

NO LIBERTY WITHOUT LAW. PART FIVE.

GOVERNMENT.

The question as to how men should be governed, by whom and through what Constitution is becoming an urgent one for the trust of men - and here reference is to the situation in all Anglo-Celtic-Saxon countries - is no longer centred in the ability of elected representatives to cope with the overall national and international scene. It is no longer uncommon to hear the charge that once men are elected to government - and this on the basis of glowing promises of reform and reconstruction - both they and their promises recede into the common mould which projects an image of total hopelessness. This situation, of course, makes a mockery of the supposed principles on which the democratic system of government is based and more, it undermines the sincere endeavours of men of the past to provide for a just and equitable system by which a nation could be governed. In this, the fourth part Law of the Lord, the subject of government is examined side by side with God's instructions as to how His Israel people - as found in Anglo-Saxondom today - should be governed and, no matter how men may consider it, this Law of the Lord remains the only yard-stick for true peace and prosperity. Indeed, it has been disobedience and the ignoring of the Law which has brought about the present disastrous circumstances in the Western world today. Abraham Lincoln, in his 1863 Gettysburg address, made the famous speech which enshrined him within the hopes and ambitions of the American people. In this, he said: "That this nation, under God, shall.. have a new birth of freedom, and that the government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth". It should be noted that Lincoln never claimed to be original in his speech nor did he pretend that the political principle - the government of the people, by the people, for the people - was a new thing. In point of fact, the phrase had been used by President Monroe before Congress in 1820, by Schinz, a Swiss in 1830 and by Henry Wilson of Massachusetts in 1860. Then too, there is the tradition that this phrase with a preface - 'This Bible shall be for the government' - was incorporated in the Wyclif Bible of 1384 as well as the Hereford Bible of the same period. Extensive research into the tradition has however failed to either confirm or deny the validity of the claims. In Hoyt's Cyclopaedia of Practical Quotations, one finds that the phrase, as such, was used by Cleon, an Athenian demagogue (430 B.C.) who appealed to the masses not for their own good, but to further his personal prestige and ambitions. All down the centuries this phrase has been used - in some instances to overthrow authoritarian oppression and in others to undermine successful government and to establish mob rule. While a broad distinction is drawn between the Bible and Politics by many ecclesiastics today who encourage Christians to abstain from involvement in this, men of a past generation were not of this persuasion. They looked upon government as a God-given trust and did not hesitate to indicate that God's Word had much to say on the subject and demanded a return of the people, through government, to the principles of administration as laid down in the Bible. One such man was Charles Turner A.M., Pastor of the church in Duxbury, who was not only a man of tremendous conviction, but one who believed God and who saw, in the founding of the people in America, the 'planting of the Lord' (Isaiah 41:19) of His Israel people. In a sermon preached before the Governor, Thomas Hutchinson, and the House of Representatives of the Province of Massachusetts-Bay in New England in 1773, this being the anniversary of the election of the King's Council for that Province, Turner drew attention to the responsibility of elected government - which government should, at all times, be mindful of its mandate which originated from God. In the opening words of the sermon, Turner said: "As God condescends to govern the creation which He hath brought into existence, His dominion, though universal and absolute, is to be acknowledged as being, in its whole plan and numerous operations, unexceptionably wise and more . . . In His wisdom, He has chosen to use, in a great variety of instances, the mediation of others, for

