

SHOULD A CHRISTIAN FIGHT?

by L. Leroy Neff

WHY do religious men sanction war, and even brand war as "holy" and "noble"—the same men who teach that Jesus said, "LOVE THY ENEMY"? Why do Catholic priests bless the troops, and sprinkle "holy water" over their weapons and equipment, which is then used to kill and slaughter Catholics on the enemy side *who have also had this same Catholic blessing?*

Why have Catholics killed Catholics? Why have devout Protestant mothers in Germany and devout Protestant mothers in England supposedly prayed to the same God, in the *same church denomination*, to spare their sons who were seeking to kill one another?

Why did men, adoring and worshipping the same little "babe in a manger," fight and kill one another in World War I and World War II? Many of the troops who were *mortal enemies*, apparently worshipping and serving the *same God*, stopped their fighting on Christmas. In some cases they even crossed over the lines to wish their enemies a "merry Christmas." The next day it was *war as usual* with professing Christians fighting and killing other professing Christians!

Why has the cross, a *symbol of peace* to many, been to others a symbol of war? Vast numbers of people have reverently given their lives, *without a fight*, for this symbol, while others *claiming* to worship the same God, have believed they must, by this symbol, *kill and destroy*.

All of these approaches to fighting cannot be right. Jesus Christ never taught ALL of these *differing* doctrines!

Confusion and disagreement grips "Christianity" today. Every church has

"PRAISE THE LORD, and PASS THE AMMUNITION!" were the words spoken by the now famous chaplain during the Japanese sneak attack on Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941. Yes, "PRAISE THE LORD," men say, as they engage in the practice of WAR! But IS God really "PRAISED" in this way? Does God sanction war? Is it *good* that young men learn to KILL in military organizations? SHOULD CHRISTIANS FIGHT?

Today, the world scoffs and ridicules—anyone who is a sincere believer in the *literal* teaching of Jesus Christ, and believes he should OBEY His Lord and Ruler—such a person is scorned as a "sissy," a "pacifist," or an "odd ball" of some sort! But *regardless* of what men *think*, or what men SAY—what is the real TRUTH of this vital subject?

With this issue we begin a *new series* of articles by Mr. L. Leroy Neff explaining the increasingly important question, "*Should a CHRISTIAN Fight?*" This is not only a basic and important DOCTRINE of the true Church of which CHRIST is the Head, but needs to be *thoroughly* understood by *all* young men of military age, or who will come of military age within the next ten or so years!—*Editor*.

differing beliefs about Christian participation in war.

With such confusion, how can an honest seeker for truth come to know what God *expects* him to do today?

There is only one source of *eternal truth* and that is the Creator God. God put mankind on this earth to learn many vital lessons. Hundreds of confusing and conflicting ideas are not His answer to life and death questions.

Most church people have never even stopped to ask themselves the question: "Should a Christian fight?" They have *taken for granted* what they were taught from childhood. People have accepted without question what the society around them, their church, club, or fraternity believes and practices about war and killing.

On one hand are *militant* and *crusading* "Christians" who have fought each other to the death, in mortal combat, on the field of battle. On the other hand are churches which say that any participation in war is all wrong.

One church teaches that the armies should consist wholly of Christians, while another teaches it is a sin to be

in military service. One sect teaches that a Christian can be a *noncombatant* in military service, while another teaches that even non-combatant service is wrong.

Frequent articles in our daily newspapers tell of people who are called "pacifists" and yet who are very *militant* in their protesting of war and war weapons. In their protesting, these people often *disobey* constituted authority. Some go on "*protest cruises*" in atomic bomb test areas.

Leading churchmen in this western world tell us that the DEATHS of these opposing

"Christians" *was necessary*. They know of *no better way!* A recent news release stated: "*The great majority* of Christians throughout history have held that war is an evil that *may be justified*, under certain conditions, as a *tragic necessity*. This doctrine is based on the ASSUMPTION that wars could be limited in scope and that *they might have good results*—such as the defense of freedom and justice—which would outweigh the carnage and suffering."

These church leaders know of no other way. But, is this God's way? Has God left us so helpless—with no better knowledge?

This *assumption* is one of the reasons for the many "religious" and "holy" wars that have scourged the earth. This ASSUMPTION has led to DISASTER on a grand scale never conceived before. The horrifying price already paid for this *false assumption* is beyond human imagination!

Here is just a part of the terrible price man has paid for such false assumptions: From the twelfth through the nineteenth century, about 14 million people were killed as a result of

war. In the last 50 years, about 75 million people were killed!

The direct and indirect cost of World War II *alone* was more than ONE TRILLION dollars. That much money would be enough to build and pay for a \$25,000 home for each family in the United States!

World leaders and statesmen realize the terrible danger that we face today. At the same time, many of the people in the world are avoiding the stark realities and terrible time of trouble that is staring us in the face.

"Mankind must put an end to war—or war will put an end to mankind."

This *shocking* statement was made recently in an address to the United Nations assembly by President Kennedy. He continued: "Today, every inhabitant of this planet must contemplate the day when this planet may no longer be habitable."

We are living in times of "MAXIMUM DANGER." We will continue under that maximum *world* danger for years to come. *The world is no longer a safe place in which to live!*

Have We Already Had Our Last Chance?

General MacArthur, who also recognizes the danger of our time, spoke these words before the assembled Congress of the United States:

"Men since the beginning of time have sought peace... Military alliances, balances of power, Leagues of Nations: all in turn have FAILED, leaving the only path to be by the way of the crucible of war. The utter destructiveness of war now blocks this alternative. WE HAVE HAD OUR LAST CHANCE. If we will not devise some greater and more equitable system, our Armageddon will be at the door..."

General MacArthur has seen firsthand the utter destructiveness of war. Few people in these United States today have seen *firsthand* the terribleness of this scourge of the human race.

