

III. THEOLOGICAL AND CRITICAL.

The God of War. By Joseph Judson Taylor, D. D. Fleming H. Revell Company, New York, 1921

Dr. J. J. Taylor has put into a volume of 255 pages his views on Christianity and war. These views have been more or less known to his brethren for several years, but he had not hitherto developed them at length. He is an intense antagonist of war. The chapter headings in this volume indicate his conception of the source of all wars, as follows: "Among the Gods," "The War God Honored," "The War God a Savior," "The War God's Pleas," "Temples and Sacrifices," "The War God Identified," "God and the War God," "Jesus and the War God," "The War God Repudiated." Dr. Taylor believes that the War God is not the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He quotes approvingly the sentiment that "war is of the Devil."

Whatever Dr. Taylor writes is readable and clear. The style is smooth, flowing and brilliant. His knowledge of Scripture and the literature of the subject is thorough. His purpose is entirely clear. He wishes to stigmatize and destroy the spirit of war. To this end he maintains that there is no justification for war in the Old Testament or the New. In the Old Testament the only wars which were justified were those which Jehovah distinctly and directly commanded his people to wage. These were numerous, but Dr. Taylor finds their justification solely in the fact that they were the result of special commands of Jehovah himself. His inference is that men are not warranted in making war under any circumstances without such an express command, and, inasmuch as men today have not the same direct relation to God, to the degree of infallible guidance and inspiration, they cannot claim that God directly commands them to wage a war. At least, the latter statement is the clear implication of all that Dr. Taylor says about the Old Testament.

The New Testament he thinks is entirely against all war. The teachings of Jesus, especially, are against war. He deprecates the late war, and finds that there was no justification for America or any other country resisting the German attack. He thinks that if France had refused to resist and had carried out what he regards as the Christian law in the premises, she would have become subservient to Berlin and the Kaiser, and would have paid taxes to another government, but she would have thus saved the lives of millions of men, women and children who perished as a result of the war, and he thinks she would have reaped the benefits of all kinds of material prosperity as a result of her non-resistance.

In this connection one naturally thinks of the Armenians, who have been massacred through the generations by the ruthless Mohammedans. Non-resistance has not brought them the blessings which Dr. Taylor thinks would have come to France, and the Mohammedans have not been moved to pity by their non-resistance. They have become more blood-thirsty and ruthless; but I pass this by for the moment.

As to the Old Testament and Dr. Taylor's interpretation of it, the average reader would not generalize or interpret it as he has done. He concedes that there were many wars of righteousness in the Old Testament specially commanded and directed by Jehovah. However, we are debarred from any such wars nowadays. All wars now are of the Devil. But if the Bible is our authority and gives us examples of what is right, as we hold who believe in its inspiration, are we justified in taking the many examples of righteous wars of which Jehovah himself approved as warnings against all war, or are we to consider them as containing the principle which may justify the kind of war which Jehovah approves. Certainly the latter is the way we ordinarily construe the Bible. We find in the inspired teachings of the Scriptures and the inspired examples of conduct the principles on which we order our present-day lives. In no respect do we have the same direct and infallible inspiration possessed by the Biblical writers. Dr. Taylor construes the Scriptures as teaching us by inspired example what

not to do. If we apply this to the New Testament containing teachings concerning the ordinances and the church and many other matters, we would abstain from following the New Testament example on the principle that that which was infallibly inspired then is prohibited now.

All will agree with Dr. Taylor's passion for peace and his hatred of war. But all will not agree that the New Testament prohibits all war under all circumstances. Of course, any nation which inaugurates a war of conquest is under the influence of the Devil. It does not follow that the nation which resists the aggressor in waging war is following the Devil.

The fundamental fallacy of Dr. Taylor's argument consists of his failure to recognize a distinction which is clearly taught in the New Testament, viz., the distinction between the church and the state. He does not seem even to recognize the existence of such an institution as the state and nowhere discusses with any adequacy its place and function in the divine government. He frequently argues as if such an institution did not exist. In order to make perfectly clear that the Scriptures recognize the state as a part of the divine order of human society, I quote two passages. There are others. In Romans, Chapter 13, Verses 1-7, we read: "Let every soul submit himself to the authorities that are over him. For there is no authority but from God; and those that are have been appointed by God. So that he that sets himself against the authority, resists the ordinance of God; and they that resist will receive to themselves condemnation. For rulers are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil. And dost thou wish not to fear authority? Do that which is good, and thou wilt have praise from him; for he is God's minister to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, fear, for he bears not the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger for wrath to him that does evil. Wherefore it is necessary to submit yourselves, not only because of the wrath, but also because of conscience. For, on this account ye pay tribute also; for they are God's ministers, attending continually to this very thing. Render to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor."

