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# BIBLIOTHECA SACRA

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## ARTICLE I.

### THE CHRISTIAN ATTITUDE TOWARD WAR.

BY JOHN ELLIOTT WISHART, D.D.,  
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PERHAPS the most consistent pacifist, in theory and practice, that ever lived, was Count Tolstoi. He was a man of genius, big and elemental in his nature. In studying his New Testament he made a discovery, namely, the command, "Resist not evil." It seemed to him fundamental. It became the basis of his thinking.

"These words, 'Resist not evil,' when I understood their significance, were to me the key that opened all the rest. Then I was astonished that I had failed to comprehend words so clear and precise. . . . Whatever injury the evil-disposed may inflict upon you, bear it, give all that you have, but resist not. Could anything be more clear, more definite, more intelligible than that? I had only to grasp the simple and exact meaning of these words, just as they were spoken, when the whole doctrine of Jesus, not only as set forth in the Sermon on the Mount, but in the entire gospels, became clear to me; what had seemed contradictory was now in harmony; above all, what had seemed superfluous was now indispensable. Each portion fell into harmonious unison and filled its proper part, like the fragments of a broken statue when adjusted in harmony with the sculptor's design. In the Sermon on the Mount, as well as throughout the whole gospel, I found everywhere affirmation of the same doctrine, 'Resist not evil.'"<sup>1</sup>

Taking this guiding principle, he proceeded relentlessly to draw the conclusions that logically followed. The business of

<sup>1</sup>My Religion (Eng. Tr.), pp. 10-11.

a soldier is to resist evil, and stands therefore self-condemned. The work even of governors and judges is of essentially the same nature and comes under the same censure. The exhortation, "Judge not, that ye be not judged" (Matt. vii. 1), he interpreted as having reference to the courts. "It would seem then that Jesus denounced judicial institutions. Perhaps (I said) Jesus never had anything to do with courts of justice, and so did not think of them. But I saw that such a theory was not tenable. Jesus, from his childhood to his death, was concerned with the tribunal of Herod, of the Sanhedrim, and of the High Priests. I saw that Jesus must have regarded courts of justice as wrong."<sup>1</sup> Thus the whole idea of opposing wrong by force was rejected.

I shall not attempt any further presentation of Tolstoi's views. He seems to have been a great and good man, honestly trying to apply the principles of the gospel, as he understood them, to the conditions of his own life. Obviously his task was not an easy one. Brought up as a Russian noble, accustomed to the life of a soldier and a magistrate, he was inextricably entangled in a system based upon force — force theoretically supposed to crush the wrong, but often really directed against the right. His very home life, and the wishes of those whom he loved, frequently ran counter to the course of conduct which he thought the teachings of Jesus required. He made a brave struggle. And if in any degree he failed, it is perhaps an indication that his ideas are not practicable in a world so full of violence and evil.

For it is plain that his principles would involve the destruction of government. His theory means nihilism, anarchy — a mild, passive anarchy, indeed, but an anarchy none the less hostile to law and order. In answer to such criticisms, he

<sup>1</sup> *My Religion*, p. 25.

would perhaps have replied that love is not a negative but a positive thing, that it is its own defense, and that it overcometh the world; and even from the standpoint of experience there is something to be said for that view. The career of Francis of Assisi, in a time of blood and rapine, is evidence that God has often chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty. Says the historian, John Fiske, in the fine chapter of his "Discovery of America" in which he describes the work of Las Casas, "There are those to-day who maintain that the type of character which Victor Hugo has sketched in Monseigneur Bienvenu is not calculated to achieve success in the world. The example of Las Casas, however, tends to confirm us in the opinion that when combined with sufficient intelligence, that type of character is the most indomitable and masterful of all. And in this I seem to see good promise for the future of humanity. The wisdom of the serpent, when wedded to the innocence of the dove, is of all things the most winning and irresistible."<sup>1</sup>

The question, then, with which I wish to deal, is a very practical one at the present time, What is the New Testament teaching concerning war? What is the distinctively Christian attitude toward such struggles of nations as these which are now convulsing the world? The statements of the Master upon which Count Tolstoi fixed, which transformed his system of thought and indeed his whole life, and upon the basis of which he interpreted Christianity, are very emphatic and are not to be explained away. What do they mean?