Since these words of General MacArthur were spoken, *we are further from world peace, closer to world war, and threatened with human annihilation.* The United Nations does not have the answer that will bring us peace. The politicians and statesmen, the leaders of government do not know the way to peace.

Why Is There No Peace?

General MacArthur had part of the answer to world peace when he stated that the basic problem is the *"improvement of human character."*

But, has human character improved even perceptibly in the past ten years since he gave that very famous speech?

NO!

On the contrary! Anyone who reads a local newspaper, or listens to newscasts on radio or television knows that in the past decade mankind in general has grown *immeasurably worse*. Crime in the United States has almost doubled.

Peace, Peace, and There Is No Peace!

War has become such an important part of this world's way of life that it affects almost everything we say, plan and do. Former President Eisenhower said in his State of the Union Message, January 7, 1960:

"With both sides of this divided world in possession of unbelievably destructive weapons, mankind approaches a state where mutual annihilation becomes a possibility. No other fact of today's world equals this in importance—it colors everything we say, plan and do... We face what could be a turning point in history, and we must act decisively." (*Los Angeles Times*, January 8, 1960.)

Many people of note have said that such powerful weapons as science has produced would force man to peace. On the contrary it is more evident, as Mr. Eisenhower stated, that man is faced with annihilation instead of peace. This is the true condition of our world. It has gotten this way because of confusion and lack of *true* values. It has become steadily worse because of *false* assumptions about the vital issues which face mankind.

The seriousness of this time is also reflected by a statement from an address delivered at Goucher College, Baltimore, Maryland, by former Secretary of State Dean Acheson:

"I assure you that I know nothing which is classified, but I know enough of what is going on to assure you that, in 15 years from today, this world is going to be too dangerous to live in... We must adjust our minds to the firm belief that, whatever our predilections, whatever our hopes and dreams are, that we really get it into our heads that the first duty of a society is to survive. That is its first duty. It isn't to make the world safe for democracy, or bring about the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. It's to survive. That's the number one necessity."

These men have evaluated the seriousness of our time. They see that *these days of trouble are not comforting* but are terrifying to those *WITHOUT God's protection*. But, they do not know the way out of this dilemma. The way

out is not to produce greater and more awesome weapons. Nor is it to be concerned only with our own personal survival or the survival of *our* society. The Bible clearly states otherwise.

With many kinds of weapons that can destroy all life on this planet staring us in the face, we are in *maximum danger*. Survival of the human race is in serious jeopardy.

Is this present terrible state of affairs and the carnage in human lives and suffering of past wars necessary? Was it really a *tragic NECESSITY* as many ministers say?

History has proved that the *assumption* that war would bring certain *beneficial results* is utterly *false*. War has not brought the peace and good results that men thought it would. We must not fall into the same error. Religious men have come to this wrong conclusion because they have *MISUNDERSTOOD the plain statements of Holy Scripture*. They have *perverted, twisted and wrested* the plain Bible doctrine to suit their own beliefs and desires.

The Bible Only Source of Real Truth

The Bible says what it means and means what it says. It states clearly and plainly whether or not a Christian should fight. There need not be any question.

The Bible is the *only* source of *true* knowledge. It is the inspired Word of God to man. It is God's instruction to us about *how to live!* Therefore, it will be the *basis* of this study. History and the beliefs of men will be examined in the light of this revelation of God to man. Since "Christians" take their NAME from Christ, and Christ's teachings are found IN THE BIBLE—then the Bible should plainly tell us *whether a Christian can WAGE WAR!* Let's seek, NOT the reasonings of men's organizations, but the very words of CHRIST. Let's investigate the plain, clear, straightforward teaching of Jesus Christ *Himself*.

We must get back to the *faith once delivered* to the early "Spirit-led Church" (Jude 3) and not follow *foolish assumptions*. Any other way that seems right to us leads to death (Prov. 14:12). The Scriptures must be examined with an open, searching, and honest mind. Previous conceptions or prejudices must be cast aside.

It is necessary to first examine the Bible teachings of Jesus Christ. He *founded* the TRUE Christian religion. What did He teach about fighting? Did

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light. *Young men need to be SURE* of God's teaching so they will not continue to be deceived by today's religious confusion. They have a right to see this subject clearly and in the right perspective, and to know what to do in the trying times immediately ahead.

It is time to face this question squarely and stop avoiding it. You need to know what God expects of you—in this very end time—today.

The next installment will begin to unfold the startling but plain answer from the very Word of Almighty God. Then we shall see from history just how the present confusion came about. We shall see who started it.

We shall also see how there has been an *amazing change* in the teachings and practices of the churches. The results of this change are shocking! What will happen in the *future* as a result of this confusion of beliefs *will be made plain*.

(To be continued)

Christians Fight?

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the original Apostles teach the same thing that Jesus taught, or did they change? Did the true Church as it started out follow the instructions of Jesus and the Apostles?

Did the Catholic Church follow these same teachings of Jesus and the original Church? What about the Protestants; did they reform and get back to the faith once delivered, or did they just perpetuate the practices of the Catholic Church?

There are so many people who consider themselves Christian today who are in military service, that it is necessary to have a whole corps of chaplains to take care of the servicemen's religious needs. Did the early Catholic Church have people in service like this? The amazing truth of history will be shocking and eye-opening.

Christ said He would build His Church and even the grave would not prevail against it. He prayed that His disciples down through the centuries would continue to be ONE, not divided and in confusion (John 17:20, 21). The centuries intervening were not to divide His Church. Have Christ's words stood the test of time? If so, it is obvious that the confusion of today is not true Christianity, but that of a clever, diabolical, counterfeit kind of "Christianity."

The world has been in confusion too long. The truth must be exposed to