

SHOULD A CHRISTIAN GO TO WAR?

Today's headlines—"Britons Fleeing Rumania," "All Americans ordered Out of China," "Japan Warns United States," "Administration Getting Ready For Any Move by Japan," "The United States Headed For War."

Christians are much exercised. The conscription bill has been passed. Young men in the United States will be called to arms. They may be called to use arms in war.

In this morning's paper is printed the statement of a Wisconsin Methodist preacher to his congregation concerning his decision not to respond to the nation's call to military training. He declares a Christian cannot be a fighting soldier.

SHOULD A CHRISTIAN GO TO WAR?

This is a very important question just at this time. Many conscientious Christians are troubled as to their Christian duty, and they are giving serious thought as to what they shall do, if the Government orders them into military training.

All Christians praise God for the material things that we have as Americans, for the liberty that is ours. All Americans, including those who are Christians, appreciate the very special national blessings that we enjoy. Just now, surely we should consider ourselves fortunate to be citizens of this country.

Our forefathers had to sacrifice their lives that we might enjoy our liberty and our material blessings. Those of us in this generation enjoy wonderful privileges because patriots of another generation were willing to shed their blood and die. They went to war to obtain our freedom of worship under our bill of rights. Many of them were consecrated Christians. Surely a citizen of this country, whether a Christian or not, is an unworthy ingrate who will enjoy the freedom and blessings made possible by other men who fought for America and refuse to respond to the call of the nation to defend and maintain our high standards of justice, privilege and liberty.

Since the days that God first gave to man the responsibility of governing his fellow-men there have been ungodly and unjust rulers. We constantly hear, in our own days, of crooked politicians, unjust judges, bribed jurors, greed, graft and corruption in city, county, state and national government. This will continue until the Ruler, described in Isaiah 11:1 to 11, arrives: "And shall make Him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord; and He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes; neither reprove after the hearing of His ears; But with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth; and He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked." Isaiah 11:3 and 4.

As we carefully study the history of nations and read the headlines concerning the European rulers of today, we should be ready to accept as truth the devil's statement in Luke 4:5 and 6: "And the devil, taking Him up into an high mountain, shewed unto Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto Him, All this power will I give Thee, and the glory of them; for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it."

No government, since the days of Christ, has ever granted to Christians such freedom and religious liberty to believe and propagate the blessed truths of the Bible, as has this country of ours. Christians should not only continuously thank God for our constitution and bill of rights,

and pray to God that the rulers will see that the liberties vouchsafed in them shall not be taken from us, but Christians should support those political rulers who are determined to defend and perpetuate them. Christians should, by no means, hinder any military action against any enemy foreign nation that seeks to overthrow our government and seeks to deprive us of our blood-bought rights. Note the Christian's prayer duty: "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceful life in all godliness and honesty."

THE CHRISTIAN AND THE GOVERNMENT

How ignorant and foolish is the Christian, or any organized group of Christians, who seeks to interfere with the nation's preparation for war, especially when that preparation is for defense against an "aggressor" nation. As Americans we should profit by the folly, error and negligence of England and France. As Christians we should heartily support our government and nation as they see to it that we do not make the same blunder, remembering the plain teaching of God's Word that the government is the minister of God for the good of Christians. Romans 13:1 to 8.

Christians apply to the powers that be for legal permits to proclaim the gospel on street corners, or in public parks, and then ask for and expect police protection in case of any unlawful disturbance on the part of some person who is an enemy of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christians, as well as sinners, ask for the benefits and privileges that are made possible by rendering unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, that is, public benefactions paid for by taxes. Christians own property and should be law-abiding citizens. They should respect and obey the laws of the land and be subject to the powers that be, which are ordained of God.

It is nonsense to regard the saluting of the national flag in this country an act of worship and therefore the sin of idolatry forbidden in the Bible. Christians should be willing to join the three Hebrews in the fiery furnace, or Daniel in the lion's den, before they worship any man or the image of any man or woman. But every intelligent individual knows that no political or civil authority or ruler in this country has ever made such a demand. It is possible, that if Christians did not have the protection of our government in defending our rights to religious freedom, they might be forced by certain religious potentates to worship images, or suffer the consequences.

