

THE CHURCH IN WAR AND PEACE. 72

"But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." Matthew 5:39.

Many say that the Sermon on the Mount is full of impractical ideals; that such ideals cannot be followed in a wicked world. Good men have been following such ideals since the first good man walked the earth with his hand in God's. Good men have turned the other cheek and gone the second mile since the days of Enoch. We read in Proverbs, a very old book, "A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger." "When we give a soft answer to a harsh one we are turning the other cheek. When we return a kind deed for an evil one we are going the second mile. Socrates advocated kindness even to the wicked and lawless. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob practiced these principles in the land of Canaan and found them good. When Jacob's sons tried the other way and hit back they almost brought the whole tribe to ruin. The Patriarch on his death bed said, "Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce: and their wrath, for it was cruel."

These principles are not only good religion, they are good business. The big corporations in America are paying large salaries to men whose chief qualification is, they have learned to turn the other cheek and to go the second mile. Who is the man we most admire? The man with a chip on his shoulder? The man with the sharpest tongue? The man who hits back every time he is hit soon builds up a force of opposition that destroys him. We all like men best who keep their anger under wraps,

the man who can return a soft answer, the man who can turn the other <sup>cheek</sup>, the man who can go the second mile. These are the men who are the leaders in church and state.

Did Jesus forbid the use of force when these have failed? He did not. Gandhi was the one who forbade it. The doctrine of passive non-resistance has been taught in late years as coming directly from the Sermon on the Mount. But it did not. Suppose you turn the other cheek and the man hits that. You go with him the second mile and he demands two more. You find him hungry and feed him and he steals the pots and pans you feed him from. He steals a bushel of corn, you take him to the barn and give him another bushel, then he comes at night with a big truck and takes all you have.

The genuine pacifist will tell you this can never happen. But in real life it does happen. He will tell you that turning the other cheek will always change your adversary into a friend. He will tell you that all men can be won by kindness if it is repeated often enough. But the Bible does not say that and experience does not teach it. We know that most of us give up too soon. We get out of patience with men when just one more kind word or deed would have won them. We try a person with kindness one time and turn against them if they do not understand. The most successful way to overcome evil with good is to repeat kindness on top of kindness. By so doing we will win some that the world thought were incorrigibles.

Nations have been as slow to learn this great truth as individuals have. Wars have been fought over trifles. In fact most wars have been fought over issues that could have been

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settled peaceably at the conference table. Very few wars have been fought with one side wholly in the right and the other wholly in the wrong.

But the pacifist tells us that force is never justified. He forbids the use of force to protect our wives and children. He forbids the use of force to protect our homes and property. The police power of the state is a form of force. How long would civilization last if it were removed or made impotent? How long till anarchy prevailed and all good lost?

The pacifist tries to draw a distinction between the police powers of the state and the military powers of the same. They are the same power and are used <sup>against</sup> ~~as~~ the same form of evil. If it is wrong for the state to defend its people, or any other people, from aggression, it is wrong for the state to defend its people from theft and murder. If there is a difference between the police powers of the state and the military, what right has ~~the~~ state to call out the militia to enforce its laws?

The pacifists say that no war has ever been fought where one power was wholly in the right and the other wholly in the wrong, therefore the use of all military power is wrong. The same objection could be raised against the state in the use of police power to enforce its laws. No state has ever given perfect justice to all its members, therefore no state has the right to use force to back its imperfect laws. Even with imperfect justice the police power of the state is better than anarchy. War is a great evil. But there are evils worse than war. We have no perfect state. The use of the military power of the state can be just as just and fair as the use of the police powers. In many instances it is.

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The reason Gandhi was so successful with his passive non-resistance was, that he used it against a Christian people. Gandhi had almost as many friends in England as he had in India. If he had used it against a nation like Japan or a Hitler he would have been quickly disillusioned. How much pain would it have given the Japanese militarists if he had starved himself to death? What would Hitler have cared for his long fasting?

The reason for the quick acceptance of Gandhi's teaching throughout the civilized world was, that men were sick and tired of war. They thought they had found a way to stop wars. They were like a <sup>drowning</sup> man clutching at a straw. If ever a theory was tried and proven false this one was. Did scrapping our navy and disbanding our army stop war? Did the fact that America and England were wholly unprepared stay Hitler's hand? The Second World War could have been prevented. But not by passive non-resistance.

What stopped anarchy and brigandage among civilized people? What gave civilization its first taste of law and order? It was a strong police power used to enforce just laws. War among nations will be stopped the same way. Wars will never cease till we have a military power strong enough to keep brigands in their place. Whether this power is an international one or wielded by one nation strong enough and just enough to give all men their rights, time only can tell. But it will have force back of it when it comes.

Japan and Germany under Hitler spent millions of dollars to keep England and America believing in the teaching of passive non-resistance. Roark Bradford had a friend who used to eat beans and chilli with him down

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at the old<sup>d</sup> French Market in New Orleans, when they were both trying to learn to write. He missed the man and later learned that he was publishing several magazines and rolling in wealth. He did not know till the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor that the money was coming from Japan. The man was convicted as a traitor.

Many of our preachers and some church papers were carried away with the teaching of passive non-resistance in the decade before the Second World War. Some went so far as to advocate open defiance to the draft. It would be very unjust to say that all these men were tools of Hitler and Japan. We know that many of them were sincere and honest. Many changed their minds when they saw our own nation threatened. But many of them gave as much trouble as they could without open defiance. Some preachers encouraged young boys to evade the draft and saw them thrown into prison. If these men had been honest they would have gone to prison with the boys they enticed to commit the crime. These men were helping our enemies, even if they did not intend it. They refused to fight for rights that had come to us through bloody conflicts. They continued to enjoy the rights that other men fought for, though they refused to fight for them. Though no one would want to deny men the right to their honest convictions, the record of the pacifists in the Second World War was not an enviable one.