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Problems of To-day.

I. Christianity and Pacifism.

By the Right Reverend A. A. David, D.D., Bishop of Liverpool.

Among nearly all who seek their way into the mind of Christ it is common ground that He gives us principles and ideals rather than detailed injunctions. Most of us believe that He did look forward to the reformation of human society as He found it, to the establishment of the Kingdom of God upon earth. But He imposed no dogma to order and define His followers' beliefs, and He laid down no ordinances for their social and political living. They are to cherish His principles and keep their eyes fixed on His ideals, and so in every generation to work out their opinions and determine their conduct for themselves. They are to expect the guidance of His Spirit. But they are not to expect precise instructions how to translate His mind into particular judgments or policies.

The Gospel record hardly ever shows Him giving a plain answer to a plain question. Who then can be saved? When shall these things be? By what authority doest thou these things? What shall I do to inherit eternal life? Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar? To all such queries He gives no immediately satisfying reply. Instead, He offers to the questioner material and suggestion which will enable him, if he will take enough trouble, to provide a sufficient answer for himself. Sometimes this guidance takes the form of a question put to the questioner. One such is implied in the parables of the lost and found which follow the complaint of the Pharisees when they saw Him consorting with disreputable people. 'What do *you* do when you have lost anything?' When the time came for His disciples to make up their minds about His own Person, and before He made His own claim, He asked them, 'Who do men say—who do *ye* say—that I am?' When He wanted to appeal to common sense as the corrective of a rigid tradition, He asked, 'Is it lawful on the Sabbath day to do good?' To a man who wanted a quick decision about property He said, 'Who made me a judge or divider over you?' Then He goes down to the real cause of any dispute about possession. Somewhere at the root of it will be found covetousness. If they are to penetrate to the inwardness of that which has perplexed them, will there be need of deep learning or great intellectual power? He never suggests it. And He rejects with special emphasis the acknowledged scholars and thinkers of His own time. But He makes great and continual demand that ordinary men shall think about His teaching freely and justly. 'Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?' More than once He shows disappointment, not at their lack of knowledge, but at their slowness to follow His own thinking from the literal into the real. 'How is it that ye did not perceive that I spake not unto you concerning bread?' In time to come there would be among His followers men of learning and of trained intelligence—'scribes who have become disciples to the kingdom of heaven.' Through the labours of these the new and unfamiliar will grow out of the conventional and old.

Suppose that some one had asked Him then, Is it right or wrong to keep slaves? What would His answer have been? It is plain that if His early followers had, using His guidance, faced this question for themselves (which they did not), they would in all sincerity have come to different conclusions. And I think He would have been very patient with their differences. We of to-day are asking Him, Is it ever right to fight? And, as always, He makes us responsible for the answer. We may be sure that He is equally patient when Christians arrive at differing and even opposite conclusions. But we may be sure that He is grieved when He finds that some of those on the one side deny the sincerity and cast doubt upon the motives of those upon the other.

One answer to our question which attracts by its very simplicity begins by declaring that war is an unmitigated evil, plainly abhorrent to the mind of Christ. So far all Christians will agree. But there are some who proceed from this indubitable premiss to argue further that armed conflict, for whatever cause and under whatever conditions it is waged, is a sin against God and a crime against humanity. And thus they arrive at the conclusion that therefore it cannot in any circumstances be right to take any part in it, or to support any preparation for it. They are careful to point out that a merely negative 'resolve and pledge to take no part in another war' is not enough. 'Pacifism,' says the Peace Pledge Union, 'is a complete way of life. We cannot expect our

governments to be pacifists if we conduct our private lives and our businesses in a militaristic way. The best propaganda for pacificism is example; and the most effective revolution is one which starts at the circumference and spreads towards the centre, not one which is imposed by the central authority. Pacifists should organize themselves in small groups for the purpose of studying, disseminating, and, above all, of putting into practice the principles of constructive pacifism.' Again, no Christian would disagree. But if such pacifism is to be actually and practically constructive it should offer some prospect that in a world which still takes warfare for granted its policy would be effective in preventing 'another war.' It is here that their argument has so far failed to convince. They rely on securing a no-war pledge from a sufficient proportion of potential fighters in all countries. In that case no government would dare to declare war or to resist aggression. For otherwise they must face the certain prospect of dissension and violent confusion at home. But what will happen if only one or two nations produce enough conscientious objectors to force upon their governments a policy of non-resistance? Can it be supposed that, as national tempers stand to-day, the aggressor nation would be so deeply impressed by the noble example of its victim as to follow it? By total disarmament a nation would surely bring upon itself a burden of mischief and misery as real, if not at first as sanguinary, as that of war. We may not say of any willing sacrifice that it will bear no fruit. But can we reasonably hope that one which is imposed upon a country by a majority of its most high-minded members is likely to serve any good purpose, even the cause of peace itself?