carrying on the designs of His province. Agreeably, the civil rulers in this world, are in the numbers of His ministers or servants . . .” After setting out what was required of these ‘ministers or servants’ - not as it was conceived by man, but as demanded by the Lord, Turner ended his sermon by stating: “All persons, in any places of sacred trust, should exert themselves, according to the requirements of their several stations, to put a stop to the growing infidelity and immorality, whereby we provoke the Holy One of Israel to anger. Finally, may God grant that henceforth, our Government may attain the end of magistracy, the general happiness; that our officers may be peace, our exactors righteous; that judgment (and not innocent blood) may run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream; that this people (the branch of the Lord’s planting) may be all righteous, and inherit the land, in uninterrupted enjoyment of freedom, civil and religious, and all blessings of goodness for ever”. In those early days, men were imbued with a conviction that God meant precisely what He said and that it was not necessary to invent a social gospel to accommodate a political climate which relegated God to the limbo of spiritual experience alone. They saw God as the centre of national life and not an appendix added for the convenience of those who felt the need for spiritual refreshment. In those days, men believed God and in this belief gave Him all the Honour and Glory in national fruits of righteousness as laid down in His Holy Word. These men saw in the New Testament, a continuity of God’s Directives as He had given these at Sinai and were encouraged in this by noting the Lord Jesus Christ’s reaction, in a political context, to the traps set before Him. In one instance of this situation, attention is drawn to the account recorded by Matthew of the Herodians and Pharisees conspiring to discredit the Lord before both the people of Judaea and Roman authorities. They put the question to the Lord: “Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?” If the Lord answered this question in the affirmative, He would be denounced as a traitor to the writings of Moses and if in the negative, He could be and subsequently was, accused of ‘perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar’ (Luke 23:2). The Lord’s answer to the question is most illuminating in that it both negated the trap set for Him and provided for an understanding of the continuity of government as prescribed by God in the Old Testament. He called for the ‘tribute money’ and asked: “Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto him, Caesar’s”. This tribute money was probably the denarius which was in free circulation and which was part of the fiscal regulation of the Roman government in the context of poll-tax which had to be paid. Having received an answer to His question, the Lord said: “Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s; and unto God the things that are God’s” . As far as the immediate question posed by the Herodians was concerned, the Lord had answered in the affirmative in which He acknowledge the principle of the acceptance and use of the Emperor’s coinage as being an admission of his de facto sovereignty over them. At this time, the Roman government extended over the whole of the then known world and as this had been accepted with whatever benefits or otherwise resulted from this rule, obedience to the government and its dictates was essential. His subsequent statement however, makes it abundantly clear that there is an infinitely better government which, under the Sovereignty of God and by way of contrast with that operating under Roman jurisdiction, is preferable.

The Dictates of Government

The Lord said: “. . . render unto God the things that are God’s” and while many limit this statement to tithes and offerings - the whole situation arising out of the question relating to tribute money - the overall context indicates that it was not only the tribute money which was discussed, but obedience to the dictates of government. The prevailing government of that time had put its coinage into operation and having accepted and used this, all people placed themselves under the system which was man-made with all the uncertainties and oppressions attendant on such a system. When the Lord called for a rendering of the things of God to God, He was making a special call - not to the Herodians - but to the whole body of Israelites who, although far from the land (Matthew 10:6),

nevertheless still retained “. . . the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God and the promises” (Romans 9:4). ‘Render unto God the things that are God’s’ - the tithe was certainly the Lord’s, but the tithe was only a portion of the whole system of government which the Lord had given to one people - Israel. While men today may ask what other things, in addition to the tithe, one should render unto God, Moses, the great law-giver in Israel, provides the answer in that he draws attention to what the Lord required of the nation. He said: “And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God, with all thy heart and with all thy soul, To keep the commandments of the Lord, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good” (Deuteronomy 10:12-13).

