

NO LIBERTY WITHOUT LAW.

PART SIX.

THE APPLICATION OF THE LAW.

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 publick 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' (Hos. 8:12).

Evidence of this is to be found in the writing of Ezekiel the prophet who, in his 44th chapter, accuses the priesthood of allowing strangers (Heb: Nokriy) into the sanctuary and in the 34th chapter, records the Lord's indictment against the Levitical administrators who he calls 'shepherds'. These shepherds had obviously gone beyond the limits of the mandate of administration for it is stated: "But with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them" (Ezek. 34:4). In view of the generally accepted practice of each man doing that for which he was equipped, the question naturally arises as to the suitability of the tribe of Levi for administrative purposes and if not, why was this tribe singled out for this service?

The question is very difficult to answer - if it can be answered at all. What is known about the tribe is that it was taken 'for all the firstborn of the children of Israel' (Num. 8:18) and according to the Jewish Encyclopaedia, this selection could have resulted from the promise of Jacob recorded in Genesis 28:22. In this, the patriarch promised the 'tithes' to the Lord and, calculating the number of the sons of Jacob from the youngest i.e., Benjamin, Levi was the 'tenth' and therefore set aside for the Lord's use. Be that as it may, it is patently obvious that Levi was not suited to the task of national administration.

Apart from their function in the various departments of national life, the main responsibility lay in keeping the people acquainted with the national Constitution under which they operated. "At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles, when all Israel is come to appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing. Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger (Heb: ger; legal sojourner) that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord thy God, and observe to do all the words of this law: And that their children, which have not known any thing, may hear, and learn to fear the Lord your God" (Deut. 31:10-13).

This, of course, falls within the scope of education - national education - in which the centrality of God and His Constitution is emphasised. It will be noted that the responsibility of the Levite administrators to 'read the law before all Israel' occurs in the year of the cancellation of debts - the year of release - the cornerstone of the whole national economy. It was a reminder to the nation, now debt-free and thus poverty-free, that its national well-being resulted from its obedience to the Constitution provided by the Lord. While the tangible reality of the political significance of the Law was thus demonstrated, the whole purpose in the Levitical function on that day was to establish the principle that 'happy is the nation whose God is the Lord'. However, against the background of economic restitution, the Levites were instructed to ensure that the future generations too could enjoy the fruits of national obedience to the Constitution.

As must be obvious, under this Theocracy, obedience was the key-note and equally obvious is the fact that it was in this department that the administrators fell down. The rejection of God as King - the intrusion of the democratic principle of government of the people by the people - all this attests to the failure of the Levites to honour their responsibility as administrators to God's witness nation.

Obedience Required

It is one of the most outstanding features in the Divine Constitution that the higher the position in the nation, i.e., king, administrator, judge or priest, the greater was the demand for obedience to the Law. Prior to the failure of the Levitical administration and before the people succumbed to the enticement of human government as manifest in the neighbouring nations, the Lord had made provision for the retention of His Law within the framework of the nation's rejection of His Kingship (1st Sam. 8:7). 'When thou art come unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me like as all the nations that are about me; Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, who the Lord thy God shall choose: one from among thy brethren (Heb: 'ach; literal blood relationship) shalt thou set over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger (Heb: nokriy; one of incestuous or spurious origins) over thee, which is not thy brother" (Deut. 17:14-15). From this, it is apparent that rulership or government in Israel was by Divine appointment and not the free exercise of democratic elections of alien peoples to administrative responsibility in the nation.

"And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests (Heb: kohen; administrators) the Levites: And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the Lord thy God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them" (Deut. 17:18-19). From this is established that governing authority is not above God's Law, and that no matter who ruled the nation or was involved with administration, they were at all times obliged to observe the national Constitution as the ultimate authority.