It is easy to criticise the extreme wing of modern pacifists for the intolerance of their temper and the vehemence of their vocabulary. Much must be allowed to a minority who feel deeply and sincerely, and are often betrayed by their enthusiasm into extravagance of thought and language. But it is much harder to understand and excuse the attitude of some of them towards Air Raid Precautions. I was informed by an official of the Fellowship of Reconciliation that 'A.R.P. are clearly intended not to save our lives but to set the Air Force free for its job of destroying the lives of others, to aid in the militarization of the country, and to prevent any panic likely to lead to a demand for peace.' In the course of a reply I pointed out that it is the duty of a Christian to succour distress however caused, that the Good Samaritan did not stop to ask himself whether his act of love would ultimately encourage violence, and that we are to do likewise and to learn how to do it. But I was told that 'it is not a Christian's duty to take part in elaborate precautions for learning beforehand how to succour distress, especially when these precautions themselves render the distress more likely. A.R.P. are intended primarily to persuade the people to die quietly if war comes, or, if alive, to line up behind the Government in the prosecution of the war.' This strange interpretation of Government motive is noteworthy, not because it is likely to have any serious practical effect upon the public mind, but as illustrating the length to which some thinkers can be led by a perverse and prejudiced logic.

It would be unfair to judge a movement by the most extreme of its exponents. But I would quote a penetrating criticism of the movement as a whole from a book by one who himself takes the pacifist view, but shows that he clearly understands the objections of those other Christians who are unable to share it. He represents the case against the peace pledge very fairly, and more forcibly than he answers it. In *War and the Christian*, p. 121, Professor C. E. Raven writes: 'War is evil, and as such the Christian is bound to labour for its disappearance. But it is not the only evil, nor necessarily so much more sinful than other elements in our social life as to call for special treatment. To betray the pledged word, to involve unwilling victims in disaster, to shirk responsibilities laid upon us by our position in the world of nations, these are also evils. There is rarely a clear-cut choice between a right and a wrong line of action. The Christian must weigh each case on its merits, doing his best to gain a true knowledge of the relevant facts, to strip himself of prejudices and self-will, to resist the pressure of mass-suggestion, and to seek for God's guidance in reaching a decision. To resolve beforehand and without reference to special circumstances that a particular course is impossible is to live not by a living faith but by rule and rote. There is the further point that even if the Christian disapproves of the actions of his fellow-countrymen that have built up the Empire, or given us our place in India, or planted the Jews in Palestine, yet these are facts which cannot be ignored. The consequences of them have to be faced: the majority of our countrymen are certainly not prepared to leave the Empire undefended, to open the north-west frontier, or to expose the Jews to massacre. Is it Christian for the pacifist to flout the conviction of his fellows,

to refuse to carry his share of the burden, and to leave to others the hazards involved, doing his best to weaken them and yet claiming all the privileges which their efforts secure to them? If he wishes to be consistent he ought to recognize that his status as a British citizen, his standard of living, his immunity from fear and oppression are dependent upon the military establishment he condemns: that the acceptance of these benefits lays upon him a moral obligation to contribute towards the armed strength which maintains them; that he cannot honestly take the advantages and refuse the conditions under which they are obtained; and that if he renounces all contact with war he ought also to renounce his franchise and nationality. He cannot properly have it both ways.'

This is truly said. The pacifist is indeed claiming the right to conduct himself as if he lived in conditions which do not yet exist, and cannot be established suddenly. There are hopeful signs that the world is awakening to the folly, the futility, the wickedness of war. But generations, perhaps centuries, must pass before the human race is finally set free from it, and the pacifists' refusal under present conditions to fight at all will not be the greatest contribution to that end. Yet his error is a noble error, and often a brave one. Like all assertions in action of the freedom of individual conscience it deserves our admiration. But there are humbler, more patient, and more positive approaches to peace which in the end will count for more than his.

The society which surrounded our Lord in His human life abounded in evil traditions and practices. He was confronted by bad government, worse administration, oppression of the weak, low moral standards of every kind, and methods of war hardly less horrible than those we are evolving now. All these things and more He appears to accept, but not passively. If He makes no passionate protest against any of them, we are not to suppose that He would have us be content to tolerate the inevitable and permanent conditions of human life. His way of dealing with social evils is not to attack them directly nor to assail them with denunciation, but rather to seek out their root causes and assault them there.

Most wars of recent times have had their origin in economic pressure. Nations have ceased to fight about religion. But when their food supply is threatened, or their industries hampered for lack of raw material, they see no other way of securing their right to live but by force of arms. Is there no other way? We know that our earth contains and produces enough to support all its inhabitants in decent well-being. We know that its abundance might be so distributed but for national selfishness, expressing itself in tariffs, in the paralysing complications of monetary exchange, and in other indirect but ever present incitements to hostility. Might we not begin to break through these artificial entanglements by applying Christian common sense at the vital point? When two or more nations confer upon some difference between them it is 'natural' for each to have in mind—What do the others want and how can we prevent them from getting it? For this might they not be induced to substitute—What do the others need and how can we help them to secure it? We shall be told that the world is not ready to put into practice wisdom even as elementary as this. But if Christians in all countries were to unite in demanding so simple an application of Christian principle we might secure at least the beginning of a change in the spirit of international approaches. Is there foresight enough in the Churches to lead such a movement?

