

is nie. Christus self is deur die Heilige Gees saam met hulle. Nou dat die ontwikkeling van die moderne lewe hom met besondere krag rig op die massale en totale van wêreldverbande en maatskaplike strukture, behoort die sorg vir die enkele mens in sy persoonlike node en vrae meer as ooit tot een van die eerste opdragte waartoe Christus sy gemeente roep. Hy bly sy kudde wei en bewaar. En Hy bly almal wat sy Naam bely, uitstuur in die wêreld. In die werk van Christus is apostolaat en pastoraat één. Hulle is ook in die lewe van sy gemeente nie van mekaar te skei nie. Waar die regte aanbidding gevind word, is die wêreldwye werk van getuigenis en diens reeds aangepak. En waar die diens aan die wêreld in die geloof verrig word, styg die aanbidding tot groter hoogte.

Dit is 'n vreugde om saam te staan

vir die bevryding wat deur Christus vir alle mense tot stand gebring is. Dit is hartverwarmend om met mekaar besig te wees in die revolusie van die Ryk van God. Dat dit 'n beslissende keuse is en 'n totale omkering van die lewe vra om Christus te volg, mag daarby nie verswyg word nie. Die evangelie is nie na die mens nie, hoër seer dit ook geheel en al vir die mens is. Op byval van die massa moet die gemeente van Christus nie reken nie, al mag hy strewe na 'n goeie gerug in die wêreld. Die kerk wat die mense nie na die mond praat nie maar hulle plaas voor die ergerlike en alleen in selfoorwinning te neme beslissing van die geloof, sal altyd plaasbekledend voor God in die mensheid staan. Terwyl hy dit weet, mag hy nooit homself of die afsondering soek nie. Want die wêreld van die volke en die samelewing van die mense vorm ewe-

seer die werkterrein van die Heilige Gees as die hart van elke mens persoonlik.

Daarom moet in die gemeente van Christus die sorg vir die enkeling en die besorgdheid vir die gemeenskap in die wydste lewenskring steeds hand aan hand gaan. Die vensters na die wêreld mag nooit gesluit word nie. En die nood van verre volke moet hom net so sterk ter harte gaan as die welsyn van die naaste wat baie naby is. Tteenoor geen vraagstuk wat die mensheid in sy geheel raak, mag die kerk onverskillig staan nie.

Vir sy kleinheid en gebreke hoef hy hom nie te skaam as hy sy heil en die heil van die wêreld buite homself in Christus Jesus soek nie. Hy mag daarop reken dat die ganse heelal eenmaal vol sal wees van die lof van God. Eers dan sal sy taak klaar wees.

CHRISTIAN ATTITUDES TO WAR

— A Historical Survey —

Prof. P. B. Hinchliff

It is not easy to discover what the earliest Christians thought about war. The New Testament contains no sustained discussions of its moral implications. Christ refused to be identified with violent nationalist movements. He is recorded as saying that it was right to turn the other cheek instead of repaying violence with violence. The whole spirit of his teaching is against the use of physical force, in any context. But there is no real analysis of the morality of warfare. The post-apostolic age has left us very few written records apart from the New Testament. We have no sure grounds for deducing what they thought of the subject. Probably the situation did not arise for the average Christian. The army was a semi-professional organisation. Christians would not be conscripted into it. Violent subversive movements, then as now, did not by their nature attract large numbers. Certainly when there were Jewish rebellions against Rome late in the first century and early in the second, Christians soon earned amongst the Jews a reputation for cowardice because they would not fight. But one imagines that in general there simply were not many situations in which a Christian had to ask himself the question — "Is it right for me to take up arms?"