The Application of the Constitution

As with the appointment of the Levites to the position of administrators, so too one finds the appointment of judges to "Hear the causes between your brethren, and to judge righteously between every man and his brother, and the stranger that is with him" (Deut. 1:16). To these judges was committed the responsibility that "Thou shalt not wrest judgment (distort justice), thou shalt not respect persons (regard social status), neither take a gift (bribes); for the gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of righteousness. That which is altogether just shalt thou follow, that thou mayest live, and inherit the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee" (Deut. 16:19-20). The office of the judge was thus clearly theocratic for the Law having been given by the Lord, his task was to apply this to the conflicts of life as these arose within the experience of the individual.

In the Antiquities of the Jews, Josephus noted that the judges were at all times assisted by the Levites for, in quoting the legal procedures as laid down in God's Law, he wrote: "Let there be seven men to judge in every city, and these such as have been before most zealous in the exercise of vir-tue and righteousness. Let every judge have two officers allotted them out of the tribe of Levi. Let those that are chosen to judge in the several cities be had in great honour; and let none be permitted to revile any others when these are present nor carry themselves in an insolent manner to them..." Thus the office of administration of justice had, at all times, immediate recourse to the Law against which all judgments were made.

In the administration of justice, it was the responsibility of the Levites to ensure that the judges acted within the Law which recognised no differentiation in the status of the individual and had absolutely no regard for wealth, position or power. "If there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment, that the judges may judge them; then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked. And it shall be, if the wicked man be worthy to be beaten, that the judge shall cause him to lie down, and be beaten before his face, according to his fault, by a certain number" (Deut. 25:1-3). In this, as is obvious, one may see that the judgment of 'beating' was to be meted out to the 'wicked' and it mattered not if he was a wealthy noble in the land or whether he was a humble blacksmith - the judgment was the same for both as was the humiliation.

The Criminal

It may, of course, be claimed that the judgments recorded in the Israel Law, while being appropriate and suitable for Old Testament conditions, do not conform with advancements made in modern civilisation. It should be stated however, that notwithstanding the wide gulf in time which separates those days from the present, the principle of judgment remains the same and is thus fundamental to any well-ordered society. In today's society, large institutions are built at the expense of the tax-payer in which the em-phasis is on the rehabilitation of the criminal - which rehabilitation is paid for out of taxes paid by the person against whom the criminal act was perpetrated.

In the Divine Law, the community is not burdened with the addi-tional cost of constructing and Maintaining of prisons. There is only one judgment where imprisonment as such was provided for and this arose out of accidental killing or homicide. Any person accidentally causing the death of another, automatically fled to a Levitical city of refuge where he remained until released by the death of the high priest (Num. 35:6,13,15; Jos. 10:2,7,9). In many instances this amounted to life imprisonment, but a sentence very different to the similar judgment in the present modern era. Murder, of course, is an entirely different matter.

The Death Penalty

Contrary to popular modern belief, the God of the Old Testament does not hold life cheaply. The taking of a life is so serious in His eyes that He demands that the murderer forfeit his life, and in Numbers 35:31 it is stated: "Moreover ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer, which is guilty of death: but he shall surely be put to death". God's judgment for murder is thus death, but man, who thinks he knows better, has invented his humanistic device of the prison system which too will soon pass to become the mental institution and psychiatric retraining and rehabilita-tion centre. Man's experimentation is certainly not diminishing crime, nor is it creating respect for human life. Conversely, God's Law and its judgments are aimed at reinstating respect for the dignity of human life. The judgment of capital punishment - indeed all His judgments have this end in view "... so that thou put the vile away from among you. And those which remain shall hear, and fear, and shall henceforth commit no more such evil among you" (Deut. 19:19-21).

Among the crimes for which the death penalty was mandatory are (1) murder (Ex. 21:12-14); (2) striking or cursing a parent (Ex. 21:15; Lev. 20:9); (3) kidnapping (Ex. 21:16; Deut. 24:7); (4) adultery (Lev. 20:10-21); (5) incest (Lev. 20:11-12,14); (6) bestiality (Ex. 22:19; Lev. 20:16); (7) ho-mosexuality (Lev. 20:13); (8) habitual criminality (Deut. 21:18-21); (9) blasphemy (Lev. 24:11-14) and (10) refusing to abide by the court decision and thus denying the Law (Deut. 17:8-13).