Another general *casus belli* looms before us. It lies in the attitude of one nation to the form of government accepted by another. The Christian recognizes the right of every country to adopt its own form, and condemns any attempt to impose it upon another. But he should go further. He should resist in himself, and use all his influence against, the temptation (from which we of this country have not always been free) to criticise, and even to pour contempt upon, political systems other than our own. We hold ourselves free to protest against actions or policies which seem to us mischievous or wrong, whatever be the form of the government responsible for them. But to abuse the form itself only irritates and inflames.

It is often forgotten that in order to make an end of war it is not enough to remove its causes. We must also find some other means of fulfilling the function which warfare is intended to serve. War is an invention as well as an instinct. It is unknown in the animal world, but men designed and have developed it in order to solve their disputes. It cannot be abolished until something else has been invented to take its place. In the *Nineteenth Century* for July of this year, Professor Gasset, of Madrid, calls attention to the need from our point of view for the establishment of an effective system of international law. He writes: 'The will to peace is not of ultimate importance in a rational pacifism. It is necessary that this word should cease to signify good intentions and

should mean a system of new relationships between men. The great damage done by sentimental pacifism to the cause of authentic peace consisted in preventing us from seeing the lack of even the most elementary techniques necessary for this end. Peace, for instance, means law as a form of such relationship. Pacifism seemed to suppose that such a law existed, that it was there at the disposal of mankind, and that only the passions and instincts of violence induced us to ignore it. . . . Since there is no such theory of international law, how can one pretend that war should disappear? To pretend that things should happen magically because we wish them may well be described as frivolous and immoral. Only that desire is moral which is accompanied by a severe endeavour to prepare the means for a practical execution.' Here is a much needed warning against the danger that peace movements may suffer from one-sided and unintelligent idealism.

But the will to fight has a source deeper than any that can be found in economics or politics or lack of law. It must be sought in the realm of character, where the followers of Christ should be specially called to deal with it. Why is it that men and women retain in adult life the pugnacity and selfishness which all would admit to be marks of immaturity characteristic of ill-disciplined children? If we were all educated on well-thought-out Christian principles should we not grow out of the childish petulance and greed that drives us into war? Clearly the world has not grown up. Indeed, it has been declared that its average psychological age corresponds to that of a child of fourteen. We have learned in these days how much mischief is wrought in later life by traditional methods of dealing with natural instincts in early youth. If they are merely forced down, they will assert themselves in after years with greater potency and more poisonous results. Out of repression spring unconscious cruelty and instinctive resort to violence. We know now that it is possible so to train these deep, unconscious forces that they may harness themselves to constructive activities. But we do not yet use our knowledge. When we realize the special concern of Christianity in establishing a wiser technique of early training we shall be in sight of deliverance from world chaos.

Such are the avenues opening out before us towards the goal of peace, an intelligent economic appeasement, a respect for a nation's right to choose its own form of government, a clearer conception of international law, and a closer study and practice of the means by which the natural impulses of the young can be both satisfied and led. There is no surer and no shorter way.

In the Study.

Virginibus Puerisque.

Milk and Water.

By the Reverend Stuart Robertson, M.A., Lisbon.

'The sincere milk of the word.'—1 P 2^2.

Portugal is a little country not very well known to English folk; which is a pity, for it is very well worth knowing. Some think it is a bit of Spain! Sometimes I get letters addressed, 'Lisbon, Spain,' which is as bad as writing, 'Edinburgh, England.'

It is not a bit of Spain. Spain is full of war; Portugal is quiet, busy, and prosperous—in fact, it is one of the few countries in Europe that are so. It enjoys a delightful climate, and possesses many lovely places. One of the loveliest and best known is Sintra, with its two palaces, one high above the town; the other, an old Moorish palace on the main square, with its wealth of trees and tropical plants and flowers.

I wish to tell you a story of Sintra. Once King John III. of Portugal wished that on a certain day of national rejoicing the fountain in the square should flow, not with water, but with milk. So he ordered that everybody in Sintra should bring a jar of milk and pour it into the reservoir that supplied the fountain, so that when it was turned on the fountain would flow with milk.

All the poor folk of the countryside came in to see this great sight and to drink at the fountain of milk. There was great expectation, and the square was crowded. But when the fountain began to flow, it was not milk that came out, but just water as usual!

What had happened? Why, this. Somebody had said to himself, 'If everybody else brings milk, it won't matter if I bring water. Among so much milk a little water won't be noticed.' So he popped in a jarful of water and thought he was very clever. Unfortunately he was not the only