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

The religious people, known as Jehovah's witnesses, followers of Judge Rutherford and Pastor Charles T. Russell, have been having some trouble with civil authorities. They have displayed ignorance of the Word of God in their attitude and action. They have been most inconsistent in refusing to salute the flag of the United States, or respond to the nation's call to arms, while, at the same time, they will call for police protection and appeal to the United States courts to protect them in their disloyalty to their government. They get under the flag for protection but refuse to defend it or respect it. They are not asked by the government to worship the flag.

The members of this religious sect do not know the first thing about obedience to II Timothy 2:15: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth." They do not know what it means to rightly divide

the Word of Truth, hence, they are workmen who need to be ashamed, not only in their disloyalty to their flag and nation, but in their propagation of an unscriptural message and program, which is a far more serious blunder, for Jesus Christ said: "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Matthew 10:28.

Jehovah's witnesses usurp the kingdom place of the nation Israel, and not only mix law and grace, but they confuse the Messianic earthly kingdom of the Prince of Peace, with the Body of Christ seated in the heavenlies while Israel is set aside and the Messianic kingdom is in abeyance. They claim that their elect group will be the 144,000 Israelites of Revelation. They seek to rob the Lord Jesus Christ of His eternal Deity. They preach rank heresy concerning the bodily resurrection of the Son of God. They know nothing of the Pauline gospel of the grace of God and make no attempt to obey Ephesians 3:9. They place the kingdom of Jesus of Nazareth in the dispensation of the grace of God. Ephesians 3:1 to 3. They frustrate the grace of God. They pervert the gospel of grace. They subvert and deceive souls. And as they are in such darkness and heresy in the more important issues of life, it is not surprising that they propagate such unscriptural theories concerning the Christian's responsibility to the government.

THE INTERNATIONAL CHURCH

From 600 B. C. up to the present time, we have been living "in the times of the Gentiles," politically; that is, under Gentile government. Since the radical change mentioned in the eleventh chapter of Romans, we have lived in the times of the Gentiles spiritually. In Jesus Christ, however, there is neither Jew nor Gentile: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one Body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." I Corinthians 12:13. "Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain One New Man, so making peace." Ephesians 2:15. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free; there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Galatians 3:28.

According to these verses the Christians in the United States know they are united to the Christians of England, France, Germany, Italy, China, and Japan, in an inseparable and eternal union, all redeemed by the grace of God and the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. In a sense they are bound by a tie that is more enduring and more precious than the tie that binds us together as citizens of the land we love. Christian Americans are naturally linked up with other Americans who are going to eternal perdition, because they believe not on Christ.

In the United States army and navy Christian Americans train and fight side by side with unsaved Americans. In eternity they will be separated. Christian Americans may kill Christians of other nations in war. They will be together in eternity.

What about the clash then between Christianity and patriotism? Some ask why should a Christian take arms with unsaved Americans and go forth to kill Christians of another nation at war with America? We behold the tragedy in the present world war, English Jews warring against German and Italian Jews, English Catholics and Protestants killing German and Italian Catholics and Protestants. Surely a deplorable state exists, and Christians are presented with many problems and questions. The true saint of God, who knows the truth concerning God's one Church, and His purpose in this age, is an internationalist, in the sense that the Christian Church is an international organization or organism.

How can an internationalist be a true patriot? Let us remember that there is no such thing as “a Christian nation.” Human reason, apart from the Scriptures, is not adequate. The Bible is the believer’s Guide Book. The Book says: “For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.” Romans 8:19 to 22.

This includes human creatures, saints and sinners alike. Peace on earth was proclaimed when Jesus Christ was born to take David’s throne. Peace on earth will be realized when Jesus Christ comes back to take David’s throne, but since the day that Paul said, “Lo, we turn to the Gentiles,” God has very definitely marked the difference between the Church and the State, the Christian’s spiritual duty, as a member of the Body of Christ, and his attitude and responsibility to the government that is functioning under such adverse circumstances and conditions, while Satan is still the prince of the world, the god of this age, and the prince of the power of the air.

