

“We have no ‘patriotism’ and are ‘loyal’ to no Gentile government under the sun. *Patriotism* is love and zeal for one’s native or adopted country right or wrong; and *loyalty* is firm and faithful adhesion to a king or sovereignty. Our love, zeal, and loyalty for the British daughter of the Italian Jezebel [the Church of England as an offshoot of the Roman Catholic Church—C.B.] found expression some twenty-five years ago in a solemn renunciation of her authority; and in obeying the gospel of the kingdom in 1847, we gave in all the love, zeal, and loyalty we had at command, to Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews”.³

The British State, therefore, for example, is of the world as the nations of the apostles’ day were, and indeed as the Jewish nation was at that time.

Although world rulers are in darkness, God uses them as elements in the working out of His purpose, so the Apostle Paul exhorts us to be in subjection to them and to pay all their dues (Rom. 13:1-7; cf. Mt. 22:21). We must bear in mind, however, that our fear and honour are primarily due to God.

All world rulers will occupy their position only temporarily, until Christ comes. Then his

servants will fight, as we saw from John 18:36 (see also Psalm 149:5-9). Once we appreciate this we can answer the question, Why did Israel fight in the past? They fought because Israel was God’s kingdom, and when it had righteous kings they fought right wars. So when Goliath defied Israel he was defying God, as we see from 1 Samuel 17:45. David, therefore, a man of faith, went courageously against him and slew him. The most faithful in Israel were the most courageous in battle. Until Christ comes we must fight a spiritual warfare with all the courage with which Israel fought their battles. The faithful warriors of the past should be our inspiration (2 Cor. 10:3-6; 2 Tim. 4:7,8).

Our allegiance to Christ is far more important than the shame of being conscientious objectors. This allegiance is more important than education, which occupies us when we are young. We need to be educated in God’s Word and develop a Christlike mind so that we courageously uphold our principles should we be tried in a national emergency.

3. *Herald of the Kingdom and Age to Come*, Vol. 10 (1860), p. 71.

Jury service

Cecil Butler

TRIAL BY JURY has evolved over several centuries in the UK, and is prized as one of the chief safeguards of the liberties of the subject. A jury consists of a group of ordinary people, chosen more or less at random, who are sworn (hence ‘jury’, from the French *juror*, ‘to swear’) to give a ‘true saying’ (the root meaning of ‘verdict’) on some question, or questions, officially submitted to them.

The main qualification required of jurors is that they be ‘good and true’, a description that should apply to all disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jurors are expected to be totally unbiased as regards the matter in hand, and in order to help to achieve this no member of the legal profession in any capacity may serve on a jury. The jury is, in fact, the only ‘lay’ element in the whole judicial process.

Juries are empanelled when the more serious offences against the law are being considered. Their function is to listen to the evidence pro-

duced by both prosecuting and defence counsels and witnesses; and, following the summing up of such evidence by the judge in the case, they retire incommunicado to consider without fear or favour the evidence they have heard, and to reach a verdict, sometimes unanimous, sometimes by a large majority, as to whether or not the accused did act as alleged by the prosecution.

The jury is not asked to say whether the action in question should or should not have been punishable by law, nor is it required to pronounce sentence on the accused if found guilty. It may, however, if considered appropriate, recommend a merciful sentence. Its sole function is to listen to the evidence produced and pass an opinion as to which side is telling the truth.

The question for the disciple of Christ to ask is, Are such duties compatible with the teaching of the Lord and his apostles? Unlike the case of

military service, there is no direct Scriptural guidance on this matter. Instead we must seek to apply Scriptural principles to this problem. Are there any grounds for our claiming a conscientious objection to jury service? Admittedly some, though not all, would find such service distasteful, disruptive of normal life and something that they would much rather leave to someone else. However, these are not objections arising from conscience, but from convenience. Certainly we would object on grounds of conscience to taking the oath, but this is no longer a requirement. One can affirm instead.

There are certain Scripture texts which at first sight might seem to justify a conscientious objection to jury service, but which, on examination of the context, do no such thing. Chief among these are Jesus's words found in Matthew 7: "Judge not, that ye be not judged" (v. 1). The next verse, however, continues: "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged". Jesus is not telling his followers to refrain from forming an opinion on any matter, but rather that they should not set themselves up as standards of behaviour. The whole purpose of education, especially Divine education, is to enable us to "judge righteous judgment" (Jno. 7:24), to "Prove all things; [and] hold fast that which is good" (1 Thess. 5:21).

Similarly, other passages, for example, Romans 14:4 and James 4:12, which might seem to preclude jury service, are found on examination of the context to refer to relationships within the Brotherhood (cf. Rom. 14:10-13; Jas. 4:11).

Perhaps it is the attitude of mind advocated by the Apostle Paul in Galatians 6 which would cause many of us to avoid jury service if we could. It might even unfit us altogether: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of

meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (v. 1).

The principal objection to our sitting on a jury is that it is an integral part of the judicial system of the state in which we live. It is part of the apparatus with which governments impose their will on their subject people. For those whose duty it is to forgive those who trespass against them it would seem to be totally incompatible to participate, even in a neutral kind of way, in the condemnation of those who have trespassed against the law of the land, the "terror . . . to the evil", and in the execution of "wrath" upon them (Rom. 13:3,4).

It should be remembered that, unlike military service, there is no provision in law for conscientious objection to jury service. The nearest thing to it is in England, where a Central Summoning Bureau in London empanels juries for the whole country, and where practising members "of a religious society or order whose tenets or beliefs are not compatible with jury service" may claim the right to be excused. (This right, however, does not exist in Scotland.) Neither our Statement of Faith nor a universal practice by us supports such a claim on our part. Any under the age of sixty-six years, the upper limit for jury service, who genuinely feel that their personal consciences unfit them for such service, should request exemption on these grounds (the English summoning document makes provision for this); but in doing so they must consider whether they are willing to take the consequences, probably a fine, if the request be refused. As Brother H. A. Twelves concludes his booklet *The Disciple and Jury Service** (which is recommended for further reading on this subject): "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind" (Rom. 14:5).

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Many years ago the writer decided as a matter of conscience that he saw no grounds for refusing jury service. The experience was illuminating. Truth was frequently clothed in anything but garments of righteousness, and judgement was not always tempered with mercy. But the overwhelming impression that was left on his mind was that he was in the wrong place; he was working with *unbelievers* whose attitude of mind belonged to a world in which the believer is but a pilgrim, and whose judgments were part of a citizenship to which we are alien. The sting of Paul's advice to saints on judgement comes at the end: "*and that before unbelievers*". There is, perhaps, no clear-cut scriptural guidance that will satisfy everyone and each believer must decide the issue for himself . . . In decisions of this kind, nothing should obscure our loyalty to God, our Father, and to Jesus, our Lord. Nothing should dim the glory of our call or the wonder of the Word of life which so sustains our heavenly citizenship.

John Marshall, *The New Life*, chapter 9.