers again to the government and court systems as such it says, "for they are God's ministers."

We see in this the line between "he" and "thee" and "thou," and "thee," and "ye." The "thou," and the "ye," and the "ye" are part of the Christian, and the "he"

is the public force of the law. It is not for a born again Christian to execute wrath upon those that do evil. "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord" (Romans 12:19). Let us turn now to John 18:36. "Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence."

II) Let us turn back now to Matthew 5 and read the words of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount where He gives the very practical teaching for His followers in this day and age in which we are presently living. Matthew 5:39, 40 says "But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. (40) And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also." Resist not evil. That is the government's responsibility. The Christian's responsibility is to convey love, not to convey judgment.

"If any man will sue thee at the law" — what do we mean by lawsuits? A lawsuit is basically an individual that has an argument with someone else and most likely a monetary argument with someone else. He goes and

uses the court system and the force of the law in order to receive some monetary benefit from that. Sometimes it is referred to as litigation. Sometimes we make the comments that lawyers are out to make money (and I suppose they also need to earn a living like the rest of us do). However, there are those who are advertising that they will take on law suit cases and they will settle for part of the proceeds.

One of the advantages we do have under British law in Canada is that it is illegal in Canada and it carries the weight of his lawyer license being removed [being disbarred] if he would at all initiate a case and say “I will settle for a portion of the proceeds, or a portion of the winnings.” Therefore, it does reduce the litigation substantially with that kind of a clause in there. They can be hired for some of the very same things but they cannot work for a commission, so to speak. It does reduce a lot of the spurious lawsuits that you sometimes hear and read about.

The Scripture says, “if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also.” It is simply what it is saying. If someone is asking for a settlement, it is necessary for the Christian to make sure

that they are satisfied. Letting him “have thy cloak also” is a little bit like putting coals of fire on his head. We are basically conveying that there is no malice in our heart. We are willing to do what we can to have good relationships.

Let us turn back again to 1 Corinthians 6:1–8, “Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? (2) Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? (3) Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life? (4) If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church. (5) I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren? (6) But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers. (7) 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? (8) Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren.”

A brother called a Christian lawyer and asked a little bit about his view of being a Christian and a lawyer in lawsuits. The first thing he said was that a Christian does not sue a Christian. That is good. A question for you to consider, Does a Christian sue a non-Christian? Where does that fit into the subject of nonresistance? There is maybe a place for appealing for a righteous judgment. However, according to the Scriptures there is not a place for a Christian using a lawsuit, or we could say the force of the law, to make a claim.

What about small claims court? We may have a business. We all know that a business cannot operate unless a business pays the bills. I may have, 25% of my income tied up in people that are simply refusing to pay their bills. Is it acceptable for me to go to small claims court and for a fee, use the force of the law to collect my dues? Is that non-resistance? We can only say, "No it is not." However, there is a probably a place for a Christian business man to write the one that owes the bill a letter and ask, "Is there any way that you can make a settlement? Could you possibly come in and talk about this? Maybe we could somehow reach an agreeable settlement." It is probably all right too, for the

Christian businessman to keep sending bills month after month.

However, is it right for the Christian businessman to say, "Unless this bill is paid in thirty days it will be turned over to the prosecutor." Now, of course, we all know better than that. We know that would not be right. However, here it says, "brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers." Paul is saying that "surely in the Church there are those that have enough perception, enough wisdom to be able to make judgment." Whom do we ask to make that judgment? I think it is saying here, "Why not simply ask the brother that all of us just think to be a little simple and let him look at this thing. We would all be surprised at the wisdom that would come forth from that kind of thing."

Verse 4 says, "set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church." I am not saying someone who is not capable of making judgments. Rather, it is someone who is maybe possibly not the one that we would consider one of the visible pillars of the church. I am convinced the Church stands on many individuals who are simply there and simply there serving the Lord, not looking for any particular public place to display their wisdom.

Those are the kind who can judge even the smallest matters and even the greater matters among us.

