

## *War and Peace*

**WAR DESCRIBES** the condition of Old Testament man: fighting his brethren, fighting himself, and, generally, forcibly violating cosmic Law. It signifies a time of the gathering of material experience, encouraged by the martial Lucifer Spirits, and of shocking and wounding the embodied human into self-consciousness. War means suffering and the resultant purification of the desire nature—the bringing of the body under the control of the spiritual will. It is a time of preparation for the Advent of the Prince of Peace.

Jehovah is Chief of the archangelic Race Spirits, and, in particular, the guiding Angel of the Jewish people. Thus, He literally was their Commander-in-Chief. His counsels and directives were divulged in the West Room of the Tabernacle in the Wilderness and in the Holy of Holies in the Temple in Jerusalem. It was important, for a while, to protect the chosen people through whom the Messiah was to manifest physically. Once He had come, however, a new dispensation was inaugurated, and the rule of separative Race Spirits gradually was to be annulled and transcended through the unifying power of the Christ Spirit. Thus the punitive Law in effect during the pre-Christian era was supplanted by the order of Love at the Advent of Christ. Love is the consummation of the Law.

Therefore, when Christ refers to His mission as bringing not peace but a sword, He is indicating the work made possible by His holistic energies. The exclusionary practice of qualifying love and expressing it only to members of one's own fami-



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*"Thou hast always need of spiritual arms."—Thomas à Kempis*

ly, tribe, and nation is abrogated, and the injunction to love one's neighbor (spouse or stranger, enemy or intimate) as oneself becomes the new law—altruism, fellowship, love to all and hate to none. Thus, as prophesied by Isaiah, in the new order, swords will be turned into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks.

The metaphor is agrarian, evoking the image of the peace and plenty of the land, over and against the nomadic mode of existence which requires the killing of animals and the plundering of the land to sustain life. The supervention of the vegetarian over the carnal mode of living is implicit if not obvious.

Along similar lines, we may understand the admonition: be ye wise as serpents and *harmless* as doves.

The Old Testament morality condoned, if it did not sanction, the principle of retaliation—of an eye for an eye. Security was to be achieved by might of arms and through the strength of armies.

The New Testament ideal extols the virtue of *suffering* all violence and injustice against one's person without retaliation, for we understand that we live in the mighty embrace and compassionate consciousness of the planetary Christ. What now comes to us comes through Christ and is for our edification and inner unfoldment. Love and forgiveness are the New Testament keynotes of spiritual realization. How often should we forgive one who trespasses against us? Not seven times, but seventy times seven: that is, at all times and permanently.

We would do well to appreciate the quantum leap in philosophy and viewpoint from the Old to the New Testament, a pivotal concern in Paul's teaching. Though an esoteric rendering of the Jewish Bible (Old Testament) is possible, the mind of the people chronicled is eminently mundane, material, and literal. God Jehovah rewards the keeping of the Ten Commandments with physical health, prosperity, and longevity. Incurring His wrath by non-observance of the moral code brings disease, pestilence, poverty, and early death. Jehovah was a national God and is the God of national and race religions. He is fierce, quick to anger, fearfully potent in avenging transgressions. He is, in fact, a soldier's ideal: a god which a robust but youthful and morally simplistic mentality could respect.

When man's evolving desire nature was in some measure brought under conscious control of the awakened Ego, he was able to respond to and receive a new order of spiritual leadership. A higher moral impulse is given in the religion of the Son. The new Commander, the Christ, does not exalt Himself, but promotes the spiritual foot soldier, the common man, the servitor. He exercises clemency toward malefactors, dissidents, deserters, and violators. He forgives. He loves. The stern, autocratic facade of power is penetrated, and the more potent force of radiant love is revealed behind it. Christ gives dignity and power to all who receive Him. Through the Holy Spirit He gives wisdom to

recognize that all *real* war is waged within the soul of individual man.

War describes man's condition of separation from Deity, of duality and division within his own composite nature. Christ's ongoing cosmic achievement describes the building of an archetype for the unification of human consciousness through subduing the imperialism of the sense-physical. Thus, we trace a development from the waging of primitive battles in a physical environment against tangible foes to the waging of subtle war with the elements and forces of our own interior nature; that is, a meta-physical struggle.

This development is set forth in the epic writings of John Milton. His *Paradise Lost* bears affinities with the Old Testament in its outer focusing, in the emphasis placed on physical scope and splendor, and in the casting of thousands. His *Paradise Regained* correlates with the New Testament, in which the focus of action is interiorized, being the mind of Christ, whose antagonists are discarnate powers.