That they are to be taken with certain limitations is probable for several reasons. One of such reasons is founded upon the conduct of Jesus himself. At least once, possibly twice, he cleansed the temple of the mercenary crowd of traffickers that

<sup>1</sup> *The Discovery of America*, vol. II, pp. 466-467.

were profaning it. These moneychangers, these irreverent traders, were making the sacred precincts the scene of their barterings. They were disturbing the worshipers with the noise of bargain and sale. They were profiteering on the needs of seekers after God. At the sight of these blasphemous proceedings the indignation of Jesus flamed into a white heat, and he made a scourge of small cords and drove them in disordered rout from the hallowed courts. The scourge of small cords was doubtless not a formidable weapon, and the horde of grafters were probably quite as much frightened by his terrible mien as by this display of force; but it is idle to try to evade the plain fact that it was a display of force in opposition to evil.

I am not inclined to insist upon any inferences that might be drawn from such statements as this, "I came not to send peace, but a sword" (Matt. x. 34; cf. Luke xii. 51-53). The reference is no doubt to indirect results of the preaching of the evangel, arising from the hostility of the human heart, and really contrary to the purpose of the message. Nor am I disposed to press the words of John xviii. 36, "If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews." The expression does not necessarily imply approval of the methods of earthly powers; indeed, passes no judgment upon them. A somewhat different case, however, is presented in Luke xxii. 36, "He that hath none, let him sell his cloak, and buy a sword." The language is not to be interpreted literally, but such an expression would certainly not have been used by an out-and-out pacifist.

Another reason to suspect that there must be some implied limitations to the statements with which we are dealing is to be found in the style of the Master's discourses. If we go to

them to find analytical reasoning, exact logical thinking, we shall be disappointed. He speaks as a seer, a poet, a prophet. His words are full of a wisdom, an insight, a spiritual power which is more than human, but in form they are popular, epigrammatic. They usually look only on one side of a subject at a time, and that side is presented with the greatest emphasis, and often with strong hyperbole; or the truth is stated paradoxically, in order to rivet the attention. These characteristics are to be seen in many of the Biblical writers, in Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and others of Old Testament times, and later, especially in the disciple whom Jesus loved. John in one place says, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John i. 8). But in the same Epistle he makes the affirmation, "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not; whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither knoweth him" (1 John iii. 6). It would be absurd to try to derive John's doctrine of sin from one of these passages, without taking account of the other. The very strength of the expressions is an indication that they are not to be construed with dull bondage to the letter. And so when Jesus warns the multitude with the words, "If any man cometh unto me, and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke xiv. 26), who can fail to understand what he means, especially when we remember that almost his last words on the cross commended his own mother to the care of the disciple whom he loved? It might be expected, then, that in the command not to resist evil and to turn the other cheek when smitten, there would be something of this element of hyperbole and paradox.

At any rate the words, "Resist not evil," must be regarded as a general rule, and there must be allowance made for ex-

ceptional cases, at least of an extreme type. If the evil encountered is moral evil, and if not to resist is to have part in it, there can be no question as to the course to pursue. Here is a boy whose companions try to pour whiskey down his throat. Is he forbidden to use force to prevent their design? Is it wrong for a woman to fight in defense of her own honor? To suggest these queries is to have the answer.

Furthermore, it is doubtful if this command of Jesus can be applied to any except our own personal wrongs. It seems to have an individual rather than a social bearing. It may be one's duty to overlook injuries done to one's self, but must one refuse to help another who is threatened by violence? Shall a strong man suffer a ruffian who breaks into his house to slay his wife and children, and make no attempt to stop him? Admitting that it may be one's duty to give up one's own rights, is it not rather cowardly if one refuse to defend the rights of those whose natural protector he is supposed to be? He who would relentlessly apply the gospel principle of non-resistance, literally interpreted, to such situations as these, would earn the title of a weakling and a poltroon, and we somehow feel that he would deserve it. There has been far too much tendency to neglect social wrongs, and I do not think that such neglect can find any defense in these startling doctrines of the Sermon on the Mount.