What do we do in the case of lawsuits? Proverbs 25:8–10 says, “Go not forth hastily to strive, lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof, when thy neighbour hath put thee to shame. (9) Debate thy cause with thy neighbour himself; and discover not a secret to another: (10) Lest he that heareth it put thee to shame, and thine infamy turn not away.” In our community there was controversy about a driveway. These two people were at each other. One day I drove by and there was this fence diagonally across that driveway. Did that settle anything? No, it did not because this neighbour could not use it and that neighbour could not use it. What would the Christian attitude have been? Would it have said, “Take the driveway. I will make myself another one?”

Here it says, “Debate thy cause with thy neighbour himself.” If we are sued, it may well be that in the society in which we live there is a place of negotiation. There is a place of trying to settle this matter in an honourable Christian way. However, as we enter into that kind of thing we need to be very careful lest our

attitudes of wanting to set them in order come through. We need to be careful that we show the example of Jesus, “and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth” (Acts 8:32). If there is an injustice that is what will bring peace.

2 Corinthians 6:7 says, “Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?” Why do you not rather take “joyfully the spoiling of your goods” (Hebrews 10:34)? If we take joyfully the spoiling of our goods as lawsuits come our way, when it is all said and done we can probably go and knock on that neighbour’s door afterward and say, “Could we come here for a cottage meeting? Could we share a Gospel paper?” If we had used the force of the law, those kinds of things will put a roadblock there that is well nigh impossible.

Matthew 5:40 says, “And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also.” I believe what it is saying here is there is a place of giving good measure. However, I really do not think it is saying here, “if any man will sue thee at the law,” that we simply say, “Here is everything I have. Take it.” However, if the course of the law concludes that,

we have a confidence that the world does not have. We have the confidence that if we are sued to the point that they would literally take everything that there are brethren in the church who will help us through that. They will not leave us to the point where we cannot feed our families.

Let us turn back to one more Scripture in Proverbs 17:14, “The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water: therefore leave off contention, before it be meddled with.” In the last

part, “before it be meddled with,” leave off contention. It is all right for us to come out on the “short end.” As human beings we would like to come out on the best end. Nevertheless, it is all right to come out on the short end. Proverbs 20:3 says, “It is an honour for a man to cease from strife: but every fool will be meddling.” It is honourable for Christians to do all they can to avoid strife and to “Give to every man that asketh of thee” (Luke 6:30).

## **Maintaining the Simplicity That Is In Christ In Non-Resistance**

I trust this is a subject that we are well-grounded in. Nevertheless, it does us good to learn more about non-resistance and living a nonresistant life as a Christian. In the title “Maintaining the Simplicity,” I had to think of the word ‘simplicity.’ It is not self-seeking. It is a singleness of heart (in other words God focused). Our heart needs to be single toward God and set on the Lord. Simplicity does not imply that we need to be ignorant. The Bible tells us, where there is ignorance, the people perish (Hosea 4:6). I want to clarify as we speak about non-resistance, this term of not resisting evil is not to be con-

fused with resisting the devil in James 4:7. “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” The Devil’s tactics are strong and we need to resist that. If we are nonresistant, I believe we are resisting the devil. It is one aspect of resisting the devil. The devil wants us to be resistant to our enemies or to whatever it may be that befalls us to give us a trial. The thought I have is from Matthew 5 and also 1 Corinthians 6, of a people spitefully using us or stealing us or mistreating us and so on. As far as non-resistance to the government, to warfare and so on, all this ties together. We have

non-resistance in our personal life, non-resistance in groups of people, non-resistance in government affairs as far as having office in government, taking part in warfare, military action and so forth. All these tie together in such a way as they are almost inseparable.

1) *Teaching of Jesus.* Matthew 5:38–42 “Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.” For a background to this turn to Exodus 21:23–25, “Then thou shalt give life for life, Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, Burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.” It continues by telling more about what happens if someone smites someone else’s servant, then that servant can go free. If his eye has been hurt or his tooth has been knocked out, the servant may go free. The background here is the old Mosaic law that God had given to the children of Israel. If anyone did any harm to someone, they had the right to retaliate. If someone hit us in the eye, we could hit them back in the eye.

Let us notice Jesus’ own words in verse Matthew 5:39, “But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.” The word ‘but’

has a significant meaning to me. It is a total revolution of what the old law was. Who (speaking of the natural) in their right mind would ever consider doing something like that? The old man does not have that in him, does he? It is not in our carnal nature to turn the other cheek, but Jesus teaches us that. He tells us that we need to turn the other cheek.