Government Authorised by God

The requirement of God - that thing embodied in the Lord’s answer to the Herodians - was that Israel walk in His ways, to love Him and serve Him, both heart and soul. This reflects the heart of the purpose for which the Lord God made the nation Israel (Isaiah 43:1 & 21). It is interesting to note that prior to the Flood, no record exists empowering man to administer the Law, each individual being duty-bound to keep and observe the Divine Commands. Nowhere in the Bible is there any authorisation for human judgment against those who failed to keep the Law. The Biblical record of the antediluvian civilisation, while being sparse, nevertheless provides a graphic picture of licence which resulted from the exercise of free will without restraint in that it is stated: “The wickedness of man was great in the earth, and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually . . . The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence” (Genesis 6:5; 12-13). While theologians today aver that no law is to be found prior to Sinai, one should note that the behaviour of men was construed as ‘wicked’ and that his thoughts were ‘evil’. Now ‘wickedness’ and ‘evil’ could only be understood if there had been a yard-stick which provided for ‘righteousness’ and ‘good’ - in other words, both ‘wickedness’ and ‘evil’ could only be charged as a violation of law. After the Flood, a new dispensation dawned in that a charter was provided authorising the Noahic family to administer the Law making it mandatory for them to exercise God’s Justice within the frame-work of Law transgression. “Whoso sheddeth man’s (aw dawm) blood by man (aw dawm) shall his blood be shed” (Genesis 9:6). This responsibility necessitated the formation of a governing body which, while being charged with the administration of the Law, had no power to enlarge the scope of its work, nor did it relegate to man the right of Law-amendment. It was simply an authorisation to implement the judgments as prescribed by the Law - in all other respects men were to remain powerless and devoid of authority to indulge in further legislation. In the post-diluvian era, the violence and crime of the ante-diluvian period gave way to violence and aggression by governments which in turn became the basis for the stringent commands of the Lord to the Israel nation concerning contact with the other nations. The instruction of Moses in this respect was: “When the Lord thy God shall cut off the nations from before thee, whither thou goest to possess them, and thou succeedest them, and dwellest in their land; Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou enquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise . . .” (Deuteronomy 12:29-30). Because of the reference to ‘gods’ in this statement, many have thought that the whole prohibition falls in the context of religious jealousy whereas nothing could be further from the truth. The prohibition is within the political context and is aimed at preventing the Divine system of government from being diluted by the incorporation of other man-conceived systems. The ‘gods’ of the nations with whom Israel came in contact, while served under various names, was basically Moloch who - in 1 Kings 11:7;33 - is written as Moloch or Milcom. While it is admitted that very little is known of Moloch, apart from the repeated references to him in the Scriptures as the god of the surrounding nations, the ancient practice of bestowing divinity upon kingship as a divine-

human link between heaven and earth, is better understood. The practice in those days was that the king was presented to the people as a god and the god as a king and in this situation it is not difficult to appreciate the power exercised by the king. Being both a ruler and a god, the sovereign wielded authoritarian power with total jurisdiction in all spheres of individual and national life. A type of state-ism or totalitarianism with absolute power invested in the king whose whims and fancies became law, was the type of arena into which God's Israel people passed when they entered the land of Canaan.

Government of Administration

Having seen that the post-diluvian charter of administration devolved into violence and aggression by governments or human organisations which exceeded the charter given to Noah and his family, it is not surprising to find that the Lord God of Israel insisted on the provision of the administrative role of His people. In Exodus 19:5 it is stated: "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation . . ." The word 'priests' is translated from the Hebrew and Arabic kohen which has a political as well as a religious meaning. In the various contexts in which this word is found, it will be seen to carry the meaning of administrators from which it may be seen that the Lord's intention with Israel, insofar as His Law was concerned, was that they would, upon obedience, become a kingdom of administrators or a people who would demonstrate the principle of government by administration and not government by legislation. As one passes on in the Law, it will be found that Moses, having provided the nation with God's Constitution, took it upon himself as leader of the people, to warn them against tampering with the Law. He said: "Ye shall not add unto the word which I commanded you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you" (Deuteronomy 4:2). This warning was repeated: "What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it" (Deuteronomy 12:32). Thus, Israel, provided with the charter which established a government of administration with authority to implement the Divine Constitution given at Sinai, became a Theocracy indeed - a people ruled by God through the agency of His Divine Constitution. While the nation covenanted to be obedient to the voice of the Lord (Exodus 19:8), they nevertheless put into practice the principles of democracy which today still operates in their modern descendants in Anglo-Saxondom. Today, these principles are held to be the highest expression of political liberty with the people not realising that it is nothing less than the continued rebellion against God which characterised the behaviour of their forefathers in the land of Canaan. Democracy, which is the government of the people, by the people, for the people, has as the final court of appeal, public opinion, which, as pointed out in the Law of the Lord, should have no bearing or influence in the administration of the Constitution. The Lord's 'thou shalt not' took precedence over every opinion, whether private, public or the world. There is absolutely no provision in the Law for a national referendum to determine amendments to it; nor, as has been stated above, could any in the land, be he king, president or priest, add to or take away any of the clauses in the Divine Constitution. The law of priestly ritual is another matter entirely, but insofar as the national Constitution is concerned, this being perfect (Psalm 19:7) cannot be improved upon nor is any attempt to change it to be tolerated. The first demonstration of the democratic tendency in Israel is to be seen when, notwithstanding the national commitment to obedience to 'all that the Lord hath spoken' (Exodus 19:8), they immediately demonstrated a desire to violate the words of God. While Moses was in the Mount, the people assembled themselves and demanded that their voice be heard with the result that Aaron acquiesced and built the Molten Calf establishing the rule of the people as against that of God. The sequel to this event should be read in Exodus 32:17-35.

