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### Christ's Teaching On War

James D. Bales

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# CHRIST'S TEACHING ON WAR



By  
James D. Bales

*Lana*

DEDICATED TO

J. N. ARMSTRONG

whose life has been an encouragement  
and an inspiration to me since first I  
met him on the campus of Harding  
College in 1933

## Christ's Teaching Which Bears on the Christian and War

Christians have less right and reason to question the decisions of their Commander-in-chief than the soldier in the best national army in the world has to question those of his commander. Christ's authority is supreme in our lives, for when we become acquainted with His Personality and teaching we feel a sense "of obligation which we may defy but which we cannot dispute for his words and witness carry an immediate and instinctive conviction to all who consider them dispassionately with an open mind and a ready will." (Richards: 36).

Jesus while on earth, did not set an example for the Christian in the killing of a national or a personal foe. His lack of the spirit of war dissappointed the nationalistic Jews and it enabled Pilate to see that Jesus was not a political threat to Caesar. Christ did not place the sword in the hands of his people to war against the pagan conqueror who was then in Palestine. However, He did leave us an example of redemptive love which suffers for the enemy and at the hand of the enemy in an effort to convert, not to crush, them. (1 Pet. 2:21; Matt.10:24-25; Rom. 12:17).

### I. DID CHRIST CONFRONT A WAR SITUATION?

Christ faced the problem of war—defensive and aggressive. The Jews wanted a military Messiah who would lead them against Rome. Jesus was the Messiah and thus he was brought face to face with current conceptions of the role of the Messiah. Those who are interested in a presentation of this fact should read *How Jesus Faced Totalitarianism* by Kirby Page. It may be obtained for fifteen cents from the



Fellowship of Reconciliation, 2929 Broadway, New York City.

Christ sent His apostles out as sheep in the midst of Wolves (Matt. 10:16). He predicted that there would be wars (Matt. 24; Mk. 13). He said that His disciples would be persecuted but He did not instruct them to defend themselves, their homes, their ideals, or their religious freedom, with swords (Matt. 10:17,18; John 15:18-21; 16:1-3; Matt. 24:9-13). The early church understood that Christ had not given them the sword for protection against unjustified attack, for in the persecutions recorded in the New Testament, and in the first three centuries, the church did not so defend itself.

Christ told his disciples, with reference to the destruction of Jerusalem, to flee, and not to fight, in the days of vengeance (Lk. 21:20). He did not tell them to use the sword to protect their native land. He did not authorize them to operate under a theory of civil government which would have forced them to wage war with the Romans against the Jews. Call them cowards if you want to, but Christ told them to remove themselves from the scenes of conflict.

Christ called Herod "that fox" (Lk. 13:32). Herod put John to death. But Christ simply "accepted the state of the Herodian world in which He had to live" in so far as changing it with the sword was concerned (Westbury-Jones: 57). Not only were there such men as Herod, but the entire land was a place of unrest. The yoke of Rome was a burden both politically, personally and religiously (Merivale, VI:3). The presence of Roman soldiers and their idolatrous images infuriated the Jews (Mommson, II:189). "Jesus was born into a ferment of discontent with political subjection and economic inequality." (Scott-Craig:45). "Galilee was full of revolution" "in the early days of Jesus" (Westbury-Jones: 57). But Jesus was gentle toward the Gentiles and recommended love, not violence, in dealing with them. John Foster Dulles recently pointed out that Jesus had called for no arm-

ed revolt against the military dictator of His generation; and that instead Jesus tried to show men how to overcome evil in themselves and in others in a way which did not lead them into blind alleys which end in the pit (Life, 12-28-42, p. 50).

## II. CHRISTIANS ARE TAUGHT TO LOVE THEIR ENEMIES (Matt. 5:38-48)

We must love, not strike, those who spitefully use us (Matt. 5:38-48; Thess. 5:15). This love is not a mere sentimentality but a creative, boundless goodwill which seeks to do ill to none and good to all (Rom. 13:10). It seeks the eternal good of the object of its love and all of its means and ends are conceived and executed in love. However, this love is so difficult, so contrary to the natural man, that some followers of Christ have often tried to explain it away to the extent that they become like those who love only their own and they thus treat the enemy as the world treats its enemies (Matt. 5:46-48). Let us notice the objections of those who forget that Christians must outlove the world (Matt. 5:20; 44-48). They forget that those who love their enemies cannot be just as efficient at killing enemies as are non-Christians. When we give the enemy what the non-Christian gives him we are not returning good for his evil (Rom. 13:20-21).

(1) *No one has ever done it.* This objector has never seen the cross of Christ (Rom. 5:7-10; Acts 7:60; 12:1-2; Rom. 12:14-21).

(2) *I cannot see why He commanded it.* Can you see the why of baptism? of the cross? Do we walk by faith or by sight? (2 Cor. 5:7; Rom. 10:17). Because we do not see why it does not mean that God does not see why and that it should not be carried out by Christians with increasing success.

(3) *It is against my nature.* It is against the nature of multitudes. But is it against the nature of those who are partakers, in Christ, of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4; 1 Pet.



1:13-17)? Is it against the nature of those who have been begotten again and who have put on a heart of compassion (Col. 3:12-)? Shall Christians settle New Testament questions on the basis of what they can do by nature or shall it be on what the Word says and what He enables us to do by grace? The man who rejects any teaching of Jesus because it is "against his nature" admits that he does not have to that extent the nature of a Christian. Some contend that man is polygamous by nature, and unregenerate man does have such propensities, but what Christian would use that argument to overthrow Matt. 5:27-28, 32. "Christ in us" will exalt and perfect our life and elevate "it from the natural to the supernatural life" (Barclay, 520).

(4) *It is too hard, it is impossible.* Stephen did not find it so (Acts 7:60). Who is to judge, Christ or His disciples? Where is the authority to make Christianity easy? Is the way of war so easy? Many other commands of Christ may be rejected with "it is too hard". None should boast of what he can do by himself, but we should not cast aside the Word because it is difficult to follow. "Are we to doubt that God's grace is sufficient for the weakest of his trusting children, to enable them to perform any duty He may lay upon them?" (Ballou, p. 180). *Perhaps we shall be surprised what we can stand when we stand for His word.* Because of their courage in bearing violations and death, many "weak" girls became an inspiration to "strong" men in the early days of the church (Spence, section on persecutions). Then, too, men have suffered much for a far less worthy cause. We ought to endure as much or more, if necessary, when aided by God. And it should be in the spirit of humility and not with a proud boast of what *we* shall be able to stand.

(5) *Such teaching drives people away from the church.* If the teaching is scriptural, this is no objection. Christ's teaching offended some (John 6:60-66; Lk. 6:45; Matt. 15:12). We are not responsible for setting up the requirements of the gospel, but we are responsible for proclaiming those

which Christ has already established. If this Christianity displeases us let us say so frankly and no longer profess to be Christian. "Are we to accommodate divine truth and duty to the convenience of our fellow men, in order to multiply superficial disciples? are we to pare down and fritter away the requirements of our heavenly Father, for fear of discouraging and driving off half-hearted professors? Who is it that presumes to daub with such untempered mortar?" (Ballou 180-181). "If we will be Christians, let us try with all our might to do our duty, and see how far we shall be left to fall short." (181-182). Why should people become offended at this and not be offended at returning evil for evil, which has not given mankind security "from extreme trial, danger, hardship and suffering" (183).

