

THERE IS A WAY—a *tried and proven way*—a SURE way—to end all fear of any all-out nuclear hot war between the United States and Russia.

What a pity that the governments and the PEOPLES of this world remain blinded to THAT WAY! And it is so simple!

It's just as simple as this: There is a CAUSE for every EFFECT—yet our whole society and way of life today is based on treating the *effect*, IGNORING the CAUSE! Our people do it in treating sickness and disease. They do it in dealing with crime. They do it in WORKING FOR PEACE!

Working for Peace

Everybody *wants* PEACE—or at least, so we profess! We WORK for peace! The pope pleads for PEACE! Prime ministers strive for PEACE! Yet *there is no peace!*

WHY?

The very NEWS of all this “working for peace” was reported millenniums ago in biblical prophecy! But, it was also reported, “The WAY OF PEACE *they know not . . .*” (Isa. 59:8).

So, the nations and world leaders CRY for “peace”—*work* for “peace,” while they endorse, sanction and continue *the way of war!* They follow *the way* that is the CAUSE of WAR, trying to STOP war by dealing with the *effect*, ignoring the CAUSE!

The world today is a good deal like the dope addict, who finds he is “hooked,” and can’t “kick it” off on the one hand—and, on the other, he is forced to keep gradually *increasing* the dosage to just hold his own. It becomes very costly, and most dope addicts resort to stealing, crime—*anything* to get their hands on enough money to keep up their growing, escalating, ever more-costly habit.

Isn't it about time we come to UNDERSTAND?

The Plain Truth is a magazine of UNDERSTANDING. All right, let me give you a little UNDERSTANDING of war and PEACE.

Why can't the heads of government in the nations of the world

1982 THE YEAR OF VIOLENCE?

by Herbert W. Armstrong

WHY do wars, riots, violence escalate—with no hope in sight for peace? World leaders do not know! They do not know that they could have peace now, in 1982, in full security for the future. Read the answer in this eye-opening article.

realize that ONLY GOD has the ANSWERS! That the BIBLE is the most up-to-the-minute source of knowledge and UNDERSTANDING in today's world for the solution of all problems. LISTEN to a little SENSE!

WHY The Plain Truth

The Plain Truth is a world NEWS magazine, keeping you abreast of the KEY world happenings leading us directly into the PEACEFUL and HAPPY WORLD TOMORROW—but, too, it is MUCH MORE! It is a magazine of UNDERSTANDING—understanding *not only* of key happenings in world news, but UNDERSTANDING of life itself, of the PURPOSE and real meaning of life—of the CAUSES of problems and troubles, whether personal and individual, national or world-problems—and of their SOLUTIONS, and of HOW, and WHEN, and by WHAT MEANS all these giant problems *are going to be solved!*

More, and most important of all, *The Plain Truth* brings you UNDERSTANDING of the very Word of God, the SOURCE of TRUTH—and of the PROPHECIES of events soon to occur, in the next two, five, or 10 years!

WHY do nations go to WAR? WHY does God *allow* wars, violence, human suffering? Many reason if God is LOVE, he surely would not *want* all this suffering! And if he is all-POWERFUL, he could prevent it. So WHY doesn't he?

Certainly God could stop it—and in fact, soon will!

But why not millenniums ago?

For a supremely important reason! A PURPOSE is being worked out here below. Man was put here on earth for the development of right CHARACTER. That PURPOSE requires free moral agency in man. It is necessary that man be given both the prerogative and the ability to *make his own decision!* Otherwise he would be an automaton—no character.

There is A WAY that will produce peace—a way to happiness, abundant well-being—and with it, God will *give* eternal life!

What is that way? The Eternal Creator set in motion not only the laws of physics and chemistry—laws like gravity and inertia—but also a *spiritual* Law that is THE WAY to all these wanted blessings. It's a simple matter of CAUSE and EFFECT! That Law is *the way* of LOVE. And love is

outgoing concern. It is giving, helping, serving, sharing—but human nature *pulls* humanity in the exact opposite direction—into being SELF-centered, selfish, greedy, the way of vanity—the way of getting, taking, accumulating—of competition, strife, envy, jealousy, resentment, hatred.

God's great spiritual LAW is simply, the CAUSE of peace, happiness, abundant well-being. The violation of that Law, by yielding to the pulls of human nature is, simply the ABSENCE of peace, happiness and abundant well-being.

God laid before man the knowledge of his Law—his WAY! He compels man to CHOOSE! Would man *want* God to FORCE him to go God's way, *contrary* to the desires of human nature? Never! He would cry out "God is unfair!" Man *wants* the right of free choice.