In I Peter, Chapter 2, Verses 13-17, we read: "Be subject to every human institution, for the Lord's sake; whether to the king, as pre-eminent, or to governors as sent through him for the punishment of evil doers, and the praise of those who do well. For so is the will of God, that with well-doing ye should silence the ignorance of foolish men; as free, and not as having your freedom for a vail of wickedness, but as God's servants. Honor all men; love the brotherhood; fear God; honor the king."

There are other similar passages, but these will suffice. From them we deduce the following conclusions: First, the state is ordained of God. It is expressly stated that this is true by the Apostle Paul. Secondly, it is a minister for good to the law-abiding. It protects human well-being. It is a trustee of human rights. Third, the state is ordained of God as a terror to the evil doer and the criminal. Fourth, the state bears the sword in order to control the criminal and evil-doer, and in order to make perfectly clear that the bearing of the sword is effective the Apostle Paul says that it is not "in vain" that it is borne.

This, then, is the New Testament doctrine of the state. It is divinely ordained for a special purpose. It uses force for the accomplishment of its purpose to suppress the criminal, to protect its citizens, and to promote the welfare of those who are its citizens or subjects. The use of force therefore by the state is recognized by the New Testament.

Glance, now, a moment at the doctrine of the church—the assembly of believers, as the New Testament teaches it. What is the purpose and function of the church? The church, as such, never uses force. It depends upon truth and the proclamation of the truth. It employs sacrifice. Its spirit is the spirit of non-resistance, the spirit of love. It is made up of those who have been regenerated by the Spirit of God. The principle of the Cross and the principle of sacrifice are the weapons of the spiritual body which we call the church. It never uses force, and therefore never functions as the state. Members of the church, however, are citizens of the state, and in both the passages cited the command is that they obey the powers that be. Christians are to be subject to the king and to the government.

If it be urged that there is a conflict between the idea of the state, which uses force, and the idea of the Christian assembly, which uses non-resistance, one need only to refer to *Romans*, Chapter 12, Verses 17-21, which read as follows: "Recompense to no one evil for evil. Provide things honorable in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as far as depends on you, be at peace with all men. Avenge not yourselves, beloved, but give place to the wrath of God. For it is written, To me belongs vengeance; I will recompense, saith the Lord. But, if thine enemy hungers, feed him; if he thirsts, give him drink. For in doing this, thou wilt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." Here Paul enjoins non-resistance in its most striking form, and yet a few verses below, in chapter thirteen, he proclaims the doctrine of the sword in the hands of government. There is no conflict whatever between the two principles. They are in perfect harmony and in accordance with the plan and purpose of God.

How, then, are we to regard war? Of course nations may make mistakes and think their wars are righteous when they are not. In some wars both sides are wrong. But there are cases where nations may righteously resist the criminal aggressor on precisely the ground that a police force of a city arrests and forcibly compels the criminal to desist from crime.

I quote from a recent book: "What is the duty of a State, which while maintaining good conduct on its own side is actually attacked and invaded for purposes of conquest and depredation by another State? The whole and fundamental fact is that when an invading army crosses its border it becomes an organized mass of murderers and robbers. They are collectively and individually within the scope of its government. Towards them it has the same duties as towards all others who are living at that time upon its territory. The invaded State has the same responsibility, though a heavier task, towards the invading criminals as towards the less numerous, less organized, less equipped criminals among its own citizens."

It is difficult to evade the force of the above language. We have no right to confound the two institutions which God has

ordained. In America we believe in the separation of church and state. The church must never usurp the rights of the state, must never seize the sword, must always propagate the truth through love and sacrifice. But the state is in duty bound to protect the weak, conserve human welfare, suppress the criminal within its borders, and resist the aggressor from without.

In conclusion, one sympathizes heartily with Dr. Taylor's great vision and great passion for peace and righteousness in the world, but one feels at the same time that he has presented us a half truth rather than all the truth of the New Testament.

I do not doubt his book will be widely read and greatly useful in stimulating the thinking of the brethren on this great subject. If he provokes antagonism of view while stimulating fresh thought, the book will be very useful. And while the present reviewer cannot agree with his conclusions, he shares in his desire for world peace and is glad this book is calculated to stimulate thought on the great subject of the abolition of war.

E. Y. MULLINS.

Belief in God. By Charles Gore. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1921.

In this book Bishop Gore has laid the foundations for a reconstruction of belief in God in the light of modern research. He points out the effects which have been produced by Darwinism in popular thought, and also the effects of Biblical criticism and the comparative study of religions, and considers the time ripe for the re-statement of the foundations of our belief in God. He calls attention, first, to the grounds of belief in God, which are:

1. Reason in the universe answers to reason in man.
2. The argument from beauty.
3. The argument from the moral conscience.

He next discusses the question of revelation, and deals particularly with the prophets of Israel, who culminated in Jesus Christ, the greatest of all prophets. The author does not consider Jesus a mere prophet. There are to be two other books in