(6) *People will take advantage of it.* Doubtless. They took advantage of Christ (John 15:20). However, the world's way has not kept people from taking advantage of you. If we live in harmony with God's will not as many people will take advantage of us, as we might think at first. This is especially true if we use moral persuasion, love and good deeds on those who oppose us. Ballou, and other writers, have listed many instances in which the way of unbounded good will has actually worked.

The objection really maintains that moral force and goodness are ineffective in both the long and the short run. *Have we no faith* in God or in man? in the power of good to overcome evil? in the existence of goodness in others which may finally respond to the good we set forth in returning good for evil? that God can deliver us either *from* death or *by* death?

Should we fear those who can touch our money and our body but who cannot kill the soul? Or should we fear the path of returning evil for evil which creates evil in us and which if persisted in will assist in our destruction (Cf. Matt. 10:28). Let us remember that our reward is in heaven, not here (Matt. 5:12). *Infidels, not Christians, sneer here.*



(7) *What if I fail to perfectly live up to it, what if I cannot stand it?* There may be many failures in the Christian life but that does not give us reason for quitting. If we use such excuses here we shall use them in any other place where it so suits us. If you fall, get up and try again. But if you start "What iffing", recall the words of Chrysostom: "Yea, for first with respect to thy wife thou wilt say, 'What if she be contentious and extravagant;' and then as to the right eye, 'What if I love it, and am quite on fire?' and of the unchaste look, 'What then, if I cannot help seeing?' and of our anger against a brother, 'What if I be hasty, and not able to govern my tongue?' and in general, all His sayings thou mayest on this wise trample under foot. Yet surely with regard to human laws thou darest not in any case use this allegation, nor say, 'What then if this or that be the case but, willing or unwilling, thou receivest what is written.'"

(8) *It is a figurative passage.* "We willingly grant that not all the precepts from the Mount were designed to be literally obeyed in the intercourse of life. But what then? To show that their meaning is not literal is not to show that they do not forbid War. We ask in our turn, what is the meaning of the precepts? What is the meaning of 'Resist not evil'? Does it mean to allow bombardment, devastation, slaughter? If it does not mean to allow all this it does not mean to allow war. What, again, do the objectors say is the meaning of 'Love your enemies', or of 'Do good to them that hate you'? Does it mean, 'Ruin their commerce,' 'sink their fleet,' 'plunder their cities,' 'shoot through their hearts'? If the precept does not mean to allow all this, it does not mean to allow war . . . if we give to our objectors whatever license of interpretation they may desire, they cannot without virtually rejecting the precepts, so interpret them as to make them allow War." (G. W. Knowles, *Quakers and Peace*, p. 39. quotation from Jonathan Dymond). Even if turning the other cheek is a figurative expression the positive principle is stated in "Love your enemies".

*"Figurative" language does not destroy meaning.* Does the figurative language in the following destroy their meaning (Lk. 12:49; 14:26, 27; Matt. 10:16; 7:1; 7:24; 15:13; 13:50; Rom. 6:2-; 1Pet. 3:21-).

In this passage, (Matt. 5:38-48) Christ referred to what Moses had commanded and *He abrogated the law, concerning the taking of vengeance, for his disciples.* It was lawful under Moses, but not under Christ. Christ's prohibition is "exactly commensurate with the Mosaic requirement". Moses did not have sole reference to "private" vengeance for he included "public" vengeance. If Christ did not prohibit what Moses required, what did He do?

(8) *We must be sensible.* Who is to judge what is sensible? We must be *Scriptural* and when we are, we are sensible in so far as God is concerned.

(9) *It refers to private, not public, acts of the Christian.* This limitation cannot be found in the New Testament and it is a tradition of man (Cp. Matt. 15:2,9). However, the individuals who so limit it do not really believe in their own limitation. They say that war is public vengeance, or that the death penalty of the country's law is also, and that therefore this passage does not apply there. *So they do not apply it in war.* Then they often argue, for war, from the fact that they would kill an intruder in their home. This is done as a private individual for private revenge and protection. Thus *it does not actually apply in a private situation.* The spirit of an eye for an eye is thus with them in both relationships. They may say that the law of the land allows them to kill an intruder but they still do it as a private individual and not as a sheriff or a soldier and thus an agent of the government. It is also well not to forget that this taking of vengeance was exactly what Moses allowed and Christ forbade. "That resistance of evil which Moses sanctioned and enjoined, Jesus obviously repudiates and forbids. The prohibition is made precisely co-extensive in all its bearings with the allowances and injunctions of the older code." (Ballou).



The Jewish law made provisions for vengeance. However, Christ took it entirely out of the hands of the Christian and left it to God (Rom. 12:19). One of God's agents is the "powers that be" (Rom. 13:1). Others are destroying angels, floods, earthquakes and fires (*Revelation*). No passage, however, indicates that God uses Christians today as agents of vengeance; or that He has authorized Christians to be so used by their government.

An individual who does a thing does it as an individual regardless of whether or not he does it on his own command or that of another. *A Christian must perform all acts as unto God* (Col. 3:17, 22-23).

The argument used to overthrow the application of the passage under discussion, can just as well be used to excuse the acts of a Christian, any sort of acts, which are done at the command of a master (Col. 3:22, such as to carry on or start a feud where such were sanctioned), or that a woman could become a prostitute at the command of her husband for she is told to obey her husband and thus she could say she did it in submission to him and as his agent (Eph. 5:22-23). And Roman husbands were sometimes like that. Would it have been right for the early Christians to worship idols at Nero's command (the ruler under whom Paul wrote Rom. 13) since such pagan worship was a part of the allegiance which Rome believed that its citizens owed to the state? Would it have been right to persecute the church because Rome believed that the church was detrimental to her welfare? Could a Christian say, I persecuted not as a Christian but as an agent of the government in submission to Rom. 13:1-6? Should a Christian be a governmental agent for the scientific breeding of human beings, if so commanded by the government under which he lived? Hitler is as much a power, of the type referred to in Rom. 13, as was Nero. Should a soldier in Hitler's army follow Hitler's encouragement and instruction to that end? Now if such reasoning applies to war, why not here also? When you have shown



the reasoning null and void here you have shown the same for the war argument based on this procedure.

That this prohibition of Christ was not so limited is indicated by the fact that the law to which Christ referred was given with reference to public acts of vengeance (Ex. 20:1; 21:1, 24; Lev. 24:20; Deut. 19:21). Christ's abrogation is co-extensive with the legislation of Moses on this point. Thus Christ did away, for his disciples, with Moses' teaching on public and private vengeance. The way some individuals, however, "translate" this verse it should read. "Ye have heard that it hath been said, let every man take vengeance on his own offenders, and redress his own grievances; but I say unto you look to the government, complain to the magistrates, carry all your causes into the courts for adjudication." (Ballou, 32). "If the government authorizes you, as its agent, you may carry out 'public' vengeance."

*Christ's life did not so interpret this passage.* He refused to take part in a "public" act of vengeance (John 8:1-7), or to be a judge over a man concerning the division of property (Lk. 12:14). He prohibited His disciples taking vengeance in the "days of vengeance" (Lk. 21:20-22). He "never sued or taught his followers to sue men at the law" (Ballou, 32).