In this metaphysical dimension, our protection now consists of spiritual armor, the whole armor of God. Here is Paul's bracing appeal: "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with Truth, and having on the breastplate of Righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace; above all, taking the shield of Faith wherewith ye shall be able to quench the fiery darts [negative thoughts] of the wicked; and take the helmet of Salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God" (Eph. 6), that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil.

The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but spiritual and mighty. Our instruments of security and attainment are high and holy affirmations willed with indomitable faith and put into practice with perfect assurance.

Advancing knowledge and developing spirituality are bringing about an understanding of the true ground of conflict: the inner planes of the individual Ego. As it is written, "we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. 6:12).

In light of the foregoing, we appreciate Max Heindel's wise counsel: "Patriotism was very good at one time, but Christ said 'Before Abraham was, I am.' Races and nations, comprehended in the term 'Abraham,' are evanescent, but 'the Ego,' which existed before Abraham, the Race Father, will also persist when Nations are a thing of the past. Therefore the Rosicrucian Teachings disregard national and racial differences, endeavoring to join all together in a bond of love to fight a Great War—the only war in which a true Christian should fight, and one which a true Christian ought to wage unflinchingly and without quarter—the war against his lower nature." —*Letters to Students*, pp. 156-7

Once having adopted, and begun to live in and out of, the esoteric perspective, we understand that in a very real sense, the Earth itself is our corporate body. Humanity are its members and Christ is its Head. Thomas Paine's Aquarian ideals ring out this allegiance to the world-whole in the words: "The Earth is my country and to do good is my religion."

Though we walk after the flesh, we do not war after the flesh. We cast down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God and brings every thought to the obedience of Christ.

An example of the new peaceful attitude ushered in by Christ Jesus is found in the conduct of that noble Being, Who suffered the humiliations and agonies of persecution and Crucifixion, receiving violence unto His person with serenity and undiminished compassion for His betrayers and tormentors. Surely the example here shames our own efforts. Most of us have not suffered unto blood,

and should we, our reward is that much greater.

We richly benefit from the Rosicrucian Teachings, which enlighten us in the order, economy, and balance of cosmic affairs. We know that every cause has its equal effect. We know that we reap what we sow, and that they that live by the sword shall perish by the sword. "He that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done" (Col. 3:25). Justice is the very fabric of Creation. Man simply pursues his sense of personal hurt and evinces his dearth of faith in the harmony of cosmic operations when he seeks to redress wrongs by committing comparable wrongs against others. Not man, but "The Lord is the avenger of all iniquities." (I Thes. 4:6) Whatever we do, be it consciously or ignorantly, we do unto God, for with Christ's ingress to the Earth's center, God actually is in all and of all. Therefore, "He that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God." (I Thes. 4:8)

By what means, then, do we overcome our adversaries—the temptations manifesting from the Desire World and the negative thoughts intruding from the mental world? We will overcome with the two-edged sword of love and truth—the knowledge and love of God as demonstrated in the continual sacrifice of his Son, the Christ. "The elect of God do battle with bowels of mercies (that is, compassion), kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another and forgiving one another...and above all these things by putting on charity, which is the bond of perfectness." (Col. 3:12-14)

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Artist, Gah Mora

**Jesus Christus**

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inordinate caring for our outward person and a treasuring of possessions that anchor us to the material perspective. We now realize that fear itself is death. Fear accentuates material identification, crystallizes our dense bodies, and feeds the forces of darkness. Our fear is our adversary's greatest ally. For, in fearing, we strengthen and invoke the very condition we would avoid. But Love is through Christ Jesus, and perfect Love casteth out fear.

“God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” When we express fear, we deny the deed of Christ and lie to ourselves. Fear has its seat in selfishness and self-concern. Christ's return is a promise, but His Presence is a living reality. That Presence is the Source of our power to attain and the context of peace in which to do so. “Peace I leave with you, my Peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

The New Heaven and the New Earth, to be inaugurated at the Second Coming, is the New Jerusalem—literally, the New City of Peace. Spiritualizing the heart and putting on Christ confer this ineffable peace.

What was formerly the legitimate occasion for war no longer obtains. Race God Jehovah, with His chosen people, is superseded by Earth Spirit Christ, whose chosen people are all humanity. For nations to do battle is to foment dissension among the members of Christ's Body. Christ is no respecter of persons. He gives to sinner and saint alike (Col. 3). Paul addresses his love and learning especially to the Gentiles, since the Jews received him not, deeming themselves already saved by dint of outward circumcision. “Ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ...having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandment contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace.” (Eph. 2)

The negatives of fear, anger, suspicion, and resentment are now spiritual anachronisms, not befitting proponents and exemplars of the New Age Wisdom.



Dover Publications, Inc.