When the Christian is called to arms and to war he is subject to the powers that be. The government, in such a case, is responsible to God for the Christian’s acts. The Christian expects police protection and the benefits guaranteed by the laws of the land. His plain Bible duty is to pay tribute and taxes to the government. Much of the tax money is used in purchasing implements of war and in training other men to fight, so as God’s Word states in I Corinthians 5:10, Christians must either heartily support the government as law-abiding, obedient citizens, or we must needs go out of the world.

Some Christians argue that our position is quite different from that of the Jews in Palestine under the iron rule of Caesar, or from that of the first Christians scattered through the Roman Empire, who had no voice in the enactment and enforcement of laws. The first century Christians were powerless to revise the laws or liberate themselves from the tyranny and injustice by voting. Christians in the United States are citizens of a democracy, or a republic, and are part of the government. Christians have the privilege and constitutional right to join with the unsaved in making the laws. Certainly Christian Americans and other Americans should act together to prevent war, if it can be done honorably.

It has been conclusively proved that war cannot be outlawed. By carefully studying the history of all nations together with the Bible, we learn that God has repeatedly permitted one “aggressor” nation to go to war with another nation, as His rod of punishment; and then has seen to it that the “aggressor” nation was humiliated and destroyed.

God knew the end from the beginning. Christ predicted that the end of this age would be with wars and rumors of wars. Every intelligent student of the Bible knows that wars will not cease until the Lord Jesus returns to earth as King. America should be fully prepared for war and no Christian has the Scriptural right to interfere with the nation’s preparations.

ISRAEL UNDER CAESAR AND ROME

As we consider the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth on earth, let us keep in mind that His nation was in complete subjection to a heathen monarch. At the time of Christ’s birth, Caesar Augustus decreed that the whole world should be taxed. Caesar Augustus was anything but a man of God. He was the world ruler and he was at the head of a mighty political organization. His predecessors had won their universal headship and power by conquest. Much blood had been

shed in war. God's chosen nation, because of sin, was subject to this heathen king and his government. In Deuteronomy 28:13, God told Israel that they would be the head and the Gentiles the tail, if Israel would hearken unto Him and obey His commandments. In Deuteronomy 28:44, God told Israel that they would be the tail and the Gentiles would be the head, if Israel did not hearken unto Him and obey His Word.

After disobeying God for many years Israel indeed became the tail about 600 B. C., when the king of Babylon went to Jerusalem, destroyed Israel's city, and temple, and took over the government of the people. Note God's words to King Nebuchadnezzar by the mouth of Daniel: "And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath He given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold." Daniel 2:38. Other Gentile rulers succeeded the Babylonian and Persian governments, until Greece was subdued by Rome. And God made Nebuchadnezzar, the Gentile idolater, head over Jews, over all of the human race.

The world would say that Jesus Christ was accidentally born in Bethlehem, but the Christian knows the Saviour was born there in fulfillment of Micah 5:2 and Isaiah 7:14. Christ was born there because a godly woman (Mary) had to obey a pagan ruler and go to that city to pay taxes. Israel was still the tail.

According to Luke 1:29 to 33 and 70 to 74, Jesus Christ was born in the city of David, of the seed of David, in the house of David, to take the throne of David as King of the Jews, and deliver Israel from Gentile domination and subjugation. But after He had presented Himself, and His Divine credentials to the rulers of Israel, He said unto His people, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side. And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knowest not the time of thy visitation." Luke 19:42 to 44.

Jesus Christ came unto His own and His own received Him not. They knew not the things of their peace, the time of their visitation; so the offer of the kingdom was withdrawn, and to them Christ said: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, but ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate; and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." Luke 13:34 and 35.