Contrary to the argument concerning "public" vengeance, Christ "enjoins non resistance alike in respect to personal assault and legal wrong. If a man smite thee on thy right cheek, offer the other. If he sue thee at the law and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. If he makes thee a prisoner, and force thee to go with him, resist not. This does not look like teaching men to go to law for redress of grievances, or encouraging them to make magistrates the revengers of their wrongs." (32). The man who was after the disciple's coat was not a thief who came at night, but a man who was using *legal means* to get the coat. Jesus said "let him have thy cloak also" (Matt. 5:40). In other words, it was before the very magistrates that some of our brethren

in an official public capacity would have said: Sue him for damages for even trying to get the coat. Not only don't let him have it but sue him to compensate you for your trouble. The man who demanded you to go one mile, with whom you were to go two, was not some crook operating outside Roman law, but "some official demanding labour in the service of the State." "The disciple will try to ease the situation by doing more than the actual statutory requirement. Thus would Jesus replace law by love." (Scott-Craig, 37). (Note: "To compel thee to go a mile, is also a proverbial expression . . . both the Roman governors and the tetrarchs compelled them (Jews) to similar service (to 'carry burdens or messages from stage to stage' JDB), or to furnish horses to their public messengers and posts, and to accompany them. The word came, therefore, to express any oppression or compulsory treatment attempted by anyone. (Watson, Richard, *Commentary on Matthew*) The law concerning an eye for an eye was not a measure of private vengeance but "the institution of organized violence in the service of justice" (Scott-Craig, 37).

Thus we conclude that the law of Moses to which Christ referred was not an "authorization of private revenge, permitting within certain limits the indulgence of personal resentment, but a public measure designed in the interests of society as a restraint upon wrong-doing, and doubtless meant to be carried out by (or under the supervision of) the public officers of the community. Yet this law Jesus quotes for the sole purpose of forbidding his disciples to apply it. We are therefore driven to the conclusion that he regarded the duty of neighbourly love as excluding the infliction of public penalties on behalf of society, as well as the indulgence of personal resentment." (C. J. Cadoux I:25): Only as viewed thus do we find Jesus doing anything more than merely echoing Moses. The war argument makes Jesus reaffirm—instead of abrogate—what Moses enjoined. It also places the Christian under a double standard of morality. He may



do with vigor in a "public" capacity what he must refrain from doing in a private capacity. He is against it in private and for it in public.

(10) *It merely forbids the taking of vengeance in a mean spirit.* You must kill your enemies in the spirit of love. However, love seeks the good, the eternal salvation, of the object of that love (Rom. 13:10). And to kill an individual is to cut off all opportunity of either you or others preaching the gospel to him. Neither brotherly love (John 13:34-35; 15:12), nor the love for our enemies, which is the love of John 3:16 and Rom. 5:8, or the love of 1 Cor. 13:1-13, could purposefully kill an enemy.

This objection also makes Jesus merely echo Moses for his law did not authorize "personal hate, malice, revenge and wanton cruelty in executing the penalties of the law" (Cf. Deut. 25:1; 16:18-20; 17:2-12; 19:15; Ex. 23:1-8). There is no such thing as "Christian" revenge which destroys the enemy. Matt. 5:38-48 forbids us taking vengeance in any spirit.

(11) *It forbids the taking of vengeance in small, not large things.* Who knows what is large or small? Who is to be judge? The injured? If so, it is likely that all things will be "too great to be endured. (Ballou, p. 32). Is the taking of an eye or a tooth a small thing? or the smiting on the cheek? or taking away our coat at law? or compelling us to render some sort of service? Are our enemies, whom we are to love, just those who do small things to us? is persecution a small thing? Christ said that his disciples would be persecuted as the prophets before them had been persecuted (Matt. 5:10-12). They were persecuted in both small and large things and many of them were persecuted unto death. Now Christ continues, when you are persecuted—and I have said you shall be persecuted as were the prophets—you are not to strike back but you are to pray for them and do them good. As a publican or gentile you would do good to the just, to those who love you, to your brethren; but not to your



enemies. However, as my disciple you must do the good unto the enemy just as surely, and to the same extent, that you would to the brother (Matt. 5:43-48). Otherwise, what do you more than others (Matt. 5:46-47). Christians must go beyond that which other men do or they fail, to that extent, to be His disciples. It is thus that our circle of love becomes perfect, complete, as is God's, in that it is love of both friend and foe (Matt. 5:45,48).

(12) *It refers to personal, not national, foes.* If so, then the moment we begin to feel that the national enemy is also our personal enemy, and that we shall strike him for having struck us, then that moment the passage applies to him and we must not strike him back! It is also noteworthy that although the Christians in A. D. 70 lived under Rom. 13 that Christ told them to flee, not fight (Luke 21:20-).

At this particular time Jesus was surrounded by Jews who hated the rule of Roman, pagan, foreign, dictatorial power. The Jews were eager for some leader who would lead them in armed rebellion against Roman dictatorship which had been extended over them through the conquest, by the Romans, of Palestine in an aggressive war. This eagerness to rebel is testified to by secular history (Cf. T. Mommsen), and New Testament references (Acts 5:36-37; 21:38). This yearning for a leader to head them in rebellion finally broke out in action throughout all the nation in Palestine and led to the wars which culminated in the destruction of Jerusalem in A. D. 70. Even that did not cure them of this desire for freedom for sometime later they again rebelled. Thus Jesus was talking in the midst of a nation which regarded Rome as both a personal and a national foe. To the Jew, Rome was indeed "*your enemy*" (Matt. 5:44). In Matt. 5:43 Jesus "alludes to Lev. 19:18, where love for 'your neighbour' is enjoined, and where by 'neighbour' one's compatriot is meant. Under the term 'enemy', by which Jesus put next, must be understood primarily the racial enemy." (Heering, 29). However, your enemy would include either the im-

mediate personal enemy whom you have seen and the national enemy whom you may, or may not, have seen. Heering further remarked that "this distinction between national and private foes has no point of contact with the Gospel (where does the New Testament thus distinguish them?). Even linguistically it has none; *echthros* is used in the New Testament and in the Septuagint both for the personal and for the national foe; *polemios* is entirely wanting from the New Testament. We have already heard how Weiss in his Commentary remarks that in Matt. 5:44 not ONLY the public foe' is meant, although the antithesis to Lev. 19:18 brings that meaning to mind first." (35). C. J. Cadoux said, in harmony with this, that "it is worth remarking that the word used for enemies (in Lk. 6:27) besides being used for private and personal enemies, is also used in the Septuagint, the N. T., and elsewhere, for *national* foes (Gen. 14:20; xlix. 8; Exod. 15:6; Lev. 26:7, 8, 17; 1 Sam. 4:3, etc.; Lk. 1:71, 74; 19:43; also Origin, *Cels* ii. 30 viii. 69)" (1:28).

One might try to justify killing his religious enemies because the passage does not say thou shalt not kill religious enemies. But it does not say love just your personal enemies—it says "your enemies" so it covers all of your enemies.

(13) *It was for the early disciples only, who were too weak to resist. Where did Jesus say* If you can resist successfully, resist; if not, don't. What wisdom! And from above! This reminds us of the teacher who, after talking about the golden rule and turning the other cheek said: "Now, Junior," she said, "what would you do supposing a boy hit you?" "How big a boy are you supposing?" demanded Junior.