To fulfill His PURPOSE, the Creator marked out a duration of 7,000 years. The first six of those millennial "days" was set aside for man to CHOOSE whether to OBEY God's Law—that is, voluntarily come under GOD'S GOVERNMENT—OR work out his own ideas of HUMAN government. Man chose to reject God, his government and his Law. He elected to follow the desires of his carnal self-centered nature.

Yielding to HUMAN NATURE is the CAUSE of war.

Rebellion against God's Law of peace is the CAUSE of war.

Nations Never NEEDED Go to War

So now let's take a look at one of the 10 POINTS of God's basic spiritual LAW. I mean that point that has to do with WARS!

In respect to WAR, the basic point is the Sixth Commandment. It says, simply, "*Thou shalt not kill.*"

If all nations obeyed that commandment and followed the way of LOVE toward other humans, there would be no war.

But, one argues, that's a pretty platitude—but it's not practical—it won't work. WHY? Because, he argues, if *your* nation obeys that commandment and is disarmed with no military force, it would be attacked and beaten by some *other* nation that disobeyed God's Law, and believed in WAR. Your nation

would therefore be helpless.

Oh, but it WOULDN'T! The Creator understands human nature better than we humans do. HE PROVIDED FOR THAT!

Let's open our eyes to down-to-earth practical TRUTH—to FACT!

You think the Almighty Creator-God is impractical—that he leaves those who OBEY him, who accept his GOVERNMENT over them, HELPLESS? One of the responsibilities of GOVERNMENT is to protect its own subjects! You think—do you?—that the GOVERNMENT of GOD is so feeble and lacking in power that it is unable to protect the individual or the nation it governs?

Open your eyes, now, to the FACTS! God did take a people to be his nation. He took a family of some two million helpless SLAVES—all descended from God's friend Abraham—and offered to set them up as a nation under his government.

Notice now, in your Bible, the specific application of the commandment, "*Thou shalt not kill,*" to military force and war.

Notice how GOD says to those under HIS GOVERNMENT, that HIS GOVERNMENT—an all-powerful supernatural and supernational government—will PROTECT His people against any invading force.

God said to Israel: "... if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries . . . and I will cut them off" (Ex. 23:22-23).

God promised supernaturally to fight any invading enemy to protect the nation and people under HIS government. I intend to give you ample case histories to verify this.

But is it just as wrong for GOD to fight an invading army, and if necessary, take human life, as for humans? ABSOLUTELY NOT! God is the GIVER of human life. Human lives *belong to him!* He, *alone*, has the RIGHT to *take* human lives. The Sixth Commandment forbids MAN, of his own volition and at his discretion—to take human life!

Why Ancient Israel Went to War

But did you notice—there were CONDITIONS to God's promise of divine protection. He said he would protect them "... if thou shalt

indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak."

During this first 6,000 years, in God's Master Plan, He does not *force* any nation, or individual, to come under his GOVERNMENT. That decision is left to man's free CHOICE.

When God, with his own thundering voice, delivered the 10 basic points of his inexorable spiritual Law from Mt. Sinai, he was outlining for MANKIND *the way* to peace, happiness and abundant well-being. This applies to every individual and to every nation. Transgression of this basic Law is SIN (I John 3:4). This Law—the very principle of RIGHT as distinguished from WRONG—had, of course, existed from the time of Adam.

You'll find the account of God's delivering of this Law in Exodus 20:1-17 and Deuteronomy 5:4-22. But, beginning Exodus 20:18, you will read the account of God laying down basic laws and statutes of his national civil government delivered through Moses.

Then, once God had restated before this vast family of Israelites his basic spiritual Law—the foundational PRINCIPLE for all the national civil statutes, judgments and ordinances—and also basic civil statutes and ordinances, God put it to these people, through Moses, to CHOOSE whether they would accept HIS GOVERNMENT over them.

Notice the completing of the COVENANT—the AGREEMENT between God and this PEOPLE—to form them into a NATION under GOD'S GOVERNMENT.

"And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basins; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words" (Ex. 24:6-8).

Government Protection Against War

NOTICE CAREFULLY! A *part* of God's PLATFORM OF GOVERNMENT that he laid before the people

before they became HIS NATION was the promise that HIS GOVERNMENT would protect its citizens from need of going to WAR. That is the OPEN PROMISE of GOD, which would apply to ANY nation. Later, God offered the SAME government, and its protection and blessings, to the first WORLD EMPIRE—the gentle Chaldean empire under King Nebuchadnezzar—as we shall see. God plays no favorites. He does not bless one nation and harm another by his arbitrary choice.

