CONCERNING THE LAW OF GOD

By H. B. CLARK*

HISTORY teaches us that men cannot successfully live together without law. The American colonists of the 1620's, arriving in their new homes along the Atlantic seaboard with neither laws nor lawyers, soon discovered the necessity of adopting laws by which they might govern themselves in their new environment. So also the California miners of 1849, arriving in that region some years in advance of American law and government, were obliged to formulate and enforce their "miners' regulations" not only as to mining rights but also in respect of the various civil and criminal problems which confronted them in a new and lawless land.

Law is essential in human society, because without law there is no assurance of order, and without order there is social chaos. Its first purpose is to establish and maintain peace between men, which it does by setting up standards of proper conduct, by affording means for the peaceful solution of disputes, by exacting compensation for wrongs which have been inflicted, and by punishing or threatening punishment of harmful acts against individuals or against society itself.

In the most advanced social organization, where the populace or membership is almost wholly Christian in fact as well as theory, there is always to be found an element of unrighteousness or unruly individuals, like the famous "little group of wilful men," which—whether we regard them as evil-doers or mental misfits—must nonetheless be restrained for the common good.

And even in the ideal "sinless world," where every individual conscientiously seeks to obey the Royal Law that he love his nighbor as himself, and to observe the Golden Rule that he do unto others as he would be done by, there still remains the necessity for standards of conduct, without which every man becomes a law unto himself.

For while one may doubtless school himself to love his neighbor, however difficult this may be at times, he cannot observe the Golden Rule by a mere exercise of will. And for this reason: The Golden Rule must be interpreted and applied, like any other broad rule, to the living and changing circumstances of life. Let us interpret it. The Rule says: "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you." What would you have them do unto you? You would have them do "right" unto you in any given situation. Therefore you must do "right" unto them.

But what is "right"? It is often easy enough to see what is right—to perceive it instinctively—and therefore to know what should be done. On the other hand, and contrary to a popular misconception, it is not

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