Who Was to Administer in Israel?

It was patently obvious that the nation as a whole could not be relied on to function as the 'kingdom of administrators'. The tendency toward the democratic principle in the matter of the Molten Calf showed this without any doubt. Now, Moses had been called by God to be the organ of His Will in presenting the Law to the children of Israel and apart from this, no further office of authority in Israel was spoken of. It is true that Moses' father-in-law Jethro, suggested assistants in the prodigious task of 'judging' the people (Exodus 18:18-22), but it should be noted that notwithstanding the feasibility of this, God never endorsed its validity and proceeded, at a later stage, to initiate His own plan by investing judicial and executive powers in the princes of the tribes and the elders of the congregation (Numbers 11:14-17). It is interesting to note the limitations imposed on both the executives and the judiciary in Israel. In the first instance, executively the government (for this is what it was) was required to administer the Law, collect the tithes, establish the financial and monetary system, provide for national defence and security, attend to diplomatic relationships - all within the frame-work of the Constitution as provided by the Lord. Judicially, they were called upon to render just, equitable and impartial judgment in all matters which came before it. The judgments were laid down and no departure from these was sanctioned. While the 'princes of the tribes and the elders of the congregation' were invested with executive and judicial authority, the Lord made provision for what might be called the civil servants in the kingdom. In Numbers 8:18 the Lord states: "And I have taken the Levites for all the first-born of the children of Israel" and it will be noted that within this newly acquired status, the tribe of Levi operated and was responsible for all basic governmental functions. While speculation exists as to the reason behind the selection of Levi, it is patently obvious throughout the Scriptural record that this tribe had a special responsibility to preserve the Law of the Lord in all its integrity and purity and to see that its requirements were duly complied with. It is of course, quite common to hear the contention that the Levites were the priestly tribe which was given the responsibility of attending to the Tabernacle and that any suggestion of this tribe's association with things of a political nature was not to be found. Such reasoning does not take into account the fact that the patriarch Levi had 3 sons, Gershan, Kohath and Merari, Kohath being the grandfather of Moses and Aaron - Aaron being the progenitor of those whose chief function was to attend to the Holy Things of God. The remainder of the Levitical family was dispersed throughout Israel, having no land inheritance, but having four cities out of every tribe set apart for their use (Numbers 35:1-8). The tribe of Levi was thus strategically placed in Israel to accomplish its function which, in general, was to keep the nation on the straight and narrow.

Failure

That it failed is all too evident in the historical narrative, for in Judges 17:6 it is stated that 'each man did that which was right in his own eyes' - an indictment against the Levites who had obviously failed to keep the Law of the Lord before the people and as with Aaron before them, heeding the voice of the people which demanded a permissive type of society. To counter this situation, the Lord provided the Judges - none of whom came from the tribe of Levi - who were to operate in a role similar to that of Moses. Even this failed for in 1 Samuel 8 one finds the record of democracy in action in the rejection of the Theocracy and the popular demand for government similar to that obtaining in the surrounding nations. However, while a monarchy was provided in answer to the demands of the people, the Levitical tribe still retained its function, although as is obvious from the history of Israel, both the Aaronic line with its Sanctuary Service and the administrative section of the family allowed the Law of the Lord to lapse and the nation suffered the consequence of this departure from the only mechanism which would accomplish its God-prescribed destiny of 'blessing all the nations of the earth' (Genesis 18:18). The Old Testament closes with a tremendous indictment against the Levites in that it is stated: "But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at law; I ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the Lord of hosts. Therefore have I made you contemplate and base before all the people, according as ye have not