Indeed, the man who would refuse to concern himself about crimes against his neighbor would possibly fall under a far more serious charge. If he could have prevented the act of violence, and, instead of doing so, merely played the part of a spectator, the law might call him to account as a sharer in the guilt. Some of the gloomiest recollections of my youth are centered in the trial and execution of two men in an adjoining town. One of them had not laid a finger

upon the victim. But he was with the murderer before and during the deed of blood, he was presumably ready to assist him, he had at least done nothing to stay his hand, and so he was sent to the scaffold as if he had himself struck the blow. One cannot without committing sin make it a universal rule not to resist evil in a world in which evil is so constantly inflicted upon the innocent. Tolstoi himself would, I fancy, have agreed that such cases as I have indicated are exceptions to the rule.

This brings us to face what seems to me to be the fundamental question in determining the teaching of the New Testament regarding war: What is the attitude of our Lord and of the inspired writers toward the State? Do they condemn human government as a thing that is useless or evil? Do they advocate anarchy of either an active or a passive kind? Or do they teach that the State as well as the Church is a divine institution which every Christian ought to obey and support?

The evidence as to the thought of Jesus on this point is largely negative, but even so it is quite conclusive. He absolutely refused ever to usurp any of the functions of the civil ruler. He would not decide between two brothers who were quarreling over an estate. He fled to the mountain alone when there was danger that they would come and take him by force to make him a king. He was tried on the ostensible charge of claiming authority which belonged to Cæsar, and though his malignant enemies would stop at no falsehood, and when the case was before the Sanhedrin, suborned witnesses, the testimony thus procured agreed not, and the case simply broke down according to the judgment of Pilate, so careful had Jesus been to avoid any appearance of disrespect to the powers that be. When in answer to the direct ques-



tion of the governor he boldly affirmed that he was a king, he explained in a way which seemed perfectly to satisfy even this corrupt Roman, that his kingdom was not of this world. Those who wish to destroy all law cannot find a single word or act in the life of Jesus to encourage them.

Of course he rarely gives positive instruction with regard to the place and function of government, because he was so scrupulously watchful to maintain the status of a private citizen, and to deal with men as individuals. But when his enemies sent spies to feign themselves to be righteous that they might take hold of his speech, and these asked if it was lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, he showed the image and superscription of the emperor on the coin which they were all using, and said, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's" (Mark xii. 13-17 and parallels). He thus shut the mouths of the gain-sayers, but he also laid down the principle that there are two realms, the civil and the spiritual, and that each has its rightful claims upon the individual. On another occasion he told Peter to pay their temple tax, though he asserted that, owing to his unique position, he could rightfully have claimed exemption (Matt. xvii. 24-27). The charge was made that he was too intimate with publicans, who were officials of the Roman government. It is also a curious fact that the man whom he commended as having greater faith than any that he had found in Israel, was a soldier, a centurion, himself under authority and having the right to command others (Luke vii. 1-10; Matt. viii. 5-13). In short, Jesus was a positive supporter of law and order.

If any should still be in doubt as to whether the Gospels hold that civil government is of divine origin, there can at least be no such uncertainty as to the teachings of Paul and

Peter. Not merely does the former direct that prayer should be offered for kings and all that are in high place (1 Tim. ii. 2), but he sets forth a definite theory regarding the state (Rom. xiii. 1-7). The powers that be are ordained of God. He that resisteth withstandeth the ordinance of God. The Christian should be in subjection not only because of the wrath which he might otherwise encounter, but also for conscience' sake. Tribute must be paid, for those who look after the revenue are ministers of God's service. Functionaries of all ranks must be accorded that which is due to them. He urges Titus to put the Cretans in mind to be in subjection to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient (Titus iii. 1). Peter, in like manner, says, "Be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king, as supreme, or unto governors, as sent by him for vengeance on evil-doers and for praise to them that do well" (1 Pet. ii. 13-14).

Now it is superfluous to insist that when these great apostles speak of government, they mean a government that used force against evil. The mighty Roman power under which they lived had many faults, but weakness in dealing with those who were thought worthy of punishment was not one of them. The function of the powers that be as it is described means the use of force or it means nothing. Rulers are to be a terror, not to good works but to the evil; they bear not the sword in vain; they are avengers for wrath to him that doeth evil; they are sent for vengeance on evil-doers and for praise to them that do well. Of course a state that would use no other means than moral suasion in maintaining order would collapse of its own weight, and the apostles Paul and Peter, who were not dull men, recognized this fact.