"AND THEY SHALL FALL BY THE EDGE OF THE SWORD, AND SHALL BE LED AWAY CAPTIVE INTO ALL NATIONS; AND JERUSALEM SHALL BE TRODDEN DOWN OF THE GENTILES, UNTIL THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES BE FULFILLED." LUKE 21:24. "AND THEN SHALL THEY SEE THE SON OF MAN COMING IN A CLOUD WITH POWER AND GREAT GLORY. AND WHEN THESE THINGS BEGIN TO COME TO PASS, THEN LOOK UP, AND LIFT UP YOUR HEADS; FOR YOUR REDEMPTION DRAWETH NIGH." LUKE 21:27 AND 28.

We are still living in the times of the Gentiles.

In presenting the long promised Messianic kingdom to Israel, Jesus of Nazareth, the King of Israel, proclaimed the spiritual program and laws of that kingdom in the Sermon on the Mount. Note His message to His disciples in Luke 12:32 and 33: "Fear not little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide

yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. “ Luke 12:32 and 33.

Jesus Christ was not surprised when Israel’s rulers hated Him without a cause, and delivered Him to Caesar’s government to be put to death: “But Jesus did not commit Himself unto them, because He knew all men, And needed not that any should testify of man: for He knew what was in man.” John 2:24 and 25. “But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray Him.” John 6:64. “Then He took unto Him the Twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished, For He shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on; and they shall scourge Him, and put Him to death; and the third day He shall rise again.” Luke 18:31 to 33.

RENDER UNTO CAESAR

It was after His rejection by the rulers of Israel that the Son of God said: “ Shew Me the tribute money. And they brought unto Him a penny. And He said unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto Him, Caesar’s. Then saith He unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s; and unto God the things that are God’s. Matthew 22:19 to 21.

In this connection note Matthew 17:25 to 27: “And when He was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers? Peter saith unto Him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free. Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money; that take, and give unto them for Me and thee.”

Surely it is all so unique and strange: the Creator of the human race on the earth in creature form, born under the governmental authority of an ungodly ruler. In I Timothy 6:15 to 17 the Holy Spirit speaks of the “appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. Which in His times He shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of Lords.” It was the King of kings and Lord of lords Who was born of the virgin Mary at the time she was obeying Caesar’s orders. More than thirty years later the virgin’s Son performed a miracle to pay His taxes, lest He and His disciples should offend Caesar’s government.

Christians are taught that Jesus Christ left us an example that we should walk in His steps, and therefore we should pay our taxes, whether or not we vote to put unsaved men in office.

THE COMING WARLESS AGE

Christians we rejoice in the fact that there is to be a warless age on this earth:

“And He shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.” Micah 4:3.

Hear God’s own word.

“ The Heavens must retain Jesus Christ until the restitution of all things.” Acts 3:21.

THE RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS

Can we depend upon the statement that God is going to send Jesus Christ back from heaven to earth to bring about the restitution of all things? We read in the Bible, “God cannot lie” and “God is not slack concerning His promises” “all of the promises of God are yea and amen in Christ Jesus;” Christ said, “all shall be fulfilled.” We read this truth in II Peter 1:19: “We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.” The day is going to dawn. Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords, is coming back to earth. That return will be in power and great glory “When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the Holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory.” Matthew 25:31.

Then the warless age shall begin. “He shall judge among the nations and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.” Isaiah 2:4. “They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” Isaiah 11:9. “Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? 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?” I Corinthians 6:1 to 3.

Satan will be the Lord’s prisoner in the bottomless pit. Revelation 20:1 to 7. Israel will be planted in their own land and none shall pluck them up nor make them afraid. Amos 9:12 to 15, and Ezekiel 34:28. “They shall look upon Me Whom they have pierced. Zechariah 12:10. “They shall serve the Lord their God, and David their King, Whom I will raise up unto them.” Jeremiah 30:9. “I will take you from among the heathen and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land.” Ezekiel 36:24.

So we have observed five facts plainly, dogmatically and definitely taught in the infallible Scriptures:

1. The Lord Jesus is going to call the members of His Body to glory before the great tribulation.
2. The Lord Jesus Christ is coming back to earth to save Israel out of their tribulation and to occupy the throne of David and be a real personal living King.
3. When the Lord Jesus returns to earth to establish His kingdom He is going to dethrone the present ruler of the world, Satan, and imprison him in the bottomless pit.
4. Israel will possess their own land with Jerusalem again their holy city,
5. The saints shall judge the world.