But human nature is human nature—and facts are facts. And humanity had rebelled against God from the beginning—before the Flood, and after the Flood. From the time of the Tower of Babel, men had *organized themselves* into nations, with HUMAN ideas of government—CONTRARY TO God's laws, and God's government over them. They had chosen *other gods!* Their religions were empty superstitions. And they were WAR-making kingdoms! God had dealt in no unmistakable manner with mankind, ever since creation!

NO PEOPLE, except a downtrodden SLAVE people in bondage, would have made the CHOICE to say to God, "All that the Lord hath said, will we do and be obedient."

Not only had this enlarged family of Israelites been suffering under the lash of slavery, but God had DEMONSTRATED to them HIS POWER—and HIS LOVE in outgoing concern for them, by delivering them from slavery by SPECTACULAR MIRACLES!

By the miracles in PLAGUES upon the Egyptians, God had freed them.

Human Nature at Work

And HUMAN NATURE? Yes, these Israelites were full of it!

WHY do world leaders, scientists and educators even today reject God, and ply their trades, professions and interests *as if God did not exist?* God himself tells us—in HIS WORD to mankind: "Because the carnal mind [human nature] is enmity [hostile] against God: for it is not subject to the LAW of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8:7).

These Israelites, even while

being blessed and delivered by God with MIRACLES, still were rebellious.

Even before they had reached Sinai a chain of significant incidents occurred. After the MIRACLES God had performed in FREEING them from slavery in Egypt, protecting them, blessing them, FIGHTING their military battle for them, leading them miraculously by a cloud by day and pillar of fire by night, these people began to gripe, grumble, complain and DISOBEY God. Even in the face of such incredible MIRACLES, they began, even then, to LOSE FAITH.

These people—600,000 men, beside women and children—came

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There is a cause
for every
effect—yet our
whole society
and way of life
today is based on
treating the
effect, ignoring
the cause!

”

to the Red Sea. There were no ships, no bridges. They could not swim such a distance. They could not walk on the water. They were STOPPED by this obstacle beyond their own power.

They looked, and within eyesight, Pharaoh's ARMY was coming after them.

Right here, *before* they reached Mt. Sinai—*before* they heard God's own great voice thundering his Ten Commandments—God *demonstrated* the pattern he would follow in preserving his people from having to undergo military service or fighting in war or taking human life!

Here is God's *living* EXAMPLE NUMBER ONE!

Yet even here, the people of Israel, in fright, grumbled, com-

plained, accused—lacked faith in God.

These Israelites had *started* out of Egypt "with a high hand" (Ex. 14:8). "But the Egyptians pursued after them, all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen, *and his* ARMY, and overtook them encamping by the sea. . . . And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto the Lord. And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt? Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness" (Ex. 14:9-12).

But God's PURPOSE was not to be defeated. He PURPOSED to deliver them out of Egyptian slavery. He PURPOSED to *show them* and *all nations* and all humanity that HE would fight their battles for them. So, in spite of their faithless complaining in this initial EXAMPLE of God's faithfulness, he was determined to fight their battle and save them.

"And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, which HE WILL SHEW TO YOU today. . . . *The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace*" (verses 13-14).

The Israelites were not to fight—but STAND STILL! They were to *see* God save them from Pharaoh's ARMY. God was going to SHOW THEM that he would fight their wars for them! They were to remain at PEACE!

How GOD Fights for Us!

Then God's angel moved behind the Israelites, and the great dark cloud moved between them and the Egyptian army. It held the Egyptian army from attacking Israel all night, but illuminated the way before Israel. Then God parted the waters of the sea, holding them back by divine MIRACLE,

so that the waters formed a high wall on both sides, and the Israelites marched across on the dry floor of the sea.

Now notice the dramatic example of how God miraculously fought Israel's battle for them, as recorded in the Moffatt translation:

"Moses stretched his hand out over the sea; the waters parted. Then the Eternal swept the sea along by a strong east wind, all night, till the bed of the sea was dry, and the Israelites marched through the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall to the right and left. The Egyptians in pursuit of them went into the sea, all the Pharaoh's horses and chariots and cavalry. And in the watch before the dawn the Eternal looked out from the column of fire and cloud on the Egyptian army and threw them into a panic; He clogged their chariot wheels till they drove heavily.