Christ's early disciples did exist in a large enough number to have caused their persecutors considerable trouble. When attacked in Jerusalem (Acts 7&8) they numbered well over five thousand men. Other Jews had attempted to rebel against Rome with less numbers; but the Christians did not endeavor to strike back at Jewish persecutors or later



against the Roman persecutors when the church was very large. (Acts 5:36-37; 21:38).

(14) *It refers to religious, not secular or political, matters.* The Jews did not distinguish between secular and sacred and religious and political as we do today. Then, too, were the cloak, the law, the eye for an eye, the two miles, the other cheek, religious matters or were they a part of ordinary life? This idea divides life up into compartments and says that religion has one compartment but that it must not spill over in any manner into any of the other compartments of life. Does not the religion of Christ and its principles regulate us in all our activities? Are we ever allowed to violate its principles? (Col. 3:12-17). This philosophy tells the crooked politician, the money-grabber and the ruthless dealer that he can regulate his conduct in those realms by any set of principles, just so he acknowledges Christ's authority in religious matters. As Falstaff said to Prince Hal, it is not wrong for a man to work at his vocation. Falstaff's vocation was stealing. The foolishness of this argument is illustrated in Ballou's statement: "That is, while attending purely to religious duties, and propagating Christianity by divinely appointed means, they must suffer all manner of personal abuse, insult, outrage, persecution and violence, without offering the least resistance, either by individual force of arms or prosecutions at law." "But as men of the world, politicians, merchants, tradesmen, money-getters, etc., they are at full liberty to follow the dictates of worldly expediency, and to resist even unto death all who threaten their lives, liberty or property." (34).

(15) *It cannot teach non-retaliation for it would violate Matt. 5:18-20.* This attempts to involve Jesus in a contradiction, for he had just said, (Matt. 5:38-), that he was abrogating what Moses had enforced. If He does contradict Himself why "isn't it as much for non-resistance as against it"? If the above interpretation of 5:18-20 is taken, the entire law of Moses is bound on us. When shall we start killing



false prophets? offering animal sacrifices? worshipping in Jerusalem? keeping the sabbath?

Matt. 5:18-20 simply points out that nothing was to pass away until it had fulfilled the mission, the purpose, for which it had been given. It, the law of Moses, did serve its purpose and it has passed away and we today are under the New Covenant which came through Christ. "Many have emerged from the *shadow* into the substance from *types* and figures into the reality. Others have been lost in the *letter*, \* more than preserved in the spirit. *All have done* their work, or are still doing it in the essence of Christianity." (Ballou, 36.) Christians who know the difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament never make this objection.

(16) *It does not apply to us.* Shall we discard all teaching in the *Gospels*? (Such as John 17:20, etc.) Jesus was speaking of some of the things to which Moses said that the people were to hearken (Deut. 18:15-19). Christ expressly declared that this was a part of the new covenant (Matt. 5:21-38). This is a part of the doctrine the Spirit brought to the apostles' remembrance (John 14:26; 16:7). Jesus said this applied to all who hear it and that those who ignore it shall crash (Matt. 7:24). Does the golden rule apply to us? (Matt. 7:12). Even if Matt. 5:38-48 is not binding on us its principle is repeated and bound on us elsewhere (Rom. 12:14; 1 Thess. 5:15,22; 1 Pet. 2:21; 3:9). Those who teach that it is not binding are least in the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 5:19).

(17) *It binds such a spirit and not the "letter of the law".* Surely we must obey the spirit of His teaching, and obey the teaching from the heart, but the letter contains the spirit. Objectors often ignore both. Follow the spirit of this teaching, and you will never be accused of willfully killing your enemy. For "if in our Lord's view the right spirit issues in a 'letter of this kind, how can a 'letter' of a

diametrically opposite kind be consonant with the same spirit" (Cadoux, 1:24). The spirit, as much as the letter, binds returning good for evil.

(18) *It applies to a perfect society, to the millennium, and not to our present sinful society.* In a perfect society there would be no wrongs to which to submit. If in the present state there are injustices and enemies the teaching applies now (*Ibid.*, p. 24). We must now do more than others (Matt. 5:41, 47). Jesus said that "my kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36), but he did not say that "my kingdom is not *for* this world" (G. J. Heering, 34). The kingdom is not *of* this world, therefore Christians do not react to the enemy with either the same spirit or actions as those react who are in the kingdoms *of* this world. However, since His kingdom is *in* the world we find that one of the difficulties presented to the Christian is the problem of living a *Christian life in an unchristian world*. Does the objector imply that as long as the world is as it is that we must accept its principles? If so, then this objection may be *convenient* but it is not *Christian*. Christ has not told us to postpone the Christian life until everyone is willing to live it.

Although we are not in a perfect society these are the principles of the perfect society and in order for that society to begin to be formed in us and to make its presence increasingly known in the world, Christians must get the spirit of that perfect society in them. The better world, this side of heaven, will not come until men undergo the moral and spiritual change which Christ works in a man. As Ballou state, the "principles, dispositions and moral obligations of men" in a so-called millennium would not be "essentially different from what the New Testament requires them to be now" (175). If heaven were now brought to earth the "gospel just as it stands, would be sufficient to guide and govern" men (177). We cannot wait until a perfect society comes, we must now give striking evidence that we are now "partakers of the divine nature," sons of God, who are endeavor-



ing to be a prepared people who may finally enter heaven, that prepared place for a prepared people. These teachings not merely constitute the ideal but they are also the "method of attaining that ideal" (Macgregor, 46).

(19) *Matt 5:38 abrogated a tradition, and not the law of Moses on the taking of vengeance.* Christ gave no indication that he was just correcting an abuse which was forbidden by the law of Moses also. He did not quote from glosses made by men for his quotation exactly expressed the Mosaic law on vengeance taking.

(20) *The portion about loving our enemies is not to be literally followed for no one believes that Matt. 5:42 is literal.* Any limitation set on any particular passage of Scripture by another passage of Scripture is to be accepted. We find no limitation to the doctrine that the *Christian* must love his enemies and do good to those who persecute him. However, we do know that 5:42 does not teach us to blind ourselves to the condition, and thus the *real need*, of the man who makes a request of us (2 Thess. 3:10-12). We are to try to help any and all who need or request our help. However, we must not overlook two facts: *First*, 5:42 says to give but it does not bind us to giving the exact thing that the individual asks for; *second*, acting from the principle of parental love, of the love of God for the just and the unjust (5:47-48), we must give to an individual *what he needs and not necessarily what he thinks that he needs*. (Matt. 7:9-12). Every request reveals a need though the need may not really be the thing which is requested. If a son, thinking that he was asking for bread, was to ask for a stone; or thinking he was asking for fish, was to ask for a serpent; we would give him what he actually needed but not the serpent or stone which he requested. We must study the individual case and see what is the good gift that the person needs (Matt. 7:11). What he may need, instead of a handout, is a chance to work and provide for himself; or some counseling on living within one's budget. Whatever his request re-



veals *that he really lacks* should be granted and no man should be turned away empty handed if it is in our power to help him.