Any humble child of God, with even a superficial knowledge of the Bible, but with a heart of faith, knows that there will be no peace on earth until these five radical changes have taken place.

Until “the times of the Gentiles” shall be fulfilled there will be wars and rumors of wars, and the government should be fully prepared, well armed, not for aggression or conquest, but for defense against ungodly, blood thirsty tyrants. Certainly no Christian should place one straw in the way to interfere with this armament, but should endorse the government’s endeavors to protect its citizens from these enemies of righteous government.

But how about the words of the Lord Jesus concerning the sword?

SHALL WE SMITE WITH THE SWORD?

The Lord Jesus was asked this question by His apostles: “Lord, shall we smite with the sword?” Luke 22:49.

In other dispensations the Lord has ordered His people to smite with the sword. Note the battle of the Gideonites against the Midianites in Judges 7:22, “The Lord set every man’s sword against his fellow.”

Then Samson smote the Philistines with a great slaughter. Judges 15:8.

King Saul and the Israelites “smote the Amalekites, and delivered Israel out of the hands of them that spoiled them.” I Samuel 14:48. God gave Saul specific orders to destroy the Amalekites, and because he spared some of them God was displeased with him. I Samuel 15:18 to 21.

David was in the will of God when he cut off the head of Goliath with the sword. I Samuel 17:51.

When the Jews were rebuilding Jerusalem at the Lord’s command, note that half of them worked while the other half protected them from their enemies with spears and habergeons. Nehemiah 4:16. Then note, “every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand a weapon, for the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded. Nehemiah 4:18.

It is true that the coming of Christ somewhat changed God’s program. In this dispensation of grace Church and State are separated, but both are the powers of God to accomplish His purpose in this age.

THEY THAT TAKE THE SWORD

Now let us read what Christ said concerning the sword:

“And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt Thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But He turned, and rebuked them, and 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.” “And behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest’s, and smote off his ear. Then said Jesus unto him, Put up thy sword into his place; for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels?” Luke 9:54 to 56, Matthew 26:51 to 53.

In neither instance was the Roman government officially concerned and we should study, “they that take the sword shall perish with the sword” in the light of Romans 13:4: “For he is the minister of God; he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.”

Here we learn that the sword in the hands of the government is ordained of God, that the ruler with the sword in his hand is the minister of God, whether or not that ruler is a saved or unsaved man. But with this statement we should ever keep in mind the words recorded in Luke 4:5 to 7: “And the devil, taking Him up into an high mountain, shewed unto Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto Him, All this power will I give Thee, and the glory of them; for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If Thou therefore wilt worship Me, all shall be Thine.”

We may have difficulty in reconciling Satan's claim with the statement "the powers that be are ordained of God." But let us read Romans 13:1 to 7:

"Let ever; soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but God; the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then, not be afraid of the power? do that which is good and those shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For this cause pay ye tribute also; for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour."

In I Timothy 3:15 and 16 the Christian is exhorted to behave in the House of God, the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. In Romans 13:1 to 7 the Christian is told how to behave toward the government.

In this day of grace Church and State have been separated by God. Spiritually, the weapons of the Christian's warfare are not carnal. The Church gives the gospel to the law-breaker. God has put the carnal weapons in the hands of the government. The government is to give the law to the law-breaker. The Christian is to be subject to the government in the enactment and enforcement of laws.

GOD'S DEALINGS WITH NATIONS

God has always ruled and overruled in the preservation of the nations whose people have been the most faithful in carrying on His program during the spiritual economy and generation in which the people lived. According to the Divine rule and principle, we feel that the United States and Great Britain will be the last of the present nations to be annihilated, because more than ninety per cent of the money and missionaries, carrying the real evangel of Christ to the heathen lands, are furnished by the United States and Great Britain. Moreover, more than eighty-five per cent of the true messengers of the grace of God, God's message for this age, are Americans or Britains. In protecting these nations from the ungodly, selfish dictators who are resorting to brute force, and every diabolical device to deprive men and women of the privilege of worshipping God, according to the Bible, and proclaiming the gospel of the grace of God, without interference from civil and political despots, God expects the United States and Great Britain to defend themselves by warring against the enemies of God and Christianity. And surely in such defense and protection Christians cannot shirk their responsibility.