"The Egyptians cried, 'Let us flee from the Israelites! *The Eternal is fighting for them* against the Egyptians!' Then said the Eternal to Moses, 'Stretch your hand out over the sea, to make the waters flow back upon the chariots and cavalry of the Egyptians!' Moses stretched his hand out over the sea. Then, as morning broke, the sea returned to its wonted flow, and while the Egyptians were fleeing against it, the Eternal overwhelmed the Egyptians in the middle of the sea; the waters did flow back over the chariots and cavalry, over the whole army of the Pharaoh, which had followed them into the sea, till not a single one of them was left. But the Israelites had walked through the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall to right and left.

"Thus did the Eternal save Israel that day from the Egyptians, till Israel saw the Egyptians lying dead on the sea-shore; Israel saw the mighty act of the Eternal against the Egyptians, AND THE PEOPLE STOOD IN AWE OF THE ETERNAL, BELIEVING IN THE ETERNAL and in His servant Moses" (Ex. 14:21-31).

Yes, for a short while, the spell of AWE still over them, these people actually BELIEVED in God. Trusting

God to DO what he has promised requires believing in MIRACLES, you say? OF COURSE! Salvation requires miracles! God is a miracle-working God!

After this miraculous delivery from disaster—from a WAR—a whole army of a then great nation destroyed—those Israelites expressed a little temporary FAITH. With Moses, they sang a song of praise and rejoicing: "I will sing unto the Lord. . . The Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation. . ." (Ex. 15:1-2).

But now UNDERSTAND the lesson here!

Ancient Egypt is a type of SIN.

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Everybody wants
peace—or at least,
so we profess! We
work for peace! The
pope pleads for
peace! Prime
ministers strive for
peace! Yet there is
no peace!

”

God was, figuratively in type, delivering these people out of SIN. They were starting out on GOD'S WAY of life.

But, UNDERSTAND!—God's way of life requires FAITH. It is a life of OBEDIENCE to GOD. Obedience requires FAITH. WE are SAVED by GRACE through FAITH "and that not of yourselves: *it is the gift of GOD*" (Eph. 2:8). But not by a DEAD faith! It is a LIVING faith that makes obedience possible.

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego (Dan. 3) obeyed God's command against idol worship—but their stout refusal to bow down to Nebuchadnezzar's idol was possible *only* by their RELIANCE ON GOD to protect and deliver them. They TRUSTED God (Dan. 3:28). They exercised FAITH—*living faith!*

Empty, dead faith—just BELIEVING that God exists—is not the faith that saves. "The [demons] also believe, and tremble" (Jas. 2:19).

But faith and obedience must ENDURE! The newly freed Israelite slaves, still under the spell of AWE after experiencing such miracles, expressed faith and sang.

But they didn't believe very deeply or for very long. When they came to Marah, they found the water too bitter to drink. This one little problem in their path brought them again to complaining and DOUBTING (Ex. 15:24). Again, by a miracle, God made the waters sweet.

Moses led these people on to the wilderness of Sin—between Elim and Sinai. They had now been gone from Egypt one month. And again, "the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron. . . and . . . said . . . Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt. . . for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger" (Ex. 16:2-3).

So God gave them a test of obedience, along with miraculously providing food. God said, "I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, *whether they will walk in my law or no*" (Ex. 16:4).

The particular LAW God was testing them on was his Sabbath. And remember, they had not yet reached Sinai. On the sixth day of the week he would provide them with a TWO-DAY portion. On the seventh day, God's Sabbath, he commanded them to rest and refrain from gathering manna. On the sixth day God provided the two-day supply. Nevertheless, on God's Sabbath, some of the people, in a spirit of rebellion, and greedy for gain, went out to gather manna.

"HOW LONG refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws?" thundered God at them (Ex. 16:28). They were neither *trusting* nor *obeying* God.

The vast congregation journeyed on and pitched tents in Rephidim. Again, there was no water. Again

they griped, murmured, accused, lost faith, and "tempted the Lord" (Ex. 17:1-2).

Now we come to the CRUCIAL INCIDENT that explains WHY Israel went to war. Regularly they had been grumbling, complaining, accusing, disobeying, LOSING FAITH—in face of constant MIRACLES from God. Now, again, as God performed another miracle, causing water to gush forth out of a rock, the people DOUBTED that God was with them. "... they tempted the Lord, saying, Is the Lord among us or not?" (Ex. 17:7.)