“And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.” (Verse 40) We have law suits in our day and age. There are law suits in the world around us. The Word tells us here, if any man sues us and takes away something, whether our coat, or something we claim as ours, (we know that all things belong to God) we are to let them have our cloak also. In other words, give them whatever they need. This also applies if they ask us to do something. In the setting here, the Jews were under Roman authority. The Jews were looking forward to being set free by this new king that would come. However, this new King told them, if the Romans compelled them to go a mile, go with them

two. If somebody asks to borrow something of thee do not turn them away.

The impression that I have here is very real, that Jesus taught, “It has been said an eye for an eye, but I say unto you.” Christ taught us to love our enemies and to pray for them. Peter cut off the high priest’s servant Malchus’ ear. Peter was very zealous in defending his Lord. Thus, he struck with his sword. Why did he have a sword to begin with? Jesus told him, “Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.” (Matthew 26:52) Jesus had asked His disciples what they have. (Luke 22:35–38) He told them to take their purse and scrip. His disciples told him they had two swords. Jesus then told them, “it is enough.” I am not exactly sure what he was implying there, but I had to think and ponder over this.

I thought about the terminology of weapons. In the United States we have what is called a “Hunter’s Education Safety Course,” for those who want to go hunting game or bring in game for meat and so on. Some people call it sports. For me it is not a sport, We use the meat that we get from the field. The course instructor left the idea that the

arms that we use in the field are firearms, but they are not weapons. Do not be confused. A weapon can be any gun so to speak. We can use a rifle in a wrong way. We can use it as a weapon, but not all firearms are weapons necessarily. I trust there is no one who reads this who has a weapon in his house. To clarify this, the definition of a weapon is, “something that is a tool that a person uses for self- defense or for combat with other people.” It is used to fight. In plain words a weapon is used to fight with against other people. I trust none of us have weapons. We understand that people do use firearms as weapons. Thus, I had to wonder, in this case with Peter and the sword, did he have it for the purpose of a weapon, or did he have it to arm himself for other reasons? Jesus never did tell him that he cannot have this sword on him. He did however, make it clear that he is not to use the sword for self defense or as a weapon. This is what stood out to me. Jesus said, “it is enough,” with the two swords. He did not say that they could not have them, He merely said not to use them. “They that take the sword shall perish with the sword.” He also said, “My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my ser-

vants fight.” (John 18:36) I believe that is the key, we might say to this whole concept of non-resistance.

Where is our kingdom? If we are heirs of the Kingdom of God as in James 2:5, then we are not citizens of this world. Which kingdom are we from? In another place it says we are, “heirs . . . and joint heirs with Christ,” (Romans 8:17) implying that we are heirs of the future Kingdom of Heaven, that eternal city. The other day I heard the term of somebody having dual citizenship. If our citizenship is in heaven, I do not think we can have a dual citizenship. There is only one country per se [as such] that we can claim as our kingdom. Jesus told the Pharisees to “Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s; and unto God the things that are God’s.” (Matthew 22:21)

Jesus asked, “Whose superscription is on this coin?” They replied, “Caesar’s” That is when Jesus said to “render to Caesar.” The currency had the superscription of Caesar. Today our currency in the U.S. has the images of different presidents on the coin. Canadian currency has different images as superscription. It shows the country of where the currency belongs. I had to think that we as human beings are,

“created . . . in the image of God.” (Genesis 1:27) We have God’s image stamped upon our lives. We do not have Caesar’s image stamped upon us. “I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” (John 17:14) This is quite plain, is it not? We are not of this world. Yes, we are in this world. We live in this world, but we are not of this world. Where are we from?

2) *The teaching of the Apostles.* “Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with 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. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.” (Romans 12:17–21) This Scripture tells us that vengeance belongs to God, not to us. It does not give us any liberty to take any kind of revenge on anyone. It then says, “therefore.” We do not have the liberty of taking vengeance, because

vengeance is the Lord's, therefore, because of this, "if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink." If our enemy needs help, help him. If he needs spiritual help, be of help wherever we can. Do not retaliate.