(21) *It would be insane to follow it.* Why is this way so insane, and the war madness which has so cursed mankind regarded as sane? It is doubtless true that much of the New Testament appears insane to those who do not have the mind of Christ. If we are to be called insane for trying to follow this then what about Christ who gave it and the early Christians who followed it? We are glad that our sanity is to be measured by God and not by man. Was it insanity in some early Christians who endeavored to teach their enemies even while tortured? Is the way of redemptive love insane and the way of destructive violence sane? Is the way of the cross, which has won so many victories, insane?

(22) *It was interim-ethics only.* Some objectors maintain that Christ thought that the world was immediately to come to an end and that these moral principles were for that period of time between the time that he was teaching and the fast approaching end of the world. Thus, now that the world has gone on for centuries instead of concluding, the teaching does not apply. However, this accuses Jesus of a mistaken view of the future and thus with basing his teaching on a foundation which proved false. It further overlooks the fact that in so far as each individual is concerned his world, and thus the world for him, is apt to come to an end at any time. And thus even if this was interim-ethics it would be needful to apply them in the interim between now and the time when the world ends for us. Then, too, it is true that a world which fails to heed His teaching is doomed to come to a disastrous end, for the sermon on the mount is followed by the crash which reports those who hear but heed not (Matt. 7:24).

Even if it were interim-ethics it would cost us no more to follow it than it cost the early Christians; and why should we be excused from the cross which they bore? However, it

cannot be proved that Jesus had such a view of the future. Furthermore, this principle of returning good for evil was not based on the coming end of the world but on the nature of God (Matt. 5:45-48). It had no reference to any particular view of the future (Cadoux, I:44-45). If it was conceded that it was "interim-ethics" it would still be true that Jesus taught Christian non-resistance.

(23) *Christ did not thus deal with the Pharisees in Matt. 23.* However, Christ spoke not to be vindictive but to try to awake their hardened hearts, so that they might not be condemned, as well as to strip them of their credit with the people that the people might not be led into the same hypocrisies. Thus it was an effort to awaken all to the evil which existed and it was done with the purpose of redemptive love, of trying to bring them to repentance. Matthew 23:37 reveals the pathos with which Christ held forth his arms of love unto these people. Christ did deal with them according to the principle of redemptive love for He went to the cross for their sins and while on that cross he did not curse them; instead he prayed that God would forgive them. And on Pentecost the gospel of forgiveness was preached to some of the very people who witnessed the crucifixion and those who were willing to accept the Saviour were forgiven (Acts 2:37-38). Surely we can see the difference "between the sternest rebuke and recourse to physical violence" (Macgregor, 49).

(24) *Does not Matt. 5:4, refer to such "drafted" services as that of being a soldier and fighting for one's country?* If so, it would be an argument for Christians today, in any country conquered by the dictators, to serve as a soldier in their armies if the dictators required it. This is evident from the fact that the people to whom these words immediately went forth were Jews who were under a foreign pagan dictator who required certain services and tribute from them. They would have been forced to keep their own people in subjection to Rome.

However, the passage has no such application for the



Jews were not required by the Romans to serve in the Roman army. They exacted no such service from the Jews and no such service was under consideration in this passage. Cadoux further argues that "it is clear that military service as distinct from general state-labour, is not here in question: for (1) the technical term here used referred originally to the postal systems of the Persian Empire, the *aggaros* not being a soldier or recruiting officer, but the king's mounted courier; (2) instances of its later usage always seem to refer to forced labour or service in general, not to service as a soldier (footnote: they 'impressed' Simon to carry a cross, Mt. 27:32. See the article 'angaria' in Smith's Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities: 'The Roman angaria . . . included the maintenance and supply, not only of horses, but of ships and messengers, in forwarding both letters and burdens.' The Lexicons give no hint that the word was used for impressing soldiers; and (3) the Jews were in any case exempt from service in the Roman legions, so that if, as seems probable, the Roman 'angaria' is here referred to, military service proper cannot be what is contemplated." (Cadoux, 32). The argument here referred to might well justify such labor as is given, at their own expense of room and board and without compensation, by conscientious objectors in Civilian Public Service Camps but it cannot be used to justify military service in the Roman army or any other army.

(25) *In conclusion*: "Your Father loves his enemies, blesses those that curse him and does good to them that hate him. Else the sun would not shine as it does on the evil, nor the rain distil on the unjust, nor salvation descend from heaven for the lost. Imbibe the spirit of your Father. Imitate his goodness to the unthankful and evil." (Ballou, 41). You are not to imitate God as Judge, but God as the Savior. You must rise higher than the publicans, who would limit such love to their brethren only. Instead of hitting back, instead of returning evil for evil, of inflicting what may seem to be



the penal and just retaliation, you must pray for, and actively endeavor to rescue the sinner and the enemies, from the clutches of the sin which bind his own soul as in a harsh slavery. Instead of raising objections and so-called difficulties, why not use your intellect to discover ways that you may actually apply, in all of your dealings, the principle of returning good for evil. This is the only principle that can bring peace to a sin cursed earth and we shall wait in vain if we wait, before we apply this principle, until there are no bad men and nothing to avenge. It is only through loving the enemy, and if necessary taking the sword into our own heart instead of putting it into his, that we can perform a redemptive act. If we kill him, that is not a redemptive act and it is an *evasion* of our Christian responsibility. (Richards, 69). There may be many difficulties in discharging this responsibility but they no more abrogate that responsibility than difficulties abrogate any other scriptural teaching.

In order to act from the distinctive Christian principle of love we must no more go back to the Old Testament level of love than to the publican and gentile level. We must go beyond them for "if we arrive but at the same measure, that of the ancients, we shall stand without that threshold" of the kingdom which Christ ushered in (Chrysostom). No other system of religion, not even the Old Testament, ever inculcated such a complete principle of non-retaliation and no other has given us the high standard of such love—the love of Christ. This love is what is new about Christianity. And it is the greatest of the Christian principles (1 Cor. 13:1-13). When we say that one should not use the Old Testament principles, which were a part of the shadow, to limit the New Testament which is the *substance*, we do not cast any more reflection on the Old Testament than Christ did when he brought in the New. The Old Testament was a forerunner but "do not thou then require their excellency now, when their use is past: but then, when the time was calling for them." (Chrysostom).

### III. CHRISTIANS MUST FORGIVE THEIR ENEMIES

"Be ye merciful, even as your Father is merciful". "For with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again" (Lk. 6:36, 38). If we pray with an unforgiving heart, a heart which seeks revenge, we call down a curse on ourselves (Matt. 6:14-15). We must forgive if we want to be forgiven.

We must realize that God will do to us as we want to do to others. When we hate and seek revenge we ask God to measure the same to us. If we always demand justice from others, for their transgressions against us, we are asking God to so deal with us. When we do as we are done by and thus return evil for evil we are asking God to exact full justice of us. But He teaches us to treat each person as a potential Christian and this we cannot do if we kill a person.

The spirit of forgiveness, of having it always in our hearts, is to be applied to enemies. And we must not do anything which would prevent their seeking forgiveness; instead we must manifest such a spirit to them. This is the known Christian attitude for Christ said to "love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you . . . if ye love them that love you, what thank have ye? for even sinners love those that love them. And if ye do good to them that do good to you, what thanks have ye? for even sinners do the same." (Lk. 6:27-33). We must forgive as God has forgiven us. How has He done it? While we were enemies Christ died for us (Rom. 5:6-10). We must thus love and forgive in order to be on the Christian level instead of the sinner level. Too many Christians argue for war with the same conception of the enemy that the world has.