Now consider what had happened. Repeatedly, God had given these people awe-inspiring and miraculous demonstrations of his intention to *fight their battles for them*. These were VISIBLE miracles, which the people witnessed with their own eyes. God had demonstrated his faithfulness, his POWER, his willingness, HIS WAY! Yet repeatedly, these people doubted, complained, found fault, grumbled. Repeatedly they LOST FAITH. After all of this OVERWHELMING PROOF, these people DOUBTED God's faithfulness—DOUBTED his power—even DOUBTED his very existence. They disobeyed. They went *the way of SIN!*

In effect, they had their own "God is dead" movement!

At this point, Moses was distraught, his nerves shattered, his patience about exhausted. After all, Moses was only human!

"What am I to do with this people?" Moses appealed to God (Ex. 17:4). "They are almost ready to stone me."

God answered Moses, had him move ahead of the people, and smite the rock at Horeb with the same stick he had used in the parting of the waters of the Red Sea. Then again God performed a visible MIRACLE—water gushed out of the rock.

But, at this juncture, Amalek came against the Israelites in great strength with an invading army. This time God ALLOWED the Israelites to *write the lesson of experience*. He allowed them to SIN. God does not forcibly prevent humans from sinning.

Moses, at the end of his patience trying to induce these stubborn,

rebellious people to believe in and TRUST God, said to Joshua, "Choose us out men, and go out, FIGHT with Amalek" (Ex. 17:9). Lacking the faith to trust God for their protection, Moses feared they would be slaughtered. Although Moses weakened and gave the order for WAR, it was THE PEOPLE themselves who actually had MADE THE DECISION for war, by their utter lack of reliance on God.

It was altogether unnecessary for these Israelites to arm themselves and wage WAR. It was WRONG! It was SIN. But God let the decision be theirs!

This incident was the *turning point*.

It occurred even before they reached Mt. Sinai. It was after this that God laid before them HIS PROPOSITION for them to become his nation, ruled by his government. It was after this that God promised, conditioned on obedience and faith, always to fight their battles for them—to protect them from war—to give them constant PEACE. It was after this that they accepted his government over them. But already they had shown lack of faith and trust, even during the days when God was DEMONSTRATING his power and faithfulness by so many miracles!

They had experienced a taste of war. They could have—*should have*—turned from it, afterward, and relied on God instead of their own power. But they didn't.

God's PURPOSE Stands!

Even though God ALLOWS humans to make their own decisions—allows them to SIN—allows nations to go to WAR—nevertheless God's purpose must stand! HIS PURPOSE was to settle these descendants of Abraham in the land he had promised Abraham—"the PROMISED LAND."

God's promise to Abraham, 430 years before, had been made UNCONDITIONAL. Abraham had performed *his* part of that agreement. He had obeyed God, kept God's Commandments and laws. Now God's faithfulness demanded that he plant these people in that land, regardless of their conduct!

These descendants of Abraham had *made their decision* to be a

fighting, war-waging nation. That decision was theirs to make. And since they had made it, God used *them* to do the fighting in driving out the inhabitants illegally possessing the land God had allotted to Abraham's descendants. Consequently God gave orders for *them* to do what fighting—and killing—was necessary to accomplish God's PURPOSE of putting them in the land of promise!

But that did not make war RIGHT. Whether to DO right or wrong—that is MAN'S decision! These Israelites did not need to fight.

So it was BECAUSE of Israel's faithlessness and disobedience that God ALLOWED them to SIN by taking up arms. And therefore God used them as his instruments in driving out the nations illegally in the land. Even now the Israelites could have REPENTED, *changed* their decision and trusted God to fight their battles for them.

Nations CAN Choose Peace!

Would it seem preposterous to chiefs of state today, to believe that even NOW, in this new year of 1982, God Almighty actually *would* fight our wars for us—that OUR nations, today, *could actually have PEACE*—and have it *this very year*?

Undoubtedly it would! World leaders today—in ALL nations—have gotten so far from God and God's ways, and God has become so UNREAL to them that it probably would seem ridiculous even to suggest such a thing. The scientists, the industrial and commercial leaders, the educators—yes, and even the CLERGY—have all departed so FAR from God and HIS WAYS, that such a thought would not even enter their minds.

Yet the ETERNAL has not left us without absolute ASSURANCE! He has recorded, in his Word, not only his promises and assurances, but three additional concrete *case histories*—in addition to those recounted in this article—proving that he ACTUALLY DID DO THE FIGHTING for a nation being invaded, when that nation and its rulers TRUSTED HIM.

We will continue this exciting story in the next number. □