

191211-4 Doctrine Series, Taking Arms against Established Government- CThurman

51. Civil Government: Taking Arms Against Established Government*

The taking of arms against an established government is a very serious matter because they are the God-appointed ministers over men. Scripture commands every soul to be subject to those in authority. The saints are commanded of the LORD to be obedient to every ordinance of man, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. To resist the power is to be condemned by that same authority. Let us pray for our leaders that we might live quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty if the Lord will.

Ro.1:1-7; 2Ti.1:1-3; Tit.3:1; 1Pe.2:13-17; 2Pe.2:10, 11; Jude 8.

**This is an added article not in the 1644 COF.*

This article is one of five articles which touches on the topic of civil government. The term *civil government* refers to that which directs or controls the conditions of a citizenry. *Civil* refers to the state of the citizens. *Government* refers to a directing or controlling act or process. So, *civil government* governs the conditions of its citizens. Everyone knows well that the state of citizens under a government can be either good or bad. But does the state or condition of a citizenry negate the imperative of God for all men to be subject unto the higher powers? Some say that it does. Some say that it doesn't. And undoubtedly there are others that fall somewhere in-between.

Let's be clear as to what this article says in light of the word of God. The article is understood to say that no *soul* should ever take arms against established government. That is because the Bible commands every soul this: *Let every soul be subject to the higher powers, For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.* (Ro.13.1) So, God commands every soul, whether or not they are Christian, to be subject to the powers that He has ordained. At this time I want to particularly focus the on the Christian by asking the question like this: Should Christians ever take up an armed resistance against established government? The question is not whether men or Christians of one government may take up armed resistance against another government. There are many examples of this in human history and in the Bible.

De 4:34 Or hath God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?

Mt 24:7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom...

The question before us is whether a Christian should ever take up armed resistance against established government.

The Bible tells us that *there is no power, no authority, but that which comes of God*. God raises up every authority that comes into power.

2Ch 36:23 Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the LORD God of heaven given me ...

Job 12.16 With him is strength and wisdom: the deceived and the deceiver are his.

17 He leadeth counsellors away spoiled, and maketh the judges fools.

18 He looseth the bond of kings, and girdeth their loins with a girdle.

19 He leadeth princes away spoiled, and overthroweth the mighty.

Pr 8:15 By me kings reign, and princes decree justice.

16 By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth.

Da.2.21 ...[he] setteth up kings.

Da.5.18 O thou king (referring to wicked king Belshazzar), the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honour ...

Da 4:17 ... the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.

...

25 ... the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.

God directs the king, princes, and rulers to do as He would have done among men.

Pr 21:1 The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.

When authorities have served the purpose for which God raised them up, He removes.

Da.2.21 ... he removeth kings ...

1Ki 22:20 And the LORD said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramothgilead? ...

Da 4:31 ... there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee.

Da.5.26 This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy [Belshazzar's] kingdom, and finished it.

27 TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.

28 PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.

God is the great determiner of mankind and not the will of man.

Da 4:17 This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.

...

35 And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?

The greatest king over men upon the earth, this side of the second coming of Jesus Christ, was king Nebuchadnezzar. Every kingdom since then has been inferior to Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon.

Dan.2.37 Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory.

38 And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold.

39 And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth.

40 And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.

41 And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay.

42 And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken.

43 And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.

44 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

45 Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.

This reading is an inerrant preview of the kingdoms of this world from Babylon and forward (c.607 or 606B.C., or roughly a millennium after the birth of Moses. Instead of kings and kingdoms becoming better they become worse.

2Ti 3:13 But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.

Many Christians are either ignorant, or have forgotten, or reject the truth that it is God that sets up and removes authorities. What is particularly disturbing to me is not so much what Christendom does, but what the true churches of Jesus Christ are beginning to do. The notion of a Christian armed resistance has been making inroads among the brethren of the churches. Let's consider the origins of this doctrine. The ecclesiology of the Catholic/Protestant religious systems manifests most clearly in their eschatology.

In the main most of Christendom holds to the doctrine of the post-millennial view; that is, Christ will come at the end of the millennium because the church will have finally won the world to Christ. Post-millennialists call those that subscribe to the *pretribulation rapture & the premillennial coming of Jesus Christ defeatist doctrines. So post-millennialists consider themselves optimillennialists and premillennialists as pessimillennialists. Now why are premillennialists thought to be defeatists and pessimists? Two reasons. First, because they believe that the world will not become better, but worse and worse; and, second, and this is the most significant point, because they refuse to raise the sword against God-ordained authorities. While post-millennialists strive to have a state church the premillennialists used to wholly reject such an unholy marriage of state & church. NOW WE GET TO THE ROOT OF THE MATTER .

The state church doctrine is a most dreadful beast! (Dan.7.7; Re.17.1-7) This state church *beast* has been opposed to the true churches of Jesus Christ since about the year A.D.313, when Constantine established the Roman state church or Holy Roman Empire. Since then there has been no other system that has created more confusion in Christendom and more human misery in the world than this system. Mind you, all of this is done in the name of God as they wage so-called just, *holy wars*. After all, if the church wages war it must be holy. Today, for lack of diligence, the churches of Jesus Christ have become mixed with the various errors of this beast. Now even some of the churches of Christ seem to be inclined to the notion that we may raise the sword against God-ordained authorities. But brethren, the Lord's churches are not suited for ruling at this present time. Reigning as kings and priests of God cannot precede the coming of the King of kings and Lord of lords. Then, and only then, shall they rule and reign with

Christ. Call me a defeatest and a pessimillennialist, but one day the world will know that it was right not to confuse church and state, and that it was right to submit ourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake until the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

* I do not subscribe to the doctrine of a pretribulation rapture, but to the resurrection, otherwise called the first resurrection, which takes place at the second coming of Jesus Christ. There is nothing in the Bible that suggests that there is a rapture as well as a resurrection. There is only a first resurrection and a last resurrection.