Some may perhaps have scruples as to how far the employment of force by the civil power ought to go, and would in-

sist that it has not the right to take life. The question of the expediency of capital punishment is a legitimate one, though it is significant that in some places where this method of dealing with crime was for a time abandoned, it has been found necessary to return to it. The law of the Old Testament was, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed" (Gen. ix. 6). It will be said that under the gospel we live in better times, but it may be that the basis of that law is to be found in the nature of man and in the nature of things. Whether vindictive penalties are justifiable or not, it is certain that the deliberate murderer is a menace to society. To take his life may be the only way to save the lives of others who are innocent. In any case, if the government has the right to enforce its authority, it is hard to see how such a limit as this which is suggested, can be placed upon its exercise. The power of the sword will necessarily mean bloodshed, if milder methods fail to produce obedience. And in times like these when foul spies, with murder in their hearts, are laying fell plots against order and liberty, regardless of how many innocent lives are snuffed out in the process, I think we shall have to revise some of our soft theories and learn a little of the stern righteousness of the Old Testament.

If these positions are accepted, it will, I think, also be admitted that the state may rightly use force against other states, if they are criminal, as well as against individuals. The nature of a moral outrage is not changed by the fact that it is a nation that is responsible for it. We must protest with our whole souls against the new doctrine, made in Germany, that kings and cabinets are not to be deterred by ethical considerations from doing whatever will advance their political interests, and that what would be an enormity if done by a

private citizen may be praiseworthy as an act of public policy. The powers that be are indeed ordained of God, just as each man is the creature of God, but in neither case is that an excuse for wrong and injustice; it rather makes them more abominable. There have been nations that were robbers and murderers, and, unfortunately, their tribe is not yet extinct. The flagitious deeds of the last three years are not a whit less hateful and less deserving of punishment because they have been done by organized millions at the behest of an arrogant military despotism. If one people may not repel evil attempted by another people, then Hezekiah should have refused the counsels of Isaiah and opened the gates of Jerusalem to Sennacherib, and the Maccabees ought not to have offered resistance when the abomination of desolation was set up in the holy place.

War in the abstract is indeed an indefensible thing. It is an irrational and inane method of settling differences. The gage of battle should be accepted only as a last resort, to save things that are dearer than life. Lowell's Hosea Biglow rightly says:—

“Ez fer war, I call it murder,—  
 There you hev it plain an' flat;  
 I don't want to go no furdur  
 Than my Testyment fer that;  
 God hez said so plump an' fairly,  
 It's ez long ez it is broad,  
 An' you've gut to git up airly  
 Ef you want to take in God.

“Taint your eppyletts an' feathers  
 Make the thing a grain more right;  
 'Taint a follerin' your bell-wethers  
 Will excuse ye in His sight;  
 Ef you take a sword an' dror it,  
 An' go stick a feller thru,  
 Guv'ment aint to answer for it,  
 God'll send the bill to you.”

I agree that war is murder. But when murder occurs, it rarely happens that both parties to the tragedy are equally guilty, and one of them may be perfectly innocent. Moreover, the bystander who could help the one that is wronged but consults only his own safety, and refuses to intervene, is an object of deserved contempt. In like manner, when war between nations breaks out, the guilt of murder, like the mark of Cain, is stamped upon some forehead, but the people who take up the sword to defend the weak and to prevent slaughter and oppression, can say, "Let the galled jade wince, our withers are unwrung." Doubtless there have been comparatively few just wars — just for either side — but there have been such, and as long as greed and arrogance and violence, in control of armies and navies, trample upon human rights and turn prosperous lands into a desert that they may have a place in the sun, there is likely to be occasion for just wars.

Now, beyond question, when the state acts, it must act through individual men and women. The law must be ordained by the sovereign or by some legislative body. It must be put into execution by a multitude of functionaries. The criminal must be arrested by a sheriff or a policeman; the judge must conduct the trial; the jury must determine whether the accused is guilty or innocent; if he is sentenced to imprisonment the penitentiary officials must keep him confined; or if he is appointed to death, some one must act as executioner. All functions of the government must be performed by men of like passions with ourselves. And if a commonwealth is to carry on war against a robber nation, it must have an army composed of men to do the fighting for it.