Most of Christ's audience, when the above was spoken, was composed of Jews whose great enemy was Rome. To such Christ said "Love", "Forgive", if you want God to forgive you.



We shall beat them, then forgive them, some say. In other words, we shall give them a bigger dose of their own medicine than they give us, we shall make them suffer as they have made us suffer, and then we shall forgive them. How do we know that we shall then be in a forgiving spirit? Do we want God to thus forgive us? Then, too, those who try to exact full justice ought to know that when this is done they are foolish to talk about forgiving. To "make them pay" and then forgive them is to talk in contradictory terms. Forgiveness foregoes an effort to force the enemy to make a so-called just settlement. God thus deals with us through the cross. How can we imagine that we are merciful even as our Father is, when we kill our enemy (Lk. 6:36)? Did Christ thus love us (John 3:16; 15:12). The enemy is to be the subject of love and kindness just as if He had not injured us. We must not be like the unmerciful servant (Matt. 18:23-35). We must manifest our sincere desire for forgiveness by forgiving others. If we exercise no mercy to the fellow who is guilty, if we plan to avenge ourselves, we make it impossible for God to forgive us and we manifest our insincerity. Why plead for forgiveness when we are not willing to forgive? We want every Christian to search his soul with the question: Do I want God to deal with me as I am endeavoring to deal with a foreign soldier, a person of another race, or a dictator?

Love and forgiveness must be exercised in order to be vitalized and actualized. An emotion unexpressed grows weaker. Acts contrary to love do not beget love in those who do them. Good will and forgiveness die within us unless our subsequent actions are loving. Killing a man and thus being an active agent in bringing sorrow to his loved ones is certainly not an expression of Christian love. The loving of our own only is not an expression of Christian love (Lk. 6:32-33; Matt. 5:44-48; Gregg: 210). Unless our actions toward our enemies are conceived by love for them they are not Christian actions. And since love dies, if unexpressed



in some manner; how much more so will it perish if our expressions are those of hate, violence and a desire to be avenged?

The attitude of parental love must guide our actions toward even our enemies. No parent could rear a child without forgiving seventy times seven. No Christian can imitate God's perfect circle of love unless he loves both foe and friend (Matt. 5:44-48; Lk. 6:32, 33, 36). The perfect circle is broken when we do good to our friends and evil to our enemies, as war dictates.

Love, however, does not do precisely the same act for every individual for the need of individuals differ. However, all actions toward all must be conceived by, and be expressions of love. Intelligence, in the service of love and not of vengeance, will determine what actions will be the most effective in redeeming the object of that love.

#### IV JESUS' SERVANTS DO NOT WAGE WAR (John 18:36)

One of the reasons Christ did not permit his servants to rescue Him, their Savior who was soon to be crowned king, from His enemies was that His servants do not fight due to the nature of His kingdom and thus due to their nature. It was not only a sufficient reason why they did not fight the Jews or the Romans but also why they should not fight anyone. For Christ's servants to fight to protect their kingdom against other kingdoms would be out of harmony with the origin and nature of His kingdom (2 Cor. 10:4; Eph. 6:17; John 18:36).

The kingdom of heaven is within us, as much as we are in it, in the sense that its principles must direct our conduct. We must experience a new birth to enter it, and in it we act differently from the world (Rom. 6:1-14, 17-19; John 3:1-10; Col. 3:9-10; 3:15-). We thus seek the things which are above (Col. 3:1-4). Since the kingdom is a part of us, its spirit must be manifested in all of our actions (cf. Matt. 15:18). Its nature is our nature. Our actions must

never contradict its spirit, and it must work a change in all our relationships (cf. Col. 3:21; Eph. 5:1, 22:6-9). Unless Christianity is a part time affair, instead of a life, we are Christ's servants at all times. There is no time when we can afford to have any other principles regulate our conduct. Thus there is no time when we should fight. Who will affirm that at some time we are not servants of Christ? Even when working for others we are to do it as unto Him (Col. 3:21-). If there is a time when we are not His servants, then at that time no demand of the gospel is binding upon us. Such a contention, of course, would carnalize the Christian.

Jesus made specific reference to wars. When a king is seized, his servants usually war against the enemy. Christ explained here why His servants had not followed such a procedure. Armed defense was out of harmony with their nature. Christ spoke not of single individuals but of "armed engagement between hostile kingdoms." Who will affirm that although we cannot fight for His kingdom we can for those of the world (Boles, 24). Even those who affirm that we can fight for governments usually end up by contradicting Jesus in that they justify fighting by saying they are protecting Christian principles. Thus they affirm that it is a "religious war"; the very kind of war which they usually say that a Christian should not fight since it would be a war for the kingdom of heaven and Jesus said that for it we must not wage war. Why shouldn't these individuals be consistent and call for an armed crusade to stamp out heretics and other enemies of the gospel? They should either do that or surrender their position. If they are unwilling to surrender their position they should at least refrain from justifying participation on the basis that it is a war which is necessary to maintain Christian principles. They should simply say that it is just a war to defend earthly government and that it has no bearing on the kingdom of Christ for wars cannot be fought for it.



But, one objects, doesn't this verse authorize us to fight as citizens of worldly governments? No, Jesus here simply states that if His disciples were of the world they would act like the world. The reason they did not was due to the nature of the kingdom. "He simply stated without approval or disapproval a universally recognized fact that the servants of earthly kingdoms fight for their governments." (Fudge, 13). And since our nature is not different from that of the kingdom of Christ, since we are servants of Christ at all times, we cannot fight. All acts must be "as unto the Lord" (Col. 3:22-24). If we fight we would have to do it as unto the Lord. If we maintain, on the other hand, that it is not for the protection of the kingdom of Christ, then we admit that we engage in something which is contrary to the interest of the kingdom and the nature of Christians. Regardless of how you view it, His servants should not fight.

Those who use the latter argument to justify Christians fighting often forget that it works with as much force in one nation as in another.

#### V. SHALL THE CHRISTIAN SANCTION THE PRINCIPLE SYMBOLIZED BY SWORD? (Matt. 26:52)

Shall the Christian get on the level of his attacker and fight them with the weapon which they have selected? Shall we leave the settlement of the issue, of the right, to the decision rendered by the sword? Shall we meet sword with the sword?

Peter thought that he had the right, if any man had it, to defend a friend with the sword so he endeavored to so defend Jesus. "Then saith Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword in its place (its sheath, John 18:11): for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." (Matt. 26:52). He gave two other reasons also (Matt. 26:53-56; John 18:36). We do not know why Peter had a sword. Perhaps it was one referred to in the statement concerning "two swords". However, we do know that when Peter tried to



use it Christ told him to put it up. Three reasons were given. They were sufficient to stay Peter's hand and from that day on—in spite of later persecutions—we find no attempt by Peter, or other Christians, to defend themselves or others with the sword. (1 Pet. 4:16-).

It has been argued that Jesus refused to let them fight because the odds were against them. No such idea is even intimated. It is further argued that since someone must see that others perish by the sword that "they" had no reference to Peter and to other righteous executors of justice. However, if the "they" referred to the attackers only (Matt. 26:47, 55), then Peter and other Christians should have seen to it that these criminals died by the sword. But they did not. They did not do it when Rome used the sword on Jerusalem in the days of vengeance (Lk. 21:20; Rom. 13:6-7). Although the odds were then against the Jews the Christians did not use the sword to punish these people. God overruled a sinful nation—Rome—to punish a sinful people. The sword by which they perished was not in the hands of Christians.