The root of the error of an armed Christian resistance comes from the false religious system which came to rise in the 4th century, called Catholicism. Catholicism had its beginning with the merging of both the state and the church, which is also called the Church of Rome. Later, in the 15th-17th centuries, a time known as the Reformation Period, this false religious system split into another faction which became known as Protestantism. Note this well: both Catholicism and Protestantism maintain the state-church heresy. The true churches of Jesus Christ were never a part of either of these false religious systems, and, at least until recently, rejected the heretical doctrine of a state-church. Today however, it is becoming very difficult to tell a true church from a Protestant organization because of the influx of so many doctrinal errors. Most Baptists are only Baptist in name. They are for the most part essentially *practicing* Protestants.

In 13th chapter of the gospel of Matthew our Lord Jesus puts before the disciples the kingdom parables. In these parables Christ's prophecies of the corruption of the *kingdom of God* as it is understood among men. This kingdom I refer to often with the term Christendom. The corruption of the kingdom is represented by three figures:

1. By tares, which represents a false citizenry in the kingdom;
 2. By the mustard seed, which represents the kingdom's aberrant growth;
- And,
3. By leaven, which represents false doctrine within the kingdom.

So, the kingdom of God, as it is represented by these parables, becomes thoroughly corrupted with error.

Mt.13.24 ¶ Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:

25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.

26 But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

27 So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?

28 He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?

29 But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.

30 Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

31 Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field:

32 Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.

Birds are a type for evil workers, obstacles to truth (cf. Ge.15.11; Mt.13.4) & evil counsellors (Da.4.12, 36), feeding off the dead (Ge.8.7; 40.19)

33 Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

Leaven is an evil influence, evil doctrine.

1Co 5:6 Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?

7 ¶ Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:

8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Ga 5:9 A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

The confusion of the state and church has brought into Christendom, into what is perceived to be the kingdom of God among men, a citizenry that is either nothing more than a clan of unregenerate patriots, or Christians that are patriots first and Christians last. These believe that it is their duty to oppose all authorities that are not as they think they ought to be. Yet, according to the prophecies that we just considered, both in the book of Daniel and the gospel of Matthew there will be more and more disorder in human governments. The doctrine of a state church puts the Christian at odds with the immutable counsel of God! Should Christians oppose what God has ordained in the kingdom of men? It is one thing for us to preach the kingdom of God is coming; it is one thing to pray for the coming of His kingdom (cf. Mt.6.10); but it is quite heretical for Christians to hope to bring in the kingdom of Christ by a militant act of defiance against civil government. The true doctrine of God says rather, that the only hope for the saints stands in Christ's second coming. Not before then can His servants legitimately and successfully wage war against the authorities of this world.

Ro.17.12 And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.

13 These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.

14 ¶ These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.

Da 2:44 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

45 Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.

Re.19.11 ¶ And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

Then all the rulers of this world come to nothing.

1Co 2:6 Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought ...

And Christ's kingdom shall never end.

Lk.1.31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

It is an everlasting kingdom. (cf. 2Pe.1.11, ... *the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*)

Da.7.27 And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the

most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.

But until that time what are Christians to do? They are to render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's (Mt.22.21), to be subject to the higher powers (Ro.13.1), obey magistrates (Tit.3.1), and submit themselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake (1Pe.2.13-15).

Mt 22:21 ... Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's. **Ro 13:1** Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. ... **5** Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. **Tit 3:1** Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work ... **1Pe.2.13** Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; **14** Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. **15** For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men...

Who doesn't know that the governments of this world are so very corrupt? That the basest of men are in these places of authority? These are not new or strange phenomena. It is true that there are examples in Scripture of the godly resisting authority. But the extent of that resistance was only by continuing faithfully in dedicated service to God. Some under these corrupt governments were delivered, some suffered & died, but none that were accounted faithful took matters in their own hands.

Daniel and his three friends under a foreign power. (cf. the issue of food, Dan.1.13-17; the worship of another God, Da.3.16-18; Daniel being condemned for praying to God, Dan.6.1-24)

The apostles resisted by submitting to the punishment of the authorities when necessary. (Ac.4.18-21;)

Ac.5.29 Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.

...

40 And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

Paul, as a Roman citizen made an appeal to Caesar. If we are afforded that right under our government we may do the same.

Ac 25:11 For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Caesar.

In the end he was martyred. He was wrongfully executed. And the Lord will avenge his death, and the wrongful deaths of all of His people.

Re.6.10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

Lk.18.7 And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?

8 I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

Finally, and this sums up everything, there is no greater example than that which our Lord Jesus' showed when He suffered wrongfully under Roman rule. First He acknowledged that the power, Pilate's authority, came from God the Father.

Joh 19:11 Jesus answered [to Pilate], Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above ...

And second, Christ states why He did not resist Pilate and why His disciples weren't fighting.

Joh 18:36 Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

Christ confessed that if His kingdom were come, *then* His servants (that's you and me, Christ's disciples) would fight. There will be a time when the saints of God shall fight against the authorities of this world. But that won't be until Christ's second coming. Until then, glorify Jesus Christ according to the will of God as it is revealed in His word.

For a comprehensive consideration of this subject refer to the three-part series entitled Avenging Ourselves, Self-Defense, and Subjection to Authority. The link to this is <https://www.sermonaudio.com/sermoninfo.asp?SID=1126172055910> or you can search Sermon Audio, find Hidden Hills Sovereign Grace Baptist Church page. Messages are available here in both audio and written formats free of charge.