

THE EQUIP INSTITUTE

Theme: Baptist Beliefs

Topic: BF&M (2000): Article XVI: Peace and War

Spring 2026

Introduction

The Equip Institute exists to equip members of Taylors First Baptist Church to think rightly about God and his Word for the sake of living rightly before God in his world. The topic this week is Article XVI in the Baptist Faith and Message (2000), which is on Peace and War.

Article XVI

It is the duty of Christians to seek peace with all men on principles of righteousness. In accordance with the spirit and teachings of Christ they should do all in their power to put an end to war.

The true remedy for the war spirit is the gospel of our Lord. The supreme need of the world is the acceptance of His teachings in all the affairs of men and nations, and the practical application of His law of love. Christian people throughout the world should pray for the reign of the Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 2:4; Matthew 5:9,38-48; 6:33; 26:52; Luke 22:36,38; Romans 12:18-19; 13:1-7; 14:19; Hebrews 12:14; James 4:1-2.

Key Biblical Texts

⁴ He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide disputes for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. (Isa. 2:4)

⁹ "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. (Matt. 5:9)

³⁸ "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' ³⁹ But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. ⁴⁰ And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. ⁴¹ And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. ⁴² Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you. ⁴³ "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' ⁴⁴ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. ⁴⁶ For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷ And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? ⁴⁸ You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. (Matt. 5:38-48)

⁵² Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword." (Matt. 26:52)

¹⁸ If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. ¹⁹ Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." (Luke 12:18-19)

¹ Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. ²Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. ³For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, ⁴for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. ⁵Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. ⁶For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. ⁷Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed. (Rom. 13:1-7)

¹⁹So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding. (Rom. 14:19)

¹⁴Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. (Heb. 12:14)

Observations

Exposition of Article XVI

Historical Context

All three editions of the BF&M have included this article. The first paragraph and most of the second paragraph has remained unchanged. However, it has undergone other revisions each time. These changes have been informed by geopolitical developments and how Southern Baptists have responded to them.

In 1925, there was a third, one-sentence paragraph: "We urge Christian people throughout the world to pray for the reign of the Prince of Peace, and to oppose everything likely to provoke war." World War I hostilities had ended on Armistice Day in November 1918, and the Treaty of Versailles was signed in June 1919. Most Americans had shifted into an isolationist posture. Among American Protestants, including Southern Baptists, isolationism was often coupled with greater openness to pacifism. The original final clause reflected these sensibilities.