Engraving, Gustave Doré, Illustrations for Milton's *Paradise Lost*

*Him the Almighty Power  
Hurl'd headlong from the ethereal sky. (I. 44-45)*

*The “war in heaven,” followed by prolonged skirmishes and wars on earth, describes the experience of the individual Ego, as it was cast down to the material dimension through its own actions and then began to put its house in order, casting down wayward impulses and ordering consciousness to God.*

If we are to suffer harm or hurt at the hands of another, so be it. We either are resolving past indiscretions or serving to demonstrate the new consciousness for which we shall receive abundant recompense. Our trials and travails are to the glory of God, and we justly praise Him for all that constitutes our sphere of experience. We know, affirm, and strive ever to demonstrate those actions which are supportive of our brethren's spiritual well-being. We seek to express only what uplifts and edifies the consciousness, embrace those feelings only which serve to ennoble the heart, and think those thoughts which confirm the unity of each with all. We describe a high calling, and we shall be satisfied with nothing less.

The nightly work of the Elder Brothers is precisely this subjugation and transmutation of conflict and enmity through compassionate suffering

and love, even as Christ Jesus “made peace through the blood of His Cross...reconciling all things unto himself.” (Col. 1:20)

As regards our daily work, we serve not by dying in defense of the Word (defending Christ or Christian precepts). The Word is its own defense. Truth is invincible. The Word was before the world. Rather, we serve most effectively by living unto the demonstration of the Word, by embodying the Word in example, by patient persistence in well-doing. What we describe is the war of the wise, the peaceable battle, the overcoming of the world. The field of struggle is our own individual consciousness. It defines a cosmic undertaking, and he who is ruler of his own soul is stronger than the ruler of a city. His peace of being manifests dynamic power in perfect equilibrium.

Who is the strong? He who retains poise amidst the most conflicting circumstances. Exposed to strife and disorder, he remains composed, potent in the peace of his mind. What is the source of this composure, this mighty calm? It is born of love, wisdom, knowledge of all the wiles and weaknesses to which human flesh is heir, the understanding of how they may be met and mastered, and the instant ability to do so. Thus does Christ Jesus describe His victory and His mastery, when He says, “Be of good cheer, for I have overcome the World.” Herein lies man’s hope. Herewith also is given the key of attainment. Christ is the way, and Christ is in us each—the hope of glory.

There may be those who are offended by the use of war as a metaphor for the condition in which we find ourselves and the summons to action made to us. However, what we intend in this figure is an evocation of the magnitude of our struggle. Spiritual attainment requires complete clarity of mind, utmost resolve, and maximum mustering of all our effectual powers. We are, in fact, talking about the matter of life and death—only in terms which are the reverse of normal understanding.

The exclusive pursuit of life in the physical means death to the spiritual, whereas, by dying to the siren song of the material world, we enter upon the reality of life in the Spirit—life eternal. This is no mere linguistic distinction. This is a condition calling for the marshalling of all available concen-

trated and unwavering energies and demanding constant vigilance and continuing assessment of the stakes involved. We understand that our very souls lie in the balance, for, “What does it profit if we gain the whole world but lose our own soul?” Where we fail to step forward, because of fondness of comfort, cultivation of physical pleasures, or simple indolence, we in effect step backwards. From moment to moment the ground we cover may seem insignificant and the faculties acquired all but nonexistent, but success is the result of countless little campaigns courageously launched and bravely and tirelessly completed.

What is particularly needful, and what the analogy of war most emphasizes, is the quality and generation of will. Most of us know what we should do, how we should do, and why we should do. Yet, really, all remains: the actual doing itself. All depends on our willing to do, on our initiating action. It is no mere coincidence that those of high spiritual attainment are called Initiates. They have summoned all their powers to begin to achieve, to continue in achievement, and completely to realize their spiritual objectives. The more they will their spiritual realization through doing, the greater are the reserves of usable energy which they acquire.

The irony of this undertaking is that it is conducted, by and large, out of sight, in the precincts of the inner man. It is the silent battle. The wounds, the setbacks, the stratagems and tactics are essentially interior and invisible. The Grail Knight in each of us does not inflict suffering; he is inflicted upon, and his holy tribulation, mostly known but to himself—his wounds—are a measure of his attainment. Thus, the stigmata and crown of thorns describe him who achieves full victory over his mortal and mortifying lower nature.

In privileged moments, we know that we are the children of Light, ever increasing in brightness through acts of Light, by walking and serving in the Light. We contend with and conquer darkness by embracing it, by being all Light, so that darkness may find in us no identity that supports it. We live peace and ever seek to demonstrate concord. We strive to live always and in all ways unto Christ. □

—Kristen Paxton