"See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men." (1 Thessalonians 5:15) There is a lot of Scripture pertaining to, and supporting the concept of non-resistance. This Scripture tells us not to render, "evil unto any man." It says, "evil for evil." If someone does us evil, we are not to return evil. The teaching of the apostles harmonized with what Jesus taught. Both Paul and Peter teach on non-resistance. In 1 Peter 3:8, 9, we read, "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing." There is one point in verse 9 that stands out too. We should not only not return evil for evil, but it says, "railing for railing." If someone talks evil about us, we should not talk evil about them. We should not spread gossip.

2 Corinthians 10:3, 4 teaches us that our weapons are not carnal but spiritual, "For 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)." I believe that these strongholds are something that the devil sets before us. He gives us temptations and things that would distract us, or pull us down. Again we remember that weapons are used to fight with people. We do not fight with carnal weapons, but with spiritual. The Bible is plain in that. Ephesians 6:11-13 tells us about our weapons that we need to use. "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. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." Then it continues and tells us what we should have on as our armour. "having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness," and so on. In verse 17, "take the helmet of sal-

vation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” That is our weapon, is it not?

When we cross over the border to Canada, one question they ask is, “Do you have any weapons?” Of course we must answer no to avoid confusion. We do however, have the sword of the Spirit — the Bible. This is our sword. Christians do not use weapons for self-defense or carnal war. The world sets the standards for the nominal church. When I speak of nominal Christianity, it is the churches in the world around us. It seems like the world quite often sets the standards for the Church. Here is an example. Fifty years ago, in the South, White people in the world would not (or could not) eat in the same restaurant, sleep in the same motels, or socialize otherwise, with Blacks. We know how that was, with regard to the segregation, racism and all that. It was worse fifty years ago, than it is now. Did the Church take a different stand? (I am not talking about us as plain people necessarily). No, they did not. The Church was every bit as bad as the world was. They were segregated. They did not worship together. They did not eat in the same restaurants. They did not sleep in the same motels. We might think it was quite bad.

They simply acted like the world did.

The world finally recognized racism as wrong. We have to admit it is a lot better now than it was. Blacks are people just as well as Whites. What did the Church do? They conceded too. They finally recognized that this should not be. They let the world set the standard. Is this not a shame? There are other things. I had to think of when the Anabaptists were persecuted. There are still countries where Christians are persecuted. Some of those countries, like Switzerland, persecuted the Anabaptists many years ago. Today they are trying to make reconciliation. About seventy-five years ago, most churches prohibited divorce. There were only rare cases where people divorced, especially one hundred years ago. Today, divorce is widely accepted even in churches. Did God’s teaching change? It was a rare thing in the world to divorce. Thus, it was prohibited in the Church was it not? The world accepted divorce, now, the Church accepts divorce. Who is setting the standard for the Church? I realize I speak of nominal Christianity. Let us beware. Does this not have a tendency to creep in, if we do not have our whole armour of God

on us? Will that not eventually make an inroad?

3) *The example of Christ and the Apostolic Church.* “For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be 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. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.” (1 Peter 2:19–25) What glory do we have if we have a fault and we are buffeted for that? If we are rebuked for our faults, it is what we deserve is it not? The commendable quality here, is not that we want to draw any honour and glory to ourselves. Peter was

simply saying that it is commendable if we suffer wrongfully and take it patiently.

When we do not take vengeance (putting it into my own words) this is acceptable with God. It is a sweet smelling savour with God. After all, what did Jesus do for us? He bore much more than we ever have. Jesus patiently bore all the mockings and ill treatment that His enemies threw in His face. He prayed that the Father would forgive them their sins. He did not strike back. One of the early writers in the latter third century AD, (pre Constantine times) who is considered a Church father (if you want to call it that) was Lactantius. He wrote, “When we suffer such ungodly things, we do not even resist even in word. Rather, we leave vengeance to God . . . The Christian does injury to no one. He does not desire the property of others, in fact he does not even defend his own property if it is taken from him by violence. For he knows how to patiently bear injury inflicted upon him.” He was writing about a Christian, “He does not desire the property of others.” He is not covetous. “He does not even defend his own property.” What are we doing when we lock our cars so that no one will take it? I do not say it is

wrong to lock our cars, because I do too. There is a measure of balance in preventive measures before it happens, or resistive measures as it happens or after it happens. There is a difference.