It is surely fair to say also that when such civil or military representatives of the people rightly discharge their duties,

they act not for themselves but for the state. It is a serious accusation against any one to say that he has resisted an officer of the law, for in so doing he has really resisted the authority of the commonwealth. The judge who condemns a man to death and the sheriff who executes him, have not committed murder. It is the law and the nation behind the law, that have inflicted the penalty. I once served a term as a juryman, and it fell to my lot to act as foreman on the trial of a man accused of killing his wife. Much to my relief there was not sufficient evidence to justify a conviction; but if there had been such evidence I would have been bound by my oath to vote for a verdict of guilty, and I would have done so, and should assuredly not have felt that I was taking a man's life. It would have been the state itself that did the deed. Thus, too, the soldier fights not merely as an individual who has a weapon and knows how to use it, but as a representative of the nation and by its authority, and the responsibility for his actions as a soldier, in the rightful discharge of his duties, rests upon the nation. Many of us, brought up in piping times of peace, revolt at the very thought of using a gun or a sword upon a human being, and say to ourselves, "Thou shalt not kill." But the boy who marches to battle at the command of the powers that be, especially if the war be a just one, is no more guilty of murder than is the judge or the sheriff through whose instrumentality the law brings the slayer to the scaffold. Indeed, John Ruskin finds the characteristic of the soldier on account of which he is honored as a hero, not in the fact that he shoots but that he offers himself to be shot, not in the fact that he kills but that he may be killed. But both in what he does and in what he endures, he represents the state. His acts are its acts. His sufferings are in a sense vicarious. This authority

may of course be abused by the soldier, just as it may be abused by the judge and the sheriff, but he who carries out the legitimate orders of the civil power has the right to feel that it is the nation that strikes the foe by means of his arm.

If, then, there are any just wars, if there are any occasions on which a people ought to rise in its might and smite the wrong, action will be possible only if the citizens are willing to enter the ranks and do battle for the right. What then is the duty of a Christian if his country is engaged in a righteous conflict? The Christian is also a citizen. And if it be incumbent upon all good citizens to serve their land in its time of need, the Christian assuredly ought to prove himself worthy of the name of a good citizen.

To test the matter, let us take Kant's formulation of the law of duty — an admirable criterion, even if his ethical theories be not accepted — “Act so that the maxim of thy will can always at the same time hold good as a principle of universal legislation.”<sup>1</sup> In unphilosophical language the rule comes about to this, “Act so that it would be well if all did as you do.” We may illustrate the bearing of the law by applying it to the food situation of our land at the present time. The Government is endeavoring in part to supply the needs of our allies who are fighting for us across the sea, and has appointed meatless and wheatless and porkless days. I might reason thus: “I am one person in a vast population of something more than one hundred millions. My appetite is fairly good, but the amount I could save by observing the regulations would, compared with the whole amount, be absolutely infinitesimal. It would not count. Why, then, should I comply with the request of the Food Administration?” This argument seems plausible. But suppose the

<sup>1</sup>The Critique of the Practical Reason (Eng. Tr.), p. 119.

principle upon which I am acting, were adopted by all. That would mean that the other ninety-nine million, nine hundred and ninety-nine thousand, nine hundred and ninety-nine people in the country would also disregard the new restrictions, and there could be no food conservation. My conduct, in a word, tends to destroy the policy proposed. To present the case in a more Kantian manner, the maxim of my conduct may be stated as a universal law somewhat thus, 'One may rightly neglect a public duty if he is convinced that there are so many others to do it that his neglect will not affect the issue.' Manifestly the law is impossible and self-contradictory, for in proportion as it is universally adopted, there will be no others to whom the task of obedience can be left.