NEW TESTAMENT

There was, perhaps, one such situation. In times of persecution there must have been many Christians who wondered whether they were entitled to defend themselves by force—particularly since, in the first two hundred years, persecution was far less often a result of deliberate state policy than of riots and disorders started by Jews or heathens, as in the famous Ephesian episode of Acts 19. If an Ephesian punches me on the nose because I am a Christian, may I hit back. But it was precisely here that our Lord's teaching was unequivocal. "If a man

strikes you on one cheek . . .", "Pray for those who persecute you . . .", and so on. Moreover his example as well as his teaching would bind Christians. One can see from the way in which Stephen's martyrdom so closely parallels Christ's own death how this ideal was venerated by early Christians. To be "led as a lamb to the slaughter" was the ideal. In view of the fact that Stephen's speech to his judges occupies two full, closely printed pages of my Bible he can hardly be said to have fulfilled the rest of the quotation applied to Christ "and as the sheep before her shearers is dumb, so opened he not his mouth" — but the ge-

neral pattern is clear. Non-violence — non-resistance — love — forgiveness — gentleness.

THIRD CENTURY

When we come to the third century, when there is much more written evidence, it is still not easy to be certain what Christian teaching about war was. This was the period, of course, when savage persecution became more and more a matter of deliberate, systematic government policy. The state, society, the world would have seemed to be quite clearly a cruel and wicked thing. There were those who said that no Christian could be a soldier in the employ of such a state. The reason is not always clear. It has been suggested that the real reason was that a soldier might have to sacrifice to the gods, but this is not (for various reasons) a satisfactory explanation. It must have been

- simply that a soldier's business was to kill; or
- that a soldier might have to take part in the organisation of persecution; or
- that a soldier was defending and perpetuating an evil society.

Hippolytus (who lived about the year 200) is quite categorical in saying that a Christian soldier cannot kill

nor take an oath of loyalty. Under those circumstances he was hardly an acceptable soldier at all. But Hippolytus is known to have been an extremely rigorous and old-fashioned moralist. In the same passage he lists other professions forbidden to the Christians — a pander, a gladiator, a heathen priest, a harlot, a soothsayer — but also a charioteer, a juggler, a sculptor or a schoolmaster. It seems as one reads the list (actor, magistrate, painter etc., etc.) that there were very few jobs that Hippolytus regarded as safe for Christians and one wonders how far it was possible to enforce such a series of prohibitions.

Another writer of the same age and strict outlook, Tertullian, conducts a detailed discussion of the moral problem of warfare and is quite clear that no Christian can be a soldier. He can take no oath of loyalty to anyone other than Christ. He cannot live by the sword in view of Christ's teachings. He is a son of peace and cannot make war. He cannot imprison and torture others. And so on.

Yet there are others who seem to teach that under certain circumstances a Christian might legitimately serve in the army. Even Tertullian, admits that a soldier who becomes a convert could continue to serve his time in the army provided he can evade immoral duties. But in those days there was no police force. The maintenance of the *Pax Romana* rested on the army. It was conceivable that in the more settled provinces of the Empire a man could be a soldier and not have to do more than the regular patrolling duties of a London bobby. He could regard himself as upholding law and order and as part of that system of punishing the evildoer and praising those that do well, which the New Testament describes as part of the god-given vocation of the state. Hippolytus and Tertullian are not, therefore, merely indulging in fantasy when they say that a Christian could be a soldier provided he did not fight.

FOURTH CENTURY: CONSTANTINE

When we come to the fourth century and the conversion of Constantine, there is a marked change. The state becomes, no longer the epitome of cruelty and evil, not just the preserver of divinely approved law and order, but the positive embodiment of

good. Society is regarded as Christian society and something which the Christian ought to strive to preserve. Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea and the father of Church history hailed the advent of the first emperor sympathetic to Christianity in terms which seem rather nauseating and sycophantic to modern ears. This is almost a new Messiah. God's rule on earth has begun. Constantine could be called by Christians the new David and the thirteenth apostle.