Another thing that Lactantius said, "We do not resist those who injure us, for we must yield to them." This is the overall picture and pattern of the early Church in the first three hundred years. They were all in that same tenor. There are none of the real Christians who defended or supported resisting evil. Let us not allow the world to have an influence on us to change this thought and belief, or to change the Scriptures. People do wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction.

4) *The Superiority of the New Testament.* Luke 16:16 states, "The law and the prophets were until John." The law was in effect until the time of John. We might say until the time of Christ. Hebrews 7:12 states, "For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law." The priesthood was changed. They had a Levitical priesthood and a Levitical law. Jesus came from the tribe of Judah. There was a change in priesthood, was there not? He was a "priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."

(Hebrews 7:17) Jesus is our unchanging high priest. We do not have to change high priests every so often. He is our eternal High Priest. Because there is a change in the priesthood, changing from the Levitical priesthood to the Judah priest (being Jesus) there is made of necessity a change also of the Law. Jesus said, "it hath been said. . . But I say unto you." People try to change Jesus' teachings. People have all kinds of reasonings why we should support the country we live in, why we should take up arms or why we should defend our country. They have all kinds of logical (in a way) reasons, (logical sounding at least) or legitimate sounding reasons. However, we know what Jesus' words were, "But I say unto you."

In Matthew 25:21, we are given the parable of the lord and his servants who were to use their talents. The lord answered them and said, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." This applies to us as well. On the day of judgement when we give account of our deeds, we want to hear those words, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." People can speak great swelling words. They can speak of things that sound reasonable and logical, but we will not hear those

words, “well spoken.” It tells us, “well done.” This gives us the idea that what we do — the life we live — talks louder than the words we speak. The New Testament gives instructions for us as Christians which supercede the old Law. The things that were important in the old law, were brought out again in the new law — the New Testament. The New Testament supercedes the Old. This is brought out in other places in the Epistles. It tells us that the Old was “done away.” Now we have the New.

We understand that the New Testament is the Law that we go by. The New Testament gives instructions and clear direction in different areas of peoples relationships, for instance, husband and wife it gives. “Husbands, love your wives.” (Ephesians 5:25; Colossians 3:19) and “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands.” (Ephesians 5:22; Colossians 3:18) and so on. It gives directions to Pastors or Church leaders. We find the qualifications of Church leaders. The New Testament gives directions to the Church to submit to the Church authorities and so on. It gives double direction, husband and wife, parents with children. It gives directions for parents. It gives direction for children. When it comes to govern-

ment, it is interesting to note that we have basically a whole chapter in Romans 13 on this subject of government. This teaching is only given to the Christians. I stand for correction, but I could not find anywhere in the New Testament, where it gives directions for the civil government. In the subjects that are addressed, connected to the government like Romans 13 and elsewhere, the Christian is the subject that is being directed, not the government. What does that mean? Does this not tell us something? God’s Word in the New Testament gives us explicit directions on both sides of a subject, except when it comes to government matters. Here, it only addresses the Christian. Christians are to be in subjection and to give honour to the government, “honour to whom honour, [is due]” and so on. The government is there for our protection. In that sense it would tell us what the government does for us. However, in the New Testament, it does not give any explicit directions how the government is to govern the land.

I believe the reason for that is because the government is worldly, we might say. It is an entity of the world. It is a kingdom of this world. The New Testament has to do with the Kingdom of God.

We are of that new Kingdom are we not? I trust we are. This stood out to me that it does not give direction. If it would give explicit directions on how a government could rule, and how it should rule Christians, and so on, then maybe it would be a little more legitimate to support the government, and to be involved in the government. We should support the government in prayer and giving our dues to where it is due and so on. Give “honour to whom honour.” We need to respect the government and authorities, the law of the land, and rulers of the land. It is very important. The Bible does give us direction. Again, it has directions for us as Christians to respect the government over us. This is another reason why we do not participate in government affairs.

5) *Based on Love to Our Neighbour.* “Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.” (Matthew 5:43, 44) Again, we have that same example. Jesus has a different understanding of what the Old Testament was and a different

plan for us. He told us so. It is a command for us to love our enemies, not only if we feel like it. It tells us here, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you.”