The Thief

In the case of theft, conviction resting upon established guilt and this arrived at by the testimony of two or three witnesses (Deut. 19:15), demanded multiple restitutions according to the circumstances of the case. "If a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it; he shall restore five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep" (Ex. 22:1). Conversely, "If the theft be certainly found in his hand alive, whether it be ox, or ass, or sheep; he shall restore double" (Ex. 22:4). Today a person convicted of the above charges is merely sent to prison and the person suffering the loss left without physical restitution - the satisfaction of the conviction being an empty tribute to justice as a man sees it. In the Divine Law, the loss of the sheep through theft and death deprived him of his immediate as well as future wealth for the commercial value of the animal plus its reproductive value were assets to him. The restitution ratio of four to one was therefore an adequate compensation. The five to one ratio of the stolen ox took into account the added feature of an ox as a beast of burden and one which had a wide variety of tasks in a man's every day economy of life. The compensation was therefore commensurate with the animal's function.

The Community

While certain judgments were stipulated for specific crimes perpetrated by individuals, the Law held cities responsible for crimes committed within its borders when those responsible for the crime were not punished. The community was required to make atonement for the crime which produced a civic consciousness of community responsibility and made for the strict enforcement of the Law (Deut. 21:1-9). In this one may see that the individual within the community becomes a law-enforcement officer in that he is forbidden to be a bystander in any situation governed expressly by the Law.

"Thou shalt not see thy brother's ox nor his sheep go astray, and hide thyself from them; thou shalt in any case bring them again unto thy brother" (Deut. 22:1). Lost or strayed animals, indeed all of a man's possessions were to be protected under the Law and to be held in ward with every public effort made to afford an immediate restoration of that which had been lost - a civic responsibility engendered by the Law. Likewise in the case of public morality. A woman assaulted in a city without raising a cry of alarm is considered to have given her consent to the assault and therefore subject to the penalty of whoredom - death (Deut. 22:24). How-ever, having raised the alarm, it was the duty of every man within the sound of her voice to act and render assistance. In today's society, a cry for help is invariably ignored with many simply stepping over the body of the victim. In Anglo-Saxondom, communities are filled with bystanders who watch with superficial interest as lawlessness, crime and tragedy parade before their eyes and no finger is lifted to halt the erosion.

"When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him; and has been partaker with adulterers" (Ps. 50:18). The inactive bystander, apart from his failure to observe the requirements of the Law, renders himself liable to the judgment prescribed from the crime committed. Like the perjurer, he becomes an accomplice and an accessory to the crime (Deut. 18:18-19) and liable to the penalty. Thus community responsibility is clearly defined and indeed demanded of the individual who contributes by enforcing the Law and thus contributing to the well-being of all within the city limits.

The king, the judge, the Levite and the individual all have their part to play in the functioning of a flourishing community - indeed all are inter-dependent. However, as the Bible makes abundantly clear, men appropriated to themselves positions for which they were not qualified, while others, under the pretext of guarding public morals abused civic responsibility in furthering their own ends. This point is graphically illustrated in the New Testament - in the account of the women taken in adultery (John 8).

The scribes and Pharisees, no doubt invoking the civic responsibility clause in the Law of the Lord, dragged the woman who had been caught in the act of adultery before the Lord asking that He judge the woman in terms of the Law (John 8:5). The hypocrisy of the Pharisees was exposed by the Lord for by this time adultery had become such a common practice that the prescribed judgments had long since fallen into practical oblivion. In the first instance, there were recognised judges in the city before whom the woman should legally have been taken and yet they brought her to the Lord. He refused to act as judge. In place of this, He acted within the framework of the Law as it was originally given prior to its pollution and perversion by those who, at that time, had usurped the Israel name and function. It will be noted that the Lord, "stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he hear them not" (John 8:6). What did He write? The Scripture does not say, but one is not left to speculate for, as throughout His whole Ministry, the Lord Jesus Christ pointed to the Law and its requirements and judgments. In this instance, He drew attention to the trial of bitter water or the water of conviction recorded in Numbers 5:11-31.