There is a difference between the Scriptural rights of the individual Christian to protect himself against persecution by his enemies, and the Divine authority of a nation, to protect itself against the invading army of an enemy nation, especially when it is evident that the rulers of the enemy nation are seeking to forbid its citizens and defeated victims to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and serve Him according to Bible instruction.

God definitely instructed the rulers of Israel to war against the Philistines and Assyrians. He told them to destroy the Amalekites. God very definitely led David when he decapitated Goliath. Because of the sins of the Jews, in fulfillment of II Samuel 7:14, God did permit Nebuchadnezzar to destroy Jerusalem and enslave the Jews; but what happened to

Nebuchadnezzar? Let us note II Samuel 7:14 and Daniel 4:33: "I will be his father and He shall be my son. If he commit iniquity I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men." "The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar; and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagle's feathers, and his nails like bird's claws."

Yes, Pharaoh and his people afflicted Israel sorely; but what happened to Pharaoh and his army? They made their grave in the bottom of the Red Sea. Exodus 15:4. God buried them there. In this connection let us note, in Exodus 15:3, that Jehovah is "a Man of war." In Isaiah 9:6 and 7, He is the Prince of Peace. He is coming to be the Prince of Peace; but how is He coming? "And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war." "And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations; and He shall rule them with a rod of iron; and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." Revelation 19:11, 14 and 15.

Note Psalms 76:10 and Psalms 2:3 to 5: "Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee; the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain." "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath, and vex them in His sore displeasure."

In Ephesians 1:11 we learn that God worketh all things after the counsel of His own will, and that God has a predestined purpose which He will accomplish during this day of grace. The dictators of Europe may join with antichrists, and the heathen murderer of Japan, to defeat God's purpose; but all the armies of man and forces of Satan cannot thwart God's purpose. Japan is making a serious blunder in prohibiting Christian messengers to preach God's message to their people. God's purpose and spiritual program is to complete the Body of Christ, made up of believing Jews and believing Gentiles from all nations: "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect Man, unto the measure and the stature of the fulness of Christ." Ephesians 4:13.

King Saul opposed the cause of God and the servants of God, but when he came to death by self-destruction, he cried, "I have played the fool and have erred exceedingly." I Samuel 26:21.

Some other kings are playing the fool now and many believe that at least one of these ungodly tyrants will leave this world by self-destruction. And then what? "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Hebrews 9:27.

I APPEAL TO CAESAR

Paul practiced what he preached.

Note Acts 19:21 and Acts 23:11: "After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome." "And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of Me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome." Yes, Paul must go to Rome. Caesar must have the opportunity to hear God's saving message from the heart and lips of the Lord's prisoner, Paul. God assured Paul that he would get to Rome, but Paul did not calmly sit down and fold his arms and say, "you Jews and Romans try to kill me if you can; I am Divinely protected." What really transpired? Read it

in Acts 25:9 to 12: “But Festus, willing to do the Jews a pleasure, answered Paul, and said, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me? Then said Paul, I stand at Caesar’s judgment seat, where I ought to be judged; to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest. For if I be an offender, or have committed anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die; but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Caesar. Then Festus, when he, had conferred with the council, answered, Hast thou appealed unto Caesar? unto Caesar shalt thou go.”

Already the Roman government had saved Paul from death at the hands of the religious Jews, who claimed to be the exclusive people of God: “And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing that Paul should have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the soldiers to go down, and to take him by force from among them, and to bring him into the castle. And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul; for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.” “And they came to the chief priests and elders, and said, We have bound ourselves under a great curse, that we will eat nothing until we have slain Paul.” Acts 23:10, 11 and 14.