How can we do harm to a person we love? Does this not go against any kind of instinct or laws or whatever we want to call it, to do harm to a person whom we love? People take vengeance, because they have a lack of love, is it not? If we have love in our hearts for our enemies, we can do no harm to them. Romans 13:10 states, “Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.” Nonresistance is living in the spirit of the second great commandment, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” (See Matthew 22:39; Mark 12:31; Romans 13:9; Galatians 5:14; James 2:8) The first great commandment is to, “love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.” (See Matthew 22:37; Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27) The second commandment is like unto it. According to the Scriptures, we would be given the thought that our neighbour is anyone whom we come in contact with. Thus, if we love our

neighbour as ourselves, we esteem others better than ourselves. We give others the benefit of the doubt if it is questioned. How can we kill somebody that we love? It is the work of the Devil. It is something the Devil puts into the heart of man to take vengeance on someone else. This can be in any category, person to person, organization to organization, country against country and so on. How can we help slaughter people and yet say we love them? People join the military, professing Christians join the military, the military has chaplains to help their soldiers and others who need spiritual help. In that sense it is probably good. However, the idea of professing Christians going to war is not. If we had brethren in another country, and our countries went to war against each other, if we and our brethren elsewhere were to enter the military, we would be fighting against each other would we not? It could be very possible that one Christian would kill another Christian — a fellow brother — in the name of God. God forbid that we take part in anything like that. We need to get this across to our young people especially. We need to be rooted, grounded and settled in the Word of God.

6) *Practical Applications of*

*Nonresistance.* We have already studied some. We studied about turning the other cheek, returning blessing for cursing, praying, giving food and drink and so forth. The Bible teaches that we must not enter into strife and lawsuits with anyone. We came across that. We are to suffer wrong. This brings us to 1 Corinthians 6:6–8, “But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers. 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? Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren.” Is this not a shame if a brother goes to law against a brother? Somebody has a grievance, let it not be once named among ourselves, to go to law against a brother, and at that among the unbelievers. “Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life? If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church.” (1 Corinthians 6:2–4) This gives

the thought that we, the saints — the Christians, will judge the world in that day of judgment. The saints will be made righteous so to speak. The saints will receive their reward and the world will receive their reward. In that sense, we are judging the world. But, it also gives the thought that we are to judge within the Church. Jesus said, “Judge not, that ye be not judged,” (Matthew 7:1) but, He gives the Church authority to judge matters within the Church and use discipline if necessary. This is needed within the Church. This is as far as our liberties go insofar as helping people to see the truth, or come back to the right road and stay within the Church. If we have a matter against a brother, we are never to go to law with that. We do not have any business going to law with anyone, whether brother or unbeliever. If it comes to an unbeliever, we would rather suffer wrongfully. Even as a brother, we should rather suffer wrongfully, than take vengeance.

There might be a place in the church where a brother treats another brother wrongfully. The brother who is treated wrongfully, should not take measures. However, it is the church’s responsibility to judge in that case, and to correct that one way

or another. However, if it is an unbeliever, without (outside) the church, we need to suffer wrong patiently. Hebrews 10:34 tells us to take, “joyfully the spoiling of your goods.” There is more to this verse, but if someone spoils or ruins our goods, we are to take it joyfully, even if it means giving up our personal possessions, if required. Some day we might have to give up some possessions. What do we do if someone steals from us? Are we quick to call the law in order to get it back? We would feel that if someone steals from us, the authorities are there for our protection and for our good. Usually they want to know, if something like that is going on to help them carry out their duties. We would not discourage contacting the law and only giving them the information they want or need. However, we would not press charges.

We would do well if we would also refrain from asking it back again. The Bible does tell us if somebody asks of us, we are not to ask of it again. So what does that leave us? The reason we should contact the authorities is for their benefit. The Bible tells us the authorities are for our benefit and protection as well. We also do not take part in the manufacture of munitions or

weapons. This brings us back to warfare again. If we would even take part in building missiles or such like, we would be taking part in the slaughter of people.