In this Law, the accused woman having been brought to the tabernacle, the priest then took 'holy water in an earthen vessel' and put 'of the dust of the floor of the tabernacle into the water'. The woman was then charged with the crime after which the priest gave the water to the woman to drink which, if she were innocent, nothing happened, but if she were guilty, she fell under the penalty - her body reacting in such a way as to establish her guilt.

It will be noted the Lord was in the temple when they brought the woman to Him and as He stooped and wrote in the ground, was this not the 'dust of the floor of the tabernacle'? Thus writing in the dust, the Lord met the requirements of the Law but He did more. He placed the accusers on trial for preferring charges against the woman, the scribes and Pharisees acting, in terms of the Law, in the husband's role. By writing in the dust, the Lord placed them in this category by invoking the Law in Numbers 5. "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." That the accusers knew that the Lord knew of their adultery as well, was all too evident, for having placed them (legally) in the role of the woman's 'hus-band' and as they were also guilty of adultery, their just due was death as well. It is small wonder that they went out 'one by one' with none left to press home the charges of adultery against the woman.

It should be noted here that the Lord had confirmed the death penalty for the woman and so there is no question about her guilt - had He not invited the first stone to be thrown in the death sentence? However, in judgment of this nature, the Law demanded 'two or more witnesses'. These were missing and so as Jesus Himself had not witnessed the act, He said to her: 'Go, and sin no more' (John 8:11).

THE MAN BORN TO BE KING

It will be noted, if one is able to throw off the opiate of modern re-ligious teaching, that the First Advent was the direct result of national rebellion against the Sovereignty of God in all its phases - a vindication of the law of cause and effect. This principle dominates the whole body of revealed Scripture and as one considers the Messianic prophecies these will be recognised as God's response to the deteriorating national situation in Israel arising from the national alienation from God's Constitution.

Isaiah, truly one of the most prolific writers in the context of Messianic prophecies, went to great lengths in clarifying the reason behind the Virgin Birth which, he contended, was a 'sign' to Israel of Divine intervention in the tragedy of national disintegration (Isa. 7:8-14). Referring to the state of darkness which had descended upon the nation, he then wrote of the Child born to be King Whose government would emanate from the 'throne of David' (Isa. 9:6-7) thus indicating the correction of the national malfunction of Israel. There are indeed few people who are not familiar with the prophet's fifty-third chapter which records the suffering of the Messiah, but how many are there who realise that Isaiah, in drawing attention to the consummation of the First Advent, was stating as its immediate priority, the ending of Israel's then rebellion against the Sovereignty of the Lord? The prophet wrote: "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities...for the transgressions, of my people was he stricken" (Isa. 53:5-8). The use of the personal pronoun 'our' and 'my' by the prophet certainly denies the modern teaching of universalism and indicates the prophet's limitation of the First Advent to those whose transgression and iniquity was an impediment to the Plan and Purpose of God.

Transgression

To fully appreciate Isaiah's attitude, the subject of 'transgression' should be noted. In the Hebrew text, the word translated as transgression in the Authorised Version is *pesha* or *pesha* or *pasha* which has no other meaning than rebellion or breaking away from the rule of authority. It is patently obvious that to the Israelite Isaiah, the tragic situation in his own people, resulting from the continued violation of God's Law, was a rebellion against the Authority which alone gave context and meaning to his people. Thus, if one removes the English translation from the text replacing it with the more correct 'rebellion', one is able to see the picture of Messianic prophecies, not as a series of unconnected events, but as the deliberate action of God in Redeeming His people Israel and liberating them from the bondage of the then permissive society and bringing them once again into the true liberty which is afforded by His Law.