Now, for the application to the question before us. Here is a Christian, who abhors violence, who hates war as a descent from reason to brutality, as an outbreak of insanity, as murder on a large scale — and well he may hold such opinions. But the world is being swallowed up by war, and our country had to take up arms against war to save its soul. Shall this same Christian, though he believes that it is the business of government to punish evil-doers and to vindicate the right, say that he approves the cause, but that his refusal to bear a part cannot possibly affect the final issue, and that therefore he will maintain the principle of non-resistance? Would the maxim of his conduct stand the test of universal application? If all men, not only in private relations but also when called into the service of the state, refused to resort to force against wrong, then we should have no police, no sheriffs, no judges, no legislators, no governors, no presidents, as well as no armies and navies; for every one in these various positions must bring the strong arm of the law to bear upon criminals, who are not likely to submit to punish-



ment except under compulsion. In short, such a denial of duty to the government is, so far as it goes, destructive of government. It means anarchy.

I have great sympathy with the conscientious objector, and I would not for a moment seem to reflect upon his sincerity; but I do doubt the worth of his logic. Of course he may truly say that there are plenty of men who have none of his scruples. Some, indeed, take naturally to the military life, and exult in the pomp and circumstance of glorious war — though they tell us that in modern battles this attractive element is disappearing, and we need not regret the loss. Many years ago I read in the *Missionary Review of the World* a story told to illustrate the attitude of the Hindu toward women. Dr. Jacob Chamberlain, who related the incident, spent a long life in Christian service in India. A seventh son had just been born in his home, and there were no daughters. An old Brahman called to congratulate him, and expressed particular delight at the evidence of the divine favor in the fact that the baby was a boy. The missionary told him that both the mother and he were greatly disappointed that it was not a girl, — a statement which was received with astonishment and incredulity. Dr. Chamberlain put what he thought was a hard question, and asked how we should get along if there were to be no more girl babies. But the answer was ready, “Ah, Sahib, there are sinners enough in the world to have girls. Why should a righteous man like you be cursed with them?”

Shall we who shrink from the employment of force say that there are sinners enough in the world to do this rough work, and that we should be excused? If we admit that government is necessary and that it must punish evil-doers even if they be nations, the extreme pacifist position can

apparently be supported only by a logic like that of the wise Brahman. But can this position be stated and defended as an ethical principle? Let us apply Kant's test and attempt to set it forth in the form of a universal law, as thus: 'One who dislikes fighting may properly leave it to others, if he is satisfied that there are enough of them to enable the state to accomplish its task of punishing evil-doers.' Now it is evident that so far as this principle became universal, so far there would be no others to whom the task of acting for the state could be left. In a word, the law is self-contradictory. It cannot be stated in general form without revealing its essential absurdity.

We say that the powers that be are ordained of God, that it is theirs to be a terror to evil works; and so certainly he who by their authority performs this function is, whether he knows it or not, a minister of God's service. But we maintain that there are sinners enough in the world to do its fighting and that our help is not needed. Well, if government is necessary, it should have the support of all good citizens; if it is to survive, it must punish wrong-doing, and must do this through the agency of its citizens. And if our reasoning holds we have an anomalous situation, in which God's ordinance, doing God's work, must depend upon sinners, while the righteous play the rôle of spectators and enjoy the results. That is not the conception of duty that was held by Cromwell's Ironsides, or by the saints of Old Testament times. Now if the law of duty is for each of us the law of God, and if obedience to the law of God is essential righteousness, it may turn out at the end of the day that the sinner who obeys his country's call in time of need, is more righteous than he who, because war is wrong, refuses his support even to a war against brutal, scientific murder.

But some one may attempt to turn the flank of this position by saying, 'Let the principle, Resist not evil, once be given universal application. If all obeyed it, there would be no violence, no oppression, no bloodshed, and no wars. There would then be no need of soldiers; and he who refuses to be a soldier is really acting in accordance with the only law which will finally bring peace upon earth.' All this is quite true. But it is also true that in such an ideal condition there would be no need of sheriffs, of judges, of legislatures, or of authorities of any kind — in short, there would be no need of government. But that is only to say that the rule would work admirably in a perfect society, in a sinless world. And in such a society, not only could we do without the state, but the church, with its preaching of the gospel of pardon for the lost, would be quite as unnecessary. In his vision of the New Jerusalem, John saw no temple therein. Conditions around us, however, not to speak of the orgy of blood across the sea, are far too painful proofs that we are not yet living in such an ideal commonwealth. These divinely ordained institutions, the church and the state, presuppose a world in which sin is to be found, and in which means must be employed to redeem men from it and to check its outward manifestations. We require a rule of duty which will be applicable to such conditions. It is not sufficient to have one which would work only in an Utopia, or rather only in the Celestial City. As long as there is wickedness on earth there must be a spiritual organization to point men to the cross of Calvary and to establish the kingdom of God among them, and there must be civil government to restrain their violence and their crimes for the sake of society. And living in such a world, the Christian ought, of all men, to be ready

to do his duty to the state, even if it be the unpleasant duty of inflicting vengeance upon evil-doers.