All this is very understandable in terms of the human situation. If one had been a Christian, never quite sure when one might be persecuted; or a bishop whose office had hitherto seemed like a vocation to martyrdom — and then all of a sudden one's religion was treated as something quite safe and respectable, good and proper — one might well begin to think that the state, which had seemed the agent of evil, had been converted into God's instrument for good. So it would be right to fight for such a state, to preserve it against its enemies. It is true that even as late as Augustine's time (end of 4th, beginning of 5th century) Christians could still be suspected of being potential pacifists — but, more often than not, Christians themselves were perfectly willing to disprove this suspicion and do their duty as soldiers, generals, secret policemen and so on. The Church was even prepared to invoke the power of the state in persecuting the pagan survivors or the new heretics, like the Donatists. It must be admitted that this honeymoon period did not last for long. The Arian controversy made Christian leaders realise that there could be disadvantages as well as advantages when the government took one side against another in doctrinal disputes. Yet the idea survived with a curious persistence, that the Empire was in some sense a Christian Empire. Augustine's famous *City of God* was written partly because men were really terrified that the collapse of the Empire would mean the end of the Church on earth. And right down to the Renaissance (a matter of a thousand years), there is still the idea that the Roman Empire was a God-given thing designed (in terms of the vision of the Book of Daniel) to usher in the kingdom of the saints.

But, even in what I have called the honeymoon period, the Church's attitude was not unequivocal. There remained some uncomfortable feelings

that war was not a proper occupation for a Christian. A man who had killed another man in battle was not permitted to communicate at the sacrament until he had done penance. Ambrose, bishop of Milan in the late 4th century, refused to admit an emperor to the congregation of the faithful because he had been responsible for a massacre. The emperor was subjected to the same public penitential process as any other man who had shed blood. "Thou shalt not kill" was still uneasily regarded as an absolute prohibition. The Church had inherited from Judaism the belief that there were three sins for which forgiveness could not easily be obtained — murder, adultery and apostasy. And even when Christianity was allied with the state — even when the killing was described as a necessity of state — the Christian conscience was not entirely at ease in the matter.

THE "JUST WAR"

After the collapse of the Roman empire towards the end of the fifth century, the Church in the West was faced with an entirely new situation. I stress the words "in the West" for two reasons — first because it is the western tradition which we have, in the main, inherited; secondly because developments in the East were (as we shall see) rather different. The Church had been born into the Roman Empire and, beginning as a small, almost an outcast, group had worked her way to the top. Now she found herself representative of a superior but defeated civilisation faced with the challenge of evangelising the victorious, heathen or heretical Barbarians. We have not the time to examine in detail the story of the Church's reaction to this challenge nor to see how she tried to build out of the two cultures a new single Christian Europe, nor to measure her success or failure. We can only note that in time medieval Europe emerged as Christendom, with Church and society inextricably mixed together — the whole of life under the Church's wing, organised and regulated by the Church and yet (conversely), the Church's life and teaching and rules modified and conditioned by the fact that she was so firmly entangled with society.

The thing that always fascinates me most in the period called the Dark Ages, while the Church was still grappling with the conversion of the

Barbarians, is the change one finds in the type of sermon preached. I have mentioned St. Augustine and the ideas he disseminated in the fifth century. His sermons are theologically subtle and he obviously has a congregation with a relatively high educational level, able to appreciate the compressed, allusive intellectual approach. A century later Christian preachers were reduced to oversimplified thunderings against the grosser sins of the flesh. Educational levels had dropped sharply. We are in the sort of atmosphere that one reads about in novels of Irish or Italian peasant communities — not very theologically profound clergymen threatening illiterate sinners with literal hell-fire because of drunkenness, fornication, brawling and swearing.

And, of course, war was an essential ingredient of the Barbarian way of life. There was little that the Church could do to stop it. Even at the beginning of the Dark Ages, when there was still some light left, relatively well-educated Franco-Roman bishops encouraged Clovis to become a Christian on the grounds that the Christian God was a getter of victories. At the other end of the Dark Ages, when light was beginning to dawn again, the great Charlemagne, creator of the Holy Roman Empire, committed many atrocities on the people of Germany claiming that he was fighting for the extension of Christianity against the heathen barbarians. At no time in the Dark Ages or the Middle Ages did the Church have a hope of outlawing war, even if she had wanted to. It was just an inevitable and accepted part of the way of life.