7) *We should avoid participating in political matters and elections.* Are we, as God's people, to be involved in hoping or rooting for a particular leader? Yes, we should pray for our government. We should pray for an election. But God sets up the kingdom. He takes down kingdoms. He sets up and ordains governments. I believe that God allows for the 'temperature' or degrees of the country the kind of government to lead it. If we become involved in political matters are we not taking part? Should we just as well go and vote? Should we not just as well take up arms and help the country we are living in or rooting for? Our country is not of this world. By voting we become a part of the government. This is why we do not vote, or at least one reason. Is it not just as bad if we have it in our heart? We want this person. We just do not write it down.

God ordained the government. We are taught this in Romans 13. However, the Christian is not to be a part of it. Many Bible believing Christians today pride themselves on being separate

from the world because they reject today's liberal views on abortion, homosexuality, and so on. Professing Christians, we might say, have conservative views. We appreciate that. The liberals have a more liberal view on abortion they think it should be allowed. They think same sex marriages should be allowed. The conservatives take a stand against that. I believe that they pride themselves on that they are voting in favour for the way that they want it. We do not want abortion, homosexuality and so on. Does that have an influence? Is this why we tend to think one way or the other? It is up to God to give us a leader that we need in the country we are in. It goes hand in hand with the spiritual temperature of the country and the people in that country. However, being a right wing Republican is also of the world. It is just as much of the world as being a liberal, we might say. "Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD." (Jeremiah 17:5) If we trust in man or the government to take care of us, or if we trust in the military, that is our arm. We are making flesh our arm. It says cursed be that man. May God bless.



seemed to be carefree and happy. Standing near the wide-open door of the car, they enjoyed watching the changing scenery of the country through which the train sped swiftly. Their lively talk and happy laughter filled the whole car and dispelled the sad expression from many a face, at least temporarily. Judith, however, left her sisters frequently and went to join her parents. Sympathetically, she looked at them with her beautiful dark eyes. She was now nearly sixteen. With her quick mind, she comprehended the situation in which her beloved parents found themselves. It was impossible for her to laugh and talk with her sisters without giving serious thoughts to the future. Yet she saw the future in a different, a much brighter light than her loved ones. From her early childhood she had known how God had helped her ancestors in times of trouble. She believed that God had not changed since, and if He had aided the people in ancient times, He surely would help in these days of sorrow and need.

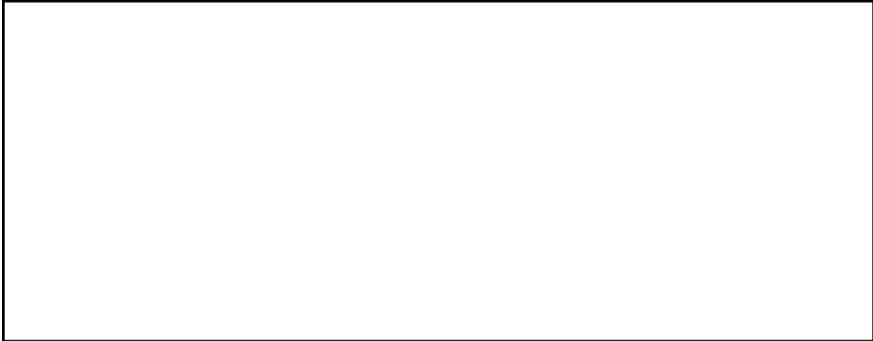
Leaning against the door post, Judith watched the rapidly disappearing villages and cities. In her

mind, she went back through the centuries to the land of Egypt. There she saw her forefathers as they in one night had girded their loins, put the primitive bags around their shoulders, took the staff in their hands, gathered their children about them and, leaving their possessions behind, had left the country in which they had lived for centuries.

Quickly and vividly, she compared their present situation with the past events in the history of the children of Israel. "We are now refugees just as were they. We, too, have left home and all that was dear to us " reflected Judith. "There our fathers were in the wilderness thousands of years ago, and we, too, are as in a desert, not knowing where to go or what to do. This vast country is a wilderness for us at present. But I trust that the same Jehovah who went with our forefathers is with us now. And I hope that He will lead us, too, to a place where milk and honey flow."

"How great and wonderful is our God!" whispered Judith quietly. At this thought she lifted up her eyes to the clear, blue sky where the first bright stars were visible.

*I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not — Jude 5*



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