Paul was the most spiritual, courageous, and fruitful Christian of all times. He was not afraid of death. Note his words in Acts 21:13: “I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus,” Later on, he said, “to die is gain, it is far better to depart and be with the Lord.” Philippians 1:21 and 23.

He wanted to finish his course and faithfully perform the task which the Lord Jesus Christ had committed to him. Acts 20:24. He always bore about in his body the dying of the Lord Jesus, always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake. II Corinthians 4:10 and 11. Paul believed for himself what he wrote in Romans 8:28: “All things work together for good to those who love the Lord.” He said, “Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.” Philippians 1:20. Paul said, “the Lord stood with me, and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.” II Timothy 4:17. Paul was persuaded that the living omnipotent Christ could keep him, but he said, “I appeal to Caesar.”

When Festus declared Paul’s cause unto the king, the Roman ruler said: “It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have license to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him.” Acts 25:16. Paul said, “I stand at Caesar’s judgment seat.” Acts 25:10.

In the matter of rendering unto Caesar the things which were Caesar’s, Paul was very careful to practice what he preached. The religious leaders who claimed to be the servants of God, wanted the Roman authorities to either kill Paul, or let them kill him. These religious haters of Christ said of Paul and his fellow-servants, “all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar:” “These all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, One Jesus.” Acts 17:7. Festus declared that the only true accusation that could be brought against Paul was concerning “One Jesus, Which was dead, Whom Paul affirmed to be alive.” Acts 25:19.

Paul knew the truth written by another apostle, Peter: “But, and if ye suffer for righteousness’ sake, happy are ye; and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled.” I Peter 3:14. Note also I Peter 3:15 and 16.

“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: Having a good conscience: that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.”

“Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.” I Peter 4:16.

Caesar’s sword saved Paul’s life from the angry religious mob. He was not only subject to the powers that be but he was protected by the Roman soldiers. He would have been as inconsistent as are some of our present-day theologians, if he had taught Christians to interfere with Caesar’s military forces.

CHRIST—THE CHRISTIAN—AND CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

When Jesus Christ spoke, in Matthew, He was a minister of the circumcision confirming promises which God made to Israel concerning their Messianic kingdom. Romans 15:8. That kingdom was at hand for Israel. Matthew 4:17—Matthew 15:24—Matthew 10:4 to 8. The Body of Christ was not at hand. The dispensation of the grace of God for Gentiles was not at hand. Ephesians 3:1 to 6. The Lord Jesus Christ was not instructing members of the Body of Christ as to their responsibility to the Roman king and government. In the Sermon on the Mount the Lord Jesus Christ was not abrogating God’s decree concerning capital punishment. That Divine decree is clearly set forth in Genesis 9:6: “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God made He man.”

Let us remember that Noah found grace in the sight of God about 900 years before the law was added at Sinai. Genesis 6:8. Noah was not an Old Testament saint. The Testament (Covenant), made old by Christ’s death on the cross, was added in Exodus 20 was about 2500 years after Adam left Eden. Noah was not under the law. He was the recipient of God’s grace.

After the law was added, at Sinai, many times it is recorded concerning certain law-breakers, “they shall surely be put to death.” During the first 900 years that Israel was under the law Church and State were united by God’s order. To Israel, God committed religious and spiritual laws, civil and criminal laws, domestic and sanitary laws. During the centuries that Israel was both Church and State their rulers were authorized and instructed to enact and enforce many laws with which the members of the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth, have nothing to do, except as they are citizens subject to the powers that be. Some of these laws were brought over into this present economy of grace; and the responsibility of their enactment and enforcement was placed in the hands of the minister of God who beareth not the sword in vain, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Romans 13:4. By God’s decree, Church and State, in the economy of grace, are separated. The sword is in the hand of the government. The government applies the law to the law-breaker. There must be adequate penalty for the transgression of the civil laws, and the law must be enforced, otherwise a reign of crime, lawlessness and anarchy will result.

The members of the Body of Christ are to be evangelical in creed and evangelistic in action, remembering the words of John 3:17: “For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved.” The Church is the custodian and dispenser of the spiritual law called “the spirit of life in Christ Jesus.” Note Romans 8:1 to 4: “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

But let the Christian remember that it is in the same Epistle of grace (Romans 13:1 to 9) that the member of the Body is instructed as to his responsibility to the government.