Another such confirmation is to be found in the writing of Daniel who recorded the angelic explanation for the 'seventy weeks' mandated pe-riod provided for his - Daniel's - people. "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression..." (Dan. 9:24), the word 'transgression' again being the English translation of the Hebrew *pesha* which, as the consideration of Isaiah's writing has shown, means 'rebellion'. It will be noted in reconsidering Daniel's writing that the 'transgression' is not a generalisation, but has the definite article preceding it thus indicating a specific rebellion and not a universal one. The cause therefore, for the First Advent - if one accepts the integrity of the prophets which the Lord Himself placed above reproach (Luke 16:31) - was Israel's insubordination and secession from God's Constitution which brought His Covenanted Purpose and His Holy Name into jeopardy.

Into the New Testament

While men may dispute the fact, it is nevertheless true that teachers in Anglo-Saxondom have extended the Old Testament rebellion against God into today's doctrines in that they have transposed what is actually written in the Scripture to make God's Word conform with man's emotional and intellectual requirements. For instance, they refuse to accept what is written in Matthew's Gospel, preferring a spiritualised version of the angelic annunciation to Joseph concerning the Child born to Mary. The Scripture relates the instruction; "... fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:20-21). The phrase 'his people' is universalised to take in all people at all times - an interpretation which makes nonsense of the scriptural definition of 'sin' (1st John 3:4). Further, it ignores as though it was not written, the explanation by the angel who stated that the Birth of the Lord was

the fulfilment of the Isaiah prophecy and which, as has been seen, was provided as the effect resulting from the cause of Israel's departure from God's Constitution.

Luke's account of the annunciation to Mary is perhaps the most potent of all in that Gabriel emphasised the Kingship of the Son to be born to Mary - a Kingship which is not stated as being universal, but specifically limited to the house of Jacob. "He shall be great, and shall be called the Sons of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:32-33). If, as so many teachers today aver, the Law of the Lord has been replaced by 'grace', through what instrument will the King rule? The whole picture of the end of the age with its turmoil, chaos, confusion and violence indicates that the Second Advent of the Lord is a necessity in which the King is coming to enforce His Kingship in Israel. The parable of the 'wheat and the tares' (Matt. 13:24-30) makes this abundantly clear and one should not eulogise about a 'gospel of love' bringing about a universal society of peace. The principle of the rule of the Lord was stated by John the Baptist who said: "And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire" (Matt. 3:10; Luke 3:9).

The Call for Reformation

God's Law was the cornerstone of the Lord's Ministry for He Who was 'made under the law' for the express purpose of 'redeeming them that were under the law', by no suggestion or implication provided any thought that He supplanted the Law with grace. Throughout His Ministry, the Lord called for a reformation, a reconstruction of the faith once delivered to the fathers which was based on obedience to God's "voice, charge, commandments, statutes and laws" (Gen. 26:5). The need for this was patently obvious. Aliens had already insinuated themselves into a role for which they were not fitted and having violently assumed an identity which was not theirs (Matt. 11:12), the usurpers were projecting their religious and civil traditions as a vital and necessary development of the Old Law in conformity with the then modern trends. Under the pretext of 'modernisation', the Pharisees gave priority to tradition over the Law - tradition which then, as with today, became a perversion of God's Holy Constitution. As must be obvious, despite the reformation demanded by the Lord, His true Israel people have persisted as proselytes to Pharisaism or its modern counterpart Judaism and steadfastly refuse to 'have this man to reign over us' (Luke 19:14).

It should be clearly understood today that the Lord Jesus Christ did reject law - He rejected every law and every tradition except those given by the God of Israel at Sinai for did He not say: "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up" (Matt. 15:13)? Did He not also say: "Think not that I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matt. 5:17-18)? Because of the ambiguity of the English translation of these words, many have been tempted to utilise this text as a justification for the non-observance of the Law. However, a closer look at the Greek text will show this is to be a vain exercise in wishful thinking for the very opposite emerges.