The statement concerning "perishing" did not apply to the attackers only. It was a defensive sword, in a just cause, which Christ put up. Christ also had reference to Peter for he gave it as a reason why Peter should put up his own sword. The way some interpret it, it would be a reason why Peter should use it. "Put up again thy sword into its place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" (Matt. 26:52).

Jesus does not necessarily mean that every individual sword user shall die by the sword, any more than every individual is drawn to Christ on the basis of John 12:32. Those who live by violence shall meet with violence here, as well as with the sword of God's judgment hereafter.

Glanville thought that Jesus here expressed two judgments: (a) the sword perishes; (b) the users of the sword

perish *with it*. "With" does not necessarily mean "by the means of", although it does often mean that. It may also carry the meaning of "in company with" (Lk. 22:52). Men see the sword as an instrument of success but Jesus saw through it as a "symbol of impermanence, a type of the things that pass away." He exposed its "essential deceitfulness" and revealed that its nature is decay and death. What it does it can undo. What it establishes it can disestablish. The instrument of conquerors has been the means of their undoing sooner or later. And yet men regard the sword as the surest guarantee of success and security. In spite of this history has confirmed Jesus' judgment on those who build by, and that which is built by, the sword. Their work is impermanent and the man whose life is built on it has wasted his time. Since we are identified, in this world, with the work to which we give ourselves, the man who gives his life to a work of impermanence may be said, in "so far at least as this world is concerned", to "perish". To those who seek a purposeful life this is indeed a heavy judgement—"that his life's work has proved to hold within itself the seeds of its own decay: that it had been as well, in fact (in so far as doing a permanent work is concerned, JDB), if that man had never been born." If the dead who once fought with the sword for a warless world, a world of goodness and forgiveness, were to come back today they would see that in so far as really permanently establishing such a world is concerned, their efforts were in vain. Their other work may live on but that which was based on the sword does not. Peter, for example, is remembered not for his desire to use the sword but for his gospel work. Perhaps all warriors, if they could come back, would wish to devote all their labor to work that endureth. Their work as fighting men, founded on violence, was subject to violence. In other words the life of violence is wasted. However, that work which they did which was not based on violence may survive.

Christ, like us, had a work to do. He repudiated the



sword and refused to found His kingdom on violence. The sword would have introduced an element of decay into His kingdom which would have destroyed it as it destroyed Caesar's. Christ refused the sword and His kingdom did not, as some perhaps feared, perish. It is increasing while other kingdoms, built by the sword, are decreasing and perishing with the sword. They rise and fall.

Jesus' repudiation of the sword is a judgment on all who use it. His work is permanent; that based on violence is "a mere temporality—to have been doing something which by its very nature, will demand to be done over and over again." Has not the way of war been exactly that? Any quality of permanence which is attached to the results of war will be attached to those things which have been brought in which differs from the sword. Any permanent results will flow from the introduction of spirituality, love, forgiveness, faith in God and fraternity; and not those things directly accomplished by the sword. The work of war is at naught unless another element is introduced.

And thus we say that although we may not see every individual perish who uses the sword, yet all work and institutions which are founded on it are subject to destruction by violence. Christ wanted His kingdom to endure forever, thus he refused the sword with its nature of decay and death (Lipscomb, 68). Pressense well said that "he who is resolved to suffer and to die for God cannot be vanquished. His noble endurance is also an ineffaceable disgrace to his persecutors, and every fresh victim to their rage makes persecution more detested. There is, then, no graver mistake than for a persecuted people to offer material as well as moral resistance; this is to subject themselves to the chances of strength, to the risks of a struggle of which the issue is always uncertain. He who takes the sword deserves to perish by the sword, for he implicitly admits the right of the strongest. Moral resistance, on the contrary, knows no chances, no risks. It is link-



ed to an immortal principle, and destined to certain triumph." (I:40-41).

## VI. THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST AND THE SPIRIT OF WAR

Unless the spirit of Christ in Christians today produces the acts of war and the spirit of war, it is impossible to harmonize the spirit and acts of war with those of a Christian. Which statement, in each of the following pairs of statements, is in harmony with Christ's teaching? Blessed are the merciful or "have no mercy on the enemy" (Stalin)? He died to make men free or he killed to make men free? Love your enemies or hate them? Do good to those who spitefully use you or strike those who strike you? Good for evil or bomb for bomb and more if possible? Spiritual weapons (2 Cor. 10:5; Eph. 6:14) or carnal weapons? Children of God or "angels of hell"? War not after the flesh (Eph. 6:12) or shed blood and kill? Jas. 4:1; Gal. 5:24 or indulge and inflame them? Swords to plowshares or plowshares to swords? Isa. 11:9; 65:25 or hurt and destroy? John 18:36 or fight? Matt. 26:52 or draw and use it? Eye for an eye (Matt. 5:38-) or no eye for an eye? Rom. 12:17-21, avenge not or avenge? Mk. 8:34 or inflict suffering as well as bear it? Do as you want to be done by (Matt. 7:12) or do as you have been done by? Poor in spirit or proud in spirit and nationalism? Meek or resentful? Peacemakers or warlike? Persecuted for righteousness sake or avenge oneself? Try to kill or to save those who reject and oppose the Christ (Lk. 9:51-56)? Use instruments of redemptive love to redeem man or instruments of vengeance to destroy man?

The following experiments will convince one of the full force of the impact of the spirit of Christ against the spirit of war. (1) Contrast a description of the most deadly and efficient soldier with the New Testament description of the noblest Christian. (2) Pray for the essential nature of war in Jesus' name. (3) See if Christian teaching would be accepted by the army as good pre-fight instruction.

(1) A prominent columnist described a commando as an individual who has been taught "in the ruthless forms of murder and attack. They are," he said, "turned and ground to a fine edge, too, in their hate. They hate more than any other men in the world." Notice newspaper and war books for descriptions of fighting men in action and ask: Is a description of the most efficient soldier in the world also the description of the noblest type of Christian? If Christians have the authority of Christ to kill they have, by virtue of that fact, the authority to become the most efficient killers in the world. A Christian ought not to do anything in which it would be wrong for him to excel.