God Himself instituted capital punishment, demanding the death penalty for the shedding of human blood, because man was made in the image of God. We might expect an evolutionist to advocate the abolition of capital punishment but not a Christian who accepts the inspired Word of God as his guide. We repeat that capital punishment, or the death penalty, was not instituted under the law, but long before the law was given at Sinai. It is confirmed and continued under this grace testimony, in Romans 13, and therefore the Lord Jesus never intended, in the Sermon on the Mount, to abrogate or abolish it, as far as the government is concerned.

THE FOLLY OF POSTMILLENNIALISM

In the last world war we beheld the folly of the Postmillennial pacifists in the various denominational churches. They preached against preparations for war, as well as against participation in war; and later on, many of them were displaying above their pulpits the flags of all the allies, and their churches almost became recruiting stations.

The fallacy of Postmillennialism has had much to do with the unsaved politicians' estimate, ideas and doubts about Christianity. There is not one line of Scripture to support the kingdom theories of the Postmillenarians. They teach that God's purpose and program, during this age of grace, is to bring in the kingdom, the universal reign of peace and righteousness, that as the result of preaching Christianity and Christianizing the nations, having the legislative bodies enact laws based upon the Sermon on the Mount the ethics of Jesus, the golden age, or the millennium, will come. The Church, with them, is "spiritual Israel" and Jesus Christ is the absent King of the Church; and as the kingdom of God is within the Christian, there is no reason why Jesus Christ should come back to earth to be king on an earthly throne. They have decreed that He shall not. They claim that this is a reflection against them, to say that the return and presence of Christ the King is imperative to establish Christ's kingdom on earth. Many of them are turning to what they call, "the social gospel." They of course, do not believe Galatians 1:8 and 9.

In seeking to apply the Sermon on the Mount, many preachers do not understand that no man can practice the ethics of Jesus until he first receives, by the new birth, the nature of Jesus Christ. Some are preaching social regeneration, or political reform, instead of regeneration for the individual sinner, described in John 3:18: "He that believeth on Him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." Of course, when they take an inventory and admit that there are fourteen times as many unconverted heathen in the world today as the total population of the world when Christianity began, they know that their program and task require wholesale salvation; so they endeavor to Christianize society and governments. However, some sincere Christians among them are turning from the error of their way, from the false hopes of the Postmillenarians.

Because of the unscriptural mixture of God's kingdom program with God's purpose in this day of grace by Christian preachers, because they are not only ignorant of the blessed hope of Titus 2:13, but scoff at the true servants of the Lord who faithfully proclaim the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, first to receive His Church, and then His advent as the Son of man, the Prince of Peace, to bring a righteous and peaceful political government, there are thousands of unconverted statesmen, politicians, religious reformers, and all kinds of sinners who say that Christianity is a failure.

Christianity is certainly a failure according to the program of the Postmillenarians; but they are the real failure. They have seriously failed because they have presented a program that is not of God and opposed to the true program of God. God, during this age of grace, is building a House, called the Body of Christ, the One New Man. Ephesians 4:11 and 12. I Corinthians 12:13. Ephesians 2:15.

Note the purpose and goal of God: “And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying (building up) of the Body of Christ; Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect Man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” Ephesians 4:11 to 13.

The end of the present Divine economy will not be the end of the world. After this age of grace, when the Lord’s Body has been completed, the great tribulation will follow, and then will appear the Son of man coming in the clouds with power and great glory. Concerning Christ in heaven God’s Word declares: “Whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.” Acts 3:21.

War is a horrible thing and every true American sincerely trusts that this nation may be saved from participation in this present conflict unless participation will save the nation from something worse than war. Every Christian preacher should be diligently proclaiming God’s saving message to lost sinners. They should be more interested in saving men from eternal perdition than in saving them from war. But pacifism on the part of Christians that interferes with the government’s preparations for defense against an “aggressor” nation is unscriptural.