The key-word in the relevant verses is 'fulfil' which to many has come to mean a completion or an ending. This being so, an examination of Greek text becomes necessary for if the Lord ended the Law, His subsequent actions and statements make Him at variance with Himself. The Greek word translated as 'fulfil' is pleroo which is derived from pleres which means to 'make full to the top, to cause to abound or to pervade'. Throughout the New Testament, one finds this word dominating situations which, as the context reveals, confirms the abovementioned definition and indicates something being made full and being maintained. Thus literally, the Lord said that He had come to put the Law into force and to keep it in force in opposition to the traditions of men. In verse eighteen, the word 'fulfilled' is translated from the Greek ginomai which means 'to

become, cause to be, happen'. In point of fact, what the Lord said was that, far from abolishing the Law, He had come to put God's Law into force until it permeated all Israel causing it, God's National Witness, to function as had been intended in the first instance.

The Law in Operation

Prior to His Instruction on the Mount and serving as an added emphasis to His call for reformation and return to the Law of the Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ provided a tangible illustration of the efficacy of the Law. It will be recalled that immediately prior to His first adult public appearance, the Lord triumphed over six satanic temptations, all of which required a declaration of independence from God and His Law. In each of the temptation, the Lord's defence was: "It is written" - a phrase which leads one back to the Law of the Lord in every instance. The Greek word translated as 'written' is *gegraptae* which at that time was in daily use and had a legal significance. The practice in those days was that when two men wished to enter into a contract, they drew up the terms of this and then proceeded to an officer of the court who, after reading the contract to both parties, wrote *gegraptae* across the contract indicating that it had been duly attested and none could alter any jot or tittle of the document. In the context of the Lord's usage of the word against Satan's temptations, one understands anew the significance of the Law in that the Constitution having been given, it was unalterable with no power in heaven and earth able to change one word of its content.

The tempter said to the Lord: "... command that these stones be made bread" (Matt. 4:3) and the answer came back: "It is written (*gegraptae*), Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God". This was a direct quote from Deuteronomy 8:3 where Moses warned the children of Israel against violation of the Law. "And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness...And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee to know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live" (Deut. 8:2-3). Again the tempter said: "If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone". Again the answer came back: "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God", another quote from the attestation of the Law recorded in Deuteronomy 6:16. When the tempter offered the Lord all the kingdoms of his satanic system with their allurements as the reward for worshipping him, the Lord's answer was once again: "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" - a direct quote from the First Commandment recorded in Deuteronomy 5:7. One is thus able to see that the Lord's sure defence against the evil of temptations was the Law of the Lord which was and is unalterable, unchangeable and efficacious in the extreme. If it was sufficient for Him, how dare men today claim it to be inefficient, archaic and obsolete?

The Instruction on the Mount

A point which has escaped the attention of many today is the fact of the similarity between Moses and the Lord Jesus Christ in the matter of Law pronouncements. Moses, it will be recalled, received the Law of the Lord from the mountain in Sinai and from its slopes transmitted this to Israel. In Deuteronomy 18:18 Moses recorded the words of the Lord Who promised that He would raise up a Law-Prophet like unto Moses Who would teach the Lord's commandments to the people. Is it purely coincidental that the Lord Jesus Christ utilised mountains on at least two occasions to establish His alignment with the Law of the Lord?

In the first of these in which He declared Himself as King and Lawgiver, He declared the Law from the mount and in which the only change which is evident is that Moses' preface to each aspect of the Law - "Thus saith the Lord thy God" is replaced by "I say

unto you". This is a change only in phraseology and not in personality for it was the same Authority - the Word - Who gave the Law to Moses Who now asserted His Identity in the simple statement: 'I say unto you'. What, in fact did He now say? Fully conversant with the perversions resulting from the 'Traditions of men' which the Pharisees insisted were inseparable from the Law, the Lord developed the full implications of this in calling for a reformation and return to the spirit as well as the letter of the Law.