There still remain some questions which are not easy to answer. What should a Christian do if his country enters into a war which he thinks unjust? In passing let it be said that it is difficult to understand the mental processes of the man who holds such a view of the conflict in which we are now engaged. No nation of course has a monopoly of all the good or of all the evil; but if we consider the principles which are avowed by those who claim the right to speak for our enemies, as well as the utter disregard which has been shown for the laws of war, for solemn treaties, and even for the fundamental decencies of life, we shall be disposed to think of this as a supreme crisis in the struggle of light against darkness, of liberty against tyranny, of the kingdom of God against the kingdom of this world, of Christ against Belial. I know something of the great, gifted, patient, kindly German people. I have been in their homes and enjoyed their hospitality. Edmund Burke, speaking in defense of America, said, "I do not know how to draw an indictment against a whole people." But a people may be led astray. "You can fool all the people some of the time." And here is a wonderful nation, among whom the very germs of representative government seem to have originated, now held under the ruthless but efficient rule of a despotism, and trained in false ideas and ideals through a press and a system of education which are under the control of the authorities, until they have become the willing tools of that arrogant, unscrupulous military oligarchy by which they are bound, and which is now aiming its blow at the heart of human freedom, scorning ethical considerations and endeavoring to reduce the business of slaughter and intrigue to the exactness of a science. If war

is murder, then in sheer self-respect we were called to enter the conflict to stop the bloody work of the murderer and to clear ourselves of complicity in his crimes. The cause of outraged Belgium and of heroic France is surely the cause of the Christ.

But for most of the world's wars there has been no such justification. The most enthusiastic patriot among us would probably not deny that even our own land has sometimes been in the wrong in its quarrels. James Russell Lowell, a true lover of his country, strongly condemned the campaign against Mexico which so greatly enlarged our borders; and Lloyd George, now prime minister of Great Britain, was almost in danger of mob violence about a score of years ago, because of his criticisms of England's treatment of the Boers. What is to be done if the nation to which loyalty is due enters a war which is unjust?

If one conscientiously believes that it is wrong to have any part in war, his course ought to be clear enough though it may be difficult. He owes allegiance to Cæsar, but he owes a higher allegiance to God. The voice of his conscience, mistaken though it may be, is to him the voice of the Master of his life, and he must obey it. Our Government has usually made allowance for such scruples, and accepted them, when they seemed genuine, as a sufficient reason for exemption from military service. But if such provision for his case is not made, it is always open to one to follow the course which he holds to be right, and suffer the consequences. This is what was done by the confessors and martyrs, who professed full loyalty to the state which condemned them, but refused to disobey the higher law. I have in this paper been giving my reasons for dissenting from the opinions of the out-and-out pacifists; but those who are persuaded in their own hearts

that this is the true view, should by all means follow their own light, and suffer without murmuring any inconveniences that may ensue.

The case is somewhat different with the man who, acknowledging that war is sometimes justifiable, is doubtful whether the one in which we are now engaged can be so characterized. Such doubts in the present emergency are, I confess, a matter of astonishment to me, and show, as I think, a strange blindness concerning the perils to liberty and to the kingdom of God which are involved in this crisis. But such a Thomas called Didymus should reflect that there are constitutional ways by which his opinion can make itself felt in this Republic; that, on the other hand, if the Government is to act at all, the will of the majority must prevail; and that, having used all legitimate means to win the country to his view, it is the part of a loyal citizen to subordinate his individual preferences to the public weal. If, indeed, he believes that our course is essentially evil, he should obey his conscience and suffer the penalty. But if he is merely not convinced that our entrance into this conflict was necessary, he may surely take refuge in the thought that it is the state that is making war, and that when he acts as the agent of the state, his deeds are not those of a private person, but of that power which is ordained of God. No doubt there are in the armies of our enemies many Poles, Bohemians, Hungarians, and even Germans, who serve unwillingly in these hateful campaigns of murder which their commanders have planned, and they deserve our sympathy.