The Church did something to mitigate its effects. The so-called "peace of God" attempted to make it a sin to fight on holy days and the truce of God attempted to protect the clergy. There were rules as it were, for decent warfare which a gentleman infringed at the peril of his soul. Gentlemen did infringe them, but there was a feeling that it was morally wrong to be too blood-thirsty. Even the memory that the Church should not fight, survived. Bishops rode into battle, as they were bound to do in their capacity as great feudal lords, but they armed themselves with maces or clubs rather than swords, since it was unfitting for Christ's ministers to shed blood. The Church insisted on the sacredness of the oath of loyalty — so important to the

feudal structure of society — and this had the effect of making much warfare sinful. Almost all of Europe was bound together by ties of feudal loyalty. A man who fought against his overlord was committing a sin. So the theory of the "just war" emerged. If some wars were sinful others must be right. The theory became more sophisticated until Aquinas in the thirteenth century listed precisely the moral requirements for the just war, such as the possession of a righteous cause and a fair hope of success (not a purely cynical requirement this, but intended to reduce unnecessary suffering).

Nor was the "just war" a matter of theory alone. The Church acted positively and gave its blessing to certain campaigns. Thus William the Conqueror invaded England under a banner blessed by the Pope. He was fighting to exact the fulfilment of a sacred oath. From the eleventh century the crusades were fought as holy wars against the infidel and crusaders were deemed to earn certain spiritual benefits. It is here that we must note the different traditions of the Christian East. In the Byzantine Empire at Constantinople war was still regarded as something savage, un-Christian, uncivilised and best undertaken by professional mercenaries. When the crusaders arrived — Christian knights and even bishops ready to enjoy a "just war" — the East was horrified. It was one of the "non-theological factors" which led to the division of eastern from western Christendom.

In the thirteenth century a holy war was proclaimed against the Albigensian heretics in the South of France. Many horrors were again perpetrated by Christian men who believed that they were doing their duty.

It must be remembered that the Church also proclaimed certain wars to be unjust and immoral. When the infamous 4th crusade turned aside from its pious objectives to capture and sack the Christian city of Constantinople, Pope Innocent III excommunicated the crusaders with some very scathing remarks about soldiers of Christ who sat a harlot on the patriarch's throne in the Church of S. Sophia to a liturgy of bawdy songs.

RENAISSANCE

In the fourteenth century Renaissance political ideas, with a more cy-

nical pragmatic slant, watered down much of medieval moral theology about war. Political advantage began to be reckoned a sufficient justification of war. Morality and justice were no longer of such importance. Yet the emperor Charles V still believed passionately in his vocation as Holy Roman Emperor to preserve the integrity and unity of European Christendom. The Reformation threatened its unity; Turkish invasions its integrity. To fight the Turks and even the Protestants might be his duty. Francis I of France, Charles' great rival, was more typical of his age. To undermine the Emperor's power, Francis was prepared to use any ally — infidel, heretic, even the pope. This was much more in tune with the new political theories of men like Machiavelli.

THE REFORMERS

For the reformers the morality of warfare was a vital matter. They were accused of undermining the stability of society and plotting to overthrow governments. On the radical wing of the reform movement there were, indeed, those who tried to bring in the kingdom of the saints by force. The Peasant Revolt in Germany had religious overtones. In the city of Munster a curious apocalyptic kingdom was set up amid scenes of bloodshed and fanatical cruelty.

Others among the radicals held that all government was no more than a necessary consequence of sin and that the saints ought to opt out of organised society, refuse civil duties, avoid the taking of oaths (oaths of loyalty) and certainly not to fight in armies. Here was, in a sense, a return to early Christian principles.

The reformers thus felt called upon to do two things —

- (1) make it clear that they were not anarchists or revolutionaries in the political sphere;
- (2) Encourage Christians to serve the state even in war.

Thus, as is well known, Luther came out on the side of law and order with a savage pamphlet attacking the Peasant Revolt and the XXXIX Articles of the Church of England contained a section stating that it was entirely right and moral for a Christian to bear arms if commanded to do so by those in authority.

CALVIN

Calvin, in the final section of his

Institutes, considers the whole question of the Christian's duty in relation to the state. He sees government as a God-given vocation and obedience as the only justifiable attitude of the governed. He sets out five different propositions:

- (1) It is the duty of the godly ruler to insist on obedience from ungodly (i.e. non-reformed) subjects.
- (2) It is the duty of every citizen to obey a ruler.
- (3) The Christian must normally obey the ungodly ruler.
- (4) But Christians must not obey the ruler if this involves disobedience to God.
- (5) Even violent resistance against the ruler in such a case can be justified if it is approved by someone constitutionally vested with a subordinate authority.