The Lord and Murder

The first of the Lord's references in what is commonly but mistakenly called the Sermon on the Mount, has to do with 'killing'. "Ye have heard that it was said of them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment..." This, of course, is a reference to the sixth Commandment which literally means: "Thou shalt do no murder" - the word 'kill' being an unfortunate translation of the Hebrew ratsach. What the Law actually states is that unjust violence against a brother is definitely forbidden, whereas legitimate warfare, capital punishment and self-defence are not. The Lord, in drawing attention to this Commandment used the Greek equivalent to the Hebrew ratsach which was phoneuo and which, as indicated by the Hebrew word, meant murder or unjust violence. One is thus able to see that the Lord changed nothing, for judgment was still applicable and unjust violence - this case murder - had only one reward - death.

The Lord and Adultery

The Lord's second specific reference to the Law involved the Seventh Commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery" - the Hebrew naaph carrying the meaning of debasing, corrupting and rendering counterfeit. The punishment for this in the Law was death and by no hint or suggestion did the Lord abrogate the judgment. The thought as well as the act of adultery came under a similar judgment for human nature being what it is, the thought is indeed the father to the deed.

The Lord and Divorce

Against the loose practices which had developed as the result of Pharisaic traditions, the Lord then drew attention to the biblical Law of Divorce and in which He altered nothing which was not in Deuteronomy 24. "It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery..." The word 'fornication' in this instance is translated from the Greek pornea which has as its primary meaning, incest. However, there are other shades of meaning to this word which are covered in the Old Testament Laws concerning grounds for divorce. Persons were divorced by the death of one of the partners - a death by execution for transgression in offences which carried capital punishment. For instance, death was mandatory for women who revealed unchastity before marriage (Deut. 22:21); for adultery after marriage (Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22-23) for prostitution (Lev. 21:9) and for incest (Lev. 20:11-17). Women, on the other hand enjoyed equal rights in divorce by death for homosexuality (Deut. 22:20); rape (Deut. 22:25-26) and kidnapping (Ex. 21:6) are obviously masculine and warrant the death penalty which automatically divorces the woman from the man.

Mixed Marriages

Another type of divorce may be enforced by the authorities which covers mixed marriages which were prohibited by the Law. In this context the following may be read: (Deut. 7:1-3; Ex. 34:12-16; Num. 25:6-8). However, the Lord Jesus Christ specifically pinpointed the type of divorce which involved the writing of the 'bill of divorce' (Deut. 24:1-4). Israel, it will be noted was given a bill of divorce (Jer. 3:8) and the principle

involved here was that to which the Lord made references contrasting this with the loose excuses evolved by the Pharisees and practised in that day.

Uncleanness

The bill of divorce in Deuteronomy was valid only when some 'uncleanness' was found in the wife. As will be seen, this 'uncleanness' could apply to the man as to the woman. Israel, as the wife of Jehovah, was divorced because of apostasy, unfaithfulness, secret treachery under the guise of sincere and faithful obedience. The nation refused to heed God's Law seeking its own directives while still retaining a facade of piety in its observance of the Feasts of the Lord. She became a divorced wife because she disobeyed the authority of her husband Who was both a Covenant and Law keeper. This is the 'uncleanness' which alone warrants the 'bill of divorce'. It was this principle to which the Lord on the Mount drew attention reforming the Law in conformity with its original context.

Throughout the whole of the instruction on the Mount one finds, as one searches, that not a single jot or tittle of the Law was altered - indeed it could not be, for as He had stated, He had come to make the Law of the Lord abound and so permeate the people to whom it was an integral part of their mission. It was this Law, pure and unadulterated which was to be written in the heart and mind of His people in terms of the New Covenant and it was this Law which is to go forth from Zion and to establish a witness to which nations and people can flock (Mic. 4:1-5). This is indeed 'tidings of great joy' which should be taught at a time when violence, crime, chaos and confusion stride through society taking their toll in misery and suffering.

Disaster is undoubtedly increasing throughout the world today and the true Israel people, as found in the Anglo-Saxon and kindred people of the West, should remember what the First Advent was really all about.

If they insist on calling themselves Christians, then it is time they followed the example of He whose Name they have taken. It is time they reinstated the Law of the Lord as a way of life and a nation's constitution.