kept my ways, but have been partial in the Law” (Malachi 2:8-9). Thus, as has been seen, when the Lord called for a rendering ‘unto God the things that are God’s’, He was without doubt calling on Israel to return to the Law of the Lord and to render unto the Father, the Service for which the nation was formed.

ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY

“For if the first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, behold the days come saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt . . . For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days . . . I will put my laws into their minds and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.” (Hebrews 8:7-10)

Great capital has, of course, been made of the fact that the Israel story in the Old Testament ended in apparent failure with men rejecting the Old Scriptures which they contend was and is the basis for the attempt to perpetuate a theocratic philosophy of Hebrew nationalism. Phrases which appear with monotonous regularity in many theological text books all point an accusing finger at the Law which they disparage as “unchristian” and which they reject as being totally incompatible with human conscience. While men may pass their judgment on the Law, the New Testament has a different story to tell in that, while it definitely underwrites the national tragedy of Israel in the Old Testament, it brings to the fore the law of cause and effect. It reveals, in the clearest of language, that a fault developed within the Israel polity and does not leave men to speculate where this fault lay. It categorically asserts that the sphere of law-operation is where the fault lay - within the nation itself and not with the Law. In the above-quoted Scripture, it will be noted that the first covenant was found to be faulty, but nowhere does it state that the Law suffered from the same deficiency. By observing what is actually written - in both the English translation and the Greek text - it will be seen that the first covenant was Israel’s undertaking in respect of obedience to the Law. This is where the break-down occurred for the Scripture states that the fault was in them (personal pronoun) i.e., the Israel people who had covenanted to obey “all that the Lord hath said” (Exodus 19:8). That the fault lay in the national sphere of operation cannot be doubted for a generation later and despite the covenant of obedience, “every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (Judges 17:6). While the Scripture does not excuse the people for the violation of the covenant - indeed they paid the penalty for this in both the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities - special attention is drawn to the failure of the Levites, the civil administrators, who “corrupted the covenant of Levi” (Malachi 2:8) and who, as translated by Ferrar Fenton, “hated to look at my law” (verse 9). **Administrative**

Responsibility In the world of today, men are doing exactly the same thing. They will not look at God’s Law which they consider as irrelevant and totally incompatible with the modern technological age of men’s creation. Within the ideology of the equalitarian dogma, all men are endowed with equal ability and in many instances, men are placed in administrative positions who have no ability in this field. It is small wonder that chaos reigns in both local and national government within Anglo-Saxondom. In Biblical times, when the Law was operative in Israel, different stations in life based on a man’s inherent capability, was the norm with no so-called “human rights” issue transforming a butcher into a politician. In the Apocryphal Ecclesiasticus 38:31-34, it is stated: “All these trust to their hands: and every one is wise in his work. Without these cannot a city be inhabited: and they shall not dwell where they will, nor go up and down: They shall not be sought for in public counsel, nor sit in the congregation: they shall not sit on the judge’s seat, nor understand the sentence of judgment; and they shall not be found where parables are spoken. But they will maintain the state of the world, and (all) their desire is in the work of their craft”. The context in which the above

quotation appears is the wide spectrum of national commerce with workers in each facet gravitating to his own level of capability and projecting a dignity into the labour of his ability. The inequality of individual ability was thus an acknowledged feature of Old Testament life and was never considered as a political arena until the priestly office and that of the administrators indulged in legislative enactments which changed the Theocracy and made God's Law "an alien thing" (Hosea 8:12).