It is clear in the context that Calvin believed that the fifth case would arise only in very rare circumstances, but because he set this scheme out in the *Institutes*, i.e. in the context of dogmatic theology, it was treated as a doctrinal principle by some of his followers, rather than as a piece of situational ethics. Calvinism became, in many parts of Europe, a militant, revolutionary and violent movement, rebelling against Catholic govern-

ments and fighting in many a religious war.

Sixteenth and seventeenth century Europe was the scene of a great many such — down to the thirty years war in Germany and the Civil War in England where many fought in order to establish the rule of Christ's saints on earth. Though small radical Christian movements, such as the Quakers in England, continued to advocate the rejection of all violence the overwhelming opinion was that to fight for the true religion must be to fight justly. But, partly as a natural revulsion against the devastations resulting from such wars, partly because of the rise of rationalism, in the late 17th century, men began to turn away from such fanaticism. This is not to say, of course, that wars ceased but they were fought openly and frankly for political advantage. Where principles were involved at all they were principles like patriotism, liberty and so on, rather than direct religious issues. God's aid was still invoked upon the cause. The British national anthem is such a prayer from this era and God is asked to "frustrate the knavish tricks" of the king's enemies. (In the original version he was also asked to bless General Wade and the "roads he made"!) But the age of religious wars proper had passed.

RECENT TRENDS IN CHRISTIAN THINKING

It must be remembered that, apart from Napoleonic France and one or two other exceptions (like the British naval press-gang), there was not usually any system of conscription. Armies were either professional or volunteer. Moreover the peasant class was illiterate, not equipped to argue morality, and they believed what they were told by the social "betters". For most Christians the question of whether a man ought to fight for his country did not arise. When the Boer War started there were many in England who had doubts for the first time about the justice of fighting to destroy the independence of a very much smaller and less powerful state. And the First World War, with conscription and total war, made conscientious objection a serious problem for the first time. This did not prevent English and German religious leaders from claiming that God was on *their* side, each against the other. In World War II, the situation was somewhat different. Conscientious objection still existed but German Christian leaders were, on the whole,

opposed to Hitler and the Allies believed themselves quite clearly to be fighting to defend themselves against a manifestly evil power. It was only a rare and brave voice, like A. R. Vidler, who could ask whether the whole war was not better understood as "God's judgment on Europe". But as recently as the Suez Crisis it was possible for an Anglican bishop in the English House of Lords to defend England's attack on Egypt, in Thomistic terms, as a "just war".

Recently, I think it is possible to distinguish three growing trends in general Christian thinking:

- (1) a widespread feeling that pacifism of some sort is the only really Christian attitude;
- (2) that however justifiable war may be in theory, the hugely destructive nuclear weapons make all war immoral;
- (3) (a most interesting development) that one may have conscientious objections to a particular war even if not to war in general. This is a rapidly growing opinion in America (vis-a-vis Vietnam) and is in some ways a return to medieval thinking about the just war.

I have already gone on for far too long and yet hardly done more than scratch the surface of Christian thinking about war and its morality. Inevitably what I have said has been generalised and superficial. I hope you may be generous enough to forgive this.

VERSOENING EN „SKEIDSMURE“

'n Lewe in versoening hou in dat ons die „mure“ wat volke, kerke en mense (ook binne die gemeente!) telkens tussen mekaar oprig, nie kan erken en aanvaar nie. Wanneer Jesus Christus die tussenmuur tussen Israel en die volke, die heidene, weggebreek het, hou dit in dat die gemeente hom by geen enkele tussenmuur kan neerlê nie. By alle begrip vir die eie aard van kerke, modaliteite, rasse en volke wat tot ontwikkeling mag kom, sal die gemeente apartheid in die sin van volstreekte skeiding moet afwys. Ook op hierdie manier word die „kosmiese“ aspekte van die versoening verwerklik.

(Uit: *De Tussenmuur Weggebroken*)

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