There is yet another difficulty which troubles many Christians as they try to think out the meaning of this world tragedy. War is grim business. True as is John Ruskin's pregnant statement, it is, nevertheless, the duty of the soldier

to kill men, and that seems harder to do than to offer one's self to be killed. *The Outlook* some time ago published a letter written by an officer, in which he said that they were teaching the soldiers to be mean, because they were to go against an enemy who is mean, who does not play the game, and who must be beaten with his own methods. It is doubtless true, as Mr. Roosevelt often tells us, that when a blow is to be struck, it is almost a crime to strike soft. The shortest way to peace is straight through, and to win that goal, our armies must fight with all possible thoroughness.

But if this obligation should be interpreted as a permission to let loose all the savage ferocity which slumbers in human nature, ready to break out if restraints are removed, then, whatever may be the result of the battles across the sea, we shall be defeated. The thing against which we have drawn the sword is that arrogant militarism, whose theory is that might makes right, and that any means may properly be adopted if only they will accomplish the end in view. If we conquer the representatives of that foul system by arms, but are conquered by the spirit which has made it hateful to the whole world, the disaster will be irreparable.

But, surely, terrible as war is, such a result is not inevitable. We have all of us known too many veterans who were the kindest men in the world, to believe that war must harden the sensibilities. It is, on the contrary, rather a striking fact that some very devout, even saintly, men, have been soldiers by profession, such as Chinese Gordon, Stonewall Jackson, and General Howard. And of Cromwell's army, composed of "men of religion," it has been said by Macaulay, "They at length came to regard the day of battle as a day of certain triumph, and marched against the most renowned battalions of Europe with disdainful confidence. Turenne was startled

by the shout of stern exultation with which his English allies advanced to the combat, and expressed the delight of a true soldier, when he learned that it was ever the fashion of Cromwell's pikemen to rejoice greatly when they beheld the enemy." War is doubtless not essentially conducive to the Christian spirit, but, nevertheless, Christian men have found it possible to grow in grace amid the horrors of battles and sieges.

That must mean that even the grim business of a soldier can be done to the glory of God and in fellowship with Christ. The men in the trenches have the right to remember that they act not for themselves but for the state, the ordinance of God appointed by him for the punishment of evil-doers and for the praise of them that do well, and that if their cause is a high and holy one, they are serving God in fighting for it. They will do the stern work before them as to the Lord and not unto men, and in so far as the military end in view will permit, they will be ready to show to the foe the kindness and love of the Master.

It may be said that this is hard to do in the heat of conflict. Undoubtedly it must be so. When the charge is sounded, the whole attention must be riveted upon the fierce struggle and the destruction of the enemy. But in those times of agony, the danger and the need often bring a compensating sensitiveness to the things of God. Indeed, here at home, surrounded as we are with favorable circumstances, we must confess with Browning,

"And I find it hard  
To be a Christian, as I said."

It is hard on the battlefield; it is also hard in the place of business, in the pastor's study, and even in the pulpit. But reports that constantly come in prove that this hard thing is



possible for the boys in khaki, and that it is being achieved by many of them while the cannons thunder and the machine guns scatter death around them. Amid all the ruin that this insane war has brought, the cross of Calvary stands more supreme than ever as the one thing that will meet the needs of the battle-torn earth. And this very conflict in which the forces of evil have done their worst, may perhaps be the great opportunity of the church of God.

To sum up, War is essentially an evil. It is sad, indeed, if it must be confessed that we can find no better way of settling international differences than the irrational, the unspeakably wicked, method of the wholesale slaughter of men by all the improved devices that science can invent. We cannot but hope that the futility, the madness, of such returns to the life of the jungle, may become so manifest in the present crisis, that we may soon behold "the Parliament of Men, the Federation of the World." But as long as nations, in their lust for power, run amuck and attempt to destroy freedom and the rights of men, it will be necessary that governments which acknowledge that they are ordained of God should fight His battles, and it is the duty of the Christian to bear his part in such struggles.