(2) Christians should be able to pray concerning their activities and to do their work as unto the Lord. The essential acts of war, those acts which are inseparably connected with war, should be the object of Christian prayers if they are to constitute a part of the actions of a Christian. Should Christian lips pray Mark Twain's war prayer, which was penned in satire? "O Lord our God, help us to tear their soldiers to bloody shreds with our shells; help us to cover their smiling fields with the pale forms of their patriot dead; help us to drown the thunder of the guns with the cries of the wounded, writhing in pain; help us to lay waste their humble homes with a hurricane of fire; help us to wring the hearts of their unoffending widows with unavailing grief; help us to turn them out roofless with their little children to wander unfriended through wastes of their desolate land in rags and hunger and thirst, sport of the sun-flames of summer and the icy winds of winter, broken in spirit, worn with travail, imploring Thee for the refuge of the grave and denied it; for our sakes, who adore Thee, Lord, blast their hopes, blight their lives, protract their bitter pilgrimage, make heavy their steps, water their way with tears, stain the white snow with the blood of their wounded feet! We ask of one who is the Spirit of love, and who is the ever-faithful refuge and friend of all that are sore beset, and seek His



aid with humble and contrite hearts. Grant our prayer, O Lord, and Thine shall be the praise and honor and glory now and ever. Amen." (Richards) Shall we add: "Lord may they suffer, ten fold over, all the anguish which they have caused us and others, and Lord help us personally to see to it that they so suffer. Bless our propaganda and blast theirs, nurture our spirit of hate and vengeance that we may be more efficient in this work. Sanctify thou every means which we find useful in destroying and deceiving our enemies. Overlook any spiritual and moral lapses which, Lord, are an inevitable product of modern war. We pray in the name of gentle Jesus who on a Roman Cross, placed there by hate, prayed: Forgive them for they know not what they do. And forgive us Lord even as we forgive those who trespass against us. In the name of the Savior who died for men of all races, Amen. If thus praying for the instruments and acts of war seems to gag in your Christian throat, perhaps you can sing a song written by William T. Polk.

"Jesus Lover of my Soul,  
Help me drill a deadly hole  
In my foeman's heart or face,  
Loins or any vital place,  
Abide with me, and do not pass  
Till I have filled his lungs with gas."

If you think that this is blasphemy, and if you cannot sing it with the spirit and the understanding (1 Cor. 14:15), then why prostitute your body to such acts which are an essential part of modern war. If it is blasphemy to speak it as a sincere prayer song, then why is it right to do it? to actually perform such acts?

(3) No army, that I know of, teaches the Beatitudes as an essential part of the development of an efficient soldier. The sermon on the mount will make a noble Christian. Will it make an efficient soldier? Will it cultivate the spirit of the acts of war? Nowhere does the word of God, which furnishes us to every good work (2 Tim. 3:16-17) furnish us



with the spirit and the acts which are involved in the raining down of destruction upon an enemy. And since the Christian is a personality, and not an automaton, how can the spirit of war and the spirit of Christ animate the same individual at the same time. One spirit must be laid aside if the other spirit is to reign in an individual's heart.

## VII. OF WHAT SPIRIT ARE YOU? (Lk. 9:51-56)

Christ rebuked the disciples who wanted to call down fire out of heaven, as Elias did, to consume the Samaritans. He "said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save (them)." (Lk. 9:51-56).

They did not understand the nature of Christ's mission and of His teaching and thus they felt that Christ's disciples were justified in taking Old Testament examples of the destruction of life to support them in similar actions. To save, to convert, to change others and not to destroy them is the Christian's goal. If we cannot convert them with Christian means we have no other weapons to use on them for Christ does not allow us to crush enemies.

It is noticeable that Christ rebuked them, instead of rebuking the Samaritans. The disciples profited by this rebuke and later we find that John, who had wanted to destroy them, had a part in their conversion (Acts 8:1, 4, 14). He learned what it was to be persecuted and scourged and yet to love (Acts 3:1; 4:3; 5:18, 40; Rev. 1). He learned to rejoice that he was counted worthy to suffer shame for Christ, instead of depending on the Old Testament for instruction as to how to treat the enemies of the will of God (Acts 5:18, 41).

This is not to say that Jesus denied that the severity of God had been revealed in Elias' actions or that it is absent from the New Testament. However, we do maintain on the authority of Christ that there is a difference between the spirit of the servants of God in the Old Testament and the

children of God in the New Testament. God's children are reconcilers and not executors of God's just judgments on the earth. Let us wait continually on the ministry of reconciliation—of man to God and thus of man to man—and leave the execution of judgment to God (Rom. 12:19), and to whatever agents or channels through which He may be pleased to work. But that He is not pleased to so work through Christians is certain.

### VIII. PETER AND THE WAR QUESTION

What did Peter, who once lifted the sword to protect Jesus, say about the sword after Pentecost and the coming of the Spirit?

Peter preached the gospel of forgiveness to those who had crucified the Christ (Acts 2:17-; 3:11-). He made no effort to destroy Christ's enemies, although he said that unbelievers would be cut off (Acts 3:23). He left all vengeance taking to the Just Judge. He made no effort to protect himself or the brethren when persecution came (Acts 4:1-3, 17, 21; 5:40). Instead of striking back he rejoiced that he was "counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name" (Acts 5:42). Christians must suffer, if necessary, but not return evil for evil; instead give a blessing (1 Pet. 2:19-23; 3:9; 4:13-19). He told Christians, suffering under Roman persecution, to remain in submission to Rome. He did not advocate rebellion against the pagan, persecuting dictator. (1 Pet. 2:13-23.) He did this in spite of the fact that the state was punishing doers of good instead of doers of evil. What this scripture taught a Christian to render to a government it taught him to render to a government which was pagan and oppressive.

There is no example in the conduct of Peter where he drew the sword, after Pentecost, to defend either himself or another. Neither did he ask another to do it for him. Peter did not execute Ananias (Acts 5). "The death of those persons is not represented as the act of the apostles, or as in



any manner procured or occasioned by them. It is recorded as the visitation of God, without any curse, imprecation or wish of men." We do not know that Peter knew that Ananias would die. And the wife was given an opportunity to either show her innocency or repent. She did neither and Peter knew, from what had happened to Ananias, that she would perish for her deception. If this example justifies Christians in taking life it justifies the destruction of hypocrites and sinners in the church by members of the church. We do not dispute the power or the right of God to terminate life. We simply say that He has not given Christians authority to do it and that this is not an example of a Christian taking life.

#### IX. NATIONAL WARS DIVIDED THE CHURCH

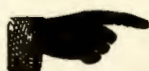
What the NT sanctions for a Christian in one country it sanctions for a Christian in another, and in every other, country with reference to his government. If Christians may go to war for their governments—and all may if one may—serious division is wrought in the church and Christians fight Christians. Christ condemned such division and maintained that His disciples would be known by their love for one another (John 17:20; op. 1 Cor. 1:10-12; Eph. 4:1-6; 1 Cor. 12:12-25). We must love the brethren, wherever they are, as Christ loved us (John 13:34-35; 15:12). When one member suffers, the entire body suffers (1 Cor. 12:26). Unless the body of Christ is that of a mad man it will not inflict suffering on itself. Instead of hurting one another Christians must love one another as God has loved us (Rom. 5:8; 1 John 4:10-11; John 15:13). Thus we shall work no ill to our neighbor, (Rom. 13:10), and much less to our brother.

The church is universal, not national, and Christians in all countries are members of the same body. Unless they can conceive of God and Christ at war with one another they must not war with one another but manifest love and unity (John 17:20). We should no more shoot a Christian in another country than one in our home congregation. National



wars are an instrument of the evil one to destroy the unity of the church and to discontinue the love of the brethren (Heb. 13:1).

If Christians are supposed to go to war all Christians must be on one side. The church must declare war against a common foe instead of having a part of the church fight against what another part fights for. How could we hate and kill our brother (1 John 3:14-18)? Why should some reason that the church cannot war against a common foe but that nationalism is permitted to line Christians by the side of unbelievers to fight against other Christians who are also so arrayed? No, the international character of the church and the fact that what the Bible teaches about allegiance to one government it teaches about all, these things forbid Christian participation in national wars.



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